

Politics in Central Europe

The Journal of the Central European Political Science Association

Volume 8

Number 1

June 2012

Regional Politics in Central Eastern Europe

Next Issue:

Cultural Transformation and Nation Branding in Central Europe

*The articles published in this scientific review are placed also in SSOAR
(Social Science Open Access Repository), <http://www.ssoar.info>*

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ESSAYS

Women's Representation in European Parliamentary Elections: A Second-Order Approach?

Jan Kovář and Kamil Kovář

Abstract: *Elections to the European Parliament (EP) fall within the category of second-order national elections. Given the fact that these types of elections do not lead to the formation of government there is less at stake and, as a result, voters behave differently when casting their ballots. But what about political parties: do they also perceive the less-at-stake character of second-order elections in a similar fashion as voters and hence behave differently as well? This article draws on available electoral data related to women's representation in the Czech Republic and Slovakia to explicitly link the second-order election model to independent actions of political parties. The results show that women candidates have (1) more positions and better ranking on ballot lists (equality of opportunities) as well as (2) better chances of getting elected (equality of results) when running in SOEs. Political parties remain the primary gate-keepers to political office and increasing women's political representation will depend on whether they have a strategic incentive to promote women and to improve their chances of being elected. In this sense, the EP is a key space for the promotion of women, given the second-order character of EP elections.*

Keywords: *European Parliament, second-order elections, political parties, women's representation, first-order elections*

The fact that elections to the European Parliament (EP) are different from national legislative elections in the European Union (EU) member states has been evident ever since the very first of these Europe-wide elections were held in 1979. In their immediate aftermath, Reif and Schmitt (1980) labelled the first direct European elections 'second-order national elections' (for an overview, see Marsh – Mikhaylov 2010). In a later work, Reif proposed an operational definition of such second-order elections (SOEs): 'All elections (except the one that fills the most important political office of the entire system and therefore is the first-order election) are "national second-order elections", irrespective of whether they take place in the entire, or only in a part of, the country' (Reif 1997: 117). After more than three decades and six more sets of European elections since Reif and Schmitt

(1980) published their seminal work, second-order election (SOE) model has become one of the most widely tested and supported theories of voting behaviour in elections to the EP (Cabada 2010; Ferrara – Weishaupt 2004; Freire – Teperoglou 2007; Hix – Marsh 2007; Kousser 2004; Marsh 1998; Reif 1984; Šaradín et al. 2007).

Nonetheless, it was argued that the applicability of the SOE model in the ‘new’ member states – those that joined the EU in 2004 and 2007 – does not have to be as straightforward as in the ‘old’ member states (Cabada 2010; Koepke – Ringe 2006; Marsh 2009; Schmitt 2005). Moreover, it is quite logical that given their aggregate nature (see below), the SOE model’s predictions have been mostly tested using aggregate electoral data and election-related survey data.¹ This, however, led researchers to focus primarily on sophisticated strategies of voters. Nevertheless, by primarily focusing on the strategies of *voters*, the model is rendered blind to independent actions of the rest of the electoral circle: the *media* and the *political parties* (see also Weber 2007). Since perhaps the most important aspect of SOEs is that there is less at stake (Reif – Schmitt 1980: 9–18), it is viable to assume that all the three abovementioned actors experience the less-at-stake character of SOEs likewise.

In this paper, we thus try to fill a void in the literature by directly linking the SOE model to independent actions of other actors in the electoral circle than to *voters*: the *political parties*. We do this through the analysis of a descriptive representation of women in the 2004 and 2009 European elections in two countries that joined the EU in 2004 – the Czech Republic and Slovakia – and *at the same time* applying the SOE model. But, does it matter whether women are represented in parliaments or not? Does it make sense to focus on the number of women in legislatures? Phillips (1998) marked out four arguments to further women’s political representation: (1) female politicians serve as role models, inspiring other women to political activity (Kittilson 2005; Wolbrecht – Campbell 2007); (2) equal representation of the components of society in legislatures is a sign of justice (Phillips 1995); (3) only female politicians are positioned to represent women’s interests (Dodson 2006; Wängnerud 2009); and (4) political representation of women invigorates democracy (Norris – Lovenduski 1989). Building on Phillips’ (1998) work, Dovi (2007) identified two other arguments: (5) women’s political representation is necessary for women to put their confidence in political institutions (Schwindt-Bayer – Mishler 2005) and (6) female representatives increase the legitimacy of democratic institutions (Mansbridge 1999).

¹ Only recently scholars began to uncover the micro-foundations of the SOE theory and confront them with micro-level empirical evidence (Clark – Rohrschneider 2009; Hobolt – Wittrock 2011; Schmitt – Sanz – Braun 2008).

Put differently, in her seminal work, Pitkin (1967) has identified four distinct (but interconnected) dimensions of representation, three of which are of importance for our work: (1) descriptive representation, referring to the compositional similarity between representatives and the represented (Schwindt-Bayer – Mishler 2005); (2) substantive representation, which refers to the congruence between representatives' actions and the interests of the represented (policy responsiveness); and (3) symbolic representation, referring to the represented feelings of being fairly and effectively represented or, in other words, how representatives are perceived by those they represent. It has been pointed out that increased descriptive representation contributes directly to substantive representation by producing policies more responsive to societal interests. Descriptive representation influences symbolic representation by enhancing public confidence in representative institutions both directly and indirectly (Paxton – Hughes – Painter 2010). Moreover, substantive representation is claimed to have direct effects on symbolic representation (Schwindt-Bayer – Mishler 2005: 410-414). Finally, (viable) symbolic representation enhances political engagement and may increase substantive representation (Atkeson 2003).

The remainder of this paper is as follows. The next section briefly reviews the literature on women's political representation, followed by a section discussing the literature on the SOE model. These two sections thus introduce main concepts and present the theoretical background. The fourth section unveils the expectations based on and derived from the two previous sections. The fifth section then clarifies methodological issues, operationalises concepts, and presents the data. The sixth section presents the results of the analysis and, finally, the last section concludes by summarising the findings and discussing their implications in the light of relevant research literature.

Women's Political Representation

Questions of political representation constitute one of the central areas of political science research literature. In this sense, dynamics of candidate selection are crucial to political representation because the issue of who is – and who is not – selected as a candidate has fundamental implications for all the other meanings and phases of political representation (Krook 2010a). Social representation, then, refers to how far given legislature reflects the society from which it is drawn in terms of salient political cleavages like gender, class, and region (Marsh – Norris 1997; Phillips 1993). From a normative standpoint, political institutions should represent the interests of all citizens, including traditionally marginalised groups (Williams 1998). In this sense, women offer probably the most telling example: even though they form more than half of the population, women presently constitute a minority

of parliamentarians worldwide, just a bit over 19% (Inter-Parliamentary Union 2011).²

Probably the most complex theoretical model for explaining women's access to political office in countries around the world is the supply and demand model of candidate selection (Norris – Lovenduski 1993, 1995). The supply and demand model suggests that the number of women elected is the combined result of: (a) the qualifications of women as a group to run for political office; and (b) the willingness of party elites to select female candidates (Matland 2004; Randall 1987). The relationship between supply and demand, in turn, is mediated by the structure of opportunities in the political marketplace that is set by the legal regulations, party system, political institutions, and political culture (Norris 1997). Most of the variables mentioned in the previous paragraph fall within the structure of opportunities category. Consequently, it is the interaction of the structure of opportunities, supply, and demand that ultimately determines the level of women's descriptive representation in parliament (Matland 2004: 5).

On the supply side of this model, previous research has indicated several factors that determine whether (women) candidates come forward. The motivation and political capital of candidates can be expected to influence whether they choose to stand for office (Matland 2004). As pointed out by Norris and Franklin (1997) 'people with the greatest motivation and resources will be most willing to consider a political career'. Turning first to the motivation of candidates, the literature which has developed in the US context puts greatest emphasis on the political ambition of candidates. Fox and Lawless (2004) found that women express significantly lower levels of political ambition to hold elective office and, thus, are far less likely to emerge from the pool of eligible candidates (see also, Fox – Lawless 2010, 2011). Furthermore, they are also more likely to doubt their abilities to engage in campaign mechanics.³ Turning to political capital, it has been argued that women and men have different amounts of political capital which can be used to pursue office (Norris – Franklin 1997), and that women may believe they lack the crucial material resources necessary to launch a successful campaign (Matland 2004).

² There are considerable cross-national and cross-continental differences in descriptive representations of women. For example, women, on average, currently comprise 22% of the deputies in the national legislatures in Europe (Inter-Parliamentary Union 2011), but only below 16% of the representatives in the NPs in Central and Eastern Europe. For elaboration on these differences, see, for instance, Stockemer (2007) and Wangnerud (2009).

³ According to them, two factors explain this gender gap: first, women are far less likely than men to be encouraged to run, and second, women are significantly less likely than men to view themselves as qualified to run (Fox – Lawless 2004: 275).

The demand side of the model is produced by party rules, ideology and attitudes of gatekeepers, all of which may favour certain potential candidates over others (Meserve – Pemstein – Bernhard 2009; Norris – Lovenduski 1995). Norris and Lovenduski (1995: 13–14) pointed out that assessments of potential candidates are strongly shaped by the preferences and opinions of political elites. In short, previous studies have emphasised that discrimination by selectors, the use of affirmative action strategies, and the centralisation of the selection process may be expected to have the most significant impact on the outcome (Norris 1997; Norris – Lovenduski 1993; Randall 1987). Since political parties play a central role in the candidate selection process in Europe, most scholars dealing with women’s descriptive under-representation emphasise demand-side explanations, whilst still acknowledging supply-side factors.⁴

Recently, a refreshing and stimulating critique of the supply and demand model has been brought to light by Krook (2010a, 2010b). Krook presents three broad arguments questioning its appropriateness for theorising the dynamics of candidate selection. First, in contrast to the economic model, the ‘political market’ does not operate efficiently towards equilibrium (Krook 2010b: 166). Second, the supply and demand model cannot in itself account for under-representation of women in every country in the world (Krook 2010a: 710). Third, the tendency to generalise about whether supply- or demand-side factors are more important overlooks important cross-national and cross-party variations. On the basis of these three assumptions, she offers an institutionalist and a feminist critique of supply and demand and eventually proposes a feminist-institutionalist theory of candidate selection. The crux of the theory is that dynamics of candidate selection can be reconceptualised in terms of a configuration of three types of gendered institutions – systemic, practical and normative – that work together to shape the characteristics of candidate selection (Krook 2010a: 713).

The SOE Model

After briefly reviewing the literature on the candidate selection process and candidate quality in European elections, we now turn to the literature on the SOE model. As was hinted at in the Introduction, the SOE model has become the dominant one in any academic discussion of elections to the EP. It is important to note that in their ideal form, SOEs are fought within the same party system as the FOEs (Marsh – Mikhaylov 2010; Reif – Schmitt 1980).⁵ Perhaps the most important

⁴ Given that in the US context, the candidate selection process is a bit less dominated by political parties, it is consistent that many researches focus on political ambitions and motivation (see above).

⁵ In the countries under analysis (i.e. the Czech Republic and Slovakia), this condition is satisfied, as both types of elections were fought within almost identical party systems.

aspect of SOEs is that there is less at stake in SOEs.⁶ The SOE model suggests that there is a qualitative difference between different types of elections depending on the perception of what is at stake; compared to FOEs, in SOEs there is *less at stake* owing to the fact that they do not determine the composition of government (Reif – Schmitt 1980).

Owing to this fact, the SOE model is built around three broad propositions: (1) *lower level of voter's participation*, (2) *brighter prospects for small parties*, and (3) *government parties lose*. Furthermore, as a consequence of the less-at-stake dimension, 'voters cast their votes (...) not only as a result of conditions obtaining within the specific context of the second-order arena, but also on the basis of factors in the main political arena of the nation' (Reif – Schmitt 1980: 9). The campaign and results of SOEs are influenced by the political constellation of the national political arena (Reif 1997). Hence, the last broad proposition is (4) *election campaigns comprise not only second-order-arena-specific issues but also (if not dominantly) first-order-arena-specific issues* (Irwin 1995; Reif 1984; Šaradin 2008).

One of the problems of the SOE model may be in the fact that the (aggregate) propositions of the SOE model have been mostly tested using aggregate electoral data and election-related survey data. This, however, leads to methodological problems of observational equivalence and ecological fallacy as well as disregard for the need for individual-level explanations of vote choice (e.g. Clark – Rohrschneider 2009; Hobolt – Wittrock 2011). Scholars thus recently began to use individual rather than aggregate models and data in order to build solid micro-foundations of individual vote choice and overcome the problems of observational equivalence and ecological fallacy (Hobolt – Spoon – Tilley 2009; Schmitt – Sanz – Braun 2008; Weber 2011).

Another important shortcoming of the SOE model lays in its primary focus on sophisticated strategies of *voters*. The model does not involve an explicit link to independent actions of the rest of the electoral circle – the *media* and the *political parties*⁷ – despite the findings of many studies showing that (1) parties allocate fewer resources for campaigns in SOEs than in first-order contests (Hertner 2011; Maier – Tenscher 2009) which, of course, has consequences for the organisation and conduct of campaigns and (2) EP election campaigns are of low intensity and are dominated by national issues (de Vreese 2009; Irwin 1995; Kauppi 2004).

⁶ The model has proven useful in studies on a range of elections beyond just those for the EP, including those for regional and local assemblies as well as referendums (e.g. Glencross – Trechsel 2011; Heath et al. 1999; Rallings – Thrasher 2005).

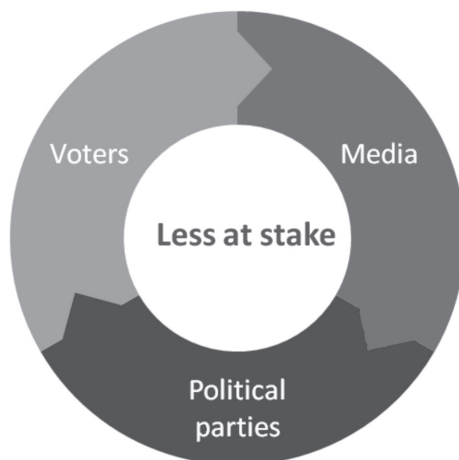
⁷ In fact, Reif (1997) argued that the extent to which EU-specific factors determine the campaign and outcome of SOE varies *inter alia* with the relative importance attributed by citizens, parties, and media. Nevertheless, the SOE model does not offer any expectations and/or testable hypotheses. The connection thus remains rather implicit.

Moreover, European elections are consistently found not to be very visible in national television news and there is little doubt that the media find them less interesting than national FOEs (de Vreese et al. 2006; Kovář 2010; Peter – Lauf – Semetko 2004). The absence of a direct link to political parties and the media is surprising given the (not unusual) conclusion of a recent analysis of EP elections in the Czech Republic claiming that ‘political parties drew little attention to European issues and put lower profile party figures on their ballot sheets, and (...) the media paid little attention to the elections’ (Klíma 2010: 18). Since perhaps the most important aspect of SOEs is that there is less at stake (Reif – Schmitt 1980: 9), it is viable to assume that all the three abovementioned electoral actors perceive the less-at-stake character of SOEs likewise and thus EP elections matter less not only to voters but also to political parties and the media (e.g. Havlík – Hoskovec 2009; Klíma 2010).

In their review article Marsh and Mikhaylov (2010: 18) argued that in order to better understand EP elections, more attention should be given to the mechanism(s) that give rise to the second-order effects. In particular, in connection with previous research it is viable to assume that actions of political parties and the media help give rise to these second-order effects. In fact, findings of a recent study examining the conditioning effect of party polarisation on the EU dimension show that in EP elections, ‘voters only take EU-specific considerations into account when political parties provide them with clear choices’ (Hobolt – Spoon 2010: 23). This is echoed by another study concluding that EU-issue voting is much more pronounced when parties and the media provide a higher level of political information on European matters (de Vries et al. 2011). Yet another recent article argues that should citizens be fully informed at the EP election time, it would result in a roughly 30 per cent increase in turnout (Bhatti 2010). Put differently, the behaviour of parties and the news media is crucial in shaping the nature of electoral choices and levels of turnout in EP elections. Consequently, in order to better understand EP elections we would benefit from focusing on the links between voters, candidates, political parties, and the media (see also Hobolt – Franklin 2011; Strömbäck – Maier – Kaid 2011).

When explaining patterns of low turnout in EP elections, Gagatek (2009: 81-82), though, explicitly involves and links all of the three electoral actors. He uses the metaphor of a ‘vicious circle’ – involving the three actors – to account for patterns of low turnout. He then argues that political parties and the media are best positioned to break the vicious circle of low turnout (Gagatek 2009: 88-89). In this paper, we borrow his metaphor and slightly amend it in order to make it explicitly linked to the SOE model. The mechanism behind the modified figure can be presented graphically as in Figure 1. This mechanism is the starting point of our analysis, as it directly links the SOE model and its less-at-stake dimension with actions of the political parties and the media.

Figure 1: Electoral actors and the SOE model: A vicious cycle?



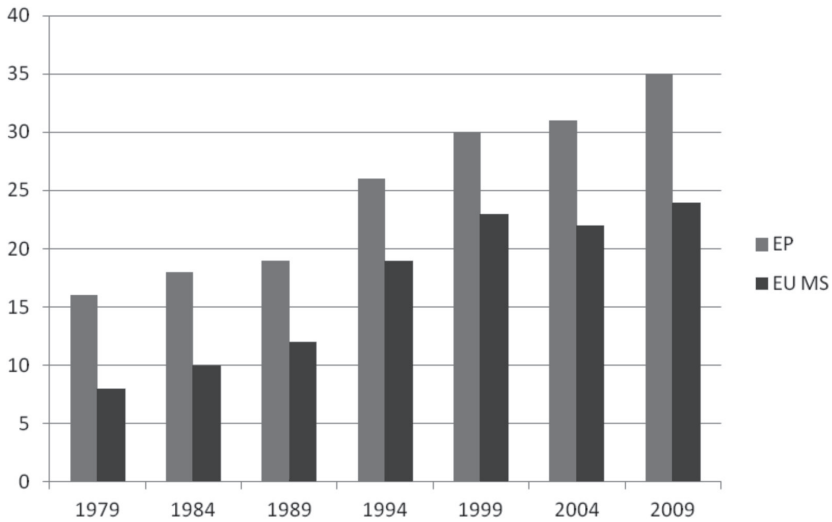
Source: Gagatsek (2009); authors' modifications

In relation to our research project, the SOE model does not offer explicit propositions or testable hypotheses concerning women's representation in EP elections. But, the nature of the SOE model provides political parties with the opportunity to experiment inasmuch that there is *less at stake*. From a theoretical point view, since the EP is not considered to be a site of effective power, becoming a member of the EP (MEP) is not as competitive as becoming a member of NP (MP) and political parties are thus more willing to make an effort to present women candidates for EP than for national FOEs (Vallance – Davies 1986; Verzichelli – Edinger 2005). In other words, it could be argued that 'where there is power there are no women; and where there is no power there are women' (Freedman 2002: 179). Moreover, parties may see EP elections as a chance to prove their good credentials regarding gender equality by selecting a large number of women candidates for SOEs where they feel less is at stake.

In fact, existing comparative research conducted in the British context suggests that political parties nominate more women candidates for SOEs. Moreover, when standing for SOEs, women candidates have better opportunities for electoral success (Harrison 2005, 2010). The higher percentage of women MEPs than MPs and lower level of women's under-representation in the EP highlight this finding (Figure 2). Nevertheless, we still know oddly little about women's political representation in the EP and elections to this institution (e.g. Freedman 2002; Kantola 2009; Vallance – Davies 1986), in particular, concerning a systematic comparison of different orders of elections (i.e. FOEs vs. SOEs). These studies and aggregate data give us an important insight into the composition of the EP regarding the balance

between female and male politicians, yet they do not explicitly address the question of how dynamics of women’s representation differ across different ‘orders’ of elections. These studies also do not provide a cross-national comparison of women’s representation since they concentrate on the case of the United Kingdom. This lack of studies concerned with women’s representation is particularly surprising given the topic’s long tradition in political science research. That is where we would like to contribute some theoretical structure as well as empirical evidence.

Figure 2: Women representatives in the EP and EU member states (%), 1979–2009^a



Source: European Parliament 2011; Inter-Parliamentary Union 2011

Notes: ^a Values for EU Member States (MS) show the average percentage of women representatives in national parliaments of EU MS at the time of respective EP elections.

Expectations

Although the standard SOE model does not offer explicit propositions about women’s representation, the nature of the model and its less-at-stake dimension – as depicted in Figure 1 – along with the findings of previous research literature bring about some clear expectations about both women’s representation. The nature of the SOE model provides political parties with the opportunity to experiment inasmuch that there is *less at stake*. Accordingly, national political parties nominate more women candidates to SOEs as the less-at-stake dimension allows them to put forward less traditional slates of candidates (Freedman 2002; Frias – Marshall 2004; Harrison 2005), given that parties play a crucial role in candidate selection

processes in all EU member states. From this point of view, it is important to understand women's inclusion in parties: women as candidates and women as representatives. Thus, the nature of the SOE model along with facts that (1) the EU has been at the forefront of equal opportunity policies for years now (European Commission 2011; Kantola 2009); (2) both countries analysed in this work had to adopt and implement all EU gender equality directives within its national legislation (Bitušíková 2005), and (3) given that parties remain the primary barrier to increased women's representation (Franceschet 2005; Kunovich – Paxton 2005), we might expect that political parties attitudes towards forwarding women differ across FOEs and SOEs.

In her feminist-institutionalist theory of candidate selection Krook (2010b) reconceptualises the dynamics of candidate selection in terms of a configuration of three types of gendered institutions – systemic, practical and normative – and argues that 'distinct institutional configurations may operate not only across but also within countries, producing variations across parties as well potential conflicts between national and party level rules, practices, and norms' (2010b: 711-713). We would only add that distinct institutional configurations may operate not only across and within countries but also across different 'orders' of elections (SOEs vs. FOEs). Systemic institutions do not differ much across SOEs and FOEs in both countries (see below). We therefore expect that different practical and normative institutional configurations operate in SOEs.

Alternatively, and borrowing from International Relations (IR) literature, political parties may follow different logics of action across SOEs and FOEs since there is less at stake in the former. While in FOEs decisions of political parties might be driven by the logic of (expected) consequences (nominating vote-maximising candidates), in SOEs, they might follow the logic of appropriateness (seeking gender equality credentials) (March – Olsen 1996, 1998; Olsen 2007).⁸ We therefore expect that female politicians will have better prospects for both equality of opportunities (women as candidates) and equality of results (women as representatives) in SOEs (see Dahlerup 2007) owing to the fact that there is less at stake in these types of contests. Moreover, we also expect that the ratio of women representatives to women candidates will be higher in SOEs. In other words, women candidates will have more and better ranking on ballot lists as well as better chances of getting elected in SOEs compared to FOEs.

⁸ These distinct logics of action in fact operate at the same time (cf. Goldmann 2005); important is which one prevails in a given case (Risse 2000). Logic of expected consequences assumes that human actors choose among alternatives by evaluating their likely consequences for personal or collective objectives, conscious that other actors are doing likewise, whereas logic of appropriateness sees human actions as rule-based, actors following rules that associate particular identities to particular situations, approaching individual opportunities for action by assessing similarities between current identities and choice dilemmas and more general concepts of self and situations (March – Olsen 1998: 942-952).

Analysis of Women's Representation: Research Design, Data, and Methods

As mentioned above, the mechanism presented graphically in Figure 2 is the starting point of our analysis, as it directly links the SOE model and its less-at-stake dimension with actions of the political parties and the media. In this paper, we focus on the link with actions of political parties only. In both countries, only political parties and their coalitions can be nominated in elections and as such the selection of candidates occurs only within running parties (Linek – Outlý 2006; Outlý 2007). In addition, given that national political parties establish the procedures governing both national legislative and EP elections, control candidate selection process for both offices, set the content of electoral campaigns in both elections, and structure the labels under which parliamentarians are elected (Hix – Lord 1997; Kunovich – Paxton 2005; Linek – Outlý 2006; Norris – Lovenduski 1995), we suppose that analysing women's representation and comparing it across FOEs and SOEs might tell us about if and how second-order political parties perceive EP elections and as such help us to uncover how high (stakes) importance and motivation political parties assign to FOEs and SOEs.

The operationalisation of first- and second-order elections is straightforward. FOEs are operationalised as the most important elections in a given country (Reif 1984). In both countries, these are national parliamentary elections. All other elections in a given country are second-order national elections (Reif 1997). Although the SOE model has proved to be useful in studies on a range of elections beyond just those of the EP, including those of regional and local councils as well as referendums, in this paper, we focus only on EP elections. Political parties, through the candidate selection process, limit the choices available to voters. They make decisions about what candidates to field and how much support to give them through, for example, placement on party lists (Kunovich – Paxton 2005). The electoral process thus creates a two-tier filter that women must pass through: first, they have to be selected by parties as candidates, and second, they have to be selected for political office.

In order to analyse women's representation across SOEs and FOEs and address our expectations, it is necessary to understand both female candidates and female representatives and we therefore apply two levels of analysis (ballot list and parliament representation): (1) *Women as candidates*: the percentage of female candidates for the country, calculated by dividing the total number of female candidates by the total number of candidates running for election (equality of opportunities). Given that an increased number of female candidates is often combined with 'hopeless' list placement (Dahlerup 2007; Kunovich 2003) and hence 'having an equal number of male and female candidates is little more than a gesture if the most winnable places are preserved for men and women simply "make up the numbers" at the bottom of

party lists' (Harrison 2005: 94). Hence, we also include the second level of analysis: (2) *Women as representatives*: the percentage of women in the EP and national parliament (NP), calculated by dividing the total number of women elected by the total number of positions in the legislature (equality of results). In both countries, representation in the lower house is used since lower houses are the more powerful ones.

Finally, because we expect that the ratio of elected female to female candidates will be higher in SOEs we include: (3) *Ratio of representatives to candidates*: the yield of female representatives from the female candidates, calculated as the percentage of female representatives elected divided by the percentage of female candidates. Values of one indicate a one-to-one relationship between the percentage of candidates and the percentage of female representatives (see Kunovich – Paxton 2005). Since the focus here is on women's descriptive representation only, we draw on electoral data, namely, aggregate electoral results and formal composition of ballots as made available through both countries' statistical offices and the official web site of the EP.

Before presenting the results, we have to deal with potential caveats of this research project. As mentioned above, the type of electoral system used has an effect on electoral opportunities for under-represented sections of society (McAllister – Studlar 2002; Paxton – Hughes – Painter 2010). Moreover, the type of electoral system used is said to affect how parties organise the candidate selection process, whereby the number of constituencies and district magnitude influences the level of centralisation of the candidate selection process within parties (Gallagher – Marsh 1988; Linek – Outlý 2006). Both countries, however, use some kind of PR system, with a possibility of preferential voting for both SOEs and FOEs analysed here (Outlý 2007; Šedo 2007). Each country's ballot structure is characterised as an ordered list system by Farrell and Scully (2007), despite the fact that both Czech and Slovak voters have a multiple-candidate vote option.⁹ In reality, Klíma (2010: 15) concluded that preferential voting had practically no influence on the outcome in the Czech EP elections.

Thus, the ballot list ranking of candidates by political parties is in both countries across FOEs and SOEs rather definitive and the impact of preferential voting is negligible (see also Kunovich 2003; Lebeda 2007; Linek – Outlý 2006; Macháček 2009). In Slovakia, the number of constituencies is the same (1) across both types of elections. In the Czech Republic, the country is divided into 14 constituencies for

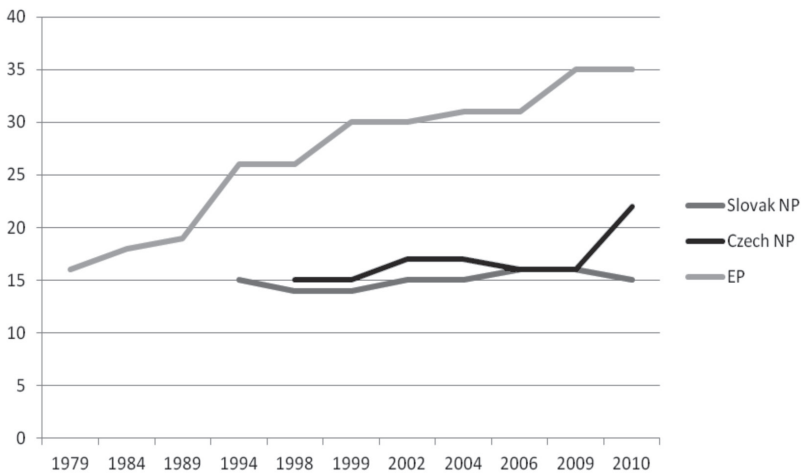
⁹ In elections to the EP as well as NP, Czech voters may use as many as two preferential votes (Act No. 247/1995 Sb., on Elections to the Parliament of the Czech Republic and on Amendments and Supplements to further Acts, as amended 1995; Act No. 63/2003 Sb., on Elections to the European Parliament and on Amendment of Some Laws 2003). In EP elections, Slovak voters may use as many as two preferential votes, whereas they may use up to four preferential votes in national parliamentary elections (Act No. 331/2003 Z. z., of the Slovak Republic on European Parliamentary Elections, as amended 2003; Act no. 333/2004 Z. z., on the election of the Slovak National Council, as amended 2004).

FOEs and uses a single constituency for SOEs. Nevertheless, the district magnitude in these constituencies is not much different from the district magnitude in EP elections, given the number of mandates allocated (Lebeda 2007; Outlý 2007).

Results

Do women have better prospects of being nominated as candidates and getting elected when standing for SOEs in the Czech Republic and Slovakia? On the general aggregate level, Figure 3 shows that there is a higher percentage of women parliamentarians in the EP than in lower houses of both countries. Ever since the countries joined the EU, the representation of women in the EP is almost twice as high as opposed to that in respective NP which suggests that women candidates have better opportunities of being elected in European elections than in national parliamentary elections. Nonetheless, focusing on aggregate data at the level of the EP distorts the measure by including the 25 other national delegations to the EP.

Figure 3: Women representatives in the EP, Czech, and Slovak NP (%)

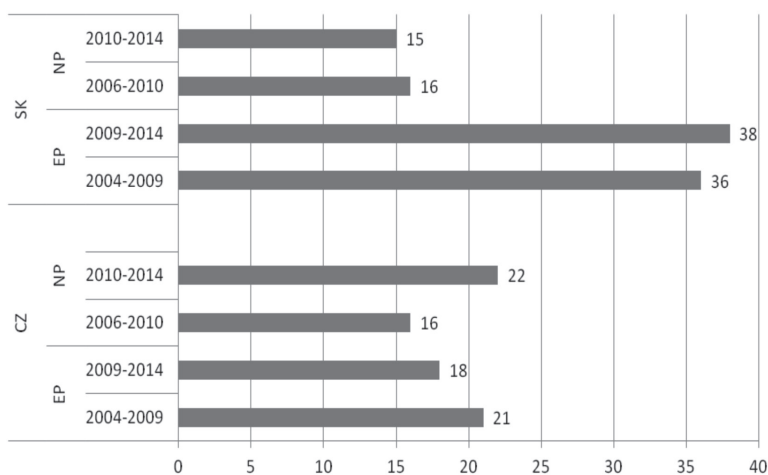


Source: Bitušíková (2005); Czech Statistical Office (2011); European Parliament (2011); Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic (2011)

That is why Figure 4, as a next step, shows the aggregate levels of a descriptive representation of women in both countries' legislatures and national delegations to the EP in all four election years analysed here. In Slovakia, women clearly have better opportunities for electoral success in the EP – second-order – elections than in first-order national elections. The level of descriptive representation of women in the Slovak NP was 16% (2006–2010) and 15% (2010–xxxx) respectively,

while within the national delegation to the EP, it was 36% (2004–2009) and 38% (2009–2014) respectively, representing more than twice as high a level of women representatives in the EP than in Slovak NP. The evidence from the Czech Republic is rather mixed. Comparing the EP term 2004–2009 (21% of women) with the national parliamentary term 2006–2010 (16%), it is evident that the descriptive representation of women was higher in national delegation to the EP than in the Czech NP by an indispensable margin of 5%. On the other hand, for the next term in the EP (2009–2014) only 18% of representatives within the Czech national delegation are women, while in the Czech NP women make up 22% of MPs. The proportion of women in NP is thus higher than that in the EP.¹⁰ Overall, women seem to have similar opportunities of being elected in both second-order and first-order national elections in the Czech Republic.¹¹

Figure 4: Women representatives in Czech and Slovak NP and delegation to the EP (%)



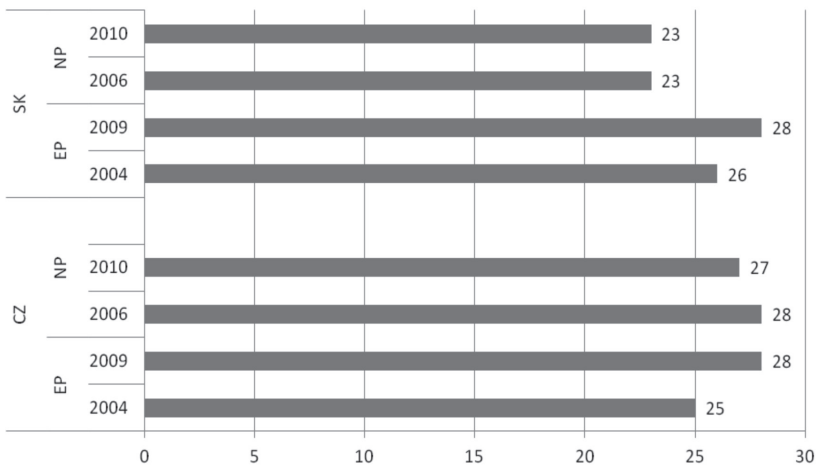
Source: Czech Statistical Office (2011); Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic (2011)

¹⁰ A higher level of descriptive representation in NP than in the EP which somehow contradicts our expectation can, however, be partly explained by contextual situation after the last national parliamentary elections in the Czech Republic. Rise in the proportion of women up to 22% is unprecedented in the Czech Republic (see Figure 3) and partly incurred by the success of new parties (VV and TOP09) in which women candidates had better chances of equality of opportunities and equality of results, as shown in Tables 1 and 2.

¹¹ The seeming discrepancy with our expectations might be alleviated by the fact that the Czech Republic is characterised, even by the standards of post-communist countries, by very low participation of women in national politics which holds also for EU politics (Beauvallet – Michon 2009; Kantola 2009; Matland 2004).

Moreover, it is often lamented that there is a division between women as candidates and women as representatives – that equality of opportunities does not always result in equality of results (Dahlerup 2007; Harrison 2005; Kunovich 2003). After analysing women as representatives, we thus turn to analysing women as candidates. In terms of equality of opportunities, we put forward an expectation that women will have better and more positions on ballots in SOEs than in FOEs. Figure 5 provides an overview of the aggregate levels of the descriptive representation of women on ballots for analysed elections in both countries. In Slovakia, there were more women on the ballot list for both the 2004 and 2009 EP elections than that for both the 2006 and 2010 national parliamentary elections. While before both the 2006 and 2010 national parliamentary elections, the proportion of women candidates on ballots was 23%, it was 26% before the 2004 EP elections and 28% before the 2009 EP contests. In other words, there were 3–5% more women candidates listed for SOEs than for FOEs. The evidence from the Czech Republic is again rather mixed without a clear pattern. Before the 2004 EP elections, women made up 25% of all candidates, while before the 2006 national parliamentary elections they made up 28% of all candidates. There were more women on ballots for national parliamentary elections than for EP elections. On the other hand, before the 2009 EP elections women represented 28% of all candidates, while before the 2010 national parliamentary elections, they represented 27% of all candidates. Anyway, the differences are narrow and our expectations are not borne out by them unambiguously.

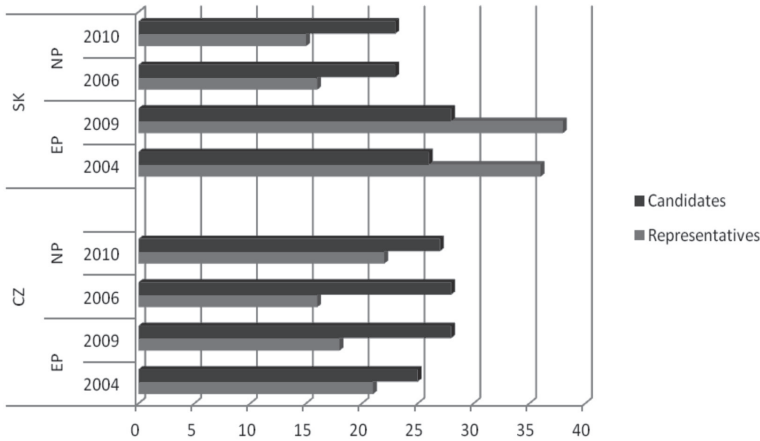
Figure 5: Women candidates in Czech and Slovak national parliamentary and EP elections (%)



Source: Czech Statistical Office (2011); Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic (2011)

Given the fact that an equal number of male and female candidates is little more than a gesture if the most winnable places are preserved for men, it is important to look beyond simply the number of women candidates on ballots. Figure 6 and Tables 1 and 2 hence compare the proportion of women as candidates and women as representatives across FOEs and SOEs. The case of Slovakia is telling: a small increase (3–5%) of women candidates on ballots for EP elections as opposed to national parliamentary elections resulted in more than twice as high a number of women representatives elected in Slovakian EP elections than in elections to the Slovak NP. The ratio of the percentage of women candidates to that of women representatives is twice as high in SOEs as compared to FOEs in Slovakia (Table 2). On the other hand, the situation in the Czech Republic was similar across SOEs and FOEs. A similar percentage of women candidates on ballots for EP and national elections resulted in a similar percentage of women representatives in the NP as well as the EP. The highest ratio of women candidates to women representatives was in the 2004 EP elections (Table 1).

Figure 6: Women candidates and women representatives in Czech and Slovak NP and delegation to the EP (%)



Source: Czech Statistical Office (2011); Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic (2011)

Table 1: Percentage of female candidates and women representatives in Czech national parliament and delegation to the EP

	Candidates	Representatives	Ratio
EP 2004	25	21	0,84
NP 2006	28	16	0,57
EP 2009	28	18	0,64
NP 2010	27	22	0,81

Source: Authors

Table 2: Percentage of female candidates and women representatives in Slovak national parliament and delegation to the EP

	Candidates	Representatives	Ratio
EP 2004	26	36	1,38
NP 2006	23	16	0,70
EP 2009	28	38	1,36
NP 2010	23	15	0,65

Source: Authors

Taken together, the expectation that women candidates will have more positions on the ballots for EP elections than for national parliamentary elections was supported in both election years in Slovakia. On the other hand, women as candidates have a roughly balanced number of positions on ballots for European as well as national parliamentary elections in the Czech Republic. As far as the expectation that women candidates have better prospects of getting elected in SOEs is concerned, this was the case in Slovakia where women clearly have better chances of electoral success when standing in EP elections. In the Czech Republic, on the other hand, equality of results was quite similar across SOEs and FOEs. In sum, the case of Slovakia, particularly, clearly supports our expectation that the fact that there is less at stake in SOEs allows political parties to put forward less traditional slates of candidates (Freedman 2002; Frias – Marshall 2004; Harrison 2005), and thus, women candidates have more and better ranking on ballot lists as well as better chances of getting elected in SOEs compared to FOEs.¹²

¹² Given that we are concerned only with the comparison of aggregate (country) levels of women representation across SOEs and FOEs, we do not report individual party-level results here. Nevertheless, Appendices 1 and 2 provide an overview of party-level results so that an interested reader can get some knowledge of party-level trends in women representation across SOEs and FOEs in both countries.

Conclusions and Discussion

At the outset of the paper, we posited that by focusing only on strategies of voters, the SOE model is rendered blind to independent actions of the rest of the electoral circle (see Figure 2) – political parties and the media – and that the study of political parties and the media during the elections to the EP would, in theoretical terms, benefit from application of the SOE model and vice versa (e.g. Gagatek 2009; Weber 2007). Moreover, it was argued that dynamics of candidate selection are crucial to political representation given that the question who is, and who is not, (s)elected as a candidate has fundamental implications for all other phases and meanings of political representation. Moreover, women's presence can be justified, given that it is normatively desirable that parliaments reflect the social composition of the society.

In this paper, we therefore attempted to directly link the SOE model to independent actions of political parties. Hence, we decided to apply the SOE model to women's descriptive representation in elections to the EP and choose the Czech Republic and Slovakia as case studies. Drawing on electoral data related to women's representation, we show that women candidates have more positions and better ranking on ballot lists (equality of opportunities) as well as better chances of getting elected (equality of results) when running in SOEs. There are generally more women on ballots for SOEs; they have better positions on these ballots and thus better chances of being (s)elected. This pattern was especially pronounced in Slovakia, whereas the results were rather mixed in the Czech Republic while not going against the logic of our model. Nevertheless, the Slovakian case clearly supported our expectations. In this sense, our findings complement the standard SOE model and support findings of previous research literature (Freedman 2002; Harrison 2005, 2010).

Given that political parties are the primary gate-keepers to political office (Gallagher – Marsh 1988), increasing women's political representation will depend on whether political parties have a strategic incentive to promote women and to improve their chances of being elected. In this sense, the EP is a key space for the promotion of women, given the second-order character of EP elections. It indeed seems that different practical and normative institutions operate not only across and within countries but also across different types of elections within a single country (Krook 2010a), or, as we suggested, political parties follow different logics of action across FOEs and SOEs, given that in the latter there is less at stake. Nevertheless, the EP remains socially unrepresentative in terms of representation of women (Figure 1) which also holds for both countries' delegations to the EP (Figure 3).

These findings, except for enriching the standard SOE model, have wider implications for our understanding of political and policy representation in the EP more generally. While women continue to be significantly under-represented in

the newly established democracies of Central and Eastern Europe (Chiva 2005; Matland 2004), this does not – paradoxically – have to be the case (at least to the same extent) within both countries’ delegations to the EP given the second-order nature of EP elections. In addition, women’s presence in high-level elective office ‘not only decreases the possibility that gender issues will be overlooked, but it also brings a “different voice” to the legislative process’ (Lawless 2004: 81). Several studies demonstrate the effect of women on political participation: the levels of voter turnout, political interest, knowledge, and media usage increase among women who live in areas with women candidates running (Atkeson 2003; Stokes-Brown – Dolan 2010; Wolbrecht – Campbell 2007).

From this point of view, it is viable to assume that the EP’s future role will be determined not only by its formal powers but also by the type of members it attracts (Scarrow 1997). Evidence, for example, shows that women are more diligent and have better attendance than men at EP plenaries (Joannin 2005). Social representation, then, may be important for, at least, two other reasons. First, the underrepresentation of certain social groups may undermine representational linkage and democratic legitimacy of legislatures (Mansbridge 1999; Norris – Lovenduski 1995; Phillips 1995). Second, the presence of women in parliament is theorised to be important for strengthening women’s representation in the democratic process, and descriptive representation, thus, has the potential to make a substantive policy impact (Dodson 2006; Lawless 2004). Since the representational linkage in EU politics is argued to be broken (Thomassen 2009: 11-13) and the EU suffers from a democratic deficit (Føllesdal – Hix 2006), moving towards gender equality in the EP is always good news. It might strengthen the representational linkage, encourage political participation, and ultimately positively influence EU’s legitimacy.

From this perspective, strengthening the powers of the EP might be counterproductive for women’s representation. As noted by Freedman (2002: 179), ‘[a]ny further transfer of authority (...) will make it more difficult to pursue gender equality [in the EP]’. If EP elections cease to represent SOEs where less is at stake, then – paradoxically – the EP will no longer constitute a privileged space for the promotion and political involvement of women. To sum it up, our evidence supports the assumption that the SOE model can help us understand independent actions of political parties (and the media) in SOEs. Women candidates have more positions and better ranking on ballot lists for SOEs. In addition, electoral fortunes of women were better in SOEs in both countries, as the SOE model together with prior research findings would suggest. Nonetheless, the EP still remains socially unrepresentative, a characteristic that serves only to add to the already considerable problems of legitimacy as well as democratic deficits in the EU, as democratic and legitimacy deficits are closely related to each other (Jensen 2009).

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Appendix 1: Women candidates by party (%)

	Political Party	2004 (EP)	2006 (NP) ^b	Difference ^a	2009 (EP)	2010 (NP) ^b	Difference ^a
Country							
CZ	ČSSD	19	27	8	21	22	1
	KDU-ČSL	25*	20	-5	34*	30*	-4
	KSČM	19	26	7	44	30**	-14
	ODS	13	23	10	14	23	9
	SNK-ED	28	28*	0	-	-	-
	Suverenita (SZR)	-	-	-	48*	40***	-8
	Svobodní	22	-	-	4	14	10
	SZ	50	36*	-14	48	39*	-9
	SZR	44	27	-17	-	-	-
	TOP 09	-	-	-	-	26*	-
	US-DEU/ULD	28*	28*	-	-	-	-
	VV	-	-	-	56*	32*	-24
SK	ANO	57	33	-24	-	-	-
	KSS	29	17	-12	17	16	-1
	KDH	21*	17	-4	15	23	8
	LD-HZDS	36	30	-6	38	25	-13
	MOST-HÍD	-	-	-	-	19	19
	OKS	0	22	22	-	-	-
	SaS	-	-	-	23	18	-5
	SF	43	32*	-11	-	-	-
	SDKÚ	21	23	2	25	15*	-10
	SLS	0	2	2	-	-	-
	SNS	-	-	-	8	13	5
	SMER	29*	17	-12	38	19	-19
	SDL	-	-	-	31	23	-8
SMK - MKP	18*	13	-5	15*	15	0	
Mean		26	23	-3	28	23	-3
Standard Deviation		14	8	-	15	7	-

Source: Czech Statistical Office (2011); Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic (2011)

Notes: ^a Shows the difference between national parliament and EP elections. Positive values indicate higher percentage of women in national parliamentary elections. Negative values indicate the opposite.

^b Values for national parliamentary elections in the Czech Republic are, for comparative reasons, counted using three constituencies with similar district magnitude as for the EP elections. These are

Hlavní město Praha (Prague); Jihomoravský kraj (South Moravian Region), and Moravskoslezský kraj (Moravian-Silesian Region). The values are averages of these three constituencies.

CZ: ČSSD=Česká strana sociálně demokratická; KDU-ČSL=Křesťanská demokratická unie-Česká strana lidová; KSČM=Komunistická strana Čech a Moravy; NEZ=Nezávislý; ODS=Občanská demokratická strana; SNK-ED=Sdružení nezávislých kandidátů-Evropští demokraté; SZ=Strana zelených; SZR=Strana zdravého rozumu; TOP09=Tradice, odpovědnost, prosperita 09; US-DEU=Unie svobody-Demokratická unie; VV=Věci veřejné.

SK: ANO=Aliancia nového občana; KSS=Komunistická strana Slovenska; KDH=Kresťanskodemokratické hnutie; LD-HZDS=Ludová strana - Hnutie za demokratické Slovensko; OKS=Občianska konzervatívna strana; SaS=Sloboda a Solidarita; SF=Slobodné fórum; SDKÚ=Slovenská demokratická a kresťanská únia; SLS=Slovenská ľudová strana; SNS=Slovenská národná strana; SDL=Strana demokratickej ľavičky; SMK-MKP=Strana mad'arskej koalície - Magyar Koalíció Pártja.

Appendix 2: Women representatives by party (%)

Country	Political Party	2004 (EP)	2006 (NP)	Difference ^a	2009 (EP)	2010 (NP)	Difference ^a
CZ	ČSSD	0	8	8	29	5	-24
	KDU-ČSL	50	0	-50	50	-	-
	KSČM	17	50	33	0	50	50
	NEZ	50	-	-	-	-	-
	ODS	11	17	6	11	21	10
	SNK-ED	33	-	-	-	-	-
	Suverenita (SZR)	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Svobodní	-	-	-	-	-	-
	SZ	-	50	-	-	-	-
	SZR	-	-	-	-	-	-
	TOP 09	-	-	-	-	40	-
	US-DEU/ULD	-	-	-	-	-	-
	VV	-	-	-	-	33	-
SK	ANO	-	-	-	-	-	-
	KSS	-	-	-	-	-	-
	KDH	33	14	-19	50	13	-37
	LD-HZDS	33	27	-6	0	-	-
	MOST-HÍD	-	-	-	-	11	-
	OKS	-	-	-	-	-	-
	SaS	-	-	-	-	18	-
	DF	-	-	-	-	-	-
SDKÚ	33	20	-13	0	21	-	

SK	SLS	-	-	-	-	-	-
	SNS	-	15	-	0	11	11
	SMER	33	12	-21	60	16	-44
	SDL	-		-	-	-	-
	SMK - MKP	50	15	-35	50	-	-
Mean		31	21	-11	25	22	-6
Standard Deviation		16	16	-	25	13	-

Source: Czech Statistical Office (2011); Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic (2011)

Notes: ^a Shows the difference between national parliament and EP elections. Positive values indicate higher percentage of women in national parliamentary elections. Negative values indicate the opposite.

^b Values for national parliamentary elections in the Czech Republic are, for comparative reasons, counted using three constituencies with similar district magnitude as for the EP elections. These are Hlavní město Praha (Prague); Jihomoravský kraj (South Moravian Region), and Moravskoslezský kraj (Moravian-Silesian Region). The values are averages of these three constituencies.

CZ: ČSSD=Česká strana sociálně demokratická; KDU-ČSL=Křesťanská demokratická unie-Česká strana lidová; KSČM=Komunistická strana Čech a Moravy; NEZ=Nezávislý; ODS=Občanská demokratická strana; SNK-ED=Sdružení nezávislých kandidátů-Evropští demokraté; SZ=Strana zelených; SZR=Strana zdravého rozumu; TOP09=Tradice, odpovědnost, prosperita 09; US-DEU=Unie svobody-Demokratická unie; VV=Věci veřejné.

SK: ANO=Aliancia nového občana; KSS=Komunistická strana Slovenska; KDH=Kresťanskodemokratické hnutie; LD-HZDS=Ludová strana - Hnutie za demokratické Slovensko; OKS=Občianska konzervatívna strana; SaS=Sloboda a Solidarita; SF=Slobodné fórum; SDKÚ=Slovenská demokratická a kresťanská únia; SLS=Slovenská ľudová strana; SNS=Slovenská národná strana; SDL=Strana demokratickej ľavice; SMK-MKP=Strana maďarskej koalície - Magyar Koalíció Pártja.

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Making and Breaking Political Legitimacy in Post-Communist Democracies: The Quality of Government Effect

Jonas Linde

Abstract: *Despite a broad consensus about the importance of overcoming ‘bad governance’ in order to legitimise new democratic regimes, mainstream research on democratisation and political support has tended to emphasise the importance of formal democratic institutions such as elections and political representation, while to a large extent overlooking the output-side of the political system. However, this article argues and provides empirical evidence of the fact that the legitimacy of the political system is created on the output-side of the political system. Legitimacy thus depends on how citizens evaluate the procedural fairness, or the ‘quality of government’, of the political system. Drawing on large-scale cross-national survey data, the article presents evidence on how post-communist publics perceive and evaluate the fairness, impartiality and the extent of corruption among public officials and politicians. Statistical analysis shows that citizens’ perceptions of fair treatment from the authorities and the extent of corruption among public officials exercise a substantial impact on support for the principles and performance of the democratic political system.*

Keywords: *legitimacy, political support, quality of government, procedural fairness, regime performance, regime principles*

Introduction

Regardless of a broad consensus about the importance of overcoming ‘bad governance’ in order to create legitimacy in new democratic regimes, the efforts to explain the creation and erosion of political legitimacy research on democratisation have to a large extent focused on the input-side of the political system. A large amount of studies have emphasised the importance of the introduction of free elections and extended political representation in order to achieve government that represents the majority of the citizens, i.e. “the essence of democracy: rule of the people by the people” (Lindberg 2006: 1). The main argument behind this logic is that citizens will accept the government’s right to rule because they have been given the right to choose representatives in free and fair elections, resulting in a government that represents the majority of the citizens and could be held accountable (cf. Przeworski et al. 1999). It is thus thought that citizens that are not part of the winning majority will still perceive the system as legitimate because they have the chance of ending

up on the winning side in the next election (cf. Przeworski 1991). Thus, the logic behind this argument is that political legitimacy is created on the input-side of the political system because elections determines political representation and is an effective form of interest articulation.

In recent years, this view has been challenged by some scholars who instead point to the fact that legitimacy is a product of the output-side of the political system, and in particular depends on the authorities' ability to implement public policy in a fair and impartial manner. For example, Rothstein has convincingly argued that "legitimacy is created, maintained, and destroyed not by the input but by the output side of the political system. In brief, political legitimacy depends on the quality of government, not the quality of elections or political representation. /.../ [and] the normative basis of the quality of government is its impartiality" (Rothstein 2009, 313; cf. Rothstein – Teorell 2008; Rothstein 2011). This article sets out to empirically investigate how the publics in seven post-communist countries perceive and evaluate the quality of their governments, in terms of fairness, impartiality and corruption, and how such sentiments affect political legitimacy. The subsequent statistical analyses show that public perceptions of quality of government constitute an important determinant of political legitimacy, as measured by several different indicators.

Post-communist democracies are particularly interesting in this regard. In Central and Eastern Europe, the political elites adapted quickly to the game of electoral democracy, and citizens have used their political rights and freedoms to replace governments that have not met their demands. The eastward enlargement of the European Union in 2004 and 2007 is probably the best indicator of democratic consolidation in these countries. The new member states have shown their credentials when it comes to democratic elections, market economy and the implementation of the *acquis communautaire*. However, despite the fact that the citizens now benefit from the same political and civil rights as their counterparts in the West, the Central and East European countries fall behind the West European EU member states when it comes to different aspects of political performance. The most obvious example is the problem of corruption (cf. Karklins 2005; Holmes 2006; Schmidt 2007; Miller et al. 2001; Berg-Schlösser 2004).¹

¹ It is however important to acknowledge the substantial variation when it comes to levels of corruption and administrative performance, both within the group of post-communist EU member states and within the group of 'old' member states, at the point in time corresponding to the survey data used in this study. For example, in Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index (2005), the two most successful post-communist countries – Estonia (6.4) and Slovenia (6.1) – were ranked higher than Greece (4.3) and Italy (5.0). On the other hand, Romania (3.0) received a lower rating than Egypt and Sri Lanka. This pattern is also found when consulting the World Bank's Worldwide Governance Indicators (2004), where the Czech Republic, Estonia and Slovenia were given higher scores on the indicator 'Governance effectiveness' than Greece and Italy.

The article consists of four main sections. In the first part, the theoretical framework is presented and the central concepts are defined and discussed. The second section presents a descriptive analysis of public perceptions of different aspects of quality of government. The third section contains a multivariate analysis of the effects of public perceptions of quality of government on two different dimensions of political legitimacy; public support for the principles and performance of the political system. In the fourth part, the findings and their implications are discussed.

Conceptualising Quality of Government

In an attempt to bring conceptual clarity in the growing body of research focusing on ‘quality of government’, Rothstein and Teorell (2008) propose that the defining feature of quality of government is *impartiality in the exercise of public power*. This means that “when implementing laws and policies, government officials shall not take anything about the citizen/case into consideration that is not beforehand stipulated in the policy or the law” (Rothstein – Teorell 2008: 170). Quality of government is thus first and foremost an output-related phenomenon (Rothstein 2009). However, Rothstein and Teorell also stress the connection between impartiality at the output side of the political system and political equality on the input side of the system, i.e. the equal possibility of access to power and universal suffrage in democratic elections. In order for political institutions to be impartial, they have to rest on a basic norm of universalism, where public integrity is understood as equal treatment of citizens regardless of the group to which one belongs (Mungio-Pippidi 2006: 87–88). Hence, quality of government as impartiality rules out all forms of corruption and particularistic practices such as clientelism, patronage and discrimination (Rothstein – Teorell 2008: 171). It is of course also important to note that impartiality is seen as basic norm of quality of government and not as the only aspect of it. Thus, a government that is perfectly even-handed in its total incompetence would hardly qualify as ‘high quality’.

What is of concern in this study is citizens’ perceptions of the *quality of government*, i.e. the impartiality of state institutions and the public administration, rather than the *quality of democracy*, a concept which in the last decade has attracted substantial academic interest (cf. Altman – Pérez-Liñán 2002; Diamond – Morlino 2005; 2004; Berg-Schlosser 2004; Morlino 2004; Merkel 2004; O’Donnell et al. 2004). Analysing similarities and differences in the design and performance of democratic systems, both old and new, the research program on the quality of democracy has made important contributions in bridging two strands of comparative politics; comparative government in advanced democracies and democratisation studies. Surveying the research on quality of democracy, it becomes clear that most conceptualisations mainly focus on the *input* side of the political system. For

example, Diamond and Morlino (2004) identify no less than eight dimensions of the quality of democracy, of which only two – responsiveness and the rule of law – are explicitly connected to the output side of the political system.²

Although the concepts of quality of government and quality of democracy are related in many regards, it is important to note that there are important differences that make them only partially overlapping. Although democracy could be regarded as a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for QoG, majoritarian democracy may in fact in some circumstances threaten impartiality in the exercise of public power: For example, in an ethnically divided society, the ethnic majority, after having been elected, may decide that all citizens from the minority working as civil servants should be fired. This would clearly be a breach of the impartiality principle in the exercise of government authority, albeit stemming from democratic principles in the access to authority (cf. Rothstein – Teorell 2008: 178).

Thus, a democratic political system does not necessary come with high quality government. Many democracies – particularly newly democratised countries – display poor performance when it comes to an impartial implementation of public policy. States that are passing laws that, for example, exclude certain groups from basic political and/or civil rights cannot be seen as having high quality of government, even if the policies are implemented with the highest degree of impartiality on behalf of the public officials, because that would breach the principle of equality in the access to political power. Hence, quality of government requires both democracy (in the access to power) and impartiality (in the exercise of this power) (Rothstein – Teorell 2008: 180).

Quality of government as impartiality might also seem close to the *rule of law*. And of course, many definitions of the rule of law include impartiality and fairness as fundamental aspects (cf. Weingast 1997; O’Donnell 2004; Morlino 2004; Diamond – Morlino 2004). However, while “impartiality is central to the rule of law, the norm of impartiality is broader because it applies to spheres of state action other than those directly governed by law” (Rothstein 2009: 314). For example, when public policy is implemented in areas such as education, social welfare and health care, discretionary powers often need to be transferred to lower-level officials responsible for implementing policies and decisions. This falls outside the sphere of government activity regulated by the rule of law. Thus, the impartiality principle both encompasses and goes beyond the rule of law (Rothstein – Teorell 2008: 180–182; Rothstein 2009: 314).

² The eight dimensions are rule of law, participation, competition, vertical accountability, horizontal accountability, political and civil freedoms, equality, and responsiveness (Diamond – Morlino 2004).

The Meaning and Measure of Regime Legitimacy – A bottom-up Perspective

There is no doubt that political legitimacy is important. It is also a widely debated concept that is tricky to define in a consensual way. This comes as no surprise considering that “the concept of political legitimacy is central to virtually all of political science because it pertains to how power may be used in ways that citizens consciously accept” (Gilley 2006a: 499). In political science two distinct understandings of legitimacy can be singled out. According to Weatherford (1992) the earliest understanding of legitimacy consisted of “the view from above”, where the assumption that an outside observer, relying on gross aggregate evidence of regime actions and performance, can measure the legitimacy of a political system. The strength of this standpoint is its broad theoretical view and that it formulates legitimacy in terms of systemic properties that enhance the possibilities of comparative analysis. Weatherford (1992: 150) identifies four main attributes of this formulation of legitimacy:

1. *Accountability*. Are rulers accountable to the citizens via a process that allows wide and effective participation?
2. *Efficiency*. Is the government set up to accomplish the ends of society without wasting resources and time?
3. *Procedural fairness*. Is the structure of the system such that issues are resolved in a regular and predicted way, and access to decisional arenas open and equal?
4. *Distributive fairness*. Are the advantages and costs allocated by the system distributed in an equal manner?

The weakness of this view is its focus on formal structures and aggregate processes. One particular shortcoming is the insufficient recognition of the need to observe the ‘subjective’ micro-level aspects of the political system, i.e. the perceptions and attitudes of the general public.

Accordingly, along with the emergence of publicly available opinion data in the last decades, the ‘from above’ perspective has been replaced by what Weatherford calls “the view from the grass roots”. This perspective is particularly concerned with *citizen evaluations* of the legitimacy of their political system. The ‘grass roots’ view could be argued to be more consistent with the theoretical basis of legitimacy since all definitions of the concept ultimately rely on public *perceptions* of the political system (Booth – Seligson 2009: 8; cf. Gilley 2009; Rothstein 2009; Easton 1975). Most empirical research within this field takes as its departure the pioneering work of David Easton (1965; 1975), which places legitimacy within the framework of what he calls “political support” (Booth – Seligson 2009: 8). Easton

defines legitimacy as “the conviction ‘that it is right and proper ... to accept and obey the authorities and to abide by the requirements of the regime’” (1975: 541).

Easton’s conceptualisation of political support built on the idea that nation-states can be regarded as *political systems*, and his framework drew an important distinction between specific (oriented towards the performance of political *authorities* responsible for making and implementing political decisions) and diffuse (more abstract feelings towards the political *community* and the *regime* as such) levels of support. In more recent theorising about political legitimacy, Easton’s framework has been refined and expanded. In two influential contributions to the field, Pippa Norris (1999b; 2011), presents an analytical framework that treats political support as a multidimensional phenomenon ranging on a continuum from the most diffuse level of the political community to the most specific level of specific political actors. According to Norris, political legitimacy has five distinct components: the political community (feelings towards the nation-state), regime principles (the underlying values of the political system), regime performance (the functioning of the system in practice), regime institutions (actual government institutions) and political actors (actual incumbent officeholders) (Norris 1999; 2011). Empirical analyses of different surveys have demonstrated the fact that the theoretical dimensions are indeed reflected in the minds of citizens (Norris 2011: 44–46; Booth – Seligson 2009: 29–33; Linde 2004: 86–89; Klingemann 1999: 37).

While the multidimensional conceptualisation of legitimacy has become standard in mainstream empirical research on system support and legitimacy, it has been argued that the empirical work has lagged behind, especially when it comes to operationalisation of the multidimensional concept of legitimacy. According to Booth and Seligson (2009: 10–14), the shortcomings include reliance on only one dimension, lack of multiple indicators and a tendency to focus on the more specific dimensions of legitimacy, i.e. support for government institutions and government performance. In this study, the determinants of two dimensions of legitimacy – regime principles and regime performance – will be investigated by a series of regression analyses using alternative indicators of each dimension.

Perceptions of Quality of Government in Post-communist Countries

The following part of this paper will be devoted to an empirical investigation of post-communist citizens’ perceptions of a number of important aspects of ‘quality of government’. As we have seen, procedural impartiality and fairness are essential dimensions of quality of government (Rothstein – Teorell 2008; Rothstein 2009). Since our theoretical framework argues that political legitimacy to a large extent depends on public perceptions of quality of government, we need individual level data in order to assess the publics’ perceptions of quality of government.

Data and Measurement

In general, questions about procedural fairness, impartiality and corruption are – quite surprisingly one might argue – relatively hard to find in large cross-national surveys. Therefore, the special section focusing on corruption in the *International Social Survey Programme's* (ISSP) survey Role of Government IV (2006) is particularly useful for our purposes. The survey covers 22 countries. Seven of these are post-communist (Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Latvia, Poland, Russia, and Slovenia). They represent different types of post-communist societies: consolidated democracies and EU member states, an EU applicant country (Croatia) and the increasingly authoritarian Russian federation. The 2006 study was the first ISSP survey to address the topic of corruption. Thus, no trend data are available and we are confined to looking at cross-country comparisons.

Perceptions of (Un)fairness and (Im)partiality – A Descriptive Analysis

Ever since Weber's writings on the ideal-type modern state, it has been recognised that the delivery of public services should be decided impartially. Thus, *fairness* has become a central concept in theories and empirical analyses dealing with the behaviour of public administration (Galbreath – Rose 2008; Tyler 2006). To be considered fair, the public administration must treat individuals *impartially* in the allocation of goods and services. According to Galbreath and Rose, 'impartiality involves the application of rules in the same way to everyone with the same characteristics; for example, paying the same pension to people who, on the basis of their age and contributions, are entitled to receive the same sum' (2008, 55). Thus, this conceptualisation of fairness comes very close to the notion of 'quality of government' outlined above.

The focus on impartial implementation of political policy means that citizens' perceptions of the impartiality of public institutions and actors that implement public policy will be the main concern here. The argument is that citizens' evaluations of the impartiality of institutions and public officials exercise a significant impact on evaluations of the performance of the political system as a whole. Our theoretical and empirical claim is thus closely related to the 'procedural fairness argument', stating that it is the fairness of the procedures through which institutions and authorities exercise authority which is the key to the willingness of individuals to defer to the decisions and rules created and implemented by those authorities and institutions. Thus, we assume that evaluations of the fairness of decisions and implementation of policy are independent of one's self-interest (Kumlin 2004, 42; cf. Tyler 2006; Grimes 2006).

There are a number of important reasons why people care about the way decisions are made and in what way they are implemented. For example, that most people consider fair treatment a moral right, that fair procedures indicate that one is respected by the party making the decision, and that procedural judgements provide individuals with a mean to evaluate outcomes when the fairness of outcomes in themselves is uncertain (Esaïsson 2010). Thus, whether citizens regard policies and decisions as legitimate depends on whether they believe them to be fair and impartial and, of course, if they are *implemented* in a fair and impartial manner (Gilley 2009, 72; Tyler et al. 1989; Tyler 2006; 1994).

The ISSP asks the respondents about their perceptions of the fairness of public officials with the following question: “In your opinion, how often do public officials deal fairly with people like you?” The response alternatives range from “almost always” (1) to “almost never” (5). Table reveals substantial variation between the countries. Hungarian citizens are the ones most content with the fairness of the public administration. 59 per cent of the respondents state that they are “almost always” or “often” being fairly treated, while those answering that they “seldom” or “almost never” are being fairly treated amount to only 14 per cent.

Table 1: Fair treatment from public officials (per cent)

	Almost always	Often	Occasionally	Seldom	Almost never
Croatia	15	26	32	18	9
Czech Republic	9	30	31	21	9
Hungary	22	37	28	10	4
Latvia	24	25	25	17	10
Poland	7	23	37	26	7
Russia	3	7	28	35	27
Slovenia	12	27	33	21	6
Mean	13	25	31	21	10

Source: *International Social Survey Programme (2006)*

Note: Question reads: ‘In your opinion, how often does public officials deal fairly with people like you?’ ‘Can’t choose’ and ‘No answer’ have been left out.

At the other end of the spectrum we find Russia, where one third of the respondents arguing that they “almost never” or “seldom” expect to be treated even-handedly by the public administration. All in all, the levels of distrust in the impartiality of public officials found in the ISSP 2006 survey correspond quite neatly with the responses to a similar question asked in the *New Europe Barometer (2004)* survey, which will be used in the multivariate analysis.

Perceptions of the Extent of Corruption

There is nowadays widespread agreement that corruption represents one of the most pressing challenges to new democracies. Politically, corruption is challenging fundamental democratic principles, since it erodes the link between citizens and government. As Sandholtz and Koetzle (2000) argue, corruption takes place behind closed doors and provides privileged access for some actors, and therefore excluding others. Corruption violates democratic norms of transparency, equality and fairness. In essence, it contravenes the basic principle of impartiality, i.e. the defining feature of quality of government (Rothstein – Teorell 2008). If citizens perceive their political representatives and civil servants as being devoted to their own enrichment, rather than to the public interest, trust and support for the democratic political system and its institutions could be eroded (Sandholtz – Taagepera 2005, 109; cf. Norris 1999). When observing the data available, it seems clear that citizens are viewing corruption within the public administration and among politicians as a serious problem. Table 2 presents the responses to a question asking how many public officials are involved in corruption.

Table 2: Public officials involved in corruption (per cent)

	Almost none	A few	Some	Quite a lot	Almost all
Croatia	1	8	31	46	14
Czech Republic	1	13	47	30	9
Hungary	3	21	25	46	5
Latvia	1	10	30	45	14
Poland	0	9	39	43	9
Russia	1	2	17	47	33
Slovenia	3	21	25	46	5
Mean	1	12	31	43	13

Source: International Social Survey Programme (2006)

Note: Question reads: ‘In your opinion, about how many public officials in [Country] are involved in corruption?’ ‘Can’t choose’ and ‘No answer’ have been left out.

There is no doubt that a large majority of citizens think that the public administration to a large extent is engaging in corrupt activities. In Russia, a third of the respondents states that “almost all” public officials are involved in corruption, and an additional 47 per cent thinks that “quite a lot” officials are corrupt. In the Czech Republic the corresponding figures are 9 and 30 per cent. There is thus a great deal of variation among the countries. The variation, however, is most pronounced between the ‘more corrupt’ categories.

In all countries the shares of respondents believing that “almost no” public officials are corrupt are very small (between 0 and 3 per cent). The largest groups of citizens saying that “almost none” and only “a few” officials are corrupt are found in Slovenia and Hungary. These countries are also the ones (among the seven countries under investigation here) that rank highest in international indices on control of corruption such as Transparency International’s *Corruption Perceptions Index* and the World Bank’s *Worldwide Governance Indicators*.

The ISSP survey also provides a similar question where respondents are asked about the extent of corruption among politicians. A simple inspection of Table 3 gives at hand that post-communist citizens have even more sceptical feelings towards the cleanness of their political representatives than towards public officials. On average, 20 per cent think that “almost all” politicians are corrupt. Another 47 per cent considers “quite a lot” politicians to be involved in corrupt activities. Only some 7 per cent believe that “almost none” or o “a few” politicians are corrupt. In Russia, no less than 80 per cent believe that most politicians are corrupt. Again, the lowest levels of public distrust are found in the Czech Republic (51 per cent) and Slovenia (57 per cent). The data presented thus far indicate that the post-communist countries investigated here are under considerable pressure from widespread popular discontent with the way that public officials and politicians are doing their job.

Table 3: Politicians involved in corruption (per cent)

	Almost none	A few	Some	Quite a lot	Almost all
Croatia	0	4	18	48	30
Czech Republic	1	10	39	36	15
Hungary	1	12	17	57	13
Latvia	0	6	19	51	24
Poland	0	6	32	48	14
Russia	0	3	17	46	34
Slovenia	1	6	36	46	11
Mean	0.4	7	25	47	20

Source: *International Social Survey Programme (2006)*

Note: Question reads: ‘In your opinion, about how many public officials in [Country] are involved in corruption?’ ‘Can’t choose’ and ‘No answer’ have been left out.

The perception that a majority of public officials and politicians are willing to engage in corrupt activities is widespread. This is of course not good news from the perspectives of procedural fairness and quality of government employed in this paper. If legitimacy is created first and foremost by the quality of government, in terms of impartiality and fairness, the pervasive public distrust in the cleanness and

impartiality of the public administration and politicians expressed in the surveys could eventually pose a serious threat to the legitimacy of the democratic political system. We will return to this issue later on.

Actual Encounters with Corruption in the Public Administration

So far we have investigated citizens' *perceptions* of fair treatment by public officials and the extent of corruption among officials and politicians. As we have seen, large parts of the public believe that corrupt and impartial behaviour is something that many officials engage in. Of course, the survey questions we have dealt with concern respondents' own *perceptions* and assessments of this phenomenon. And perceptions of the extent of corruption are something different than the actual occurrence of it. The data presented in Table 4 indicate that the respondents' view of the situation might be somewhat exaggerated. When asked about how often they, or members of their families, have been asked about a bribe or favour in return for a service, a strong majority of the respondents answer *never*. Few respondents or their families have experienced this situation "very" or "quite" often.

Table 4: In the last five years, how often have you or a member of your immediate family come across a public official who hinted they wanted, or asked for, a bribe or favour in return for a service? (per cent)

	Never	Seldom	Occasionally	Quite often	Very often
Croatia	60	20	15	5	0
Czech Republic	60	23	15	2	0
Hungary	78	11	8	3	0
Latvia	54	23	17	5	1
Poland	80	12	6	2	1
Russia	49	18	21	9	3
Slovenia	80	13	5	1	0
Mean	66	17	12	4	1

Source: *International Social Survey Programme (2006)*

Note: 'Can't choose' and 'No answer' have been left out.

Thus, it seems safe to say that there is a quite substantial discrepancy between citizens' *perceptions* of public corruption and their actual personal *experiences* of it, where the public tends to overestimate the scale of the problem. Even if this is true, it could be the case that it is the prevalent feeling of widespread corruption among the citizens rather than the actual occurrence that constitutes the threat to the legitimacy of the political system. This is one of the core arguments of the

procedural fairness theory; it is people's *perceptions* – not actual levels – of fairness and impartiality of the procedures that affect legitimacy the most (Esaiasson 2010, 354). Unfortunately, the ISSP survey does not carry any questions that might be used to measure legitimacy, or general system support. Thus, in order to investigate whether perceptions of procedural fairness affect system support we have to turn to alternative data sources.

The Effect of Perceptions of Quality of Government on Political Legitimacy

The cross-national opinion survey New Europe Barometer (NEB), conducted in 2004, contains a number of questions that make an empirical investigation of the posited relationship between (perceptions of) quality of government and legitimacy possible. The available dataset available contains five of the countries that we have investigated here (the Czech Republic, Hungary, Latvia, Poland and Slovenia).

The Independent Variable(s): Perceptions of Quality of Government

As usual when it comes to general surveys, the NEB does not provide very much in terms of questions about citizens' perceptions of quality of government. It does nevertheless contain a couple of items that are useful for our purposes. The first is similar to the ISSP item presented in Table 1, where the respondents have the option to "definitely" or "somewhat" agree or disagree with the question "Under our present government do you think people like you are treated equally and fairly by the authorities?" The NEB data presented in Table 5 are quite similar to the corresponding ISSP data presented in Table 1. In all countries a majority of the respondents disagree with the statement that the authorities treat people in a fair and even-handed manner. There is some variation between countries, with Slovenians being the least dissatisfied with the treatment they get from public officials (50.3 per cent).

Table 5: People like me are being fairly treated by the authorities (per cent)

	Definitely disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Definitely agree
Czech Republic	13.4	40.4	41.3	4.9
Hungary	40.0	40.9	16.4	2.7
Latvia	33.2	42.8	21.8	2.2
Poland	39.6	39.7	16.6	4.1
Slovenia	20.0	30.3	40.1	9.6
Mean	29.2	38.8	27.2	4.7

Source: *New Europe Barometer (2004)*

Note: 'Can't choose' and 'No answer' have been left out.

The corresponding figure for Hungary is 81 per cent, which is quite surprising given the data presented in Table 1, where only 14 per cent of the Hungarians stated that they “seldom” or “almost never” are being fairly treated in their dealings with public institutions.

The second item is a question about the extent of corruption among public officials, similar to the ISSP item presented in Table 2. The question reads: “How widespread do you think bribe-taking and corruption are in this country?” The respondents are faced with four response alternatives: 1) Almost no officials are engaged in it; 2) A few public officials are engaged in it; 3) Most public officials are engaged in it; and 4) Almost all public officials are engaged in it. The responses to this question are presented in Table 6. The figures from the 2004 NEB survey correspond well with the 2006 ISSP data in Table 2. Large portions of citizens perceived corruption as widespread among public officials in both 2004 and 2006.

Table 6: Extent of public officials engaged in corruption (per cent)

	Almost all	Most	A few	Almost no
Czech Republic	20.6	48.4	26.4	4.6
Hungary	26.2	36.3	36.4	1.0
Latvia	24.2	48.9	21.1	5.8
Poland	22.0	52.0	23.9	2.1
Slovenia	16.4	37.3	33.0	13.3
Mean	21.9	44.6	28.2	5.4

Source: *New Europe Barometer (2004)*

Note: ‘Can’t choose’ and ‘No answer’ have been left out.

These two items will constitute the indicators of perceptions of quality of government in the empirical analysis. Although not perfect, these items serve as good proxies for public evaluation of the perceived fairness and impartiality of government institutions and the public administration in their dealings with ordinary citizens. Most important, they are the only empirical indicators available if we want to investigate the impact of perceptions of quality of government on political legitimacy in post-communist democracies.

The Dependent Variable(s): Political Legitimacy

Since we are interested in the effects of quality of government on legitimacy – here broadly conceived as public support for government (cf. Booth – Seligson 2009) – we need indicators that can serve as the dependent variable. Moreover,

since legitimacy is a multidimensional concept, preferably we need multiple indicators in order to achieve a reasonable level of measurement validity (Gilley 2009; Booth – Seligson 2009; Linde – Ekman 2003; Adcock – Collier 2001). Since we are interested in the general legitimacy of the political system – the diffuse type of support for the *regime* in ‘Eastonian’ terms – rather than public evaluations of specific political institutions or actors, we need indicators tapping these two levels of support.

The dimension of *regime principles* will be measured by two indicators. The first taps the rejection of non-democratic alternatives. A person that rejects all the non-democratic alternatives he/she is exposed to is seen as expressing support for the current democratic regime.³ This is arguably a ‘tougher’ measure of diffuse system support than the regularly used question about whether the respondent thinks that democracy is the best form of government or not, which usually tends to generate support rates of about 80–90 per cent in most countries, regardless of level of democratisation (cf. Klingemann 1999; Diamond – Plattner 2008; Rose et al. 1998).

In the analysis of regime principles, the ‘rejection item’ will be complemented with a question asking respondents to evaluate the current political system in comparison to the old communist system. The question reads: “Here is a scale for ranking how the government works. The top, +100, is best; the bottom, –100, is the worst. Where would you place: a) the former communist regime; b) Our current system of governing with free elections and many parties; c) Our system of governing in five years’ time?” According to the team that conducted the NEB survey, the questions are intended to measure evaluation of the political system as a whole, or the whole “package supplied as a product of bargaining between elites” (Rose et al. 1998: 105). The strength of this item is the comparative nature of the questions. Respondents are asked to evaluate the ‘current system’ (not democracy, or some democratic ideal) in comparison to the former system that most of the respondents have relatively recent memories of.

The other dimension of legitimacy investigated here – support for regime *performance* – will be measured by a frequently used indicator of regime support, namely the question asking to what extent the respondent is or is not “satisfied with the way democracy works”. Although often used in studies of system support, it has been debated what this item actually measures. The question has sometimes been used as an indicator of diffuse support, or democratic legitimacy, and sometimes as a measure of public support for the performance of the current government. A number of empirical analyses have shown that it is better suited as

³ The non-democratic alternatives are ‘a return to communist rule’, ‘having the army rule’ and ‘strong man rule’ and ‘suspension of parliament and abolishment of parties’.

an indicator of popular support for the perceived *performance* of the regime (cf. Linde – Ekman 2003; Anderson 2002; Fuchs et al. 1995; Norris 1999). Thus, this item will here be used as a proxy for public support for the actual performance of the democratic political system, which has been put forth as an important dimension of regime legitimacy. It is important to note that the perceived performance of a regime has to do both with what the regime delivers and what it refrains from doing. Approval of a regime is not only influenced by its ability to deliver, but also by the absence of undesirable state action. Thus, there are good reasons to also consider indicators tapping the popular evaluation of the regime’s respect for basic rights. Thus, a question asking to what extent the authorities respect human rights (“a lot”, “some”, “not much” and “not at all”) will be used to supplement the more frequently used “satisfaction with democracy” item.

Results

The main question posed in this paper is what impact citizens’ perceptions of the quality of government, in terms of perceived fairness and corruption, has on the legitimacy of the political system? The empirical relationship will be tested by way of a series of regression analyses with controls for alternative determinants proposed in earlier research on system support. Table 7 presents the effects of the ‘quality of government’-variables on our two indicators of regime principles. Models 1 and 3 show the effects on rejection of authoritarian alternatives and evaluation of current political system with only the QoG-variables included in the models.

Table 7: The effects of perceived quality of government on support for regime principles (logit coefficients and standard errors)

	Rejection of non-democratic alternatives (1=rejects all, 0=prefer non-dem)		Evaluation of current political system (1=positive, 0=negative)	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Fair treatment	509*** (.040)	.437*** (.047)	620*** (.044)	.517*** (.051)
Officials corrupt	-.348*** (.041)	-.347*** (.047)	-.434*** (.045)	-.431*** (.050)
Perceived economic situation		.057 (.054)		.227*** (.058)
Interpersonal trust		.079** (.045)		.134*** (.047)
Political interest		.056 (.046)		.064 (.049)
Gender		.012 (.075)		-.082 (.079)
Age		-.063** (.027)		.041 (.029)
Education		.189*** (.038)		-.034 (.042)
Income		.231*** (.038)		.051 (.040)

Constant	.299* (.160)	-.684** (.270)	.472*** (.174)	.157 (.291)
N	4,232	3,432	3,853	3,185
Pseudo R²	.06	.09	.08	.09

* $p < .10$ ** $p < .05$ *** $p < .01$

Source: *New Europe Barometer (2004)*

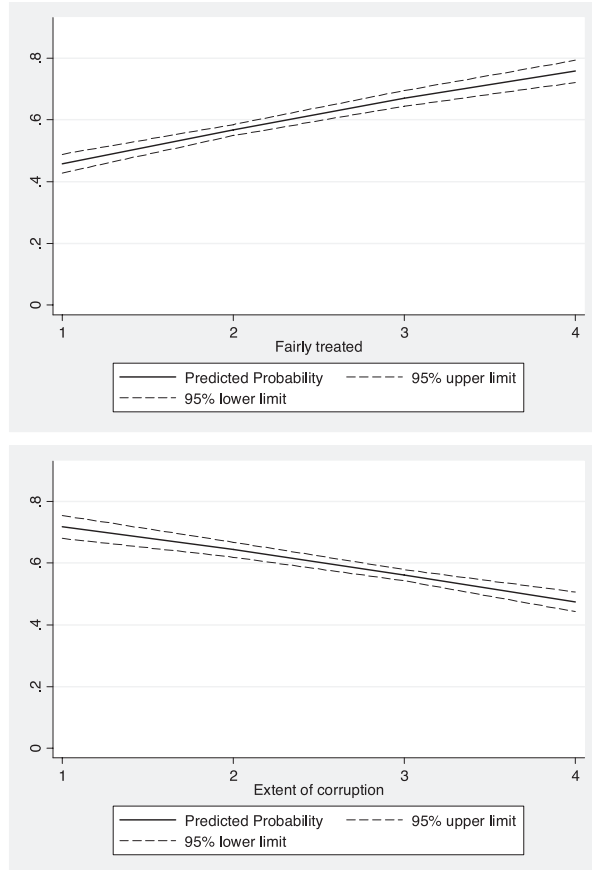
The effects are in the expected direction and the coefficients are strong and statistically significant. Models 2 and 4 introduce a number of control variables that have been shown to be important for system support in earlier research together with the usual socio-demographic control variables. Even after those controls are included, the effects are only marginally decreased, and the explained variance is only somewhat increased.⁴

Aside from our main variables it could be interesting to note that it is only interpersonal trust that shows a consistent relationship on both dependent variables. People who trust other people are also more prone to reject non-democratic alternatives *and* make a positive evaluation of the current political system. Educational level and income affect rejection of authoritarian alternatives, but show no statistically significant effects on the perception of the current system. In general, it seems that both citizens' perceptions of the treatment they expect from public officials and perceptions of the extent of corruption within governmental institutions are crucial in the production of legitimacy. The effects of the QoG-variables in terms of predicted probabilities are shown in Figure 1.

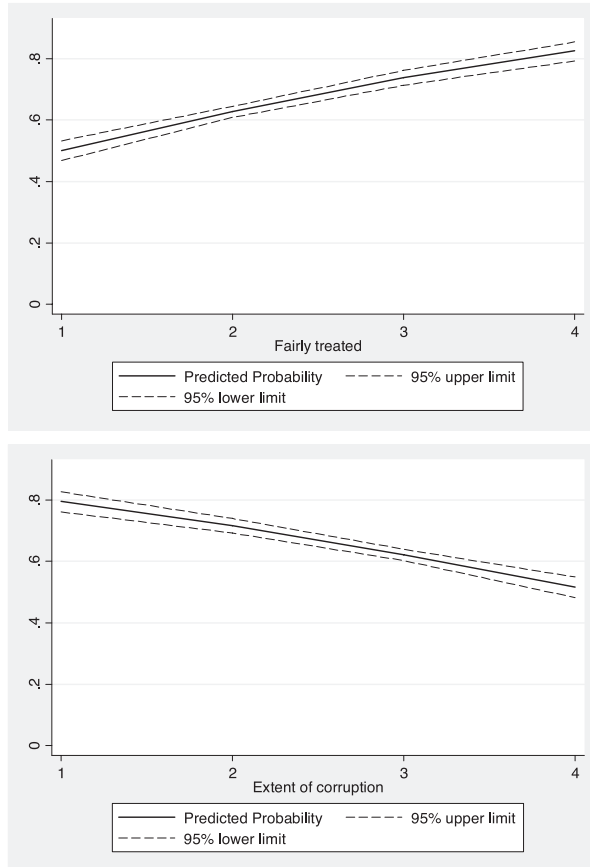
⁴ For coding of the control variables, see Table A5.

Figure 1: Predicted probabilities of perceptions of QoG on regime principles

Rejection of non-democratic alternatives



Evaluation of current political system



Note: The solid line shows the predicted probabilities, and the dotted lines show the 95% confidence interval for these predictions. The predicted probabilities are based on the logistic regression models 2 and 4 in Table 7. The effects of the independent variables are calculated when all other variables in the model are held at their mean. For coding of variables, see Table A5.

The lines in Figure 1 depict the predicted probabilities for a person to reject non-democratic alternatives and state a positive evaluation of the current political system for the different values of the two QoG-variables (1 to 4), when controlling for the other factors included in the regression models presented in Table 8. The probability for a person that definitely agrees that public officials treat people fairly to reject authoritarian alternatives is .76 (or 76 per cent), compared to only .46 for a person that definitely disagrees with the same proposition. The corresponding effects (in terms of probabilities) of perceptions of fairness for a positive evaluation of the current system are .82 and .50.

When it comes to perceptions of the extent of corruption, the likelihood that someone who regards only very few officials to be corrupt would also reject non-democracy is 0.72, while the probability for someone who regards almost all officials to be involved in corrupt activities is only .46. The corresponding probabilities for positively evaluating the political system are .80 and .52. All in all, the empirical analyses show that public perceptions of the impartiality of the public administration have a strong and statistically significant effect on public support for regime principles.

Recent research suggests that citizens' evaluation of the way the political regime functions in practice also is an important aspect of political legitimacy (Gilley 2009; Booth – Seligson 2009; Norris 2001). Table 8 presents a series of logistic regression analyses of the effects of perceived fairness and the extent of corruption on our two indicators of regime performance. The analyses include the same control variables as in the analyses of regime principles in Table 7. The QoG variables exercise statistically significant effects on both satisfaction with the way democracy works and satisfaction with the human rights situation in the respective countries. However, the effects on support for regime performance are in general stronger than for regime principles.

Table 8: The effects of perceived quality of government on support for regime performance (logit coefficients and standard errors)

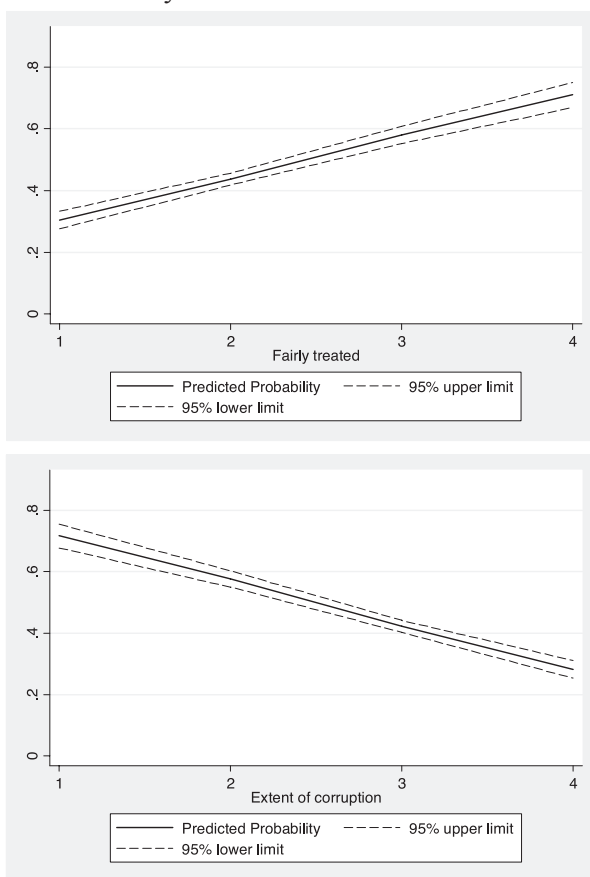
	Satisfaction with democracy (1=satisfied, 0=not satisfied)		Evaluation of human rights situation (1=respect, 0=no respect)	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Fair treatment	.690*** (.042)	.577*** (.050)	.614*** (.043)	.533*** (.050)
Officials corrupt	-.609*** (.044)	-.623*** (.050)	-.597*** (.044)	-.631*** (.050)
Economic situation		.461*** (.058)		-.066 (.056)
Interpersonal trust		.148*** (.048)		.178*** (.046)
Political interest		-.091* (.050)		.132*** (.048)
Gender		-.055 (.079)		.119 (.078)
Age		-.051* (.029)		-.101*** (.028)
Education		-.127*** (.042)		.065 (.041)
Income		.094** (.040)		.164*** (.039)
Constant	.100 (.165)	-.261 (.286)	.866*** (.169)	.637** (.281)
N	4,034	3,303	4,085	3,329
Pseudo R²	.12	.15	.10	.12

* $p < .10$ ** $p < .05$ *** $p < .01$

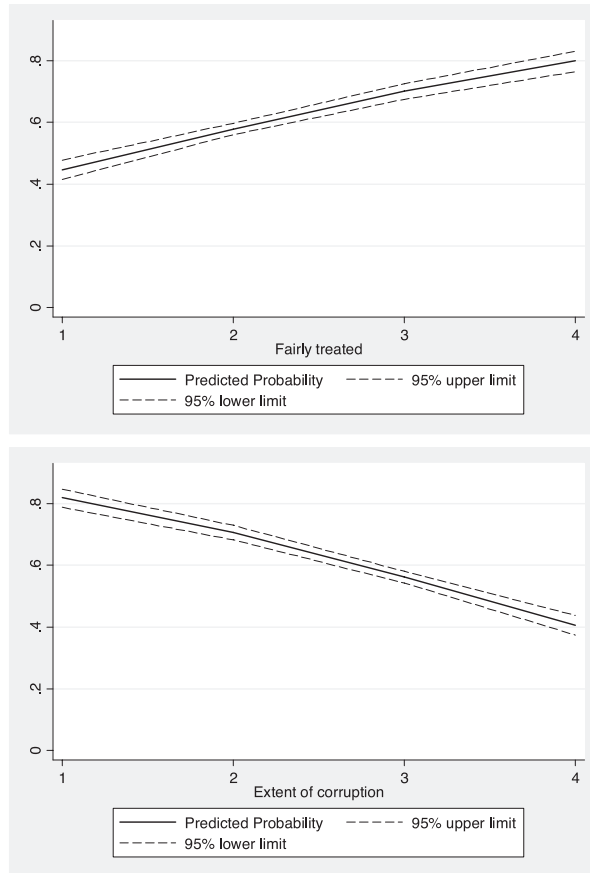
Source: *New Europe Barometer* (2004)

Our indicators of perceived quality of government also show the strongest effects of the variables included in the models. The independent effects of the independent variables are only marginally decreased, and the explained variance only marginally increased, when introducing the whole battery of controls. The predicted probabilities generated from the analyses are presented in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Predicted probabilities of perceptions of QoG on regime performance
Satisfaction with democracy



Perceived respect for human rights



Note: The solid line shows the predicted probabilities, and the dotted lines show the 95% confidence interval for these predictions. The predicted probabilities are based on the logistic regression models 2 and 4 in Table 8. The effects of the independent variables are calculated when all other variables in the model are held at their mean. For coding of variables, see Table A5.

The effects of the QoG variables on this dimension of legitimacy are very strong. Citizens being very dissatisfied with the fairness of the authorities (value 1 on the 4-point scale) have a probability of only .30 of being satisfied with the way democracy works. The corresponding probability for a person perceiving the public administration as fair and impartial is .71. The net difference is more than 40 percentage points. The effects of perceptions of fair treatment on perceptions of the human rights situation are somewhat smaller, but still strong. Figure 2 also shows the strong and significant negative effect of perceived corruption on both dimensions of evaluations of regime performance. All in all, the results of this simple and tentative analysis

indicate strong support in favour of the ‘quality of government-hypothesis’, i.e. that the legitimacy of the political system is first and foremost created on the output-side of the political system, and that it is the impartiality and procedural fairness (as *perceived* by the citizens) that matters the most in this process.⁵

Concluding Remarks

When investigating post-communist citizens’ evaluations of the way the public administration and politicians are doing their job, widespread feelings of dissatisfaction and perceptions of unfair and corrupt public administrations are the most common sentiments. From a democratic point of view this could constitute a problem since such perceptions have a strong impact on general systems support. The empirical analyses show that public perceptions of the quality of government exercise a strong impact on public support for the performance of the political system in all the countries included in the study. Thus, the relationship between perceptions of quality of government and legitimacy suggested in recent research on countries in other parts of the world (cf. Rothstein 2009; Gilley 2009; Booth – Seligson 2009; Seligson 2002; 2006; Linde – Erlingsson 2011) seems to have a bearing also on post-communist democracies. The micro-level analysis conducted here also supports the macro-level findings from other studies indicating that aggregate satisfaction with the political system is a function of the ability of the political system to control corruption and uphold the rule of law (cf. Gilley 2009; Wagner et al. 2009).

In terms of causal mechanisms, the analyses confirm the causal assumptions of the procedural fairness theory (cf. Tyler 2006; Rothstein 2004), i.e. that an individual’s perceptions of the fairness and impartiality of the political system determines his/her evaluation of the legitimacy of the political regime. If a person – by experience or perception – believes that public officials are behaving unfair and partial, he/she will believe that the system is unfair and corrupt in general, and will expect to be unfairly treated from the beginning. In such a situation it is very likely that a person who initially considers bribes and corruption to be morally wrong will end up taking part in corrupt and clientelistic actions in order to cope with the situation and receive the benefits and services that he or she is entitled to by law. The result is distrust in the institutions on the output-side of the political system which – as shown in the empirical analyses of this paper – spill over to general feelings of discontent with the performance and principles of the political regime. The end result is thus a vicious spiral where perceptions of unfairness and corruption among the public administration and street-level bureaucrats have an eroding effect on system support

⁵ As a robustness check all analyses have been replicated on each individual country sample and the results are very consistent. The predicted probabilities for each country are presented in the Appendix.

and political legitimacy. This process is not unlikely to take place in societies that perform well when it comes to the input-side of democracy, e.g. providing political equality and free elections, such as the post-communist democracies investigated in this analysis. Thus, what makes legitimacy prosper is the widespread notion among the citizens that the institutions and the public administration are fair and impartial in their exercise of authority and implementation of public policy, rather than the possibility to take part in elections and/or the realisation of individual self-interest.

These findings signify the importance of a functional bureaucracy and administration, an issue that has not received much attention in democratisation theory or research on system support. Another implication is that governments should have a lot to gain from public administration reform and education of public officials in their efforts to create and improve their democratic legitimacy. The strong impact of perceptions of impartiality in the public administration on system support also indicates that much of the earlier research has left out important factors in their efforts to explain the determinants of public systems support. Although it would be too simplistic to believe that improvements in procedural fairness and impartiality of the institutions could constitute a ‘quick fix’ for creating legitimacy, the countries investigated here may have a lot to gain by fighting petty corruption among public officials. The distrust in the impartiality of the political administration and the bureaucrats is a logical effect of their performance and thus it is only the institutions themselves that can break the vicious spiral by improving their performance.

Appendix

Table A1: Rejection of authoritarian alternatives, predicted probabilities by country

	Czech Republic	Hungary	Poland	Slovenia	Latvia
Fair treatment = 1	.39	.65	.26	.56	.46
Fair treatment = 4	.83	.80	.76	.74	.66
Officials corrupt = 1	.76	.80	.55	.80	.63
Officials corrupt = 4	.52	.62	.31	.47	.46

Table A2: Positive evaluation of current political system, predicted probabilities by country

	Czech Republic	Hungary	Poland	Slovenia	Latvia
Fair treatment = 1	.50	.58	.47	.64	.40
Fair treatment = 4	.90	.83	.70	.81	.78
Officials corrupt = 1	.88	.74	.80	.83	.78
Officials corrupt = 4	.60	.61	.37	.60	.37

Table A3: Satisfied with democracy, predicted probabilities by country

	<i>Czech Republic</i>	<i>Hungary</i>	<i>Poland</i>	<i>Slovenia</i>	<i>Latvia</i>
Fair treatment = 1	.10	.40	.22	.64	.22
Fair treatment = 4	.77	.69	.63	.84	.64
Officials corrupt = 1	.52	.68	.58	.89	.66
Officials corrupt = 4	.25	.36	.20	.50	.19

Table A4: Positive evaluation of human rights situation, predicted probabilities by country

	<i>Czech Republic</i>	<i>Hungary</i>	<i>Poland</i>	<i>Slovenia</i>	<i>Latvia</i>
Fair treatment = 1	.16	.66	.46	.44	.45
Fair treatment = 4	.72	.96	.91	.89	.70
Officials corrupt = 1	.60	.91	.87	.88	.83
Officials corrupt = 4	.28	.70	.44	.44	.33

Table A5: Coding of variables in the multivariate analyses

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Coding</i>
“People like yourself are treated equally and fairly by the authorities”	1 = Definitely disagree 2 = Somewhat disagree 3 = Somewhat agree 4 = Definitely agree
“How widespread do you think bribe-taking and corruption is in this country?”	1 = Almost no officials are engaged in it 2 = A few officials are engaged in it 3 = Most officials are engaged in it 4 = Almost all officials are engaged in it
“How satisfied are you with the way democracy works?”	1 = Satisfied 0 = Not satisfied
“How much respect is there for human rights in your country?”	1 = Respect 0 = Not respect
“Rejection of non-democratic alternatives”	1 = Supports no non-democratic regime alternative 0 = Supports one or more non-democratic alternatives
“Evaluation of current political system”	1 = Positive 0 = Negative
“How do you rate the economic situation of your household today?”	1 = Very bad 2 = Not very good 3 = Quite good 4 = Very good
“Trust most people in country”	-1 = Distrust 0 = Neutral +1 = Trust
“How interested in politics?”	1 = Not at all interested 2 = Not very interested 3 = Somewhat interested 4 = Very interested

“Gender”	0 = Female 1 = Male
“Age (collapsed)”	1 = 18–29 2 = 30s 3 = 40s 4 = 50s 5 = 60+
“Education”	1 = Minimum 2 = Vocational 3 = Academic secondary 4 = Higher
“Income quartile”	1 = Lowest 4 = Highest

Source: Author

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Party Membership in East Central Europe¹

Ladislav Cabada

Abstract: *Party membership became one of the important indicators of political participation level and quality in the Western democracies. After the fall of the communist regimes in East central Europe, also the new democracies in the region were included into the comparative research of party membership showing important differences and specifics next to the traditional democratic states. The aim of our article is to analyse the contemporary situation in party membership development in East Central Europe. As the analytical framework for the discussion we use the political participation models. Next to the party membership itself we analyse also the related issues such as party-state relations development, overparticipation and alternatives that might revitalise the political communication between the state and the citizen.*

Keywords: *political parties, party membership, political participation, East Central Europe*

Introduction

Political parties are by both social sciences and social and political actors considered one of the most important political actors ensuring political participation not only based on the electoral processes to the representative bodies, but also in the broader scope of political functions such as aggregation or articulation of interest and political socialisation. Such assumption seems to be even more valid in the case of new post-Communist democracies in the EU with weak or almost nonexistent structures of civil society prior to the regime change. Recent studies show that the political or more generally civil participation in the new democracies statistically embodies essentially lower grades than in the majority of EU-15 countries, Cyprus and Malta. Such results might be observed in the case of political parties –but also as regards other societal organisations such as labour/trade unions, professional associations, non-governmental organisations, church groups etc.

In fact, in the majority of new democracies in East Central Europe the party membership does not reach more than 1–2 per cent of adult population with electoral rights. Such matter of fact seems to be very problematic concerning the important

¹ This article has been prepared as a part of the grant project *Modely politického stranictví ve střední Evropě* [Party Systems Models in Central Europe] (SGS-2012-025) through the Grant Agency of the University of West Bohemia in Pilsen.

function of recruiting new political elites and generally with respect to the issue of political participation. Seemingly, the situation of low party membership and sinking electoral turnout opens the space for other types of political actors ensuring the political participation, and also for new strategies in political participation. As examples, new social movements are often mentioned, but – not only – in new democracies of East Central Europe we could observe a strong penetration of media and media-staff into politics (media magnates established their own relevant political parties for example in Czech Republic and Slovakia), new political parties growing from the business environment (political party as a private company) and also extensive occurrence of ‘single-use’ political parties (for example Lithuania, Slovakia, or the Czech Republic). Such development naturally results also in strong volatility and distinctively unpredictable electoral results including also the lack of searching common, general interest and solutions.

The aim of the article is to analyse the low party membership in new EU-member states from East Central Europe, its reasons and especially impacts on the character and behaviour of political parties (the existence of so-called cartel parties, a strengthening relation between the politics and business, the interconnectedness between the political parties and the state etc.) and other types of political and societal actors.

The Main Characteristics of Political Participation Development in East Central Europe

An appropriate political participation is generally considered the key condition and sign of the stability and quality of democracy, or the precondition of a possible change of regime in case of non-democratic political regime or government type. The democratisation of the Mediterranean and East Central European countries within the third wave of transitions to democracy revitalised the research of political participation (the revitalisation covered also the research in Western countries, which could then be incorporated into broader comparative frameworks) and, at the same time, broadened it in connection with some specifics of new democracies. Most authors of the first texts dealing with the political participation in new democracies saw one of such specifics in the fact that the civil society, from which social and political actors representing clear and aggregated interest should recruit, was weak and underdeveloped (cf. Fink-Hafner, Kropivnik 2006; Kluegel, Mason 1999; Letki 2004; Vráblíková 2009).

The pro-Soviet regimes of so-called real socialism in East Central Europe, in spite of their strong diversion from purely totalitarian practices of permanent political mobilisation of masses, were still based upon a camouflage of mass political participation during 1970s and 1980s: it was used, both inwards the society and

outwards, as a legitimisation instrument as it was presented as a proof of the support of the ruling structures of power. Concurrently, it served as an instrument of enforcement of the loyalty and conformity of the citizens as many general life situations were linked to it (career choice, the opportunity to study at a selected educational institution, accommodation allocation, etc.). Forced membership in Communist parties and other mass social organisations then spontaneously transferred into a less formal way of political participation – participating in demonstrations and petitions rather than political party membership, etc. – or directly into the pattern of zero participation in the processes of declaration and promotion of interests.

With the exceptions of partial liberalisation periods (Czechoslovak Prague Spring 1968, Polish liberalisation at the turn of the 1970s), independent voluntary organisations including political parties were outlawed under the Communist regime (Letki 2004: 666). The interest in political involvement, though, grew significantly in times of liberalisation of some of the pro-Soviet regimes, as seen on the massive support of the Polish independent trade union ‘Solidarity’ or on the massive growth of the memberships of both the satellite and new political parties during the Prague Spring in 1968 (Ulc 1971: 433). On the presented examples, we can observe that even the (post)totalitarian regime lacked the capability to suppress all the tendencies to political participation outside the official structures tied with the regime, and that the activity of protesting against the regime (the effort to reform it) could be linked with a considerable political involvement, which was especially the case of Polish ‘Solidarity’, or East-German Christian opposition. On the contrary, the example of Czechoslovak ‘Charter 77’ demonstrates quite well that the neo-Stalinist form of Communist regime was capable of a very effective resistance to alternative political participation by making it illegal, including remarkable sanctions (Ulc 1971).

The democratic transition in the countries of East Central Europe represented a substantial breakthrough into the existing practices and habits including the approaches to political participation. Self-identification with any aggregated social group sharing a common interest or program had soon proved very important and at the same time complicated. In societies based upon the official rhetoric of class conflict, the citizens’ could identify with the classical socio-economic cleavages only with great complications. “Respondents to a national survey in Czechoslovakia, for example, had great difficulty in placing themselves on a left–right continuum ... similar characteristics were also found in Bulgaria, and in Poland” (Evans, Whitefield 1993: 530). This is also true for a large part of new political elites, unfamiliar with traditional political ideologies, dreaming of specific ‘third ways’ between liberal capitalism and socialism. Along with a temporary cleavage of continuity vs. discontinuity in the relations to the *ancien régime*, other non-liberal or collectivist

approaches with nationalism in the forefront powerfully established themselves. “Communism deprived individuals of institutional or social structured identities from which to drive political interests, other than those of the nation or mass society” (Evans, Whitefield 1993: 522).

In the period of transition, the societies in the post-Communist countries of East Central Europe were quite exceptionally mobilised for political participation in the form of participating in demonstrations, forming society-wide movements to lead the countries to the first free elections, spontaneous, to an extent, restoration or founding of political parties, etc. On the other hand, during this very period of the ‘revolution euphoria’, a large part of the members of the former mass political structures (the Communist party and its possible satellites, trade unions, youth, sports, and similar organisations) had already used their right not to be their members (Vráblíková 2009: 868). We can see here two contrary processes, then. The exceptional political mobilisation usually ended with the first free elections, for which a very high turnout was typical, exceeding even 90 per cent (Fink-Hafner, Kropivnik 2006: 61; Letki 2004: 665). On the other hand, “the second and third elections under democratic rule were associated with significant declines in voter turnout” (Kostadinovova, Power 2007: 263).

During this ‘post-honeymoon period’, apart from the voter turnout, also party membership and also other forms of institutionalised participation experienced a remarkable decline (Letki 2004: 666), and the significant deficiencies in the issues of civil society development fully manifested. In the cases of some social groups this ‘political demobilisation’ is quite marked. After the fall of the Communist regimes, for example, women’s participation declined (Barnes 2004; Fink-Hafner, Kropivnik 2006: 62; Letki 2004: 671); however, it has to be considered that women did not appear on the highest posts of Communist regimes, or that the Communist leaderships were almost purely masculine. Similarly, there was a decline in the political participation of the least educated citizen groups (Fink-Hafner, Kropivnik 2006: 69).

The declining political participation and the lack of post-materialist, individual approach to forming and promoting the aggregated interests of social group in politics might be seen as a part of more general signs of the (post-)Communist political culture. The political culture created by the Communist regime was characterised by egalitarianism, desirability of equalisation of incomes, unwillingness to participate in official politics and separation of the private space (Bernik, Mlanar, Toš 1995: 574–575; Potůček 1997; Večerník 1998).

The Communist system of forced political involvement ... was not capable of socialising its citizens for *voluntary* participation ... The citizens of the then non-democratic regimes had not gone through the democratic “school of citizenship”

(Vráblíková 2009: 868). This fact consequently transformed into a very specific ‘paradox’. We see it in the fact that it is the very former – or present – members of the (post-)Communist parties who stay exceptionally politically active. “Membership in a Communist Party before 1989 is a very good – positive – predictor of political involvement in new ECE democracies” (Letki 2004: 675). This fact is, in our opinion, quite a clear demonstration of the predisposition of many members of the new political parties in East Central Europe. Usually, those were pragmatic careerists whose political participation expressed by their membership in the Communist party was entirely or principally a means of achieving their individual success. There is ground for persuasion that they work in contemporary political parties again without an internalised ideological background (we shall deal with the weak ideological background of political parties in East Central Europe later) or a deeper relation to society, i.e. their membership in a political party serves them usually as a lift to power.

Low level of political participation in new democracies manifested in remarkable overestimation – sometimes even adoration – of certain institutions or even individuals. In this context, many authors point at excessive roles played by parliaments or political parties. “The situation in post-communist societies (particularly in the first period of transition) can be described by terms like ‘overparliamentarianisation’, meaning that the parliament becomes not only the central but also practically the *only* place for activities of political parties, and ‘overparticipation’ which refers to the aspirations of political parties to exclude other actors from political life” (Tomšič 2011: 121; cf. Ágh 1996: 55). This exclusion is easy for political parties especially because the political participation in the societies of new East Central European democracies is declining or stagnating. Political parties that have only a small membership themselves thus assume the position of the only political actor who is, by elections, legitimised to deal with the political agenda.

The weak or underdeveloped civil society in East Central European countries, typical with its strong unwillingness or apathy towards individual political participation, thus becomes a remarkable factor that, on one hand, makes political parties highly non-representative actors (considering their small party membership). On the other hand, the very fact that not only political parties but also other institutions or *ad hoc* activities of political participation have low memberships makes political parties even stronger and, to a certain extent, monopolistic actors of mediations between society (voters) and state.

Political Parties in East Central Europe

Already since the democratic transition, the party political systems in East Central European countries had manifested quite a number of significant differences when

compared to the party political systems in Western Europe. As the main difference, we should of course mention the discontinuity of the party system development behind the iron curtain after 1945, when in all countries included into our analysis there was created a system of one (state-)party that promoted the Communist (Marx-Leninist) ideology and was in full control of all the political, economic, and social systems of the country.² The mentioned discontinuity is undoubtedly the reason why now, two decades after the transition, political parties in East Central European countries are still seeking their stable program and membership base as well as the patterns of their political interaction with other parties, both within their national political systems and on the level of supranational party political federations or families.

After the dissolution of the nationwide anticommunist movements, political parties in East Central Europe formed as structures with no distinct memberships. Ágh (1992) labelled them elitist based on the way of their origin, their size and the way of their internal functioning. Fink-Hafner (2001: 76) points out the fact that the parties, because of their weak relation to society, attached to state. They try to behave like catch-all parties also because their funding depends on public subsidy. However, their connections to state and economy give them qualities that are observed on cartel parties.

Compared to political parties in the majority of West European countries, political parties in post-Communist countries – with a certain exception of some post-Communist or former satellite parties – lack mass memberships. Political parties in East Central European countries then more or less resemble interest groups of several hundred or thousand members. “Many of the various political parties were established in East-Central Europe as tools for securing individual access to power, and many existing parties split up for the same purpose. Indeed, some were called ‘sofa parties’ because of the limited number of members” (Kostelecký 2002: 154). This fact – and also their unclear and unstable programmatic – might be the reasons of little voter loyalty to a specific political party, that causes high volatility and quite a frequent occurrence of *single issue* parties and also *single use* political parties. In Central East Europe, a strong precondition for the volatility is also the low and declining voter turnout – both at second-order and first-order elections.

Despite the mentioned characteristics, the party political systems of the majority of East Central European countries – also thanks to the Europeanisation and, more generally, supranational processes of cooperation and copying successful strategies – are gradually coming closer to the trends observed in West European countries.

² In this context, we do not consider analytically significant whether the Communist party in a particular country was complemented by so-called satellite parties (e.g. Czechoslovakia and Poland) or was really the only political party (e.g. the Soviet Union).

Political parties now rely more and more often on contemporary electoral marketing, we can observe quite strong personalisation of the inter-party rivalry, the processes of Westernisation and Europeanisation integrate the majority of political parties into supranational party families/federations and socialise them. In most of the countries, specific cleavages of the first phase of the democratic transitions (/post-/Communism vs. democracy; centre vs. peripheries) gradually decreased, and the main division line moved into the traditional social-economic differentiation on the right-left axis, which is, of course, in some party political systems followed by other cleavages (e.g. traditionalism vs. post-modernity; city vs. country). In most of the surveyed countries, there evolved party political systems where the main binary opposition, or the two main poles are represented by two large political parties: 1) a left-wing oriented, social-democratic, often post-Communist party; 2) a right-wing, liberal-conservative party. In some countries (Poland, Romania), this dichotomy is slightly modified and the two main poles are represented by a conservative-social and a liberal(-social) party. These parties are complemented by other secondary party political poles, which mostly leads to forming centre-left or centre-right coalitions; single-party governments are very exceptional. In all the party systems, we can see one or more radical political parties; however, they mostly do not cross the border of extremism. Of all the countries, Hungary is closest to bipartism, or the two and a half party system, in some countries, moderate liberalism turn extreme in partial periods, especially when the *cordon sanitaire* is disrupted and one of the large parties accepts political radicals into the government coalition.³

The ideological focus or self-identification of particular political parties in East Central Europe is, however, often very shallow and formal. We can often see a political party in search of its ideological foundation and programme base with a remarkable delay since its origin or even its election success. This was, for example, the case of, now dominant, Slovak party Smer (Direction), that only several years after its origin started to approach (rhetorically and formally) the social-democratic party family. This phenomenon was generalised e.g. by Ehrke (2010), who stated: "The current competition in central and southeast Europe between conservative, liberal and social democratic forces conceals a more fundamental categorisation: the parties of the left labelled »social democratic« are organised in central and southeast Europe in terms of ethnic and clan-based parties, post-communist, postmodern-hybrid and – exceptionally – genuine social democratic parties. In the wake of recent changes in the party-political landscape these central and southeast European parties could prove to be, not latecomers, but forerunners, in the event

³ Eg. Poland 2005–2007 with the League of Polish Families and the Self-Defense, or Slovakia, where between 2006 and 2010, the Slovak National Party participated in the government.

that northern and western European parties abandon the self-imposed restrictions of their traditions and mutate into ideology-free management agencies for government ... If their names are anything to go by, the parties on the central or southeast European periphery are a reproduction of the western European political model; there too, the most important debates take place between conservatives, liberals and social democrats (so far, usually without the Greens)” (Ehrke 2010: 3–4).

The implied problematic ideological identification concerns also many political formations of conservative or liberal (self-)definition in East Central Europe. Many political parties in the region are capable of changing their programs, ideological foundations, and sometimes even their standpoints within some cleavages very flexibly. Quite an apparent one is the pro-European vs. Eurosceptic cleavage including the nationalist tendencies tied to the Eurosceptic standpoints. “Should the need arise, values can be switched for tactical reasons – for example, in Hungary, one political party (FIDESZ) was able to transform itself from a liberal into a nationalist party without much difficulty because its leadership took the view that there were more potential voters on the right” (Ehrke 2010: 4).⁴

In consistency with the assumptions concerning the condition and prospects of political participation in East Central Europe, the political parties then, too, may be viewed as structures created generally by the top-down mechanism, with no stable ideology, membership, ties to strong and stable social groups, etc. Sceptical assumptions concerning the quality of political participation and interconnection of political parties with the civil society have been confirmed by many surveys. In these days, the finding that the general trend of political party membership decreasing is more prominent in East Central Europe than in Western countries is considered indisputable (cf. Dalton, Wattenberg 2000; Fink-Hafner, Kropivnik 2006: 55; Biezen 2003; Biezen, Mair, Poguntke 2012). Similarly, e.g. the first surveys of the European Parliament elections in post-Communist countries clearly show a considerably lower voter turnout within the post-Communist territory, on a more general level, they show a boost of trends connected with so-called second order elections (Cabada 2010; Koepke, Ringe 2006). In the following passage, we shall focus on one of the concrete specific features of political partisanship (not only) in East Central Europe. This feature is low to almost none party membership.

⁴ Ehrke continues: “Parties are less predictable. Naturally, their practical political options are restricted, too, but by external factors, not by their own traditions and the self-restraint to which they give rise ... In both versions of peripheral nationalism, which mirrors the old debate between Westernisers and Slavophiles, *backwardness counts as an advantage*” (Ehrke 2010: 4).

Party Membership in East Central Europe

As indicated above, the assumption of civil society underdevelopment in East Central European countries was confirmed by the development after 1989 and its analyses. This verification also concerns political participation including the issue of party membership. The assumption that party membership in East Central Europe would be significantly lower than in Western European countries became one of the general hypotheses of virtually all surveys dealing with comparative analysis of party membership. Biezen, Mair and Poguntke (2012: 26) base their recent analysis upon the assumption that “over and above the more general issue of the decline in party membership, we also anticipate that two general distinctions will be apparent from the data. The first, which follows in line with much of the expectations and hypotheses in the literature on post-communist Europe ... , and which was already indicated in the membership levels recorded in the late 1990s ... , is that party membership levels in the post-communist democracies will have remained substantially below those in the established Western polities.”⁵

The comparative analysis of the political party membership development in post-Communist countries is substantially complicated by several factors. Among the most important, there is definitely quite considerable lack of rootedness of a number of party-political subjects that keep their relevance expressed by the presence of their representatives only shortly (often only for a single election term). Another important factor is quite remarkable reluctance of political subjects to provide undistorted and objective information on themselves (this reluctance is strongly related to the fact that many countries lack a mechanism controlling the information, including that of funding, provided by political parties; quite often the place where the data is gathered and examined is the parliament, which is controlled by the parties, etc.). Many subjects then have the tendency to inflate their memberships in communication with the public or their party-political competitors. As an example, we may mention the most important Czech political rivals, the ODS (the Civic Democratic Party) and the ČSSD (the Czech Social Democrat Party), whose representatives repeatedly tended to state numbers identical to those provided by their rival (should one party state that it had 18 thousand members, the other immediately countered saying that it had “just above 18 thousand members”). Some parties, contrarily, evolve an effort to present themselves as structures of exclusive membership granted to ‘proven’ candidates; an example may be a Czech party *Tolerance, Odpovědnost, Prosperita 09* (Tolerance, Responsibility, Prosperity) (TOP

⁵ “The second distinction ... is that between large and small democracies. The relationship between size and democracy was first theorized by Dahl and Tufte (1973: 43), who hypothesized that ‘the larger the citizen body ... the weaker the incentive to participate’ - a proposition which has obvious implications for party membership” (Biezen, Mair, Poguntke 2012: 26–27).

09), that sharply limited, or even stopped recruiting new members soon after its establishing at the turn of 2009/2010 in a fear that many candidates applied only because the polls promised it a high vote in the upcoming elections.⁶

In many countries there is also no legislative concerning multiple party membership of one individual (e.g. the Czech Republic or Estonia) therefore the statistics might be distorted by the fact that some persons might be simultaneously reported as members by several parties.

Table 1: National levels of party membership in post-Communist countries in CEE

Country	Year	Total party membership	Total Party Membership as percentage of electorate (M/E)
Bulgaria	2008	399,121	5.60
Czech Republic	2008	165,425	1.99
Estonia	2008	43,732	4.87
Hungary	2008	123,932	1.54
Latvia	2004	10,985	0.74
Lithuania	2008	73,133	2.71
Poland	2009	304,465	0.99
Romania	2007	675,474	3.66
Slovakia	2007	86,296	2.02
Slovenia	2008	108,001	6.28

Source: Biezen, Mair, Poguntke 2012: 28, restricted to post-Communist countries

Biezen, Mair and Poguntke (2012: 27–29) found in their analysis of 27 European countries that the average representation of political party members in the group of eligible voters is 4.65 per cent. We can see that, among the post-Communist countries, Slovenia, Bulgaria and Estonia have above-average political party membership. Contrariwise, among the seven countries with the lowest percentage of political party member representation, there are as much as five East Central European countries. The last two positions belong to Poland and Latvia, which, as the only two countries of the sample, did not reach one per cent, just a little better result was reached by Hungary, respectively the Czech and Slovak Republics. Of West European countries only the United Kingdom (1.21) and France (1.85) fell among them.

Quite interesting may also be the view of the long-term development trends in the area of political party membership. Biezen, Mair and Poguntke (2012: 32) offer the analysis of about the last decade. We shall focus only on the countries of

⁶ Interview with the Vice-Chairman of TOP09, Dr. Marek Ženíšek, December 17th, 2011.

the post-Communist territory again; unfortunately, relevant data for all the ten EU member states are not available (Latvia, Lithuania and Romania are missing in the analysis).

Table 2: Party membership change since the late 1990s

Country	Period	Change in M/E ratio	Change in number of members	% change in number of members
Bulgaria	2002–2008	–0.81	–44,479	–10.03
Czech Republic	1999–2008	–1.45	–113,560	–40.70
Estonia	2002–2008	+1.53	+14,999	+52.20
Hungary	1999–2008	–0.61	–49,668	–28.61
Poland	2000–2009	–0.16	–22,035	–6.75
Slovakia	2000–2007	–2.09	–78,981	–47.79
Slovenia	1999–2008	–3.58	–48,700	–31.08

Source: Biezen, Mair, Poguntke 2012: 32, restricted to post-Communist countries

Positively, the most remarkable deviation from the trend of political party membership decline is the case of Estonia. While political party membership was declining in all the post-Communist countries, in Estonia, the number increased by more than 50 per cent. We see the reason – with no deeper expert analysis based on e.g. a questionnaire survey – generally in the specific character of the Estonian ‘electronic’ democracy based on a substantial simplification of the processes of political participation (the opportunity to participate in elections using the Internet or a cellular phone, etc.), specifically then in the electronisation of the process of political party membership application.⁷

All other post-Communist parties, however, manifested quite a remarkable decrease of political party membership over the last decade. This trend is most noticeable in the cases of the Czech Republic and Slovakia, which occupied the first two positions among the entire survey sample encompassing 23 countries. The rapid decrease by almost a half (Slovakia), or 41 (Czech Republic) per cent respectively, might be among other linked with a specific development in the successor organisations, i.e. the post-Communist parties, or the successor parties of the Communist-led political party association, so-called National Front (Národní fronta). In the case of the Czech Republic it included, apart from the Communist Party, also the Christian Democrats – the People’s Party).

⁷ This reason was also given by Estonian political scientists in interviews done within the research project Political Parties in Central and Eastern Europe – Interview with Dr. Petr Jurek, 3 January 2012.

Also the case of Slovenia is worth noticing. If we compare the data of tables 1 and 2, we see, on one hand, that Slovenia has the highest political party member representation in the group of post-Communist countries (6.28 per cent), on the other, however, this figure has markedly decreased over the last decade – within the entire sample of 23 countries, Slovenia is on the fourth place (thus, only the United Kingdom got among three post-Communist countries of the greatest decrease of political party membership, having reached the third place). A question that would definitely deserve further research is, whether the only post-Communist EU member state that was not a part of the Soviet empire is thus gradually coming closer to these countries, or rather follows the trends observed in the group of so-called advanced industrial democracies (Dalton, Wattenberg 2000). In this concern, we can note that the latest surveys of political party membership development trends do not offer any generalising conclusion. Biezen, Mair and Poguntke (2012) found, for example, that in some countries of so-called Western Europe (rather, however, West Mediterranean countries) we can observe quite a marked growth of party membership.⁸

Regardless of this fact, the reality is that political parties in East Central Europe integrate only a negligible part of the population of the particular countries. The parties “seem a relatively unrepresentative group of citizens, socially and professionally if not ideologically. The large majority, of course, are inactive ... In general, they also tend to be older and better-off than the average citizen, more highly educated, more likely to be associated with collateral organisations such as churches or unions, and more likely to be male than female” (Biezen, Mair, Poguntke 2012: 38).

Critical reflections pointing out that the membership of political parties is so small and their ties to the civil society so insufficient that they may be marked as “lonely protagonists” (Kunc 1999) were even more supported by further, and quite massive, decrease of party membership. Quite a very dangerous trend that undoubtedly correlates with the erosion of party membership is the intertwining of political parties with the state. Although this penetration of political parties into the state is far from being comparable with the practices of the Communist state-parties prior to the democratic transition or of the presidential parties known e.g. from the contemporary Russia, this trend is highly negative. Grzymala-Busse, for example, in her analysis of the ties and penetration between political parties and the state in post-Communist democracies claims: “Parties with weak roots and low

⁸ Out of 23 surveyed countries, the membership grew in six – apart of Estonia also slightly in Austria (2.28 per cent) and the Netherlands (3.40), markedly, by one third, in France (32.24), Italy (32.89) and Spain (35.32) (Biezen, Mair, Poguntke 2012: 32).

organisational presence turned to the state as the main source of resources necessary for their survival” (Grzymala-Busse 2007: 200–201).

The author supports her claim with statistics and other facts, however, the inspiration for parasitism on the state and public subsidies which the East Central European political parties took from Western Europe should not be overlooked. Grzymala-Busse herself, through her own calculations based on 2004 data, has arrived to the opinion that in Western Europe (she probably means the EU-15) the public subsidies represent on average 52 per cent of all estimated resources of the income of political parties while in Bulgaria it is less than 20 per cent, in Slovakia 30 per cent and in the Czech Republic, it is 35 per cent. On the other hand, it is obvious that political parties in East Central Europe obtain much less resources on membership dues compared to Western Europe. While in Western Europe, the parties obtain about 10–15 per cent of their estimated sources this way, in East Central European countries this is often less than 1 per cent (Estonia, Slovenia, Poland), at most 5–7 per cent (Czech Republic, Bulgaria). It is the very countries with the lowest political party income from their members, where the parties rely on public subsidy most (Estonia – 85 per cent; Slovenia 70–75 per cent;⁹ Hungary – 69 per cent) (Grzymala-Busse 2007: 191). Biezen (2003: 212) speaks of “étatizations through public funding” in this context.

Even though we do not see the trend of the growing dependency of political parties on public subsidy as positive, we consider it an all-European trend, i.e. one that is not associated exclusively with East Central European countries. Political parties have, in this case, simply taken thorough advantage of their exclusive position, given to them by their inclusion in constitutional texts as the key actors mediating the communication between the state and civil society. In our opinion, the parties were brought to the position of cartel parties by their exclusiveness and by the effort of states to maintain, in terms of the constitution and institutions, the plurality and competition of democratic political parties for power, especially in a situation when there is a lack of constant pressure from party memberships that would be in contact with civil society.

These cartel parties then intertwine with the media and business (and sometimes even with organised crime); they are also characterised by considerable personalisation connected with the strengthening of party executive bodies *vis-à-vis* their small, weak, and scattered memberships. “Party members clearly play a reduced role compared to professionals and the party leadership ... Parties in new democracies thus tend to limit the opportunities for involvement and participation of the organized membership ... Furthermore, it can be argued that many of the

⁹ For a current and detailed analysis of political party funding in Slovenia from (not only) public subsidy, see (Krašovec, Hauhton 2011).

organizational changes point towards the marginalization of the membership per se, and a loss of intra-party democracy more generally ... The overall weakness of the structural linkage between parties and societies in a sense has paved the way for a more influential role for the party elites” (Biezen 2003: 204–206).

Political parties in East Central Europe thus, considering their origin and development, manifest some specific generic – naturally rather ideal-typical – features. These are especially a small membership, when in many cases the parties are not interested in acquiring new members and thus they virtually resign their recruiting function. It is because a lower membership consequently means lower pressure on intra-party competition and quality – it is remarkable how often we can see the situation in East Central Europe when a political party is not capable of assigning someone to even the highest political positions because it generates virtually no new political generation. “Party memberships are generally too small to counteract party elites. For all or most party members, politics represents an individual career path, not an instrument for shaping society in accordance with normative principles. Political engagement is motivated by the personal prospects of lucrative party or government office or other perks, not political convictions!” (Ehrke 2010: 5).

Searching for alternatives and new ways of providing for democratic government by means of adequate political participation thus became a legitimate scientific and political question that has to be asked with even greater emphasis and urgency in new democracies originating from the third wave of democratisation than in the case of the consolidated democracies of Western Europe. In the conclusion of our contribution, therefore, we shall make an attempt to reflect possible alternatives to the monopolistic position of political parties in Western democracies. We present this reflection on such a level of generality that its outcomes are not of territorial (East Central European) but general validity.

Conclusion

As repeatedly mentioned above, both politics and political science see political parties, when looking at their historical role, as the most important intermediaries. “For simplicity’s sake, let us delineate three generic types of intermediaries: *political parties*, *interest associations*, and *social movements* ... The distinguishing characteristic of political parties is their role in the conduct of territoriality based elections. They control the process of nominating candidates who, if they win, occupy specified positions of authority, form a government, and accept responsibility for the conduct of public policy” (Schmitter 2001: 70–71).¹⁰

¹⁰ Schmitter (2001: 71) continues: “Interest associations seek to influence the direction of policy so that it will benefit particularly ... their own members, without competing in elections or being publicly accountable for these policies. Social movements are also in the business of trying to

Schmitter, however, builds upon the hypothesis that “*these three types of intermediaries all play a significant role in the consolidation of neodemocracies*” and, moreover, that “*there is no longer any a priori reason to suppose that parties should be privileged or predominant in this regard*” (Schmitter 2001: 71–72). In our opinion, this finding may be generalised both in terms of territory, i.e. beyond the territory of East Central European countries, and in terms of the phase of the development of democracy, i.e. also beyond the framework of transitive or consolidation periods (respectively) of the development of democratic political systems. This – considering the decreasing memberships of political parties and, more generally, the transformation of the roles and positions of political parties in relation to society – is also the spirit of the thoughts of Biezen, Mair and Poguntke. In the preliminary version (presented at the ECPR Joint Session in Lisbon in April 2009, cf. Biezen, Mair, Poguntke 2009) of their article they discussed distinctively the implications of membership decline in Europe.

The authors build upon the premise that “party membership becomes less and less important ... Nor are they always likely to provide a reservoir of attractive candidates”. Regarding decline in membership, political parties find themselves in such a situation, when, especially in elections other than parliamentary ones (especially in the case of local elections which require a high number of candidates), they are not able to fill the candidate lists with their own members or there is only slight competition among their members in contesting positions on the candidate list.¹¹ With reference to the practice of Italian centre-left parties, Biezen, Mair and Poguntke suggest that primaries were “opened to all citizens who are willing to register their names and addresses and who are willing to pay the small fee ... if primaries are intended to broaden the base of leadership support, it makes much more sense to extend the opportunity for participation in these primaries beyond the party itself”. Let us note that a similar practice was used e.g. during the primaries in the French Socialist Party searching for the candidate for the Presidency in October 2011.

Also in East Central Europe, similar efforts to overcome the distinction between members and non-members may be observed. A remarkable – although not entirely

exert influence over policy without competing in elections ... but the benefits that they typically seek would accrue, not specifically to their own members, but to a broad spectrum of the citizenry – even to foreigners, plants, animals ...”

¹¹ Let us illustrate this phenomenon with the example of the Czech Republic. In a situation when there are more than 6,000 autonomous municipalities, the largest political parties are not capable of creating a candidate list in more than half of them (and concentrate on the competition in the several largest cities, which largely mimics the competition at the national level, including the topics and strategies used in the campaign). In local elections, the traditional winners are then the formations of independent candidates that may occupy even more than 50 per cent of all seats offered by the municipalities (Vodička, Cabada 2011: 393).

plausible – example is the political formation *Věci veřejné* (Public Affairs, VV), which succeeded in the elections to the Czech National Assembly in 2010 and became a part of the government coalition. The party put its stake in direct communication with its supporters, so-called registered ‘Vs’. With them, it consulted on its program and staffing issues or the issue of participating in the government coalition by means of Internet referenda. This, undoubtedly interesting, attempt to overcome the public aversion towards political parties was, however, torpedoed by the disclosures that these referenda were allegedly manipulated, that the party, including its staffing, was virtually directed by one of its members (calling himself the ‘super guru’) by means of (among others) corrupting the party’s deputies, and that this person systematically used the method of illegal eavesdropping, blackmailing, and so on against his intra-party opponents or politicians of other parties. It became apparent then, that the party had not really diverted from the trend already described above by Kostelecký, namely that of parties being a tool for securing individual access to power.

Political party membership is in East Central Europe by far the least used form of political participation. The citizens of these countries mostly participate in elections, sign petitions, donate money, and participate in manifestations and demonstrations (Vráblíková 2009: 879–880). However, even in terms of these activities, the majority of the countries do not reach the statistic level of the countries of Western Europe. In the middle age and older cohorts, this trend is undoubtedly boosted by the influence of the frustration and apathy originating from the compulsory political participation in the previous, non-democratic political regime. These people are often still the propagators and supporters of the freedom not to participate (Rose 1995) that manifests itself not only in relation to political parties but also to other forms of civil association and political participation. This attitude is quite frequent in the new democracies of East Central Europe even two decades after the transition; many citizens of the new democracies still “enjoy the freedom from politics with which they have had or have a negative experience” (Fink-Hafner, Kropivnik 2006: 68).

Political participation in East Central Europe is also accompanied by a strong phenomenon of ungrounded political party affiliation – not only of the voters but also of the politicians (in countries such as the Czech Republic, Poland, Slovenia and others, we could present a number of examples of politicians who are able to work in several political parties – and to do so at the topmost level – during their political career). This ungrounded party political affiliation manifests itself in a part of the voters as a kind of a ‘hibernation’ from which they might be awoken only by a strong stimulus, often a marketing-type one. Such a stimulus is connected with presenting new political subjects that usually promise the removal of the former

political ‘cartel’ of relevant political parties. After their election success (this might even be winning the elections, as experiences from e.g. Latvia or Slovenia show), such subjects become a part of the ‘cartel’ (inevitably – it is hard for a new political party to create a unanimous government) against which it fought, thus accentuating the phenomenon of *Parteienverdrossenheit* even more.

“In Western democratic political systems, political participation should maintain two main functions: the function of selection and control of political elites or the government on one side, and the function of activation and mobilization of human resources on the other” (Fink-Hafner, Kropivnik 2006: 59). It is obvious that the fewer members the parties have, the more difficult it is for them to perform these functions. However, the very fact that political parties slackened the effort to perform their crucial functions is the main reason why political parties became unattractive to citizens. In our opinion, there is only one way to escape this vicious circle – the return to performing these functions together with a thorough modernisation of intra-party life. Political parties must revitalise their recruiting function, especially at the lowest, local level of government. At the same time, they must abandon the trend that was understandable in the process of transition, but is hardly acceptable in the present day. Here we mean the fact that a large number of politicians establish themselves directly at national level, without proving their qualities and competences by working previously at lower party or governmental levels. Such a change also requires, of course, more competent behaviour by voters, who should be able to weed out candidates lacking experience from lower levels of government and to withhold their mandate from them. This would require the adoption of new instruments of intra-party and voting democracy, especially the preference vote, split vote, and so on. Although the personalisation of politics would thus be affirmed, the decision-making competence of voters would be strengthened.

Political parties themselves should struggle for a breakthrough in the trend of mobilising citizens solely for the purposes of elections. As shown by the present case of Hungary (this applies to the unprecedented defeat of the socialists in 2010), failing to create strong ties with voters and stable voter support may result in the seizure of power by another political subject with no opportunity of effective control left for the side of the formerly governing subjects. Such a breakthrough should be connected to a transfer to e-democracy, or the broadest possible use of new communication channels, respectively. However, proven traditional forms of communication should not be abandoned.

Last but not least, the state should also influence the promotion of party membership, for example by means of the tax assignation option for political party members (similar methods are known in some countries in regard to church membership) or, on the other hand, by means of financial support for political parties

that would, apart from the momentary – electoral – success, also reflect the more permanent activities of political parties and trends within them. It is especially the state and political parties who should work symbiotically in maintaining another crucial function of political actors, i.e. political socialisation, and, more generally, civil education. In this area, which was significantly weakened and was rendered to the forces of the ‘market’ after the transition because of its politicisation during the Communist period, we can observe, too, a remarkable difference between the countries of East Central and Western Europe. After all, in many East Central European countries the most visible actors remain the German political foundations built upon the democratic traditions of political education founded after the Second World War.

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Ten Years of Equitable Representation in Macedonia¹: Affirmative Action Policies in Need of Remodeling

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Abstract: *In multiethnic societies liberals are concerned about outcomes in which people have fewer resources and opportunities than others when this is due to circumstances that they had no responsibility for causing. In this context demands by members of systematically and long term disadvantaged ethnocultural minorities for a form of an affirmative action are justifiable. However, once the effects of the long term oppression are mitigated, the provisions for special measures are redundant. This paper discusses the implementation of the principle of “just and equitable representation of non-majority communities”, an affirmative action style of policy in the Republic of Macedonia. It will argue that now, ten years since the principle was agreed upon by the policy makers in the country, it is in need of re-evaluation and modification to take into consideration the results achieved so far, and the various problems of implementation such as the deficiencies regarding the integration of the smaller minorities such as the Roma.*

Keywords: *justice in multiethnic societies, affirmative action, Macedonia, Ohrid Agreement, principle of just and equitable representation*

Introduction

In multiethnic societies the liberal state should take into consideration the needs of persons belonging to minorities that are for any given reasons seriously disadvantaged in comparison to the members of the majority. Under such a state of affairs, universalistic liberal policies aimed at eradicating individual deprivation might need to be modified. Liberalism is concerned about outcomes in which people have fewer resources and opportunities than others when this is due to circumstances that they had no responsibility for causing. Systematically discriminated and thereby disadvantaged minorities, that have fewer resources and opportunities than the majority population, such as African-Americans in the USA, need(ed) special state assistance in overcoming this predicament and successfully integrating into society. Under such conditions, granting special rights on a temporary basis

¹ While the constitutional name of the country is the Republic of Macedonia, as a consequence of Greece's persistent objections to using this name, it was admitted to the United Nations in April 1993 “provisionally referred to for all purposes within the UN as the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, pending settlement of the difference that has arisen over the name of the State.” In this paper I will, without prejudice on the naming dispute, use “Macedonia” to refer to this country.

falls within the liberal theory that emphasises the equality of all its citizens. This is particularly cogent to remember when discussing the issue of ‘affirmative action.’ The demands by members of ethnocultural minorities for a form of an affirmative action are justifiable only if they are adopted in legal provisions on a temporary basis. Once the effects of the long term oppression are mitigated, the provisions for special measures would be redundant. After a certain period of implementation, the inequalities vis-à-vis the privileged group of people would become ameliorated if not eradicated.

This paper discusses the implementation of the principle of “just and equitable representation of non-majority communities”, an affirmative action style of policy in the Republic of Macedonia. It will argue that now, ten years since the principle was agreed upon by the policy makers in the country, it is in a need of re-evaluation and modification to take into consideration the results achieved so far, and the various problems of implementation. One of the problems is that the focus has largely been on the biggest minority in the country, the Albanians, while there are deficiencies regarding the integration of the smaller minorities such as the Roma. In the next section this paper discusses justice in multiethnic societies including the principle of affirmative action. A short overview of Macedonian political history follows with a discussion of the circumstances under which the principle was introduced in 2001. A discussion of the shortcomings in the implementation of the affirmative action style policy in Macedonia is followed by general remarks on how it should be modified.

Liberal Neutrality and Justice in Multiethnic Societies

Although the origins of the idea of political neutrality reach back to the emergence of religious toleration in the 16th and 17th centuries, the debate about the liberal concept of neutrality has been continuously on the agenda of political theorists and liberal thinkers. (Kis 1996: 1) A dominant view of contemporary liberals is that the state must evince impartiality or neutrality towards different conceptions of the good.² Liberal neutrality means that public action should disregard all differences among citizens including family loyalties, individual, national or religious affiliations, or economic position, so as to treat them all as equals.³ Moreover, according to the postulates of the modern liberal theory the state must stay out of the individual’s autonomous construction of his/her own life plans- his/her “conception

² For some of the major contemporary arguments about liberal neutrality see: Ackerman: 1980; Rawls: 1971; Rawls: 1993; Dworkin: 1985; Larmore: 1987.

³ The expression “‘liberal neutrality’”, though not the concept, is indeed rather recent, introduced in Dworkin: 1974.

of the good.” Liberalism equally guards the civil and political rights of all citizens regardless of their group membership, be that cultural, ethnic, professional or other.

Liberal neutrality is comprehended as “the independence of political decisions from any particular conception of the good life, or what gives value to life.” (Dworkin 1985: 191) Neutrality is understood as ‘passive impartiality’-the government and its institutions function in a strictly procedural way and are separated from ideas about the good life, as proclaimed and practiced by diverse society subcultures in a given society. The state should not reward or penalise particular conceptions of the good life, consequently, governmental actions should not aim to eliminate or discourage lifestyles that are, according to popular beliefs, deviate or immoral. Rather, a liberal state should provide a “neutral framework within which different and potentially conflicting conceptions of the good can be pursued.” (Kymlicka 1989: 883)

Liberalism does not prescribe how people should lead their lives. The government “should be committed to tolerating the views and cultures of its people and, in general, committed to staying out of individuals’ decisions regarding the best way to lead their lives.” (Hampton 1997: 173) Accordingly, individuals are left to autonomously mould, or pursue their own ideas of the good life. In public policy and law the state should be neutral between conceptions of the good. As a result, within a liberal state, Christians, Jews, Muslims, Buddhists, atheists, agnostics, Macedonians, Albanians, Serbs, may all equally freely pursue the way of life proscribed to them by their individual, religious or ethno-national characteristics.

Consolidation of a democratic regime in multiethnic countries is more difficult than in more homogenous ones. The main problems for achieving consolidation in plural societies arise due to a “stateness” problem, namely the disputes over the boundaries of the state, its character, the question regarding who has a right to citizenship, etc. In fact, “the more the population of the territory of the state is comprised of plurinational, lingual, religious, or cultural societies, the more complex politics becomes because an agreement on the fundamentals of a democracy will be more difficult.” (Linz and Stepan 1996: 29) The opposite is also accurate. Conflicts are “reduced when empirically almost all the residents of a state identify with one subjective idea of the nation, and that nation is virtually contiguous with the state.” (Ibid, 1996: 25) The congruence between the polity and the demos facilitates the creation of a democratic nation-state and is therefore one of the conditions for successful consolidation of democracy.

The question of the justness of the nation building process is not a benign one, nor it is purely confined to academic deliberations and political theory, the lack of a genuine sensitiveness of the state to demands by minority members, in multiethnic societies frequently leads to ethnic conflicts and wars. Cases of ethnic conflict

abound throughout the world and are a problem to be reckoned with. Indeed, if a significant group of people “does not accept claims on its obedience as legitimate...this presents a serious problem for democratic transition and even more serious problems for democratic consolidation.” (Ibid, 1996: 27) Because of the potentials of inter-ethnic discord, considerable political crafting of democratic institutions and norms must take place so that democracy can be consolidated in multicultural states.

According to Linz and Stepan, homogenising policies, even if not antidemocratic, would probably not be conducive to democratic crafting. Rather, “complex negotiations, pacts, and possibly territorial realignments and consociational agreements are often necessary before the majority formula will be accepted as legitimately binding.” (Ibid) To consolidate democracy in a plural society requires state attention to the needs of national minorities. In a multiethnic setting “the chances to consolidate democracy are increased by state policies that grant inclusion and equal citizenship and that give all citizens a common “roof” of state mandated and enforced individual rights.” (Ibid, 1996: 33)

From a liberal point of view then, given the unfair position in which the non-majority ethnic groups find themselves and granted the importance of language and culture for the individuals’ identity and his/her ability to make meaningful choices about life, (Kymlicka 1997) it seems just that the state should provide the members of the ethnic minorities who wish to do so, means to preserve their own culture. Justice in liberal, ethnically heterogeneous states is provided if the state is not understood as a ‘nation-state’, a state that belongs to the citizens of one ethnic group, but as a polity that is shared by all citizens of the country. In an ethnically divided society:

“the state which treats every citizen as an equal cannot be a nation state: it must be a co-nation state. It cannot be identified with a single favored nation but must consider the political community of all the ethnic groups living on its territory as constituting it. It should recognize all of their cultures and all of their traditions as its own.” (Kis 1996: 224–5)

The fact that the autonomous choice of individuals belonging to ethno-cultural minorities to pursue distinct cultural and linguistic life might be hampered by the state nation- building ingrained in the culture and language of the majority nation necessitates equal treatment for these minority individuals. A liberal state respects personal autonomy, and an equal respect for the autonomous choice of all citizens, including individuals of minority cultures, to preserve their language and culture, asks for cultural sensitiveness in the process of nation-building. Alternatively, as Kymlicka has put it, “[equal] respect for the autonomy of the members of the minority cultures requires respect for cultural structure, and that in turn may require

special linguistic, educational, and even political rights for minority cultures.” (Kymlicka 1989: 903)

A societal culture is a “culture which provides its members with meaningful ways of life across the full range of human activities, including social educational, religious, recreational, and economic life, encompassing both public and private spheres” (Kymlicka 1995: 76). Since members of minority cultures have great difficulties in securing their societal culture, the condition for their freedom and their predicament is a question of circumstances rather than choices, and then there is a justification for state intervention for minority cultures. Kymlicka argues that secure cultural membership is an important condition of freedom, the lack of which is a serious disadvantage. Freedom for Kymlicka, the capacity to form and revise a conception of the good life, requires a context of choice for devising one’s plans for living a meaningful life, and culture is the ‘provider’ of this context. Thus, in *Multicultural Citizenship*, (Ibid: 83), he writes, “freedom involves making choices amongst various options, and our societal culture not only provides these options, but also makes them meaningful to us.” Also, consider the following: “for meaningful individual choice to be possible, individuals need ... access to a societal culture” (Ibid: 84). If liberal equality requires equal citizenship rights and equal access to a common ‘field of opportunity’, then “some minority cultures are endangered and this ... does not respond to our intuitions about the importance of our cultural membership” (Ibid: 152)

Consequently, opposed to the “blood and soil” principle for granting citizenship, liberal states allow integration of members of other races, ethnicities and religions to the national community. As a result of this inclusiveness, liberal states have a loose conception of citizenship centered usually on the shared language used in wide range of societal institutions (schools, media, law, government, economy and so on). The nation is understood not as the supreme value for individuals but merely as an instrumental value for promoting individual interests. Liberal nations are ready to learn and adopt from other cultures, they do not fear interaction with other states and nations. Moreover, liberal states accept the concept of dual national identity. Therefore they would allow celebrations of holidays by members of the nation who do not belong to the majority ethnicity. Finally, and most importantly, liberal states let the national minorities engage in their own process of nation building.

The circumstances in which minorities find themselves are not a matter of their preference. As Yael Tamir has accurately put it: “membership in a cultural community is a matter of personal choice, but this does not imply that members have chosen to be a minority. This status is imposed on them... and could be seen as supplying a reason to support their chances of leading a meaningful and worthwhile life without having to renounce their cultural commitments.”(Tamir 1993:

42) Granted “a liberal society’s presumed interest in promoting and protecting the value of individual autonomy, practices instantiating this value contain their own justification for accommodation and recognition.”(Levey 1997: 237)

In a liberal polity, all persons should be treated equally and when the state sustains the life options of the individuals from the majority population through the process of nation-building, it must also maintain the life choices of the persons from the minorities if it is going to treat all citizens equally. The state has a duty to support minorities, because individuals within a minority culture are in an inequitable position *vis-à-vis* the members of the majority nation. While individuals of the majority nation take it for granted that their language and culture appear in the public domain, the persons belonging to the minority culture cannot take this for granted. If the individual members of majority cultures have their language taught through the educational system, while there are minority persons who would like the same to be done for their own language, then the state, in order to maintain the equality of its citizens, should also provide instruction in the given minority language provided that there are a sufficient number of such students. A commitment to equality of all the people in the political society will allow members of minorities to pursue their own conceptions of the good life with equal support from the state as for the members of the majority groups. What is also important is that because the reasons for adopting a policy in support of minority cultures would be independent of any conception of the good life, the policy would satisfy the constraints imposed by the principle of liberal neutrality.

Justice in ethnically heterogeneous states requires that the state not be understood as a ‘nation-state’, a state that belongs to the citizens of one ethnic group, but as a polity that is shared by all citizens of the country. A plural state is more legitimate if all its citizens and not only those of the majority, consider the territory of the state their own homeland, accept the legal system of the state and their institutions, and respect the insignia of the state as their own symbols. These are goods to be jointly shared with all of the other citizens. The political community of a multicultural country will be just if:

“it is formed from a union of ethnic groups living together. Its official symbols, holidays, its cultural goods handed down in school, and its historical remembrance will absorb something from the tradition of all the ethnic groups belonging to it, so that everyone can see the state is also theirs: likewise, everyone can see that the state is not their exclusive possession but is held jointly with the other ethnic groups forming it.”(Kis 1996: 237)

Moreover, a liberal state should take into consideration the needs of persons belonging to minorities that are for any given reasons seriously disadvantaged in

comparison to the members of the majority. Under such a state of affairs, universalistic liberal policies aimed at eradicating individual deprivation might need to be modified. Liberalism is concerned about outcomes in which people have fewer resources and opportunities than others when this is due to circumstances that they had no responsibility for causing. Therefore, the need for special treatment of disadvantaged minorities can be related to a situation where the process of nation-building has been undertaken with no regard as to the interests of the members of the minorities and such a long period of time that these individuals have been permanently excluded from the economic and social mainstream. Special measures and political mechanisms for achieving just minority representation could be employed in situations where a need arises for ameliorating systematic disadvantages. Under such conditions, we should stress that granting special rights on temporary basis falls within the liberal theory that emphasises the equality of all its citizens. This is particularly cogent to remember when discussing the issue of 'affirmative action.'

Systematically discriminated and thereby disadvantaged minorities, that have fewer resources and opportunities than the majority population, such as African-Americans in the USA, need(ed) special state assistance in overcoming this predicament and successfully integrating in the society. These measures are just even if they allow for preferential treatment of citizens. This is so because, Afro-Americans for example, have suffered discrimination in all important fields of social life, such as employment, education, housing, and so on. To treat them as equals in such a state of affairs will mean to treat them differently than the rest of the population. Policies offering preferential admission to educational institutions and jobs to blacks in the USA, Roma in Eastern Europe, Albanians in Macedonia, were/are consequently justifiable exercises. Such treatment of African American "does no injustice to white males ... since the former [they] have achieved their superior qualifications through the underserved advantages of past discrimination." (Ingram 2000: 195)

In international law the concept of affirmative action is generally referred to as "special measures". The first mention of these "special measures" was made by the Government of India during the drafting of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). India suggested that an explanatory paragraph should be included in the text of article 2 specifying that: "Special measures for the advancement of any socially and educationally backward sections of society shall not be construed as distinctions under this article. Alternatively, the Committee might wish to insert in its report a statement, which would make that interpretation clear." The representative of India pointed out that the implementation of the principles of non-discrimination raised certain problems in the case of the particularly backward groups still to be found in many underdeveloped countries.

In his country, the Constitution and the laws provided for special measures for the social and cultural betterment of such groups. Measures of that kind were essential for the achievement of true social equality in highly heterogeneous societies. (Commission on Human Rights 1998: 2)

The important question for achieving social justice is how long to administer 'affirmative action' without adjusting it to changeable circumstances. Affirmative action measures need not be contrary to basic liberal principles. However, the demands by members of ethnocultural minorities for a form of an affirmative action are justifiable only if they are adopted in legal provisions on a temporary basis. Once the effects of the long term oppression are mitigated, the provisions for special measures would be redundant. After a certain period of implementation, the inequalities vis-à-vis the privileged group of people would become ameliorated if not eradicated. Thus, for example, "although it remains true that American blacks are on the average disadvantaged, there is now a flourishing black middle class, and it is their children who are the main beneficiaries of preferential admissions to the leading universities." (Barry 2001:115) One of the most prominent experts in the field of multiculturalism Will Kymlicka speaks of the need for a temporary status of these group rights:

"in so far as these rights are seen as a response to oppression or systematic disadvantage, they are most plausibly seen as a temporary measure on the way to a society where the need for special representation no longer exists....society should seek to remove the oppression and disadvantage, thereby eliminating the need for these rights." (Kymlicka 1995: 65)

Evidently, once the systematic disadvantage has been balanced out, the need for special measures becomes obsolete. According to liberalism, "justice requires equal rights and opportunities but not necessarily equal outcomes defined over groups." (Barry 2001: 92) Therefore, no particular individual can proclaim that he/she has a right to a guaranteed post in the public administration or in the state's decision making bodies.

The requirement of the "limited duration" of special measures has been continually stressed in international law. In his report on the protection of minorities, Eide offered affirmative action as a solution to problems regarding minorities. (Eide 1993:19) However, he added that affirmative action can lead to group conflict, for which reason such measures should not be continued beyond the time when equality has been achieved.⁴ Prolonged implementation of affirmative action measures

⁴ In its General Comment No. 18 on the non-discrimination principle, the Human Rights Committee stated that affirmative action, i.e. special measures, may be taken only for as long it is needed to correct discrimination in fact. On the other hand, in paragraphs 6.1 and 6.2 of its General Comment No. 23 in article 27, the minorities article, it admits that although the rights protected under

might be problematic because it implies a unity of political attitudes based on arbitrarily given characteristics such as race, ethnicity or culture. Granting special rights along ethnic lines might actually homogenise the other ethnic communities, resulting in an increase of the level of interethnic mistrust and tensions. Therefore, affirmative action measures should be temporary and compensatory, aimed at correcting conditions that impair the enjoyment of equal rights. (Akermark 1997: 23–8)

The Macedonian Multiethnic Project

Modern Macedonia emerged in 1945 as one of the six constitutive republics of the Socialist Federated Republic of Yugoslavia. When Yugoslavia disintegrated in the second half of 1991, Macedonia chose to assert its own independence rather than remain in a truncated Yugoslav state likely to be dominated by Milosevic's Serbia without the counterbalancing influences of Croatia and Slovenia. Yet, the peaceful and benign transformation of Macedonian society was preceded by an uneasy period of democratic consolidation. Among the different factors that negatively influenced this process were: the struggle for the international recognition of the country, the Greek embargo and the diplomatic and economic pressure for the republic to change its name,⁵ the disruption of the economy due to the UN sanctions on Macedonia's main trade partner Serbia, as well as the financial impediments as a result of the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia and the Kosovo refugee crisis. None of these factors endured however, as a strong importance for the consolidation of the democratic system as the disputing of the character of the state by Macedonian Albanians.

The foundations of the new state were not fully supported by the Macedonian Albanians. The referendum turnout for example, was 72 per cent and it is most likely that ethnic Albanians did not take part in it after being persuaded by partisan leaders. Paradoxically, Macedonian Albanian politicians were, on the one hand,

article 27 are formulated in negativity terms positive measures by States may also be necessary to protect the identity of a minority and so long as they are only aimed at providing protection, they may constitute a legitimate differentiation under the Covenant. Here, no time limit is imposed. Notice also the different word use. This distinction is also made in State practice, for example, India has a different protection system for minorities, whose rights have an element of permanence, and for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, whose special rights are envisaged as temporary and exceptional measures to reduce the inequalities between communities. In *Preliminary report* submitted by Mr. Marc Bossuyt. p. 28.

⁵ Greece claims that the name is exclusively part of its cultural and historical heritage. Athens insists that Macedonia must add a "qualifier" to its name in order to differentiate the country from the northern province of Greece bearing the same name. Greece also argues that the name implies territorial irredentism. Macedonia has renounced any claims on Greek territory, but it regards its name as a core part of its national identity. The view from Skopje is that Macedonians have a right to self-determination.

content with the changes of the system and took an active part in shaping it. Ethnic Albanian legal experts were involved in the drafting of the new Macedonian constitution. Three ministers of the short-lived (March 1991 – June 1992) non-partisan, ‘cabinet of experts’ were chosen among the ranks of this minority. The 1992 coalition government led by Branko Crvenkovski’s Social Democratic Alliance (SDSM) as well as all the other cabinets since included one ethnic Albanian party with five ministerial posts. Throughout the years Macedonian Albanians took increasing number of posts in the diplomatic service, public administration, the police and the army. Nonetheless, ethnic Albanian politicians in Macedonia “in the early years of transition adopted an obstructionist tactic.” (Hislope, 2003: 139)

Thus, the new constitution was not being approved of by the political parties of Macedonian Albanians. The special parliamentary session was boycotted by the PDP-NDP (Party for Democratic Prosperity- National Democratic Party) to protest the preamble of the constitution which formally declared Macedonia to be »the national state of the Macedonian people, providing for the full equality of citizens and permanent coexistence of the Macedonian people with Albanians, Turks, Roma, and other nationalities«. Formerly, under the socialist constitution, the preamble defined Macedonia to be a nation of »the Macedonian people and the Albanian and Turkish minorities« and in 1991 Macedonian Albanians felt that they have been demoted as they were not explicitly mentioned being a constitutive nation along with Macedonians. Moreover, article 19 of the constitution speaking about religious rights and liberties referred only to the Macedonian Orthodox Church in name, denoting the other religions present in the country as “religious communities and groups” thereby aggravating the sense of injustice of the Muslim Albanians in Macedonia even more. The 1991 constitution was to become a major bone of contestation between the representatives of the Macedonian Albanians and the state institutions.

Successive events showed that Macedonian Albanians have adopted a radical stance against the legitimacy of the new country. In 1992 ethnic Albanians boycotted the regular Macedonian census. More importantly, in early January 1992 a clandestine referendum was held in the western Macedonian counties where Albanians comprised a majority. The referendum gave 90 percent for independence, although no immediate actions were taken upon it. (Isakovic 1997) However, later on, in Struga in April of 1992, Albanian leaders proclaimed the “Albanian Autonomous Republic of Illirida” although again no concrete steps were taken to create this entity. (Hislope 2003: 139) Meanwhile the PDP-NDP walked out of voting sessions in the parliament regarding international recognition, and the national anthem, while also vigorously lobbying against Macedonian international recognition by the United Nations and the European Union until ‘greater ethnic rights were given to the Albanian community.’ (Fekrat et al. 1999).

A serious political problem emerged in December of 1994 when a private Albanian-language university was established in Tetovo by the municipal councils of Tetovo, Gostivar and Debar. Denying the legality of the project at first the Macedonian government reacted strongly against the university and quickly moved to close it down. Indeed, on February 17th, 1995 a man was killed in clashes between about 1,500 ethnic Albanians and Macedonian police outside the illegal Albanian-language University in Tetovo. All Macedonian Albanian MP's supported the initiative to establish this university. After Tetovo University reopened in November 1995, the central authorities did not take any further action regarding the issue. Funded by the ethnic Albanian community in the country and abroad this institution functioned without official recognition until 2006 when it was opened as a public university.

Another serious problem occurred in the summer of 1997 when a serious confrontation developed between the Mayor of Gostivar, Rufi Osmani, and the central authorities. After putting up the Albanian and the Turkish flags in front of the town hall, Osmani together with the mayor of Tetovo, Mr. Alajdin Demiri, defied a May ruling of the constitutional court that other countries' flags (including Albanian and Turkish) could not be flown in public. Gostivar is a multiethnic town, where Macedonians, Macedonian Albanians and Turks live intertwined. Macedonian Albanian politicians have been referring to the flag issue as a 'human rights violation,' "raising the rhetorical temperature above the record previously set by the Tetovo university confrontation: Mayor Rufi Osmani called on Gostivar's Albanians to "protect their flag with their blood"." (International Crisis Group 1997)

On July 7th, 1997 in an effort to defuse tensions, the parliament passed a law allowing the flags of Macedonian national minorities to be flown outside town halls on state holidays, but the mayors in both towns rejected the law. After the government in Skopje sent in Special Forces to take down the flags flying outside Gostivar's town hall the police were surrounded by a hostile mass of ethnic Albanians. After what the police explained was an unjustified attack on their units, it violently intervened to diffuse the crowd. In the process an exchange of fire was reported and three protestors were killed, while 312 people had been reported arrested, including the town's newly-elected radical mayor, Mr. Rufi Osmani. Gostivar was effectively under undeclared martial law for a week following this incident and repeated OSCE requests for permission to enter Gostivar on July 9 were flatly refused by the police. (International Crisis Group 1997)

There were other interethnic incidents in the early years following Macedonia's independence. In fact, during the 1990s Macedonian political elites clashed with their ethnic Albanian counterparts over the basic idea behind the concept of the state. Much of the tensions resulted due to the different perceptions among the

two communities about the underlying concept of the Macedonian state. In the early 1990s both Macedonians and Macedonian Albanians had ambiguous feelings towards the disintegration of the former Yugoslavia. Macedonians were cheerful for having secured independent statehood. On the other hand, they realised that the Macedonian state would face many obstacles from its more powerful neighbours. Throughout history Macedonia's neighbours have either consistently or at one time or another chosen to deny the existence of a Macedonian people, and hence their right to possess their own state, and claimed Macedonia and the Macedonians as their own; furthermore, membership in Tito's Yugoslavia provided Macedonians with a "sense of security, a sense of security both against unfriendly, even antagonistic states-Bulgaria, Greece, and to a certain extent Albania and against a condescending and patronizing partner and neighbor inside Yugoslavia, namely Serbia." (Rossos 2002: 104)

Similarly, for the Macedonian Albanians independence from Yugoslavia was both a blessing and a curse. On the one hand, with the dissolution of federal Yugoslavia and the proclamation of Macedonian independence Albanians from Macedonia escaped the destiny of their Kosovan kin suffering under the strict rule of Slobodan Milosevic. Within the fledgling political system of the Macedonian Republic they could influence domestic politics to a certain extent. At least in theory Macedonian Albanians were guaranteed all civil, political and social rights. On the other hand, however, Macedonian Albanians regarded the independence of the country and the new frontiers vis-à-vis Serbia as an unnatural and burdensome obstacle to their relations with Kosovo Albanians. Ethnic Albanians in Macedonia perceive Kosovan Albanians as sharing the same identity. (De Rapper 1998) In fact, during the time of Tito, Pristina was a regional centre for all Albanians in former Yugoslavia including those from Macedonia. Pristina University educated many of the political and social elites of the Macedonian Albanians. For example, Arben Xhaferi, the leader of the leading Democratic Party of the Albanians (DPA) was educated in Pristina and for some 15 years he was a director of the province's TV station.

Although separated from their Kosovan kin, Macedonian Albanians have a perception that they are not a minority in the country. On the contrary they see themselves as equal partners to Macedonians and have since the late 1980s asked for the aforementioned legal status. When in 1989 a new constitution was adopted defining the Socialist Republic of Macedonia as 'the national state of the Macedonian nation' rather than 'the state of the Macedonian people and the Albanian and the Turkish minorities' as it had stood before, Macedonian Albanians vehemently protested. When a similar formula was accepted in the Preamble to the 1991 Constitution, Albanian political elites again protested against these developments and demanded

that the Albanian community living in Macedonia should be given a partner-nation status.

Moreover, ‘the demographic superiority of the Albanians over the other ethnic minorities living in Macedonia is the main argument in their struggle to improve the status of the Albanian community’. (Babuna 2000: 183) Besides, ethnic Albanians present a significant percentage of the population in the areas they inhabit in Macedonia, representing an absolute majority in many municipalities in the North-western and Western parts of the country. Moreover, many Macedonian Albanians are claimed to be without citizenship although they have lived in the country for years if not decades, while also a number of ethnic Albanians from Macedonia have immigrated to Western Europe but keep close contact with their places of origin. Treated as a ‘mere minority ethnic group’ Macedonian Albanians perceived the new state and its institutions as lacking legitimacy.

On the other hand, throughout the post-independence period Macedonians felt themselves endangered and believed that granting partner-nation status to the Albanians would lead to a Bosnia-type situation. Before the Ohrid Framework Agreement, signed on August 13, 2001 Macedonians largely regarded the Republic of Macedonia as their nation-state, in which other ethnic groups are granted equal citizen rights. Macedonian political elites often argued that the minority rights for the ethnic Albanians in the country were on par with the highest standards of international legislation. Of special concern to them was the fact that the percentage of the Albanian population in the country has significantly increased in the last decades. Before the conflict in 2001, Macedonians often pointed out that as a result of the very high birth rate of Macedonian Albanians and the migration of ethnic Albanians from Kosovo in the period from 1953 to 1993, the number of the Albanians had risen by 288,670 or 189.2% so that in 1994, the percentage of the Albanians was 22.6% of the total population in Macedonia, compared to 1953 when this percentage was only 11.7%.

Partitioned during the Balkan Wars in 1912–1913, Macedonians were faced with harsh assimilative practices, most of which remain intact even today in Greece and Bulgaria. As a result of the long lasting repression Macedonians in these countries have been assimilated in great numbers. Macedonians in the Republic of Macedonia have thus felt doubly threatened; not only is their presence in the historic region of Macedonia rapidly dwindling but also, now that there exists a free Macedonian state, ethnic Albanians have vowed to overtake it both demographically and politically. By large, rather than anticipating sustainable peace or coexistence, ‘Macedonians remain mistrustful of the Albanians’ true intentions... at worst they suspect designs for a “greater Albania” (or, more commonly, “greater Kosovo”).’ (Fraenkel 2004: 403)

Various elements in the constitution, the census taking, the laws on education, local self-government, and public display of national minority symbols, the ethnic make-up of the police, army, as well as the public administration, were all contested by Macedonian Albanians in this period.⁶ While Macedonians have kept insisting on a unitary nation-state Macedonian Albanians have refused to be considered an ethnic minority in a Macedonian nation-state and have advocated official bi-nationalism. Beginning in the early 1990s, reforms were enacted and improvements were made, albeit quite slowly, resulting in a rise in participation of the civic sector by Macedonian Albanians in recent years. Similarly, in 2000 amendments to the Law on Higher Education were passed allowing private education in languages other than Macedonian, while a European-financed trilingual (Albanian, English, and Macedonian) university was opened in 2001. However, these changes have not been sufficient for the political parties of the Albanians in Macedonia. Although Macedonia recognised the rights of national minorities and promoted pluralism in the media, native-language education, minority civil society organisations, and interethnic power sharing in the national government living standards sank as unemployment soared. Under such circumstances the political transformation was formulated as a zero-sum game, pitting ethnic Albanian grievances against Macedonian fears for “their” country’s security and integrity.

Armed conflict erupted between Albanian rebels and government forces in 2001 but was quickly ended through an EU- and U.S.-mediated agreement, signed in August of that year. The so-called Ohrid Framework Agreement envisioned a series of political and constitutional reforms aiming to accommodate the grievances of the Albanian community, while at the same time preserving the unitary character of the state, thus addressing the concerns of the Macedonian majority who feared a ‘federalisation’ of the country and its eventual disintegration. In meeting much of the demands raised by the Macedonian Albanians throughout the 1990s and introducing features of consociational power sharing, such as a system of double majorities requiring consent from minorities represented in parliament to key decisions of the Parliament (the right of minority veto), and when voting members of the Supreme Court, Juridical Council and the Public Attorney, a substantial degree of municipal decentralisation, as well as confidence-building measures to overcome the immediate consequences of the 2001 conflict were introduced. (Daskalovski 2002, 2006) The agreement and the constitutional amendments also granted official status to languages spoken by more than twenty per cent of the population. Furthermore, the agreement promoted the policy of achieving equitable and just representation in the public administration at the national and local level as the highest priority, a key reform in the public sector.

⁶ On the difficult democratic consolidation of Macedonia see Daskalovski: 2006.

Although today Macedonian society is still split along ethnic lines, conflicts have been subdued with the implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement. Today, Macedonian society is free of excessive influence by extremist and intolerant groups, nongovernmental institutions or organisations. In fact, there are no visibly active organisations, private militias, or vigilante groups advocating racist or xenophobic agendas or threatening the political and social stability or the country's transition to democracy. All Macedonia's political parties share the view that Macedonia should become a member of the EU and NATO. There is a strong consensus among political groups and citizens that market democracy should be the basis of the country's political system. The process of interethnic consolidation following the Ohrid Framework Agreement is supported by the European Union. Indeed, to ensure that the government fulfils its obligations from the Ohrid Framework Agreement, the EU made the further integration of Macedonia into European community conditional on full implementation of the agreement. Promotion of multi-ethnicity, political moderation and tolerance are widely understood as being important characteristics of Macedonian politics.

The Principle of Achieving Equitable and Just Representation in the Public Administration at the National and Local Level

A key concern addressed in the Ohrid Agreement has been the under-representation of Macedonian Albanians and other, small minorities in the public administration (and public enterprises.) The agreement established the principle of achieving equitable and just representation in the public administration at the national and local level as the highest priority, a key reform in the public sector. Prior to the Ohrid Agreement initiated reforms, public administration in Macedonia was largely both a) unrepresentative of, and b) unresponsive to minorities. The members of the non-majority groups, and especially the Albanians from Macedonia, were underrepresented in the public sector. In particular, in sensitive areas of public administration, such as the police, the number of Albanians had been low throughout the 1990s. According to available data, Albanians only filled some 7 percent of positions in the public, mixed and cooperative employment sector. Similarly, most other minorities, in particular Turks and Roma, have also been underrepresented in this sector. In contrast, Albanians and other communities have been overrepresented in private businesses, in part a response to the low employment rate in the public sectors. The causes for this development have been manifold and cannot be reduced to discrimination alone. As was briefly discussed, the 'ownership' of the state and its administration by the Macedonians made employment in the public administration unattractive to Albanians, who also had to fear being ostracised by their community. As a consequence, Albanians primarily sought employment in the private sector.

The program has been quite successful in raising the number of minority members in the public service. Thus, the number of civil servants from the non-majority ethnic communities increased to 26% at the central level by September 2009. (EU Commission 2009: 21) In particular, the numbers of minority civil servants employed within the Ministry of Interior have increased to 20.33%, a significant increase from 2000 when their numbers were at 8%. (Vest: 2009) In a number of ministries like the ministries of Education, Economy, Health Care, Defence, and Local Government, the percentage of ethnic Albanian employees corresponds to the share of this population in the country in the census figures. Further employment of minority members was envisioned by the Secretariat for the Implementation of the Ohrid Agreement. (Dnevnik: 2009) It is worth noting that since 2001 the recruitment of Albanians has extended beyond the direct requirements stipulated in the Framework Agreement. For example, the army was excluded from any equitable representation requirements, but has begun to include Albanians to a greater degree than prior to the conflict.

With the reforms of the public administration under the principle of equitable representation Macedonian authorities implement the concept of affirmative action generally referred to in international law as “special measures.” Given the temporal nature of these measures and the good results achieved, is it time for this principle to be abolished? Although much progress has been made in the last ten years there are a number of issues that need to be tackled. In this context, one of the critical issues in the implementation of the principle of equitable representation is whether there is a clear need for employment of members of minorities, mainly ethnic Albanians in specific public bodies. There have been a number of instances where new recruits in the public administration were actually employed without having a proper office, and a clear job description. (Nova Makedonija 2009, 2010, Utrinski Vesnik 2010, Dnevnik 2011) In fact, many new civil servants were told to stay at home thereby earning a salary without actually doing any work and thus infuriating the general public. The resentment among the Macedonians is even bigger considering the fact that ethnic Albanian civil servants are on average much younger than their Macedonian counterparts. In an environment of declining public resources, new young civil servants, members of the minorities, Albanians in particular, mostly replace retiring Macedonians. The hiring of new civil servants from the members of the minorities should not be hastily done.

A second problem regarding the implementation of the principle of equitable representation is the power held by members of different communities in the civil service. While the principle of equitable representation step by step surely achieves the goal of hiring more minorities to work in the civil service, therefore meaning their number roughly corresponds to their numbers in the general population, it does not

have much effect on the power and managerial distribution within the civil service. According to the data from the *Annual Report on the data from the Registry of State Civil Servants* by the Ministry of Information Society and Administration, Macedonia has 12480 state civil servants/ employees (without counting the employees of the military and police). Although with the implementation of the principle of equitable representation more Albanians have been appointed to managerial posts, in general their numbers are low in the high echelons of civil administration. Other minorities have even fewer members appointed in the core positions within the civil bureaucracy. (Cohen 2010:23) In fact, in absolute numbers the greatest number of Albanians in the civil sector is employed as junior associates and other junior level positions. Their share of high level managerial posts, both in terms of absolute numbers and in terms of percentages of the whole, is much lower compared to that of the Macedonians. For example, Albanians, who are about a quarter of the whole population, constitute 19% of the State Advisors, 13% Directors and Assistant Directors of Departments and 10% Directors of Divisions. The percentages for the Macedonians on these positions on the other hand are 76%, 82%, and 85% although they constitute 64% of the general population. The percentages are even lower for the Roma and the Turks, while for the Serbs they almost approximate their percentage in the general population. The only high ranking post in the civil service where Albanians are highly represented is the post of a General/Municipal Secretary where 28% of all such posts are held by Albanians.

More ethnically segregated data on public sector employment is available from the 2010 Ombudsman's Annual Report. Even if the data is not complete⁷ it reveals a similar picture to the data provided by the Ministry of Information Society and Administration. Although the absolute number of Albanians in the civil service has increased, their share of managerial posts in certain areas of the public administration is low. Progress has been made in the employment of Albanian managers in the following institutions: the Cabinet of the President (where 20% of the managerial posts are held by Albanians); the Parliament (23%); the office of the Ombudsman (26%); the Constitutional Court (20%); the Administrative Court (28%); the Public Prosecutor's Office (21%); Secretariat for Implementation of the Framework Agreement (89%); Appellate Courts (19%); the Pension and Health Care Funds (22%); Social Work Centres (23%); elementary schools (28%); high schools (19%). In a number of ministries of the government the percentage of Albanians holding managerial posts is also approximating their share in the general population: Ministry of Education and Science (17%); Ministry of Local Government (20%); and Ministry of Economy (25%). In the other ministries and other public institutions

⁷ The Ombudsman requested information from 886 public institutions; 719 of which responded and 167 did not submit any information.

such as the General Secretariat, the Secretariat for European Issues, First Instance Courts, the Health Care providers and the Public Enterprises, the percentage of Albanians is quite low. The percentages of managerial posts for the Turks and especially Roma are also very low.

The two outlined problems in the overall successful implementation of the principle of equitable representation are different in the effects they have on the various segments of the populations. Hastily employing members of minorities without proper planning of their professional duties makes a mockery of the principle and causes resentment among the majority Macedonians. On the other hand, implementation of the affirmative action style policies only in the low and mid-level posts within the public administration causes frustration among ethnic Albanians as they perceive themselves as inadequate for leadership and the institutions as being solely run by Macedonians. This “master-servant” perception of the public institutions among the Albanians in Macedonia could cause them to challenge the legitimacy of the civil service. Finally, the members of the very small minorities such as the Turks and Roma face even worse circumstances than their Albanian colleagues. For them the implementation of the principle of equitable representation has brought very limited benefits.

Conclusion

The Macedonian example shows that the problems of democratic consolidation in a multi-ethnic society are serious if the minority groups have not achieved equality in the public sector and have been marginalised from the civil administration. Such marginalisation that can lead to ethnic tensions and conflict can be tackled by a thorough program of measures aimed at the speedy integration of the members of the ‘problematic’ community into the mainstream society, the sector of public administration in particular. Successful implementation of affirmative action type of special measures for the marginalised minority is a guarantee that Macedonia will not experience inter-ethnic conflict again. The Macedonian best practice is a novelty in the European context and can be implemented in other countries that have experienced ethnic strife over the status of the minority population. Moreover, it is important to note in this case that the described best practice can create a positive environment for reforms in other areas leading to the attainment of national long term development goals. As society in general will accept the larger role of the non-majority communities in public life, Macedonia’s other marginalised but non-ethnic minorities such as persons with disabilities or the gay and lesbian community should be affected by the reforms in the future and their status will be improved.

In multiethnic societies liberals are concerned about outcomes in which people have fewer resources and opportunities than others when this is due to circumstances

that they had no responsibility for causing. In this context demands by members of systematically and long term disadvantaged ethnocultural minorities for a form of an affirmative action are justifiable. However, once the effects of the long term oppression are mitigated, the provisions for special measures are redundant. This paper discussed the implementation of affirmative action style of policy in Macedonia arguing that it is in need of re-evaluation and modification. Moreover, we have elaborated how the implementation of the principle has made tremendous progress in terms of hiring members of the non-majority ethnic groups in Macedonia to work in the civil service. Yet, despite the progress, outstanding issues remain. In particular, we have discussed how hastily employing members of minorities without proper planning of their professional duties makes a mockery of the principle and causes resentment among the majority Macedonians.

Equally pressing is the issue of the misbalance among members of different ethnic communities employed in the managerial posts of the civil service. Although with the implementation of the principle of equitable representation more Albanians have been appointed to managerial posts, in general their numbers are low in the high levels of civil administration. Other minorities have even fewer members appointed in the core positions within the civil bureaucracy. Even though as a result of the implementation of the principle of equitable representation in the last ten years, today in Macedonia there is almost an equal percentage of civil servants belonging to the different non-majority ethnic groups as the percentage of these ethnic communities is within the general population, the mentioned issues need to be tackled so that we can judge this reform introduced by the Ohrid Framework Agreement as successful.

To recapitulate, the reform of the Macedonian public administration was deemed crucial in order to enhance a sense of co-ownership of the state for the Albanian community. However, the reform has been burdened with difficulties such as the problems inherent in the special measures for minority members group and more importantly, the general economic difficulties of the country and the need to reduce, not increase, the public administration. Furthermore, efforts at accomplishing equitable representation have been estimated to be the most costly aspect of the Ohrid reforms. Therefore, Macedonia's policy makers should take into consideration this discussion regarding affirmative action when further implementing the provisions of the Ohrid Framework Agreement aimed at equitable representation of the members of the non-majority communities.

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DISCUSSION

EU Strategy for the Danube Region

Jaroslav Čmejrek and Blanka Wurst Hašová

Abstract: *The often discussed EU Strategy for the Danube Region draws attention because of several reasons. In the following article the Strategy is being analyzed from two perspectives: (1) from a geopolitical perspective which involves creation of different regional entities in the Central European area, (2) in the Europeanization context where we focus on the analysis of the impacts of the EU structural policy on Member states and consequently their negotiation behaviour patterns in the context of European polity. In parallel, impacts of regional initiatives on European integration process are being analyzed.*

Keywords: *Danube region, EU strategy, europeanisation, regional development*

Introduction

On December 9, 2010, the European Commission introduced a proposal for the so-called Danube Strategy, which, after the Baltic Sea Strategy, is the second attempt to apply a macro-regional approach in the EU. When European Commissioner for Regional Policy Johannes Hahn presented the EU strategy for the Danube Region he highlighted the pioneering nature of this new form of cooperation, which does not consist of the establishment of new institutions or adopting new laws, but rather the more efficient coordination and strengthening of linkages between different strategies and participating parties. Johannes Hahn said: “During the consultation period the Danube states have shown their commitment to the creation of a new macro-region at the highest level. The Strategy and Action Plan we are proposing are based on over 800 submissions from the Region itself. By focusing on the most important issues, such as mobility, energy, pollution, jobs and security, I am convinced that the Strategy will make a real contribution to building a better future for this part of Europe. This second EU macro region will play an important part in pioneering this form of cooperation. I am convinced that the macro-regional approach can bring excellent results, as we are already seeing in the Baltic Sea Region.” (Speech by Commissioner Hahn, December 9, 2010).

The macro-regional strategy, applied first for the Baltic Sea Region and now the Danube Region, is an innovative model of cooperation and coordination within European structures. Some authors even refer to this kind of cooperation as a new

dimension of the EU cohesion policy (Görmar 2010: 577–589). It is characteristic that not only EU Member States are involved in it, but also geographically and politically ‘related’ neighbours. They seek solutions to resolve common social, economic, environmental and cultural problems affecting a particular area – a macro-region. In the EU terminology, a macro-region is defined as a territory which includes several different states or regions facing similar problems, or if these states have one or more common properties and geographic features. The number of member states in the macro-region must be less than the number of Member States of the European Union as a whole (Macro-regional strategies in the EU 2009).

The aim of the macro-regional strategy is to create a framework for cooperation that could lead to concrete solutions of problems which the given macro-region faces in the form of joint projects and more interdependent collaboration. A fundamental feature of the newly-developed macro-regional approach is the ‘3 NO principle’ – financial neutrality (no extra costs), legislative neutrality (no new standards), and last but not least institutional neutrality (no new institutions). Projects implemented within the given strategies should thereby not burden the EU budget, and should rather encourage the most efficient use of financial and human resources and institutional capacity (Ibid.).

While in the case of the Baltic Sea Region strategy, which was initiated in 2009, the search for new forms of cooperation and coordination focused on the question of water quality in the Baltic Sea Region, reducing the flushing of nutrients from agricultural land, planning of transportation infrastructure in the macro-region, linking the Baltic market to energies, as well as on a new, more regional-based approach to fisheries management (EU strategy for the Baltic Sea Region), in the EU Strategy for the Danube Region, the cooperation focuses particularly on the untapped potential of river transportation, underdeveloped infrastructure in the areas of road and rail connections, insufficient coordination in education, research and innovation, but also on the field of environmental threats (EU Strategy for the Danube Region).¹

The EU strategy for the Danube Region consists of four main pillars (Ibid.):

- Interconnecting of the Danube region: increasing mobility, support of sustainable energy, support of culture and tourism.
- Environmental protection of the Danube region: restoring water quality, risk management for the environment and biodiversity protection.

¹ In this context, the EC refers mainly to the ecological disaster that struck Hungary in 2010. Extensive leakage of toxic mud accentuated the need for international cooperation in the liquidation of the consequences of such disasters and their prevention.

- Increase in the prosperity of the Danube region: development of research capacities, education and information technology, support for business competitiveness and investment in the skills of citizens.
- Strengthening the Danube region: increasing institutional capacity, better cooperation in fighting organised crime.

The EU strategy for the Danube Region attracts attention through a number of aspects. In our article, we will try to explain this strategy using a double perspective: (1) A geopolitical or political-geographic perspective, which also includes the formation of various regional bodies in Central Europe, and (2), a Europeanisation perspective, in which we focus on the impact of EU structural policies on member states and their negotiating behaviour in the environment of European polity, and also on the impact that regional initiatives have on the European integration process.

The Danube Region Strategy from a Geopolitical Perspective

The following countries have joined the EU strategy for the Danube Region: Germany, namely Baden Wuerttemberg and Bavaria, Austria, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, Bulgaria, Romania, Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Moldova and Ukraine. Eight of these countries are EU members. Moreover, the EU is holding accession negotiations with Croatia with the premise that the country will join in 2013. Candidate countries include Montenegro, while Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina are also considered potential candidates. The geopolitical analysis of the newly adopted strategy implies that the total composition of the participating states will clearly be predominated by the share of new European Union member states. Of the eight EU members, only two represent the old member states – Germany and Austria. All other participating EU member states – Slovakia, Slovenia, the Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Romania and Hungary – are the latest wave of EU enlargement and evoke the feeling of growing influence of ‘newcomers’ in the hierarchy of EU coordination.

From a geopolitical perspective, within the historical development of the European continent can be seen a variety of macro-regional and transnational formations which are mutually distinct through their territorial scope and layout, primarily through the nature and depth of the integration process. We must not lose sight of the fact that a certain amount of integration work is manifested in each region. The interconnectivity of an area is used to define the characteristics of the region as a concept, and features of bounded areas are unifying indicators or principles that distinguish it from other regions.

Simultaneously, the region is characterised by a certain openness and diversity of forms of actions which the region creates and reproduces (Jones, Jones, Woods 2004: 174).

The European continent is characterised by the formation of transnational political regions. A classic example of such a region is Scandinavia. A transnational region may of course also acquire the form of a sovereign state, as in the case of Great Britain or Spain. But it can also be a region vaguely geographically specified and politically defined. This is particularly the case of Central Europe, which appears in a variety of concepts, from the German Central Europe (Mitteleuropa, or Zentraleuropa, Zwischeneuropa) to Central Europe understood as a bridge or a divide between East and West, or between Germany and German-speaking parts of Europe and cultural and political areas of Orthodox Christianity in Eastern Europe and the Balkans (Heffernan 2000: 41–45; Hnízdo 1995: 81–85).

Without resorting to cheap analogies, it cannot be overlooked that with its territorial layout, the EU strategy for the Danube region recalls one of the alternatives of the transnational Central European region. It is geographically defined by the Alps and the Danube and extends to the Adriatic and the Balkans. Historically, this concept represented the Habsburg monarchy, and even its demise did not mean that the factors of integration in this region completely ceased to function. Their revival occurred in connection with the fall of the Iron Curtain. On this basis, Central European regional cooperation began to be institutionally formed first as the Danube-Adriatic Group or ‘Quadrangone’ (1989). After the accession of Czechoslovakia (1990), it was transformed to the Pentagonal and to a Hexagonal after the accession of Poland (1991). In 1992, in response to the disintegration of Yugoslavia and other problems, it transformed into the Central European Initiative (Waisová 2003: 184–194).

In a comparison of countries engaged in the macro-regional EU strategy for the Danube region, the countries involved in the Central European Initiative show a certain overlapping of territorial layouts of both regional formations. Of the 18 member states of the Central European Initiative, five of them are not involved in the EU strategy for the Danube Region: Albania, Belarus, Italy, Macedonia / FYROM and Poland. On the other side, of the states that are not members of the Central European Initiative, two German States – Bavaria and Baden-Württemberg became involved in the macro-regional EU strategy for the Danube Region.

A content comparison has proven to be interesting. Compliance can be found in a number of topics: human resources development, sustainable energy, climate and environmental protection, multimodal transport, information society, tourism and intercultural cooperation. In addition, in the structure of the Central European Initiative there also exist working groups focused on sustainable agriculture, media,

inter-regional and cross-border cooperation, science and technology, business development and minorities. In contrast, within the EU strategy for the Danube Region also appear topics such as support for business competitiveness, an increase in institutional capacity and cooperation, cooperation in the area of security and the battle against organised crime.

Since 2005, within the Central European Initiative, the Czech Republic has mainly been involved in the development of human resources, and the annual CEI 'HR Forum' conference is organised annually in Prague. Within the EU macro-regional strategy for the Danube Region, according to available data, the Czech Republic has focused mainly on the energy sector (Cohesion policy – Macro-regional Strategy, MRD Czech Republic).

Danube Strategy and Europeanisation

The concept of Europeanisation has a wide range of meanings and is used in different contexts. The prevailing approach gives a direct relation of Europeanisation to European integration. It is not simply that structures of governance at the European level are created within EU institutional developments, but also the influence of European integration on domestic politics of member or candidate countries in the dimension of *politics*, *polity* and *policy* (Dančák, Fiala, Hloušek, 2005: 19n.). The structure of governing institutions at the European level creates a special environment in which even the inter-political players must orient themselves, and must adapt their objectives, strategies and functional and organisational structure to this environment.

In connection with our theme, the impact of the EU structural policy comes to the forefront, which belongs to the key mechanisms of the Europeanisation process. Member states, primarily those who have been preparing to join the EU – if they wanted to be compatible with EU structural policy and use its benefits – had to strengthen their administrative capacities and acquire the principles of economic and social cohesion. In post-communist countries, all of this had been associated with the democratisation of institutions. The European regional development policy focused on reducing social and economic disparities in Europe through the redistribution of executive power between the supranational and subnational levels, prompting the need for coordination by national governments. Burszt and McGermott claim that it was the monitoring and assistance mechanisms of the European Union that largely contributed to the solid democratisation of bodies of countries in the former Soviet bloc. The fact that these countries are forced to expose their institutions to external inspections leads to the conversion of existing structures into new, more complex institutions, supported by more able officials and the participation of other public and private parties (Burszt and McGermott 2008).

The introduction of territorial development institutions in Central European countries has opened an entirely new field of political action. None of these countries had previously known regional development policies in the spirit of the EU approach, and the relevant institutions did not even exist in them. Until that time, these countries exercised only an incoherent approach to interregional differences and uncoordinated sector programs. Officials were not sufficiently equipped for decision making on a decentralised level. In contrast, structural policy meant the need to create new institutions, training of officials who would be able to coordinate and implement comprehensive programs to administer a plethora of projects and follow clearly set criteria by which the supply of European money was conditioned (Burszt and McGermott 2008; Pleines and Bušková 2007: 37–50). In member and candidate countries, the EU structural policy forced the building of institutions and regional development and led to increasing the adaptability of public administration and capacity officials on the regional and local level, as well as support of the development of non-state parties, mainly civic societies (Pleines and Bušková 2007: 37–50). The principles of EU structural policies have led to the fact that national governments were unable to use the European funds in the manner they had become accustomed to – centralised and hierarchical. Through the so-called ‘FDI’ – ‘Foreign Direct Involvement’, which leads to the integration of a wide variety of players, it rather caused a significant strengthening of ‘bottom-up Europeanisation’ (Burszt and McGermott 2008).

Another aspect is the role of the Presidency, which has and exposes new EU member states (initially Slovenia in 2008, then the Czech Republic in 2009 and Hungary and Poland in 2011) to demanding tests. While regional development has been decisive for the process of local institutionalisation within the respective countries, the Presidency shifted the adaptation process to the level of ‘Brussels’. If, in the context of regional development, we follow the development of human resources, the strengthening of their administrative capacity, ability to analyse, monitor and evaluate European projects, primarily the ability to coordinate policies between the relevant local, regional and national levels, we can then see a clear parallel between coordination at the national and multinational levels – in this case European, language development, negotiation skills of officials and the need for administrative-organisational coverage of presidential events.

Ondřej Císař, who relies on the theories of Andrew Moravcsik and Robert Putnam, argues that the interaction between the domestic political arena and international environment in which heads of state interact plays a crucial role (compare Císař 2002: 50–67 and Putnam 1998: 427–460). In this sense, attention is focused on the method of the creation of national positions and the ability to promote them on an international, in this case European, level (Císař 2002: o. c.). Moravcsik’s

‘sequential analysis’ presumes that national interests are first formed at the national level, and they then enter the international arena as the bargaining power of national governments (Ibid.).

According to M. Terrasi (2000), a similar development can be traced back to the seventies with ‘old’ member states. The impact of European regional convergence can be divided into two periods. In the first period – from the conclusion of the Rome Agreements to the 1970s – there was greater homogeneity of the member states. Terrasi argues that national factors played a crucial role during this period when there was a clear process of regional convergence. We can then deduce that regional convergence conditionally arises from national convergence (Ibid.).

The development potential that was generated through the structural policy was considerable, but new member states failed to make full use of it. The so-called negative international political externalities then induced new EU member states to strengthen cooperation in the form of building coalitions to eliminate or minimise the negative costs and, adversely, to intensify the positive impacts of cooperation, which are then ultimately reflected on the domestic political scene, strengthen the position of national governments and facilitate their efforts to maximise their control over their domestic policy. According to Moravcsik, national governments are therefore the most important aggregators of the preferences of domestic political players (Císař 2002: 50–67).

Whilst the European Union supported (or at least tried to support) democratisation of the decision-making process in regional development by incorporating diverse players – whether we take into account civil society, NGOs or the private sector – the transformed economies were able to enhance their capacity to promote their interests. As soon as assistance and monitoring became multifunctional, regional players learned to use the ‘multi-level governance’ environment to gather information, in particular to engage in international groupings that help solve problems at local and regional levels. Evidence of the mobilisation of regions is, for example, found in the fact that many of them began to open their own representations in Brussels independently of central governments. Examples include the regional units of the Czech Republic or Hungary, which as of 2004 or 2005 opened up a number of regional representations in Brussels (e.g. opening of a representation of the Central Bohemian Region in Brussels on March 16, 2004, in connection with the preparation of new operational programs for the period of 2007–2013).

The shift is obvious: While in 2005, according to Burzst and McDermott, the administrative and monitoring capacities at the local level were incapable of negotiations (Burszt and McGermott 2008), the EU strategy for the Danube Region, which was adopted in late 2010, in the words of Commissioner Hahn, is already based on

800 proposals from the region as cited previously (Speech by Commissioner Hahn, December 9, 2010).

Conclusion

According to an assessment report of the European Commission on the Baltic Strategy, which was published in June 2011, the new dimension of the European cohesion policy is moving in the right direction as specified in the key documents. It must be stressed that although the proposal is submitted by the European Commission, it is done at the instigation of local and regional entities that processed their request in accordance with national interests and representation, and were able to assert their vision. The final proposal of the strategy is the result of public consultations and a number of debates within conferences attended by member states, regional and local authorities and other stakeholders. This fact supports the claim that the new member states have achieved a new level of institutional capacity thanks to structural policy, and are therefore able to take a new position within EU decision-making processes.

In a sense, it is possible to state that right now, in the mid-term interval, these ‘newcomers’ are able to efficiently create and promote their national positions on the European field. Thanks to the structural policy, the ‘newcomers’ mobilised their own administrative-human and economic-administrative resources. This created or deepened the relevant institutional administration, which helped create a more efficient mechanism of the coordination of the interests of the state on the national, but primarily the local level. Another aspect was the performance of the Presidency, which further strengthened this trend.

However, the question remains to what extent is this process efficient, and how far-reaching and beneficial are its implications for new member states as such. If we take into account the ‘3 NO’ principle, the aforementioned preservation of financial neutrality – no additional costs, legislative neutrality – no new standards, and last but not least institutional neutrality – no new institutions (Cohesion policy – Macro-regional Strategy, MRD Czech Republic), upon which the macro-regional strategy stands, doubt can be cast on the success of the real impact of the growing influence of new member states.

A number of other questions arise: Is the formulation of EU strategy for the Danube Region a consequence of the effects of geopolitical factors that were exercised in historical periods, and which are now beginning to be re-enforced in the new arrangements within the European integration process? In this context, it is worth considering why this step – the initiation of cooperation in the Danube Region through the macro-regional strategy – is taking place right now? What is the geographical, economic and political-institutional dimension? Why have these states

(similarly to the Baltic States) chosen the model of ‘macro-regional’ cooperation and not tied-in to the previous models of regional cooperation within the EU?

The Czech Republic, which is currently involved in both macro-regional strategies – the EU strategy for the Baltic Sea Region and the EU strategy for the Danube Region – holds the following position: “The Czech Republic supports the macro-regional strategy as one of the possible forms of territorial cooperation. This should, however, not become the only model of cooperation between countries within the cohesion policy, the role of the macro-strategy and their future is linked to the debate on the future of the cohesion policy, which we cannot anticipate” (Macro-regional Strategy, MRD Czech Republic).

Opinions on the real benefits and future macro-regional strategies are not uniform. But it is evident that regional development had a direct impact on the focus of macro-regional strategies within the EU, as well as on the method of coordination and institutional securing within the member states themselves. Due to the newly gained experience of Central and Eastern European countries in the context of structural policies and performance of the Presidency in the EU Council, the influence of local entities within European Union policymaking was strengthened. The EU strategy for the Danube Region is a clear example of this.

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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.

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Notes
