POLITICS IN CENTRAL EUROPE

The Journal of the Central European Political Science Association

Volume 12 • Number 2 • September 2016 • ISSN 1801-3422

ESSAYS

DISCUSSION

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METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY PRAGUE PRESS

POLITICS
in Central Europe

The Journal of the Central European Political Science Association

Volume 12 Number 2 September 2016 ISSN 1801-3422

EDITORIAL

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Politics in Central Europe – The Journal of Central European Political Science Association is the official Journal of the Central European Political Science Association (CEPSA). *Politics in Central Europe* is a biannual (June and December), double-blind, peer-reviewed publication.

Publisher:

Metropolitan University Prague Press
Dubečská 900/10, 100 31 Praha 10-Strašnice (Czech Republic)

Printed by:

Togga, s. r. o., Volutová 2524/12, 158 00 Praha (Czech Republic)

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ISSN 1801-3422
MK ČR E 18556

Politics in Central Europe is listed in the internationally recognised databases of ERIH plus and DOAJ (Directory of Open Access Journals)

The articles published in this scientific review are also published in De Gruyter, http://www.degruyter.com

ISSN 1801-3422 ČÍSLO REGISTRACE MK ČR E 18556

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ESSAYS

Three technocratic cabinets in the Czech Republic: a symptom of party failure?[1]

MILOŠ BRUNCLÍK

DE GRUYTER OPEN

Politics in Central Europe (ISSN: 1801-3422)
Vol. 12, No. 2
DOI: 10.1515/pce-2016-0010

Abstract: *This article compares three technocratic cabinets that were appointed in the Czech Republic. Its aim is to determine to what extent the cabinets can be understood as a failure of political parties. The article outlines the concept of party failure. It argues that patterns of party failure can be found in all cases. However, in the last case—the technocratic cabinet of Jiří Rusnok—party failure was only partial and indirect; its technocratic cabinet cannot be interpreted as resulting from an inability of the parties to form a partisan cabinet, but rather it resulted from the president's imposition of a technocratic cabinet. This imposition took place against the will of the parliamentary parties that sought to form a cabinet composed of party politicians immediately or following early elections.*

Key words: ***Czech Republic, technocratic cabinet, caretaker cabinet, interim cabinet***

Introduction

Since the establishment of the Czech Republic as an independent country in 1993, 14 executive cabinets have been appointed. Three of these cabinets are so-called technocratic cabinets: Josef Tošovský (1998), Jan Fischer (2009–2010) and Jiří Rusnok (2013–2014).[2] Technocratic cabinets are clearly part of a regular

1 This article has been prepared within research project no. 15-01907S (title: "Does Direct Election Matter? Analyzing Effect of Direct Election of President on the Working of the Political Regime in the Czech Republic"). The project is sponsored by the Grant Agency of the Czech Republic

2 If we include the era of post-1989 Czechoslovakia, the cabinet led by M. Čalfa between 1990 and 1992 can also be considered technocratic following Čalfa's departure from the Communist Party in January 1990 (cf. Hloušek and Kopeček 2012: 44–51).

pattern in Czech government politics.[3] To be sure, technocratic cabinets are not unique to Czech politics. They have appeared in several other European polities. Most were appointed in post-communist countries, such as Bulgaria, Lithuania, Romania, Russia, Ukraine, Moldova, but other examples of such cabinets can be found in Greece, Finland, Portugal, and Italy (cf. Pastorella 2013, 2014, 2015; McDonnell and Valbruzzi 2014).

Nowadays political parties "are neither liked, nor trusted" (Mair 2008: 230). They face legitimacy problems as well as difficulties in solving major problems of current societies. Faced with complex challenges and problems, partisan cabinets might fail to respond to them (Lawson and Merkl 1988). Hence, technocratic cabinets are often formed precisely because they are expected to outperform partisan cabinets in the quality of their policies and outcomes. Several recent examples of technocratic cabinets in Italy (the Monti cabinet in 2011), Greece (Thanou Christophilou's cabinet in 2015), and Bulgaria (cabinets Raykov 2013, Oresharski 2013–2014 and Bliznashki 2014) were appointed in times of economic crises (cf. Pastorella 2014; Marangoni and Verzichelli 2015; Pastorella 2015). These cabinets largely consisted of economic experts and crisis managers who were supposed to avert imminent economic disasters. Technocratic cabinets are also often appointed following a major crisis caused by a political (e.g. corruption) scandal (cf. McDonnell and Valbruzzi 2014: 666).[4] Parties may also fail either to establish or to keep a partisan cabinet. For example, the Greek technocratic cabinets of Grivas (1989), Zolotas (1989), and Pikrammenos (2012) were appointed once parties failed to form a cabinet following parliamentary elections (Pastorella 2013: 16–19). In Finland several technocratic cabinets were appointed following the break-up of a ruling coalition or a defeat inflicted upon a cabinet by opposition parties (Kuusisto 1958: 343–344; Jussila 1999: 289).

Therefore, technocratic cabinets (composed of non-partisan experts) might be perceived as symptoms of (or different forms of) party failure, and they might present a challenge (as well as an alternative) to partisan cabinets (for discussion see Rose 1969; Laver and Shepsle 1994: 5–8, Bermeo 2003; Mair 2008; Bäck et al. 2009; Schleiter 2013: 38; Van Biezen 2014; McDonnell and Valbruzzi 2014; Pastorella 2015; Brunclík 2015a).

Hence, we hypothesize that the three technocratic cabinets in the Czech Republic were the results of party failure (cf. Hloušek and Kopeček 2012:

3 These cabinets have an archetype in the period of pre-war Czechoslovakia between 1918 and 1938, when technocratic governments were occasionally appointed to bridge a period of cabinet and party crises. However, these cabinets were established in a different political and constitutional setting. The roots of the tradition of technocratic cabinets can be found in the Austro-Hungarian era (Hloušek and Kopeček 2012: 35–43).

4 E.g. the Ciampi cabinet in Italy (cf. Pederzoli and Guarnieri 1997) and the Berov cabinet in Bulgaria (Pastorella 2013: 14).

88–89). The article begins by defining what a technocratic cabinet is as well as conceptualizing party failure. The crux of the article is an analysis of the three technocratic cabinets through the concept of party failure. We argue that in the first two cases (1998 and 2009) one can observe a double party failure: the parties caused the fall of a previous partisan cabinet and subsequently they were unable to produce a new partisan cabinet. Thus the 1998 and 2009 cabinets were direct products of party failure. In 2013, the parties also caused the resignation of the partisan cabinet, but unlike in previous cases, they were not directly responsible for a new technocratic cabinet, which can be best understood as a cabinet imposed by the president contrary to the will of the political parties.

Technocratic cabinet: definition and types

Technocratic cabinets are mostly described in terms of three key variables: non-partisan composition, limited remit and limited term of office (cf. Herman and Pope 1973; Diermeier and Roozendaal 1998; Pastorella 2013, 2014; Hloušek and Kopeček 2014; McDonnell and Valbruzzi 2014; Brunclík 2015a). However, the only true defining feature is the composition. This means that technocratic cabinets are defined by their non-partisan nature. How about cabinets composed of both partisans and non-partisans? We follow McDonnell and Valbruzzi who still classify cabinets in which political representatives outnumber technocrats as technocratic ones, on the condition that they are led by a technocrat. They call these cabinets "technocrat-led governments" (McDonnell and Valbruzzi 2014). The role of the prime minister is key to understanding the technocratic cabinet. In short: for a government to be classified as technocratic, its prime minister must be a technocrat (i.e. a non-partisan figure).[5]

However, one could object that a prime minister may be a technocrat, because of *current* non-membership in any political party, but that same person *had been* a political party member, who might still have informal ties to the party of former membership. This pattern has frequently appeared in post-communist countries, including the Czech Republic. Indeed, all Czech technocratic prime ministers had been Communist Party (KSČ) members. In addition, Jiří Rusnok was also a member of the Czech Social Democratic Party (ČSSD) between 1998 and 2010. However, the key to our classification of technocratic cabinets is whether (or not) a person was a party member at the moment of becoming prime minister.

Our operational definition of technocratic cabinets is formal (based on a non-partisan prime minister) and does not take account the nature of the

5 To be clear, significant differences (in terms of the share of non-partisans) among various technocratic cabinets in terms of "partisanship" can be found among various technocratic cabinets (McDonnell and Valbruzzi 2014: 657).

relationship of prime ministers to political parties. To be sure, technocratic cabinets are not necessarily "neutral," but often have close ties to political parties. Indeed, even technocratic ministers, notably prime ministers, need to have good relationships with the political parties that occupy the most seats in national parliaments, which have the power to grant confidence to cabinets (as well as withdraw it from them). Conversely, some politicians operate almost like politically neutral technocrats (see Meynaud 1968: 21–70; cf. Hloušek and Kopeček 2012: 15–16).

The two remaining variables-limited remit and limited term of office—are not defining features of technocratic cabinets but can serve as important variables to show variation among technocratic cabinets and to create typologies of technocratic cabinets. As far as limited remit is concerned, Alan Kuusisto as well as McDonnell and Valbruzzi pointed out that technocratic cabinets should not be confused with caretaker cabinets, because the meaning of the latter is different in principle (Kuusisto 1958: 342; McDonnell and Valbruzzi 2014: 661–662). Whereas technocratic cabinets are defined by non-partisan composition, caretaker cabinets are defined by limited remit, i.e. the limited scope of activities the cabinets are permitted to do. It is expected that the caretaker cabinets "should simply maintain the status quo" (McDonnell and Valbruzzi 2014: 664; Golder 2010: 4).[6] However, it remains unclear where the dividing line between maintaining and changing the status quo should be drawn. In political practice there are two ways to constrain the remit. The first type is derived from formal constitutional provisions. For example, according to the Portuguese constitution, "after its dismissal, the Government has to limit itself to those acts which are strictly necessary to ensure the management of public business" (art. 189/5). Similar provisions can be found in the Danish (art. 15) or Slovak (art. 115 and art. 119) constitutions. Interestingly enough, the Greek Constitution explicitly supposes appointment of a technocratic (and at the same time interim) cabinet, if political parties fail to form a standard partisan cabinet. In this case, the president "shall entrust the President of the Supreme Administrative Court or of the Supreme Civil and Criminal Court or of the Court of Auditors to form a Cabinet as widely accepted as possible to carry out elections and dissolve Parliament" (art. 37).[7]

The second type of constraint results from a deal made by political parties which agree that the technocratic cabinet they shape will not make changes to the status quo. Although the technocratic cabinets are usually constrained in terms of the policies they are allowed to carry out, there are also technocratic cabinets whose remit is not limited (cf. Brunclík 2015a).

6 Some authors even assume that caretaker cabinets are partisan cabinets (Laver and Budge 2002: 12; Laver – Shepsle 1994: 291–292; cf. Davis et al. 2001).

7 The Croatian constitution has a similar provision (art. 112).

Similarly, although it is often assumed that technocratic cabinets are constrained in terms of the amount of time they may remain in office (Herman and Pope 1973: 205; Schleiter and Morgan-Jones 2009: 672), in principle there are no automatic reasons to assume that the term of office of a technocratic cabinet is always limited. Cabinets with limited term of office can be labeled "interim cabinets". Again, the interim cabinets can be led by a non-partisan prime minister and can be composed of non-partisans. On the other hand, the interim cabinets can be purely partisan ones too. Furthermore, a limited term of office may not automatically translate into limited remit. Some interim technocratic cabinets are established as "crisis-liquidation cabinets" whose task is not to "mind the store," but instead to take drastic measures and push through important reforms. The Monti cabinet in Italy is a case in point (Pasquino and Valbruzzi 2012; Tebaldi 2014).

How should the interim cabinets be defined? The auxiliary criterion is the half term: a cabinet is considered interim when it assumes office with the knowledge that its term of office will be less than half of the constitutional authority's term.[8] On the other hand, a cabinet that has been in power less than half the term, because it was forced to resign earlier than scheduled elections, cannot be labeled as interim if it was originally expected that its mandate would be longer than half of its constitutional term.

As this chapter has showed several different term lengths are often associated with technocratic cabinets. Besides "caretaker" or "interim" cabinets, technocratic cabinets are often labeled as "apolitical" or "non-political". However, these labels are imprecise, if not misleading. As Jean Meynaud explained: "when he becomes a technocrat, the expert becomes political" (Meynaud 1964: 262), which means that although the technocrat is an expert a given area, that technocrat "does politics" upon entering a leading executive position (cf. Meynaud 1964: 259; McDonnel and Valbruzzi 2014: 657). Technocratic prime ministers and ministers occupy top executive positions (which are by definition political); they bear political responsibility towards parliaments and, in a number of areas, it is almost impossible not to make political decisions. Even in cases of tasks of a seemingly administrative nature, cabinets often need to choose one of many potential solutions (and justify it vis-á-vis general public). Also, technocratic cabinets may justify their decision by "expert-based" arguments, but such a decision could conceal political and ideological motives or instructions given by political parties, which hold the fate of the technocratic cabinet in their hands. On the other hand, it is impossible to deny that some cabinets tend to behave rather like administrators (keep running administrative tasks

8 This institution is usually a parliament, but in some cases it can be also a president. For example, prime ministers in Ukraine (art. 115) and in Russia (art. 116) submit their resignation in a direct relation to a presidential election. A similar provision (in the form of a constitutional convention) is also applied in France.

of the executive) and not as politicians (changing the status quo and making important decisions that affect their polity). Hence, we believe that all the cabinets are political irrespective of their (partisan vs. non-partisan) composition.

Defining party failure

In general, all cabinets are formed following either parliamentary elections or the resignation of a previous cabinet. Analyses of the reasons behind cabinet termination have outlined a number of factors that lead to government resignation (e.g. Von Beyme 1985; Budge and Keman 1990; Woldendorp, Keman and Budge 2000; Strøm et al. 2003; McDonnell and Valbruzzi 2014: 666). In European countries, cabinet resignation is caused by three general events: 1) scheduled elections, 2) presidential decision to dismiss the cabinet[9] or 3) partisan reasons. As for the last category, there are three types of such reasons. First, a cabinet resigns because of disagreements within the ruling coalition, which eventually dissolves. Second, a cabinet is defeated by parliamentary opposition by losing a) a vote of confidence, b) a vote of no-confidence, or c) an important vote on a bill that has been vital for the cabinet (cf. Strøm et al. 2003: 152). Third, a cabinet resigns because coalition parties or their leading figures face a serious legitimacy crisis, e.g. following a scandal (cf. Pederzoli and Guarnieri 1997; Hloušek and Kopeček, 2014; McDonnell and Valbruzzi 2014: 666).

Although many party cabinets' breakdowns are caused by party failure, the concept of party failure is not another term for breakdown of a party cabinet, since cabinets also terminate in line with the parliamentary term of office, and in some countries they might be recalled by the president. Furthermore, besides elections and changes of coalition parties, a change in prime minister is also generally regarded as a reason for the rise of a new cabinet (for a discussion on cabinet change and durability see Lijphart 1984; Strøm 1984: 201; Strøm 1990: 57). However, it would be erroneous to label the resignation of a prime minister because of health reasons (or the death of the prime minister) as party failure.

To be clear, the resignation of a partisan cabinet does not necessarily imply the formation of a technocratic cabinet. Indeed, in most cases a partisan cabinet is succeeded by another partisan cabinet. Therefore, the fall of a partisan cabinet is only the first step towards the potential formation of a technocratic cabinet. Thus, we shall focus on situations in which no partisan cabinet is appointed following the resignation of a previous partisan cabinet. Two general reasons can be distinguished as to why a new partisan cabinet is not appointed. First, political parties may be unable to form a partisan cabinet. This means that parties have a real chance to produce a partisan cabinet, but they fail to do so

9 Here we consider only those cases in which the independent prerogative of the president can dismiss the cabinet.

(e.g. because of a substantial fragmentation of the parliamentary party system, hostile relations among them or among party leaders, lack of a suitably qualified personnel or so). Second, parties may not be allowed to form a partisan cabinet. It is necessary to emphasize that the government formation process in most European countries is not solely in the hands of parliament (or parliamentary parties); instead, the process should be understood as bargaining between a parliament and a head of state. The role of the head of state in the government formation process is often neglected since it is implicitly assumed that the procedure is entirely in the hands of the parliamentary parties. Indeed, as P. Schleiter puts it, "the study of cabinet formation, in particular in parliamentary democracies, but to a significant extent also in presidential democracies, has become virtually synonymous with coalition studies" (Schleiter 2010; see also Schleiter and Morgan-Jones 2009).[10] However, in a number of countries presidents are involved in the government formation process and may prevent parties from forming a partisan cabinet (Brunclík 2015b).

A simple typology of cabinet turnover as well as party failure can be drawn from the discussion above (see Table 1 below).

Table 1: Patterns of cabinet turnover and party failure in relation to the rise of technocratic cabinets[11]

		1st step: resignation of previous cabinet due to:		
		partisan reasons	presidential dismissal	scheduled elections
2nd step: parties are to form a partisan cabinet	not able	(1) double	(2) single direct	(3) single direct
	not allowed	(4) single indirect	(5) none	(6) none

Source: Author

First, there is a double party failure (cell 1). It means that the parties were directly responsible for the fall of the previous cabinet, and they subsequently failed to produce a new partisan cabinet. Second, there is a single direct failure (cells 2 and 3). Although, the parties did not cause the resignation of a previ-

10 In exceptional cases, parties are unwilling to form a partisan cabinet. This situation might appear unlikely and illogical. However, in some situations parties do have reasons to give up forming a partisan cabinet. An almost textbook case of this situation occurred in Italy in 2011, when the Monti technocratic cabinet was established. At that time Italy was plagued by a deep financial crisis. Simultaneously, parliamentary political parties were refusing to accept government responsibility because it was clear that the administration would have to push through very unpopular and painful measures to stabilize the Italian economy and public budgets. Thus, the parties conceded the reins of government to Monti's technocratic government, formed mainly by the president (Zulianello 2013).

11 The table does not cover special situations (e.g. death of the prime minister, cabinet resignation due to mass demonstrations, and strikes, etc.).

ous cabinet (i.e. it resigned either because of scheduled elections or because of a president who has enough power to dismiss the cabinet), they were unable to form a new partisan cabinet, even though they had an opportunity to do so. Third, there is a single indirect failure (cell 4). It means that the parties were directly responsible for the fall of the previous partisan cabinet, but they were subsequently (during the government formation process) prevented from making a new partisan cabinet, because a (presidential) technocratic cabinet of the president's own making was imposed. Finally, the remaining cells (5 and 6) show situations in which parties do not fail and cannot be blamed for the rise of a technocratic cabinet. Neither were the parties directly responsible for the fall of the previous partisan cabinet, nor were they allowed to form a new partisan cabinet.

As shown above, the fact that a technocratic cabinet is formed does not necessarily mean that the parties failed. Moreover, the existence of a technocratic cabinet does not necessarily mean that parties have no influence upon the technocratic cabinet and its composition and policies. First, the cabinet remains accountable to the parliament in which political parties still dominate. The cabinet is highly constrained if it fails to find parliamentary support to get its legislative proposals passed. In addition, it can be forced to step down once it has been defeated by the parliamentary parties.[12] Second, and more importantly, even if the parties failed to produce a partisan cabinet, they might exert a significant degree of control over the technocratic cabinet in the government formation process[13] as well as in formulating policies and priorities of the cabinet. In sum, the government formation process might be a good opportunity for the parties to control a technocratic cabinet's composition and priorities. The parties can also control its policies, since the cabinet is constantly dependent on parliamentary parties as far as its legislative proposals are concerned.

The concept of "party failure" (defined in terms of a) partisan reasons for the cabinet resignation, b) party inability to form a new partisan cabinet, and c) a combination of the two previous possibilities) is clearly different from an earlier meaning of this term. In their now classic work Lawson and Merkl (1988) analyze the phenomenon of major decline of traditional parties, rise of minor parties as well as single-issue movements that challenge key political parties. However, our concept does not necessarily refer to the collapse of parties or party systems. For example, a vote of confidence may have nothing to

12 For example, the Portuguese technocratic cabinet led by Carlos Mota Pinto was forced to resign when it was unable to find parliamentary support for its proposals (Magone 2003: 552–553; Costa Pinto and De Almeida 2008: 154).

13 In a number of countries with positive investiture rules all the cabinets are obliged to win support of the parliamentary majority (including in the Czech Republic). Thus parties can have at least some leverage in the government formation process. On the other hand, some other countries apply negative formation rules in which constitutions do not require that a new cabinet must demonstrate that it is supported (or at least tolerated) by a parliamentary majority (see Bergman 1993).

do with a party collapse or crisis. On the other hand, a legitimacy crisis is one partisan reason that may indicate a serious party crisis, or even a crisis in the party system as a whole. For example, it is not by chance that the technocratic cabinet of Carlo Ciampi—who became the first technocratic prime minister in over a century—was appointed following a gigantic corruption scandal that hit the Italian party system hard (Pederzoli and Guarnieri 1997). In this perspective it is interesting to note that all Czech technocratic cabinets were appointed following the fall of a cabinet led by the Civic Democratic Party (ODS), which was plagued by various kinds of internal problems. In at least two cases the fall of the cabinet was caused by serious scandals and a legitimacy crisis of the party (cf. Hloušek and Kopeček 2012: 88–91).

Institutional setting of the Czech Republic and the three technocratic cabinets

Before we start analyzing the three technocratic cabinets, it is necessary to introduce the Czech institutional setting—notably the rules regulating the government formation process and the position of the president within the Czech constitutional system.

The 1993 Constitution of the Czech Republic provides for a parliamentary regime with a two-chamber parliament and a two-part executive. The lower parliamentary house (the Chamber of Deputies) is the dominant legislative institution. It has the power to override a veto by the upper chamber (the Senate) in common legislation, whereas constitutional amendments must be approved by both parliamentary chambers. In addition, it has control powers over the cabinet, the dominant part of the executive. The executive has two parts: the president and the government. In general, the latter bears responsibility for most steps taken by the former. The government is responsible for daily politics and state administration. The government is exclusively accountable to the lower chamber. In contrast, the president carries out mostly ceremonial and notary functions of a head of state. Still, the president has some important powers (cf. Kopeček and Mlejnek 2013). Furthermore, the president's position within the constitutional framework was strengthened by a 2012 constitutional amendment stipulating election of the president by direct popular vote.

The president's position in the government formation process is one of the key roles of the post. The government and its composition depend on the results of the elections to the Chamber of Deputies, which passes motion of confidence in the government. It can also force the government to resign through a vote of no-confidence. Thus, the parties that command the majority of the seats in the Chamber of Deputies are most likely the winners of the government formation process. The Czech government formation process has some peculiar features that give the president more leverage than presidents in many other European

countries. The constitution provides the president with relatively wide discretion in the government formation process. It allows the president to appoint the prime minister and—upon the latter's proposal—other ministers. In formal terms, the president may appoint the prime minister at will because the Constitution does not stipulate any further conditions. All in all, the president is not constitutionally constrained when appointing the prime minister, except for the fact that the new cabinet must ask the Chamber of Deputies for confidence and a purely presidential cabinet (whose composition and policies were determined only by the president) may be defeated in the vote. However, the Czech constitutional investiture procedure is characterized by "weak positive rules" (cf. Brunclík 2015b): every government that has been formed is subject to a vote of confidence, but unlike investiture rules in many other countries, the government may assume its functions immediately after the appointment. A parliamentary vote of confidence follows no later than 30 days. Even if the cabinet fails to win the vote of confidence, it may remain in office until a new cabinet is appointed. But a new cabinet has to be appointed again by the president, who in practice may keep the defeated cabinet in power for a long time since the Constitution does not stipulate any exact deadlines for appointing a new cabinet. As it will be shown below, this wide discretion, which gives the president significant power in the government formation process, was fully used when the Rusnok cabinet was appointed. The constitution stipulates that the president "appoints and recalls the Prime Minister and other members of the government and accepts their resignations, recalls the government and accepts its resignation" (art. 62). However, most constitutional experts argue that the president alone is not allowed to recall the cabinet. The Constitution is mostly interpreted as a system where the survival of the cabinet rests in the hands of the Chamber of Deputies, and the president only formally confirms cabinet resignations (enforced, for example, by a vote of no-confidence). In addition, in constitutional practice up to now, the president has never attempted to unilaterally recall a cabinet. On the other hand, one minority expert opinion argues that art. 62 should be interpreted literally: the president is entitled to recall the prime minister and the cabinet. And the president can do so at any time (Kudrna 2013).

Josef Tošovský

Josef Tošovský's technocratic cabinet was appointed following the resignation of the right-wing, three-party minority coalition led by Václav Klaus. The minority coalition was composed of Klaus's Civic Democratic Party (ODS) and two junior parties: the Civic Democratic Alliance (ODA) and the Christian Democrats (KDU-ČSL). As early as 1996 and especially in 1997 the ODS faced accusations of unclear party financing. The party failed to explain the origins of several

significant financial contributions. Speculations also appeared around Klaus himself. Media speculated about his alleged Swiss bank account that was used for illegal funding of the ODS (Kmenta 2000). The ODS's as well as Klaus's reputation suffered significantly. As soon as the ministers of the KDU-ČSL and the ODA left the cabinet in a protest against the ODS scandals, Klaus decided to resign on 30 November 1997 (cf. Brunclík 2008: 289; Kopeček 2015: 28–30).

The resignation of the Klaus cabinet, the legitimacy crisis of the ODS, its split[14] as well as weakness of the left-wing opposition prevented parliamentary parties from forming a viable majority partisan cabinet. Hence, the political crisis cleared the way for an initiative by President Václav Havel who entrusted the KDU-ČSL's chairman Josef Lux to explore various scenarios of future cabinets. Lux's mission was accomplished on 17 December 1997 when the president, who was highly critical of Klaus and supportive of a non-partisan solution to the crisis, appointed Josef Tošovský, the Governor of the Czech National Bank, to establish a technocratic cabinet. The Tošovský cabinet was supported mainly by the Freedom Union (a splinter from the ODS), the ODA and the KDU-ČSL. On the other hand, the ODS as well as some ČSSD MPs were prepared to vote against the cabinet in the upcoming motion of confidence. Havel dismissed their criticism and stood firmly behind the new cabinet and indicated that if Tošovský's cabinet failed to receive a vote of confidence in the Chamber of Deputies, the formation of a new government might last weeks or months. The potential power vacuum and long cabinet crisis was completely unacceptable for most of the parties, which preferred early elections that were made possible by a special constitutional act on shortening the Chamber of Deputies' electoral period. On 27 January 1998 the president appeared in the Chamber of Deputies to support the Tošovský cabinet, which won the vote of confidence with 123 votes in the 200-member Chamber of Deputies (Brunclík 2008: 291; Hloušek and Kopeček 2014: 64; Kopeček 2015: 34–35).

Jan Fischer

The rise of Jan Fischer's technocratic cabinet was precipitated by the resignation of Mirek Topolánek's cabinet. Topolánek's ODS won the 2006 elections with an unprecedented 35 percent of votes. However, the ODS had to deal with the problem of putting together a viable coalition. Since a cross-block majority coalition (either with the ČSSD or the Communist Party) was unthinkable, the only alternative was a one-party (ODS) minority cabinet, or a three-party minority cabinet (the ODS, the KDU-ČSL and the Green Party (SZ) which, however, commanded only 100 of the 200 parliamentary seats. When the first alternative

14 ODS members who called on Klaus to resign as party chairman were eventually defeated in the party and founded a new party the "Freedom Union" (US).

failed in fall 2006, Topolánek tried out the second one and put together the three-party cabinet, which eventually won the vote of confidence on 19 January 2007. However, from the very beginning the Topolánek minority cabinet was plagued by a lack of stable parliamentary support as several defections from government parties occurred. On the other hand, the cabinet was occasionally supported by a few defectors from the opposition camp. It was a fragile coalition, and its clearly hostile relationship with the ČSSD-led opposition encouraged the latter to repeatedly propose votes of no-confidence in the Topolánek cabinet, which faced four such initiatives. However, on 24 March 2009, right in the middle of Czech Presidency of the European Union, the opposition proposed yet another motion of no-confidence against the cabinet. The motion was—somewhat surprisingly—eventually passed with 101 votes. The parliamentary majority, which forced Topolánek out of office, was united only in its hostility towards the cabinet, but it was actually too heterogeneous to establish an alternative partisan cabinet. Thus, the ČSSD was severely criticized for failing to put forward an alternative solution to the crisis.

Unlike in 1997–1998, when the major parties were rather passive in the government formation process and let the president form Tošovský's cabinet, this time the two largest parties (the ODS and the ČSSD) remained active and left the president with very little room to maneuver during negations over the new cabinet. When president Klaus rejected the ČSSD's plan to allow the Topolánek cabinet to rule until the end of the Czech EU presidency, and then to form an interim caretaker technocratic government that would rule the country until early parliamentary elections, ČSSD leader Jiří Paroubek brought up the idea of a technocratic cabinet as a solution to the crisis (Hloušek and Kopeček 2012: 72; Hloušek and Kopeček 2014: 1341).[15] In April 2009 Jan Fischer, president of the Czech Statistical Office, was proposed as prime minister of a technocratic interim cabinet. The cabinet members were nominated by the ODS, the ČSSD and the SZ. Fischer's cabinet was inaugurated on 8 May 2009. The parties also agreed that early elections would be held in October 2009 on the basis of a one-off constitutional act that shortened the term of the Chamber of Deputies. However, owing to a complaint filed by an independent ex-ČSSD MP, Miloš Melčák, who claimed he had the right to sit in parliament for a full term, the Constitutional Court abolished the act, and elections to the Chamber of Deputies eventually took place in May 2010 as originally scheduled, and Fischer's cabinet ruled the country much longer than expected (for details see Hloušek and Kopeček 2012: 80–86).

15 A technocratic cabinet as a solution to a political crisis was also considered when the ČSSD-led cabinet headed by Stanislav Gross resigned (Havlík 2011: 65).

Jiří Rusnok

The rise of the third technocratic cabinet led by Jiří Rusnok was triggered by the resignation of another ODS cabinet in June 2013. The ODS cabinet led by Petr Nečas was formed following the 2010 parliamentary elections and included TOP 09[16] and the Public Affairs party (VV). The latter party was replaced in the cabinet with a splinter from the VV– LIDEM[17] in 2012. Nečas resigned after his chief of staff, Jana Nagyová, was charged with bribery and abuse of power. Nagyová was suspected of bribing the former ODS MPs, who were opposing Nečas's government policies, by offering key posts in state-owned companies. She was also suspected of illegally ordering military intelligence to spy on three people (BBC 2013a).

Miloš Zeman, who became the first popularly elected president in the Czech Republic and who strongly criticized the ODS cabinet from the very beginning of his term (Nova 2013), took advantage of this cabinet crisis. Like his predecessors, Zeman invited representatives of parliamentary parties to discuss alternative solutions to the government's crisis. However, he broke with the conventions and, despite having been informed by the parliamentary parties that a technocratic cabinet was unacceptable for them, he appointed his close friend and also former minister of his cabinet (1998–2002), Jiří Rusnok, as prime minister on 25 June 2013 with the intention of forming a technocratic cabinet of experts. The former coalition government parties opposed this move (Česká televize 2013). They argued that they had the right to form a new cabinet, because they held a 101-seat majority in the Chamber of Deputies. They proposed the chamber's speaker, Miroslava Němcová, to be the new prime minister. Nor were the opposition parties positively inclined towards the technocratic cabinet. They called for early elections since they were not strong enough to form their own cabinet (Reuters 2013). However, Zeman kept supporting his original idea and appointed the Rusnok cabinet in July 2013. It is important to note that several ministers of Rusnok's cabinet ran on the ticket of the presidential party: "Party of Citizens' Right—Zeman's followers" (SPOZ). This could be interpreted as Zeman's attempt to promote a pro-presidential party and gain a reliable and loyal party in the Chamber of Deputies. However, the SPOZ failed to get any seats in the 2013 elections to the Chamber of Deputies. Ahead of the vote of confidence prescribed by the Constitution, Zeman said he would keep the Rusnok cabinet in place for several weeks, even if he lost. He reasoned this intention by referencing the ongoing investigation into the aforementioned scandals. Despite the fact that in the crucial vote of confidence in August 2013 Rusnok lost the vote by 93 to 100 (Idnes 2013a; BBC 2013b), the president authorized it

16 Acronym: tradition, responsibility, prosperity.

17 The label means "Liberal democrats" and also "for people".

to continue until a new cabinet was appointed in line with the Constitution. It wasn't until January 2014 until a new cabinet was not formed. Meanwhile, the Rusnok cabinet made a number of decisions, whereas the parliament could do little to exert a greater control over it (Týden 2013; Ihned 2013).

Three technocratic cabinets in a comparative perspective

This chapter provides an analysis of the three technocratic cabinets in terms of the concept of party failure, which is completed with several other variables that were introduced above. The results of the analysis are provided below in table 2.

Table 2: Technocratic cabinets in the Czech Republic

	Tošovský	Fischer	Rusnok
Period	1 January 1998–22 July 1998	8 May 2009–13 Jul. 2010	10 July 2013–9 January 2014
Duration (days)	201	426	200
Share of non-partisans (%)	38	100	93
Cause of cabinet crisis	legitimacy crisis and coalition break-up	coalition defeated in vote of no-confidence	legitimacy crisis
Constraint	parties unable	parties unable	parties not allowed
Type of party failure	double	double	single indirect
Limited remit	yes (caretaker)	yes (caretaker)	no
Time of office	yes (interim)	yes (interim)	yes (interim)
Parliamentary confidence	yes	Yes	no

Source: Author

All of the technocratic cabinets were preceded by a party failure since the previous ODS-led cabinets resigned because of partisan reasons. Tošovský's and Rusnok's cabinets indirectly resulted from a crisis in party (the ODS) legitimacy, which forced the ODS cabinets (Klaus[18] and Nečas) to resign, whereas

18 The ODS financial scandals were the original causes for the end of the coalition. However, Klaus's cabinet resigned only when the ministers from the junior parties left the coalition.

the Fischer cabinet resulted from a parliamentary defeat inflicted upon the Topolánek cabinet.

As far as the second step—the new cabinet formation process—is concerned, there are clear differences. In 1997–1998 and 2009 the parties proved unable to form a partisan cabinet. Hence, the Tošovský and Fischer cabinets are products of a double party failure. In contrast, in 2013 the parties of the previous coalition cabinet were determined and also capable of forming a new ODS-led cabinet,[19] but the president rejected this claim and did not give them a chance to form such a cabinet and instead appointed the Rusnok technocratic (and at the same time presidential) cabinet. Therefore, this technocratic cabinet was precipitated by a single indirect party failure. This unusual development cannot be understood without reference to the fact that Zeman became the first directly elected president. During the 2013 cabinet crisis Zeman used his legitimacy advantage[20] over the parties represented in the Chamber of Deputies, which was elected in 2010. The cabinet's existence was also facilitated by weak positive formation rules. President Zeman was the first president to fully take advantage of the potential of these rules, although in 1998 president Havel indicated his intention to do the same—to appoint a technocratic cabinet and, in the case of a failure of the Tošovský cabinet, to win the vote of confidence to postpone the appointment of a new cabinet. But unlike Zeman, Havel formed the cabinet with respect to parliamentary parties. Also, his role in the government formation process was—partly due to his illness (Hloušek and Kopeček 2012: 62)—less significant in comparison with Zeman's in 2013.

As for the share of non-partisans in the cabinet, there are clear differences. Whereas in the Tošovský cabinet non-partisans were outnumbered by partisans (62 percent partisan),[21] the other two cabinets were fully or almost fully composed of non-partisans.[22] It seems interesting to note that P. Schleiter and E. Morgan-Jones have found a strong correlation between presidential cabinets and a high share of non-partisan cabinet ministers (Schleiter and Morgan-Jones 2010: 1424–1427). Similarly, Amorim Neto and Strøm (2006) argue that presidential influence over the cabinet formation process can be measured through the share of non-partisan ministers in cabinets: the greater the role of the presi-

19 Later, the solidity of the coalition was seriously undermined during the vote of confidence in the Rusnok cabinet, as two ODS MPs and Karolína Peake (LIDEM) did not vote against the cabinet. The crumbling coalition thus induced TOP 09 to call for the early elections (Rozhlas 2013).

20 The legitimacy advantage is an effect of non-concurrent electoral cycles of the president and the parliament, which provides an advantage to the most recently elected institution (Protsyk 2005: 722).

21 Hloušek and Kopeček call this cabinet "semi-political" (Hloušek and Kopeček 2012: 8; Hloušek and Kopeček 2014: 1337).

22 It should be noted however, that the non-partisans in the Fischer cabinet had very close ties to the political parties which nominated them. The Rusnok cabinet was also almost exclusively composed of non-partisans, but in several cases, technocratic ministers were closely linked to the president's party—SPOZ.

dent in the government formation process, the higher the share of non-partisan ministers in the cabinet: "Since popularly elected presidents… often need or want to extend their appeal beyond their respective political parties, they may well be inclined to promote politicians independent of, and untainted by party politics" (Amorim Neto and Strøm 2006: 624). Non-partisan ministers tend to be more loyal to the president, since they are not accountable to political parties, and their political career is largely dependent on the president (cf. Strøm 2003; Schleiter and Morgan-Jones 2005: 6). However, this argument cannot be applied to Fischer's technocratic cabinet. It was composed exclusively of non-partisans, but the ministers were nominated by the two parties (ODS and ČSSD) that stood behind the cabinet and exerted full control over its rise and, to a large extent, over its policies too, whereas the president was clearly sidelined during the cabinet-making process.

Clear differences among the technocratic cabinets can also be found in the degree of limitation of their remit. Tošovský's[23] and Fischer's cabinets were clearly limited in this regard. In particular, Fischer was constrained in formulating the declaration of his cabinet program.[24] The limited remit even became an important argument to persuade most MPs to support the Tošovský and Fischer cabinets (cf. Hloušek and Kopeček 2012: 65–66 and 79; Hloušek and Kopeček 2014: 1338–1339). In contrast, Rusnok's cabinet was not constrained by a political agreement that would curtail the cabinet's planned policies. Rusnok explicitly rejected a caretaker role for his cabinet in his cabinet's statement of its program.[25]

23 Tošovský declared in his speech for the Chamber of Deputies that "Unlike previous governments this cabinet is not formed exclusively by a coalition of several political parties. The cabinet members are aware of this as well as of the fact that the mandate of this government is limited by the will of the majority parliamentary parties to reach early elections in June this year… The government is committed—and this policy statement is proof of that—to continue to manage individual ministries responsibly and to carry out desirable social and economic changes. The cabinet understands that it will not accomplish a number of tasks that need to be addressed; it nevertheless deems as necessary not to delay their solution and to start the work that future cabinets can carry on" (Tošovský 1998).

24 Fischer declared in his speech for the Chamber of Deputies that "The Czech government appointed by the President on 8 May 2009 was formed on the basis of an agreement of three political parties: the ODS, CSSD and the Greens. Unlike standard political governments it is not formed by a coalition of political parties, but it is composed of non-partisan experts, and does not depend on a political clearly defined coalition majority in the parliament. Its task is therefore not to implement a political program, but to carry out a good quality, impartial and politically neutral administration of the country up to early elections. Members of the government are aware of this fact and respect that the government's mandate is limited by the majority will of the Chamber of Deputies to arrive at parliamentary elections in October 2009, and that in the remaining time they will not take any fundamental political decisions. Therefore, the government openly declares that it will not open politically contentious and distinctive topics, and that during its tenure it will not submit politically and ideologically distinctive legislative proposals to the Chamber of Deputies. The government is in a good sense committed to the idea of a technocratic government, whose task is to bridge the period until a political fully-fledged government is appointed" (Fischer 2009).

25 "Less than 10 months remain to the end of the regular term of office of the Chamber of Deputies. That is why our government will focus its attention only on the current, sometimes urgent, decisions to be

As far as the party influence upon the technocratic cabinets is concerned, the resulting picture is paradoxical. Although the Tošovský cabinet was in form the least "technocratic" in terms of its composition, as most ministers were partisans, his cabinet was perhaps least influenced by parliamentary parties, because he was quite independent in selecting the ministers to his cabinet. In contrast, the fully non-partisan cabinet led by Jan Fischer was under the strong influence of ČSSD and ODS, which nominated most of the cabinet members and kept control over cabinet policies. Neither the composition, nor policies of the Rusnok cabinet were influenced by parliamentary parties, since the president was the only person to shape the new cabinet. Rusnok had very close, friendly ties to President Zeman, since Rusnok had been a member of Zeman's cabinet (1998–2002) and he also used to be a ČSSD party member (1998–2010). In addition, Rusnok's cabinet had direct links to the SPOZ, which, however, lacked parliamentary representation. Hence, as prime minister Rusnok was frequently accused of following policy instructions from President Zeman and the SPOZ (e.g. Idnes 2013b; Bureš 2014).

All of the technocratic cabinets were limited in terms of the time they remained in office. All of them were appointed as interim cabinets, which were supposed to administrate the executive until early or regular elections were held. This fact was clearly stated in all the technocratic cabinets' program declarations, which also emphasized their non-partisan and technocratic nature (Tošovský 1998; Fischer 2009; Rusnok 2010).

Conclusion

The article has hypothesized that technocratic cabinets are the products of party failure. It has outlined the concept of party failure as well as several patterns of this phenomenon, depending on the causes that led the previous cabinets to resign and the reasons why political parties do not subsequently form a partisan cabinet. In all these cases, the cabinet crisis, which precipitated the appointment of a technocratic cabinet, was caused by partisan reasons: The Tošovský cabinet was appointed after the previous cabinet collapsed following the ODS legitimacy crisis and the break-up of Klaus's cabinet; the Fischer cabinet was formed after the Topolánek cabinet was defeated in the vote of no-confidence; and the Rusnok cabinet took power when the previous cabinet led by Nečas resigned due to the ODS scandals. In the Tošovský and Fischer cases we have seen a double party failure: political parties can be blamed for the resignation of a cabinet that precipitated the rise of a technocratic cabinet. In addition,

taken in the short term... Many of these decisions will affect development in our country even in the long run and therefore we need to prepare them carefully and conscientiously consider their implications both for citizens and for the national economy. In this sense, we cannot be just a caretaker government, but we are a fully fledged cabinet with all executive powers and, of course, responsibility" (Rusnok 2013).

the parties proved unable to form a new partisan cabinet. The Rusnok cabinet stands apart. The rise of this cabinet has been classified as a single indirect party failure. Political parties caused the fall of the previous cabinet. Although they were ready to establish a new partisan cabinet, they were prevented from doing so by the president, who imposed his own technocratic cabinet. The 2013 government crisis also clearly demonstrated the impact of weak positive rules in the government formation process, wide discretion of the president in this process[26] and the impact of the popular election on the outcome of the cabinet crisis. Paradoxically, although the Rusnok cabinet's remit was not limited, it lacked the confidence of the Chamber of Deputies. In contrast, the Tošovský and Fischer cabinets were caretaker cabinets (i.e. with limited remit) that won their vote of confidence. All the Czech technocratic cabinets were interim cabinets (i.e. with limited time in office). The article has also demonstrated that the share of non-partisan ministers may not tell us much about the real influence parties (or presidents) have over technocratic cabinets.

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The Rise Of Person-Based Politics In The New Democracies: The Czech Republic And Slovenia

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Politics in Central Europe (ISSN: 1801-3422)
Vol. 12, No. 2
DOI: 10.1515/pce-2016-0011

Abstract: *In the article, the authors address certain recent political developments in two former communist countries, the Czech Republic and Slovenia. They focus on the rise of personalized politics, i.e. the type of political conduct that is driven predominantly by the personal character of political leaders (much more than by programs and ideologies). Specifically, the authors look at the weak political partisanship in East-Central Europe as one of the key factors triggering person-based politics. They find that personalized leadership has divergent consequences for political life in a democratic polity. It is very effective in mobilizing mass support as well as in overcoming many organizational obstacles. However, its influence on the quality of the democratic process is questionable.*

Key words: ***Czech Republic, Slovenia, strong leaders, person-based politics, new democracies***

Introduction

The "personalization of politics" is a topic that has been gaining importance in scholarly literature and research. Although some authors claim that empirical evidence on this phenomenon is mixed, at best (Kriesi 2011), and it depends on the institutional setting of the particular polity (Kaase 1994), it is hard to deny that personal traits of political leaders play an increasingly important role in the political life of contemporary democracies (Van Zoonen – Holz-Bacha 2001), which is referred to by some as the *presidentalization* of politics (Poguntke and Webb 2005a). Namely, political space in contemporary democracies has been undergoing a profound change over last few decades, which applies in

particular to developments in political parties' organizational structures and in the way in which they function, as well as a change in the mechanisms used to mobilize political support and in establishing a link between the parties and their constituencies.

The political life of contemporary democracies is characterized by several features that provide fertile conditions for a personalization of that life. We can talk about the diminishing importance of social cleavages, which crystallized during the process of modernization of Western societies and served as the basis for the formation of the modern political party system (Inglehart 1990). This is related to individualization, in terms of the weakening of classical political identities (class, nation, religion, ideology) (Beck – Beck-Gernsheim 2002, Genov 2010). The result is that the position of political parties as organizational vehicles of collective action and social choice is weakened (Kitschelt 2001), and agencies are channeled that represent and create a link between society and government institutions (Sartori 1976). The shift toward personalized politics has been going on over the last few decades. The personalities of various politicians has contributed to the emergence of new political parties based on strong leaders (Bossi, Le Pen, Furtuyn, etc.) as well as to the revival of some traditional parties (one example is the role of Tony Blair in the rise of New Labour) (Tomšič – Prijon 2013).

The rise of person-based politics is even more evident in the *new democracies* from Central and Eastern Europe. It is a reflection of destabilization of political space and deconsolidation of political parties. This also applies to the Czech Republic and Slovenia, two countries that belong to the group of most consolidated new democracies, once considered to have some of the most stable party systems in the region. This paper will analyze 1) the rise of *new politics* in both countries, i.e. the type of political conduct that is driven predominantly by the personal character of political leaders (much more than by programs and ideologies), 2) its roots and manifestations, as well as 3) the consequences for the functioning of democracy. According to the authors, personalized leadership has divergent consequences for political life in a democratic polity. It is very effective in mobilizing mass support, overcoming many organizational obstacles. However, its influence on the betterment of the democratic process is questionable.

We will first address the role personalities play in contemporary democracies and how they impact the functioning of political parties. Later, we will look at the specifics of political developments in Central and Eastern European countries, focusing on the two countries under consideration, where special attention is devoted to a comparison of the manifestations of personalized politics and the factors that have contributed to its proliferation. And in the closing section, we explain the consequences of these developments on the quality of democracy in the new democracies.

Personalized politics

The personalization of politics in modern democracies is a phenomenon that was first indicated within the social sciences some three decades ago. We point to Margaret Thatcher as one of the first Western politicians who showed a strong personal impetus within the party and the government. Nevertheless, only with the development of new mass communication tools (TV and especially new media accessible through the Internet) were modern democracies challenged by this new phenomenon, in a general manner. This development affected both political parties as well as executive bodies and, in some ways, also the type of political regime and politics as a whole. We focus in our analysis mainly on party system and party-voter development and, above all, leader-party and leader-voter relations. To better understand the basic concepts related to personalization of politics—and related concepts and terms—we will briefly present the contemporary discussion on personalization within political science.

In his brand new analysis of oligarchization, personalization and presidentialization of politics, Jurek (2014: 29–30) presents the interesting case study of the personalization processes in Israel (Rahat – Sheafer 2007), which recognizes three different types of personalization—institutional, media, and behavioral. In his opinion, it is the behavioral component of the process of personalization of politics that must be examined. Based on this aspect, he understands personalization of politics as a "trend occurring during the last decades within the democratic political environment that is based on strengthening the role of individual actors (party leaders, candidates, mandate holders) in political life" (Jurek 2014: 33).

Poguntke and Webb in their influential book (2005) also discuss the strengthened position and role of political and party leaders in contemporary modern democracies. They argue that "perceptions of the personalization, and in particular the 'presidentialization' of politics have become more widespread in recent years, regardless of formal constitutional characteristics." They point to prime ministers and party leaders such as Tony Blair, Gerhard Schröder, and Silvio Berlusconi (Poguntke – Webb 2005a: 1). Through their analysis they have delineated their concept of the three *faces* of presidentialization. For our article the first concept—that of the executive face combined with a discussion about the type of political regime—seems obsolete. On the other hand, the next two faces—the party and electoral faces—might be useful as a platform for the operationalization of the term "personalized politics".

Poguntke and Webb (2005a: 9) utilize the party face to present the personalization of politics as a "*shift in intra-party power to the benefit of the leader.*

> "... party activists and factional leaders cease to be the decisive power base of party leaders; rather, claims to leadership rest on personalized mandates. This

is likely accompanied by the shift toward plebiscitary modes of communication and mobilization… Increasingly, the leader seeks to by-pass the sub-leaders and activist strata of the party and communicates directly with members (or even voters)… Probably most relevant in this regards is the shift toward candidate--centered electioneering."

The authors argue that the result of this type of development results in a concentration of power in the leader's office.

In their discussion of the electoral face, which is logically strongly linked with the intra-party development discussed previously, the authors firstly stress the "growing emphasis on leadership" that appears in electoral campaigns. Furthermore, news coverage of these campaigns is such "that the media coverage of politics focuses more on leaders." Finally, talking about the general electoral processes, the "growing significance of leader effects in voting behavior" might be observed (Poguntke – Webb 2005a: 10).

Poguntke and Webb (2005a: 13–16) present the internationalization of politics, the growth of the state, the changing structure of mass communication (most authors stress the role of electronic media, cf. Jurek 2014: 28), and the erosion of traditional social cleavage politics as the main reasons for this development. Similarly, Blondel and Thiébault (2010: 17–18) connect the personalization of politics with the growing individualization in society and weakening of traditional societal bonds and cleavages. This point seems to be clearly connected with the party and electoral face. As Poguntke and Webb summarize, "the clear-cut orderliness of political competition based on the conflict of social group ideologies… seems to be disappearing in modern democracies… As consequence… factors such as the personal qualities of actual or prospective heads of governments may become relatively more important for the conduct of election campaigns."

Jurek (2014: 35–36) assumes that the personalization concepts center around three groups of individual political actors:

1. individual politicians, regardless of their position (party officials, candidates for directly elected posts, deputies, members of the government, etc.)
2. party leaders, chairpersons of political parties
3. executive leaders

The third category seems to be deeply linked with the research of presidentialization; in this sense presidentialization might be—within the behavioral type—understood as a sub-type of personalization. This is why we are also utilizing the analytical framework of Poguntke and Webb. Nevertheless, in our analysis we will concentrate only on the second category, i.e. party leaders.

Naturally, the strengthening role of the party leader also applies to the development of political parties as such. We do not have room here for a comprehensive discussion on this issue but would like to mention the discussion about the new types of political parties—cartel parties (Katz – Mair 1995) and business firm parties (Krouwel 2006). In both cases we must note the weakening bonds to the party base as an important characteristic and also the growing tendency to outsource services not just for electoral campaigns but also for program and policy formulation (cf. Cabada 2014).

To sum up, personalized politics means, "first and foremost," as Poguntke and Webb (2005b: 352) stress, the "weakening of party as a collective actor in modern democracies." Political parties "have maintained their central role as a mechanism for elite selection... However, they have been substantially challenged as actors aggregating interests... shaping policy outcomes or controlling political communications." For the party leader his own party is less important than his office. To communicate with party members and voters, leaders also often use the methods of "direct democracy."

> "Membership ballots and referenda... are more often than not initiated and controlled by leaders... In a nutshell, plebiscitary features of modern democratic politics tend to enhance, rather than limit, elite autonomy by providing leaders with an additional power resource" (Poguntke – Webb 2005b: 354–5).

Nevertheless, Jurek (2014: 25–26) doubts that the strengthening of a party-'s leader automatically brings the weakening of the political party itself. We fully agree with those doubts. On the other hand, *overparticization* in the new democracies (we explain the concept below) would mean that it is even easier for party leaders to have developed personalized political strategies. This is, why within CEE party systems with low and even sinking party membership[1] personalized politics based on business firm parties or franchise parties are successful. Those parties see voters as consumers of politics and prefer an office--seeking strategy; they have a strong tendency to outsource party activities and have the strong, personal leadership of a "political entrepreneur" (the party almost without members) (cf. Hloušek 2012; Hopkin – Paolucci 1999; Krouwel 2006; Meguid 2005; Tavits 2008; or Wagner 2012).

As Hloušek (2012: 324) mentions, *business firm parties* "are partially similar with the previous development types of political parties, but they differ in some important aspects. Compared with the cartel parties they benefit from the private sector sources, compared with the catch-all parties they do not target the interest groups that would represent concrete ideas." Business-firm parties—and the more general niche parties—are very flexible in their search for

1 Innes (2002) labelled the East Central European mainstream political parties "instant catch-all parties."

themes and strategies; on the other hand, they are also implicitly fragile due to their dependence on changeable electoral support and the attention given by the media to the parties and their leaders (Hloušek 2012: 324; cf. Carty 2004: 20–21). Let us add that some authors (cf. Olteanu and de Nève, not dated) argue that the specific position of political entrepreneurs originates in their own big firms; they have referred to political "parties" created by such entrepreneurs as *businessman parties*. These parties evince an "elite-oriented organizational structure, the wealth of resources of their founders, a manifesto and an ideology, which is based on the assumption that economy precedes politics, and, moreover, an exclusive access to the media." Naturally, such parties are one-person structures, i.e. almost completely personalized actors.

Characteristics of post-communist party systems

The main aim of the post-communist transformation was to carry out political, economic, social and cultural modernization, and thus to overcome their status of European (semi) periphery, which has characterized a vast majority of these societies for centuries (Janos 2000). This refers also to the establishment of a democratic system of governance. In this regard, some of those countries—new members of the EU from East-Central Europe—could be labeled as consolidated democracies since they managed to establish the key institutional mechanisms necessary for a successful democratic life (cf. Adam et al. 2005).

In formal terms, party systems of former communist countries resemble those in the West. The parties have also largely adopted the basic organizational principles and style employed by their counterparts in the established democracies (van Biezen 2003). Many of them are members of European party associations.

However, the social basis that determines their structure is different in some key aspects and is related to the specifics of the modernization process. As stated by Evans and Whitefield (1993: 522), "communism deprived individuals of institutional or social structured identities from which to drive political interests, other than those of the nation or mass society." Political space in most of these countries is still characterized by relative instability and volatility. This is mostly the consequence of the weak profiled identity of many political parties, which has been causing them considerable trouble in establishing a stable electoral base (Baylis 1998). This is reflected in relatively low party membership and weak linkages between party elites and their constituencies (Lewis 2001). Political parties in post-communist countries, when compared to their counterparts in established democracies of Western Europe, lack mass membership—certain exception are some post-communist or former satellite parties (Cabada, 2013c: 81).

The ideological focus or self-identification of particular political parties in East-Central Europe is often very shallow and formal. Their programs are often

very vague and incomprehensible. They are keen to switch their policy orientations when expecting political benefits from doing so. Some of them have experienced significant transition in terms of ideological profile.[2] Ideological emptiness particularly holds for niche parties, which are more present in this region than in Western Europe. In this regard, they differ with their Western counterparts, which are often very coherent and focused in terms of ideological orientations (the Five Star Movement in Italy is one exception in this regard). Unlike them, they build their public appeal with general criticism of established political parties and the *character* of their leaders. The irony is that these parties can easily transform themselves into a mainstream one (examples are SMER in Slovakia, GERB in Bulgaria, ANO 2011 in the Czech Republic, or Positive Slovenia in Slovenia) (Cabada 2013a: 16–17).

Political actors in general and political parties in particular are often criticized for their aspirations of control over various social systems, mostly the ones that could contribute to retaining or obtaining positions of power. For example, Attila Agh (1996: 55) points to overparticization, which refers to the aspirations of political parties to exclude other actors from political life. This *partitocracy* is less an expression of the parties' strength but more of their weakness, i.e. their weak intellectual and organizational potential (they try to compensate by *borrowing* resources from other areas). In any case, such practices strongly contribute to parties' low voter confidence and bad public image, regardless their ideological orientation. This created space for a different, more personalized approach in political contests.

Weak links between parties and society, coupled with a lack of democratic experience, as well as the unresponsive and irresponsible conduct of political elites, result in a high level of distrust in political parties in the eyes of the public. The rather low confidence in political parties is also characteristic for established democracies but is considerably more pronounced in former communist countries. We can speak about strong "anti-party sentiments" (Fink-Hafner 1995). All this affects political participation. Voter turnout is considerably lower on average in Western Europe and is even decreasing in some new democracies (for example, in Slovenia).

As we can see, political life of the new democracies is characterized by a number of features that provide fertile ground for a personalization of political life. Low trust of the citizenry toward traditional political agents, especially political parties, opens the door to non-party politics, which is based not on a coherent ideology or party program but on the personal traits of particular political ac-

2 One clear example is the current ruling Hungarian party Fidesz which evolved from a liberal-centrist oriented party to a strongly conservative and nationalist one. Some of its orientation has changed completely; for example, the attitude toward Russia: once fiercely anti-Russia it is now pro-Russian. Interestingly, all this happened under the same leader, Victor Orban, which testifies to the flexibility of his personal affiliations.

tors. In such circumstances, the personal appeal of political leaders is often the one that comes into play since it can override party weaknesses (as we will see in the case of Slovenia, the political status of many parties greatly depends on their leaders). Many parties, radical as well as mainstream, had strong personalized players, like Victor Orban's Fidesz in Hungary or Law and Justice of the Kaczynski brothers in Poland. Moreover, many politicians build their appeal on anti-party or even anti-political platforms, which was the case with Tyminski[1] in Poland in the early 1990s or Uspaskich[2] in Lithuania in the mid-2000s. Both were political outsiders who entered political space from the business sphere and who, during their campaigns, severely criticized already-established political parties, proclaiming a different, more *managerial* approach in their governance conduct, which would wither away the defects of established politics.

High volatility is a frequent occurrence in the highly personalized new parties, which can gain success in one election but typically, after a short period, become marginalized or even disappears from political scene, being replaced by *newer* parties (Haughton – Deegan-Krause 2015). We have even witnessed political destabilization in countries that were considered to have rather stable political and party systems—such as the situation in the Czech Republic and Slovenia. In following sections, we will discuss the rise of personalized-type politics in both countries. We will ascertain its origins, causes for its appearance, as well as the main characteristics and consequences of these political developments.

The rise of new politics in the Czech Republic and Slovenia

The Czech Republic

During the 1990s and 2000s, the Czech party system was usually described as relatively stable (Cabada – Krašovec 2012). Indeed, we could register opinions that indicate the Czech party system as a type between moderate and polarized pluralism, or—better said—about the oscillation between these two types (Havlík – Hloušek 2013). In the first half of 1990 the reason for this indication was the presence of two anti-system parties in the parliament—the Republicans on the right and the *nostalgic* Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia (KSČM) on the left. Since the first half of the 1990s the important position and role of the radical KSČM and the thoughts about the left-oriented government, including the Social Democrats (ČSSD) and also the Communist Party were the main reason for doubts whether the party system should be evaluated as limited or extreme pluralism (Hloušek and Pšeja 2009: 516).[3]

3 Cabada, Hloušek and Jurek (2013) indicate than during periods of intensified cooperation between the ČSSD and KSČM a moderate pluralism could be seen, while the parties' dance to gain more strength moved the party system toward a more polarized situation.

Talking about the cleavages in Czech society, two key ones are apparent. On one side there is a socio-economic cleavage, which has dominated from the very beginning of the transition (Hloušek – Pšeja 2009; Cabada, Hloušek – Jurek 2013). Nevertheless, we should not forget the also important and still present anti-Communism vs. Communism cleavage that, in the last few years, has been losing significance (Hloušek – Kopeček 2012; Krašovec – Cabada 2013). Based on these main cleavages, five relevant parties arose after the 1998 elections, and they continued to remain significant for more than a decade.

Signs of personalized politics and continued personalization have been present within the Czech parties and, more generally the political system as a whole, since the beginning of the transition (the most important being the ideological--political discussion between Václav Havel and Václav Klaus). At the party level, especially the leaders of the two catch-all parties—the Civic Democrats (ODS) and, after its consolidation in 1993–1995 the ČSSD—developed their approach toward voters and within the party in a clearly personalized form. It was possible to discern a stabilized personal configuration during the 1990s in the form of the ODS's leader Klaus against the leader of the ČSSD, Miloš Zeman. This constellation returned in the second half of the 2000s when Klaus's successor, Mirek Topolánek, a strong opposition leader, was challenged by the new ČSSD leader, Jiří Paroubek.[4]

After Paroubek's ascension, Czech politics became strongly personalized around him and Topolánek. This was visible during the electoral campaign, including the media's coverage of it, and also within the parties, both before and after the 2006 elections. Both parties posted their best-ever electoral results—the ODS (35.4 percent) and ČSSD (32.3 percent)—indicating that society also understood the elections to be primarily a duel of the parties or their leaders (Vodička – Cabada 2011: 258–262). In addition to these two catch-all parties, new challengers began to promote themselves through their connections with their leaders/father grounders. This was the case of the hard-line anti-European right with the chairwoman Jana Bobošíková (Sovereignty Jana Bobošíková Bloc) as well as the populist movement supporting the presidential aspirations of former ČSSD head and prime minster, Zeman—the Party of Civic Rights—Zemanists (SPOZ). Clear attributes of personalized politics were also apparent in the new centrist party: Tradition, Responsibility, Prosperity 09 (TOP09), initially led by Czech icon, longtime friend and close collaborator of Václav Havel—and his minister of foreign affairs (2007–2009)—the "prince," Karel Schwarzenberg.

The weakening of both catch-all parties, the ODS and ČSSD, which had dominated Czech politics since 1992, partly resulted from the clash between the

4 Paroubek earned the moniker "Bulldozer," thanks to his style towards the party, both in the coalition government and toward society. During one parliamentary debate he referred to himself as "infallible" and defended the cooperation with the KSČM by stating that his politics are right and must be enforced, even if it were with the support of "Martians."

parties' two strong leaders, Topolánek and Paroubek, from 2005 to 2010. This matter of fact was clearly evident in the 2010 parliamentary elections, when two brand new political parties entered the Parliament—TOP09 as well as Public Affairs (VV). The ODS and ČSSD lost about 40 percent of voters; the Christian Democrats (KDU-ČSL) and the Green Party (SZ) failed in the election with less than 5 percent of the votes, i.e. under the legal threshold. As the only stable party the KSČM came out from the election as successful, which also brought the end of Paroubek as ČSSD leader (Topolánek had resigned as ODS leader before the elections because of a scandal that arose after an interview where he made several controversial statements, such as claiming both gay and Jewish people lacked the integrity of moral character, among other things). Because of future events, the failure of Zeman's SPOZ in this election must also be mentioned.

The year 2010 brought the new political parties their first taste of success. This was based fully or, for some parties at least partially, on personalized politics. As an example of the latter, TOP09's campaign was more or less tied to the personage of Schwarzenberg. Nevertheless, VV represents the most visible success; it made use of a niche marketing strategy and a short intensive campaign with some very specific attributes.

VV was established in 2001 as local initiative. The party's first breakthrough came in the form of the election of its new leader, the well-known journalist, Radek John, in June 2009 in cooperation with some other prominent Czech personalities. Nevertheless, the main person within the party was the owner of the biggest private security agency in the Czech Republic Vít Bárta. He was and is very controversial, seemingly applying tools against political opponents that are more commonly used in the sphere of secret services (Bureš 2012: 145). The party presented itself as a pragmatic and slightly populist alternative to the "corrupt dinosaurs." In the 2010 elections VV got 10.9 percent of the vote and 24 of a total 200 mandates in the Chamber of Deputies. In the process of forming the new government, VV became the most important party, with *unlimited* coalition potential. The party's leaders occupied key ministries. It soon became apparent that all these offices (except for the Ministry of Regional Development) were de facto managed directly by Bárta, himself the minister of transport. (Cabada 2013b: 41).

Negotiations over the governmental program were a failure from the start when VV leaders decided that they wanted a more left-oriented position in the neoliberal government. The discussions exposed VV as programmatically unclear (Bureš 2012: 148, based on Hloušek 2012: 333); in the case of VV as the party of business, an official, coherent ideology or program was totally absent; the party considered voters as consumers.

Bárta tried to relaunch the party as fully populist and in cooperation with new a personalized party—Tomio Okamura's Dawn of Direct Democracy (*Úsvit přímé demokracie Tomia Okamury*). The key figure of this new project, again search-

ing for a niche in the Czech political market, was Tomio Okamura, a travel and gastronomy entrepreneur and spokesman for the Association of Czech Travel Agencies (AČCKA). Okamura won a seat as an independent candidate in the 2012 Senate elections, representing the southeastern Moravian region of Zlín, and later he founded his party with only nine members. The most visible feature of his party's program was the promise of "direct democracy", which included changes in the law to provide for the possibility to remove from office politicians, clerks, judges, etc. In addition to this issue the party—and Okamura as the sole visible face—developed a populist rhetoric that called for the protection of "common citizens" against the political elite, as well as against "anti-social" citizens and migrants. In the parliamentary elections in October 2013 Dawn won 6.88 percent of the vote and 14 of the 200 mandates. During the next 18 months Okamura did everything to close the door to new members. In the end such behavior—together with misuse of state budget–provided funds for the party—resulted in an open revolt within the party against Okamura.

As already mentioned, the SPOZ[5] is an important example of personalized politics. At the beginning of 2013, Zeman, with strong support from the party, became the first directly elected president of the Czech Republic. After the resignation of Prime Minister Petr Nečas (ODS) on 17 June 2013, Zeman decided to transform the SPOZ into a presidential party.

Zeman appointed the so-called *technical government* led by Jiří Rusnok. Contrary to the composition of the Parliament—the SPOZ had no deputies and only one of 81 senators—a majority in this government had ties to the SPOZ. The government failed to win the confidence of the Parliament, but the President, taking advantage of a constitutional quirk, decided to leave the government in office. The only way for the political parties to block this behavior, which balanced on the edge of the Constitution, was to dissolve the Chamber of Deputies and hold extraordinary elections (Cabada 2013b). In those elections the SPOZ failed. The extraordinary elections in 2013 brought into the Parliament new, and up to now the most successful new political party, clearly based on political personalization, YES 2011 (ANO 2011), formerly the political movement Action of Unsatisfied Citizens 2011 (*Akce nespokojených občanů 2011*). The movement and subsequent political party were established by one of the most important Czech oligarchs, Andrej Babiš. Within ANO 2011 Babiš played, and continues to play, the predominant role, including control over financial sources for campaigns and operation of the party. Where party membership and candidates were concerned, he often brought in managers from his own companies; in this way he also created a true businessman's party.

5 Although the official name of the party dropped the reference to Zeman (from SPOZ to SPO) at this time, in keeping with common usage, the authors will continue to use SPOZ.

ANO 2011 did not present clear program for the 2013 parliamentary elections, nor did one come later. Babiš and his supporters offer populist, anti-political rhetoric, criticizing all politicians as cleptocrats and emphasizing that he is not a politician. The state should be run like a firm, according to Babiš. The slogan, *Nejsme jako politici, makáme* (We're not like politicians, we work) became popular (Havlík et al 2014: 61).

In the parliamentary elections ANO 2011 took second place with 18.65 percent, only 1.8 percent behind the winner, ČSSD. Together with this party and the revived KDU-ČSL they created a government led by Bohuslav Sobotka (ČSSD) with Babiš as first deputy-Prime Minister and Minister of Finance. Meanwhile Babiš added media into his corporate empire, some even before the 2013 parliamentary elections. As Havlík et al (2014: 77) point out, even before the 2013 elections influential Western media, including *Der Spiegel* and *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* were comparing Babiš with Silvio Berlusconi. Similarly, in April 2015 the influential journal *Foreign Policy* referred to Babiš as "Babisconi."[6]

In the government Babiš has risen to predominance; for some observers it would seem that we have two prime ministers. This matter of fact is strengthened by the behavior of President Zeman, who supports Babiš's ambition to lead in a future one-party government of ANO 2011. Babiš has repeatedly noted that within the coalition he is unable to develop his strategy to run the country as a company, and within the government he is often critical of his coalition partners, referring to them as "traditional parties."

Slovenia

The Slovenian political space is characterized by a bipolar division into two political blocs (Fink-Hafner 1994; Tomšič 2008; Jou 2011). This division largely covers the left-right cleavage.[7] This bipolar structure has remained for the whole period, meaning that the right-left division of political space has stabilized considerably (Bebler 2002). However, some changes regarding relationships have taken place within both political camps. In the left-wing camp, Liberal Democracy of Slovenia (LDS) played a leading role throughout most of the transition period, followed by the Social Democrats (SD) and later by Positive

6 *Now the Czechs have an Oligarch Problem*, http://foreignpolicy.com/2015/04/10/now-the-czechs-have-an-oligarch-problem-too-andrej-babis/ (14 August 2015).

7 The two camps are most clearly divided by their institutional origins and attitudes toward the communist period, with *left* expressing a positive or at least benevolent attitude toward it while *right* was highly critical in this regard. The labelling of both political blocs as *the left* (first camp) and *the right* (second camp), long used in public discourse, differed from their meanings in the context of Western democracies (to some extent blurring the picture of the Slovenian political space) since members of the business elite are proponents of *the left*, mostly the LDS, while many of those who considered themselves de-privileged (often described in terms of injustices suffered during the communist regime) have supported *the right*.

Slovenija (PS) and now the Modern Centre Party (SMC), although in the case of the latter, the situation is more complicated since it is a recently established party with weak local organization and without a strong ideological core (more on the phenomenon of this party to follow). In the right-wing camp, the leading role was first played by the Slovenian Christian Democrats (the precursor to New Slovenia (NSi)), then by the Slovenian People's Party (SLS), and now, for more than a decade, by the Slovenian Democratic Party (SDS). While in the left-wing camp, the situation was rather stable throughout most of the transition period and has become more volatile in the last few years, in the right-wing camp the situation stabilized at the beginning of the 2000s, with SDS maintaining its dominant position.

In the last couple of years, Slovenian political space has been faced with the rise of a kind of non-party politics (Tomšič – Prijon 2012). This first took place, in fact, at the local level, with the emergence of a number of strong political actors without a previous record in party politics on the political stage. Zoran Janković, a former executive and co-owner of Slovenian retail giant Mercator, who became mayor of Ljubljana in 2006, is the most significant person in this category. Later, the personalized style of politics expanded to the national level. The collapse of the ruling coalition, resulting in the removal of Borut Pahor's left-oriented government (through a vote of no confidence) and subsequent early elections in 2011, brought the rise of a couple of newly formed political parties based strongly on the personalities of their leaders. One of them was Zoran Janković's List-Positive Slovenia (LZJ-PS), led by the mayor of Ljubljana, while the second one was the Civic List of Gregor Virant (LGV), led by the former minister of public administration.[8] The first surprisingly won a relative majority in the election. However, he didn't become prime minister since Janković failed to form a coalition that would have a majority in the Parliament.

The shelf life of PS was short. After Janković failed to gain a parliamentary majority and form a government (instead of him, Janez Janša became prime minister), his political fortunes declined. At the beginning of 2013, the Slovene Commission for the Prevention of Corruption published its annual report in which it accused both Janković and Prime Minister Janša of non-transparent conduct in respect of their personal finances. As a consequence, Janša's center-rightist government received a vote of no confidence in the Parliament, while Janković wound up resigning as chairman of Positive Slovenia. He was replaced by Alenka Bratušek, who also replaced Janša as Prime Minister and formed a new coalition without Janša's SDS. That caused split in the PS as well as the downfall of her center-left government in May 2014, followed by early elections in July of that year. At these elections, PS was resoundingly defeated—it even fell out of the Parliament (while its successful faction—the Alliance of Alenka Bratušek

8 Both parties withdrew the name of their leader from their official names.

(ZaAb)—barely managed to get there). The elections were won with a substantial majority by another party newcomer, the Party of Miro Cerar (SMC).

The personalization process of party politics intensified between last two (early) elections. If the two newcomers in the 2011 elections, the LZJ-PS and LGV, each took the name of their leader, in addition to the full name of the party, the names of the last (2014) parliamentary newcomers, the SMC and the ZaAB, are focused solely on their leading figures—although the SMC changed its name after the elections to the Party of Modern Centre (but kept the same acronym—SMC). If the first two parties had clear program orientations, the programs of the latter are characterized by an *emptiness*. This applied particularly to the winner of the most recent elections, the party formed by a lawyer, Miro Cerar (a professor at the University of Ljubljana), only about a month before the elections, which after the elections switched its name to the Party of Modern Centre (SMC). This absence of substance and consideration was reflected in the brief yet vague electoral program.[9] This programmatic void was mitigated by criticizing the *old* political elite on moral and ethical grounds, exposing its past misdeeds. Cerar claimed that his party transcended traditional political and ideological divisions and brought new standards of political culture. Unlike Ljubljana's Mayor Janković, who touted his business experience and related managerial skills, Cerar mobilized support based on his image as highly moral person who has not been *contaminated* by the dirty antics of his political rivals from the ranks of established political parties. It turned out that a party program was not necessary for electoral success. However, when the party took the leading role in the new government, programmatic fluidity resulted in inconsistent policy orientations that—in combination with the many scandals related to key people from government circles—resulted in a sharp decline in civic support for both the government and its main party.

Factors in the rise of personalized politics

The rise of a political approach, referred to by some as *Berlusconisation*[10] (Mancini 2011), is related to several international developments in contemporary societies. One of them is an increased role for the media in the political process. This is known as the *mediatization of politics* (Mazzoleni – Schulz 1999; Ginsborg 2005). It applies particularly to the prevalence of media logic in covering political issues and becomes most evident during election campaigns (Swanson –

9 The program of the Party of Miro Cerar was much shorter that the programs of other, more established political parties. In fact, it is a power point presentation, composed of twenty-six slides, with a very general sketch of the party's goals in different areas and guidelines of for its future activities. (http://mirocerar.si/images/Dokumenti/Program_SMC.pdf)

10 The phenomenon of leadership style known as *Berlusconisation* is based on the Italian media magnate, politician, and former prime minister, Silvio Berlusconi, who represents a new model of politics, which can be identified in some contemporary democracies.

Mancini 1996). Modern mass media, especially electronic ones, increasingly build their stories on spectacle, where images play a more important role than ideas and programs (Campus 2015). In such circumstances, it is more vital that a political candidate know how to present himself in front of an audience (supporters, voters) than how relevant or feasible his political proposals are to resolve the political, economic, and social problems.

This development came about in a situation characterized by the poor performance of the established political parties and their governments. The low administrative efficiency of these governments was accompanied by a lack of responsibility on their part (Tomsic – Prijon 2015). They strongly contributed to the weakening of confidence in politics and politicians. The negative view of political institutions—especially political parties, regardless of their ideological orientation—became predominant in the public's assessments (cf. Bull – Newell 2005; Newell 2010). The trend toward a lessening of trust in political institution is evident in many Western democracies but is more profound in the new democracies, such as in the Czech Republic and Slovenia. Among them, political parties are some of the most distrusted (Makarovič – Tomšič 2015; Vráblíková 2009). There are many elements, related to the behavior of established political actors, such as ideologization, incompetence, clientelism, corruption, and other dysfunctional practices that contribute to these negative sentiments. In this climate, new faces are able to gain popularity, especially those who build their campaigns on personalized and sometimes non-political platforms.

There are some personal traits common to most non-partisan politicians. They are, as a rule, strongly extroverted and tend to have direct contact with voters. Simultaneously, they are very skilful in media communication, i.e. the ability to establish an appealing image to the public through the use of visual impressions. They have a great deal of charisma and make followers believe that they can make things better. Their discourse addresses people of a particular country, region or city as a whole rather than a particular social group or constituency based on a specific ideological platform. This approach is often characterized by a strong populism, appealing to ordinary people and claiming to share their thoughts and sentiments. Non-party politicians tend to present themselves as political outsiders with nothing in common with established political structures and who express the genuine will of ordinary people—who are purportedly mistreated at the hands of the old elites. Although they are usually members of the social elite themselves, they nurture an image of themselves as the self-made man who, regardless of his accumulated wealth, thinks and acts like the average Joe. The communication style of these party leaders is plain and energetic. They avoid trying to communicate complicated political messages. Instead, they use simple, straightforward, and often provocative slogans. They are prone to turning their public appearances into spectacles with them playing the protagonists (see Semino – Masci 1994).

As already mentioned, the Czech Republic and Slovenia used to be perceived as post-communist countries whose political scenes were the most stable, i.e. possessing established political parties that have clear ideological profiles and where political space is dominated by parties of centre-right and centre-left orientations (although with differences in power-relations since, in the Czech Republic, the center-right held power for most of the time, but in Slovenia, this was true for the center-left). However, in the last couple of years, some of the political parties that used to be key political players have weakened or even almost disappeared from the political scene. This was caused by frequent political scandals and a general lack of responsiveness to the needs of the citizenry. They were supplemented by political new-comers who have been building their campaigns either through *managerization of politics*, based on the notion of *politics as business* according to which the country should be run as a business firm, or through *moralization of politics*, i.e. proclaiming a moral renewal of politics and bringing higher standards to political culture. The two approaches are not mutually exclusive. Both have in common a rejection of *old* political establishment and its allegedly nefarious deeds. However, the irony is that some of these new-comers who loudly denounced their established competitors as corrupt and otherwise problematic, themselves carry heavy baggage in terms of involvement in various suspicious practices (as is evidently the case with Andrej Babiš).

Person-based politics and the functioning of democracy

A key question in terms of political development of (not only) new democracies is the impact of personalization of politics on the quality of democratic processes. Can the new faces lead to a rejuvenation of political life through a strengthening of political competition and bringing new ideas and higher ethical standards? Can they contribute to more effective policies and thus to a more successful solution to the problems their societies are dealing with?

Personalized leadership can be very effective in mobilizing mass support and overcoming numerous organizational obstacles. A strong and charismatic leader can compensate for a lack institutional structures within a party. However, although such leadership is able to mobilize support in a rather short time, and even win elections, it struggles in keeping support over the long term because of weak institutionalization and no firm policy orientation. The shelf life of personalized parties is thus rather short, which contributes to increased instability in the already volatile political space of the new democracies.

This type of political conduct can be also efficient when carrying out ambitious projects, like building or upgrading infrastructure, etc. However, this holds true mainly at the municipal and regional levels, since the system of governance at this level is not as complex, the leader can more easily exert control over the

political process. At the national level, this approach proves to be less efficient since, because of these parties' vague programs and lack of clear policy orientation, especially in terms of developmental strategies, the capacity to problem solve is usually limited.

The influence of person-based politics on the democratic process is questionable. This applies particularly to the functioning of political parties. According to Rohrschneider and Whitefield (2012: 2–3), these parties must perform three main functions in order to provide an effective mechanism of representation in contemporary democracies: 1) they must offer concrete policy alternatives on relevant issues that structure party systems; 2) they must offer coherent programs, which means that specific positions over different issues are sufficiently interrelated so one can, at least in relative terms, differentiate one policy position from another; and 3) preferences of the citizenry must overlap with the positions of the parties. A party without a clear ideological platform, sound program and consistent policy-orientation can hardly meet any of these three criteria. A party's ability to provide political choice for its citizens is seriously limited. It is true that, based on their personal appeal, political leaders can achieve strong recognition from their supporters. However, this appeal is more often based on populism and demagoguery than on ideas and policy solutions. In this regard, personalization of politics can result in a deterioration of democratic standards.

We can claim that in the cases of the Czech Republic and Slovenia, the rise of person-based political parties and appearance of new faces in political life have brought very few new ideas and concepts and even fewer solutions to the most urgent problems of society. It also didn't induce any evident change in the conduct of established political actors, the very conduct that produced widespread dissatisfaction with politics in general. In this regard, despite high party fluctuation we can't really that they have produced any meaningful increase in political alternatives.

Conclusion

As we have shown, in the countries under analysis—but basically, this applies generally to many Central and Eastern European countries—personalized politics has played an important role over the last decade(s) and has disrupted the traditional organization of modern democracy based on political parties as repository of collective interests and as the representatives of social groups. This development seems to be—along with many others—one of the products of the decline in the population's willingness to participate in the political party spirit. Such behavior obstructs the ability of political parties to perform one of their traditional functions—to mediate collective interests. In a certain respect, we see a vicious circle: parties do not have the public's trust, but neither are they

interested in mass membership connected with the development of intra-party democracy and social roots. This, however, is the reason for their inability to articulate relevant social interests, etc. A temporary cure should, according to the notions of some politicians and voters, be new parties, often focused on a single topic. A number of examples can be found in contemporary Central and Eastern Europe. They concentrate on different issues; they use different tools of political marketing; they have different roles in party systems. Yet they do share one thing. In spite of their short-lasting voter and media success, they do not resolve the above-mentioned vicious circle. In their attempts to avoid it, moreover, they are making the situation even worse. Instead of deeply involved social groups as exponents of collective interests, we can observe individual leaders who communicate with voters as if they were consumers of the leaders' products. Such a relationship does not open the door to a democratic discussion, so long as the leader does not accept the basic democratic idea, i.e. that he can be replaced in the party by another person. The *party* does not present a coherent political program or ideo-political basis; its behavior is limited by the actual decisions and preferences of the leader and, very often, by populism based on *public order* (many CEE leaders are obsessed with public opinion surveys, adapting themselves according to their results). The authoritative style of managing the party is then also transferred into the executive bodies, which again weakens democracy and democratic control.

One positive outcome of this development might be a transformation of those niche parties with a strong leader and unclear program into a traditional political party with catch-all potential, as in the case of the Slovak Direction (SMER) party and its development into the Direction-Social Democratic (SMER-SD) party. Nevertheless. Also after this *domestication*, the Slovak Social Democrats are strongly mastered by Robert Fico, the father/grounder and they balance on the edge of social populism and in some cases even welfare chauvinism. This position sits far away from the role of traditional Western Social Democrats. Hopefully, the domestication of the SMC in Slovenia and ANO 2011 as centrist parties in the countries under discussion could produce more promising results, i.e. a transformation into real political parties with adequate party membership, a clear political program and—above all—a real possibility to oppose the party leader, including the possibility of replacing him. Otherwise, the tendencies of illiberal democracy will continue to grow.

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Much more than Economy: Assessing electoral Accountability in the CEE Member States

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DE GRUYTER OPEN

Politics in Central Europe (ISSN: 1801-3422)
Vol. 12, No. 2
DOI: 10.1515/pce-2016-0012

Abstract: *Electoral accountability is considered the mechanism through which voters hold governments responsible for their performance. Questioning the traditional approach of economic voting theory, the article focuses on the influence exerted by the political context—comprehensively considered as government clarity of responsibility, availability of governing alternatives, electoral formula, and freedom of the media—on the accountability mechanism in eleven countries of Central and Eastern Europe. Using individual and aggregate data collected after the 2014 European Elections by the European Election Study (EES), the present article analyses this process in its double dimension of answerability and enforcement (Schedler 1999). Our findings suggest that voters' ability to express discontent with economic performance in new European democracies is strongly influenced by specific characteristics of the political context. A stable and cohesive government as well as a free media system, in particular, seem to facilitate performance voting in the region.*

Key words: ***Central-Eastern Europe, electoral accountability, political system, mass media***

Introduction

The wider theme of *good democracy* has always affected political studies proposing, in the last decades, more and more comprehensive and stimulating approaches to its analysis (Dahl 1971; Lijphart 1999; Morlino 2011). According to the *procedural* conception of democracy as developed by Schumpeter (1943) and Dahl (1971), elections—considered as a sanctioning or rewarding

mechanism—are at the heart of any modern democratic system (Powell 2000; Stegmaier 2009). Thus, the concept of *electoral accountability* inevitably becomes important for understanding what *democratic quality* is, assuming a relevant role for its analysis.

Schedler (1999) puts forth one of the most comprehensive concepts of accountability, composed of two related features: *answerability* and *enforcement*. Answerability refers to the obligation of governments to provide information and justification for a political act or series of acts, while enforcement stands for the sanction, i.e. the consequence the voters draw after evaluating the information, justifications, and other aspects and interests behind the political act. Given these two conditions, citizens in representative democracies hold judgment over their representatives through periodic elections.[1] In fact, in the absence of answerability, power holders are free to act as they choose, without any checks and balances. In the absence of enforcement, where there are no consequences for failing to provide a satisfactory account, so the process of demanding and providing an account is undermined.

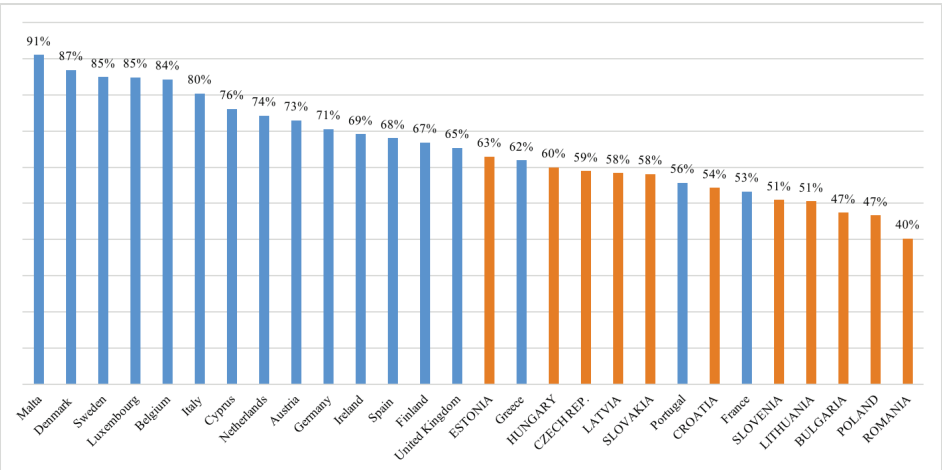
Even though in the last decades electoral accountability has become one of the most studied questions in political science—mostly in the wake of *economic voting* theory and the *clarity of responsibility* approach—cross-national studies have generally paid more attention to consolidated democracies (Powell – Whitten 1993; Anderson 2000a; Bengtsson 2004; Duch – Stevenson 2008; Bellucci – Lewis-Beck 2011; Fraile – Lewis-Beck 2014). Consequently, it is interesting to understand the role of systemic features for accountability in Central and Eastern Europe.

Economic voting showed to be unstable, varying across countries, so that a large amount of literature (e.g. Powell – Whitten 1993; Bengtsson 2004; Nadeau – Niemi – Yoshinaka 2002; Bellucci – Lewis-Beck 2011; Hobolt – Tilley – Banducci 2012) have tried to explain it as a problem concerning the selection of cases and measurement techniques. This instability would be induced by "faulty measurement of the economic and political components," together with the problems of "small, country-specific samples" (Bellucci – Lewis-Beck 2011: 205). Studies on electoral accountability in CEE countries have usually lacked in presenting wide cross-national analysis involving the use of "targeted" variables (at the individual or aggregate level), able to capture performance evaluation or those specific characteristics of the political context that shape electoral accountability.

1 On the other side, O'Donnell (1998: 112–113) states the "limited" role exerted by "free and fair recurrent elections" for vertical accountability. In fact, underlining the importance of freedom of speech, press and association to pursue both answerability and enforcement he affirms that "elections occur only periodically, and their effectiveness at securing vertical accountability is unclear, especially given the inchoate party systems, high voter and party volatility, poorly defined issues, and sudden policy reversals that prevail in most new polyarchies."

Given the peculiar level of political sophistication and participation in the region[2] (Zaller, 1990; Howard 2002), it is necessary to employ economic and political variables able to capture the characteristics of the voters. In fact, in many fluid party systems—such as those characterizing CEE democracies—characterized by weak ideological ties and voters' evaluations of leaders are not based on programmatic or ideological principals (Katz – Crotty 2006). For this reason, voters are more likely to vote according to retrospective evaluations of incumbent performance. We do not limit our analysis to test the influence of formal institutional rules on performance voting, but we enrich the study by looking at how specific characteristics of the incumbent government and the degree of freedom of the mass media influence electoral accountability in CEE countries.

Figure 1 Level of electoral turnout among the 28 EU Member States



Note: Turnout in the last national legislative election held before the 2014 European elections

First, we briefly review the literature on electoral accountability, mostly in the framework of economic voting and clarity of responsibility. Then, we present our theoretical propositions concerning the effects of specific aspects of the institutional context and the degree of freedom of the mass media. We test these propositions using a multilevel analysis of survey data from eleven European countries. The results show that voters' ability to hold governments to account is greatly influenced by the contingent characteristics of the political context.

2 According to Luskin (1990) we consider political sophistication as the "ability–motivation–opportunity triad" influencing voters when they cast their vote. In the literature *ability* has been usually operationalized as level of education, *motivation* has been measured using indicators of political interest, while *opportunity*—considered as the availability of information in a given political context—refers to more contextual factors (Luskin 1990; Popa 2013).

Our results also demonstrate the moderating impact of the mass media on performance voting, indicating the opportunity to include them in the study of electoral accountability. The conclusion looks at the implications of these findings.

Electoral accountability: previous approaches

The literature on electoral accountability developed around the theories of economic voting, that is how voters punish or reward incumbent governments according to the state of the national economy. The number of works in this field is now "around 400 by one count" (Lewis-Beck – Stegmaier 2007: 520). According to this approach, voters tend to reward the incumbent when the economy has improved and are inclined to punish him when economic conditions have gotten worse (Lewis-Beck – Stegmaier 2000; De Brug – Van der Eijk – Franklin 2007; Duch – Stevenson 2008; Dassonneville – Lewis-Beck 2014). In this perspective, an incumbent government would be judged retrospectively, i.e. looking at its economic policy outcomes, often measured using macroeconomic indicators such as inflation, unemployment, growth, or value of national currency (Dorussen – Taylor 2002).

In this perspective, re-election to the office in a given period *t* would be based on economic performance in period *t –1*. According to Fiorina (1981: 430) such a model "presumes that citizens look at results,"[3] i.e. they only consider whether the national economic condition improved or not when they cast their vote.

However, studies conducted over the last twenty years in Central and Eastern Europe present variegated evidence. Several studies using public opinion data found that economic performance affected evaluations of incumbents: Przeworski (1996) showed a co-variation between government popularity and the unemployment rate in Poland; Duch (1995) found that economic difficulties undermine support for governments in the USSR, Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic; Duch (2001) and Anderson as well as Lewis-Beck and Stegmaier (2003) found evidence of economic voting in Hungary. Using sub-national data from early in the transition, Stegmaier and Lewis-Beck (2009) found that the Hungarian electorate acts as economic voters, following an *incumbency-oriented* strategy.

Other studies—often using sub-national data—found that the relation between economic conditions and voting behavior seems to be mediated by per-

3 Another question characterizing economic voting literature is what *economic conditions* voters look at when they decide in the polls. According to a common belief, voters vote according to their pocketbook, i.e. when personal or household financial conditions deteriorate, voters punish the incumbent. Otherwise, they will reward the incumbent. Nevertheless, the overwhelming majority of studies have found that instead of emphasizing personal economic condition, voters are much more likely to be considering the national economic situation when casting their vote (Lewis Beck – Stegmaier 2000; Nadeau – Lewis-Beck – Bélanger 2012).

ceptions of party type more than government performance. According to Pop-Eleches and Tucker (2011), voters look mainly at whether a party is connected with the new or old regime rather than its responsibility for current economic performance. Powers and Cox (1997), using cross-sectional data from the 1993 Polish election, similarly found that attitudes toward economic reforms have a limited effect on voting behavior, but their importance is eclipsed by understandings of the past and other factors, such as religion. In an unrelated study, Harper (2000) found only weak effects of economic evaluations on vote choices in three countries. Given the variety of results, it is not certain whether economic voting would also be obtained at a cross-national level.

Scholars have gradually come to the point that the *economic effect* as such is not sufficient to explain voters' assignment of responsibility, but it is stronger in relation to other factors related to the political context (e.g. Powell – Whitten 1993; Whitten – Palmer 1999; Bengtsson 2004; Anderson 2007; Hellwig – Samuels 2008; Hobolt – Tilley – Banducci 2013). The awareness that explaining electoral accountability means analyzing those aspects related to Schedler's definition (i.e. answerability and enforcement) gradually spread among political scientists. An extensive amount of literature has begun to look at the influence of political context on voters' assignment of responsibility to the government for economic performance.

Powell and Whitten (1993) showed that economic voting is conditioned by the "clarity of responsibility" of political institutions. Institutional arrangement matters for voters' possibility to punish or reward governments for economic performance: "The greater the perceived unified control of policymaking by the incumbent, the more likely the citizen is to assign responsibility for economic and policy outcomes to the incumbents" (Powell – Whitten 1993: 398). Even if it is of indisputable importance, this study, and the several works which followed its approach, present the limit for analyzing almost exclusively stable, industrialized democracies, or adapting the same variables in the analysis of new democracies. It is thus not clear to what extent economic voting would occur in new democracies without traditions of holding governments accountable, such as the CEE countries. These studies, while also giving important theoretical and methodological contributions, leave open some questions, in particular regarding the *contexts* to look at in the analysis of accountability in new democracies.

The relevance of the context, conceived as the *political environment* able to mediate the effects of individual-level factors on citizens' behavior (Anderson 2007), suggests looking at several of its components, such as government clarity of responsibility (Bengtsson 2004; Hobolt et al. 2013), the existence of available alternatives (Anderson 2000) to the government, the influence of the electoral system (Powell 2000) and—as Schedler's conception of accountability suggests—the possibility for citizens to be informed through a free and

pluralistic mass media. These four components, in fact, may contribute to the functioning mechanism of accountability, ensuring information about the political acts promoted by the incumbent and the possibility for voters to identify and potentially to sanction it.

But relevance lies not only in the government and party system. Evidence from the literature supports the idea that media action promotes accountability. Reports from the media about a government's action lead to better informed voters and, as a consequence, this increases politicians' accountability (Besley – Burgess 2002; Ashworth 2012). Norris (2013) suggests that the principal function of the media is to serve as "watchdogs" defending the public interest, functioning as agenda-setters to focus citizens' attention on pervasive problems, such as the economic performance of a national government. Looking at the definition of accountability proposed by Schedler (1999), in fact, the media can (indirectly) influence answerability and enforcement, empowering citizens to play an effective role in holding government to account. The mass media may function as a stimulus for individuals, pushing them to demand information about actions undertaken by elected officials and enforce sanctions, by creating opportunities to do this.

In the last decade, more and more studies have tried to adopt both new economic and systemic variables in order to capture the strength and intensity of the relationship with the dependent variable (Bengtsson 2004; Coffey 2013; Foucault – Seki – Whitten 2013; Hobolt – Tilley – Banducci 2013). However, as stressed by Bellucci and Lewis-Beck (2011) this literature seems to lack to design a set of variables able to fit specific cases.

For these reasons, the present literature review encourages the carrying out of cross-national research on electoral accountability in eleven CEE countries which now belong to the European Union but were part of the "Communist Bloc" until 1989. To do this, we have employed specific variables, capable of capturing the peculiar aspects of our sample countries.

Does political contest really matter? Government, parties, and the mass media

Voters' behavior is influenced by the contexts in which they operate (Powell 2000). Assuming the relevance of these components for the study of electoral accountability, the aim of this research will also be to extend the clarity of responsibility approach, as developed by the literature, finding *what* contexts are of importance. The main aim of the article is to show how political context influences the accountability mechanism in Central and Eastern European democracies.

However, before doing this, it is interesting to understand the extent to which CEE citizens' voting behavior is driven or not by the economic performance

of the country. Hence, our first hypothesis assumes that the incumbent vote share is *positively influenced* by variation in the GDP growth rate and *negatively influenced* by variations in unemployment and inflation (H_1). The starting point, in fact, is to question the validity of the economic voting theory applied to Central and Eastern Europe since most of the possibilities for voters to punish/reward the incumbent derives from the perception they have regarding his/her performance (Key 1966; Lewis-Beck – Stegmaier 2000). Using evidence derived from previous research (Roberts 2010; Coffey 2013), the first hypothesis tests the effect of three macroeconomic variables—GDP growth, unemployment, and inflation—on electoral support for the incumbent government. This choice is not only dictated by the historical experience of these countries, but also by the evidences coming from previous research that has also demonstrated that the strength of the link *economy/vote choice* varies considerably across countries (Paldam 1991; Anderson 2000b; Anderson 2007; Bellucci – Lewis-Beck 2011).

Following an approach developed in the literature on consolidated democracies to explain Paldam's *contingency dilemma*, the further aim of this article is to go beyond economic voting theory, analyzing the importance of the political contexts—first of all of the institutional components—for electoral accountability in CEE. Anderson (2007: 590) stresses the importance of the political contexts for voters' behavior:

"In a very basic way, then, context and behavior are intimately connected, and this connection is at the heart of political life in at least two fundamental ways: first, *formal and informal rules affect people's political behavior,* and people's preferences, attitudes, and behavior affect the establishment and functioning of such rules. Second, *citizens are exposed to variable social, political, and economic environments* that they are called upon to understand and interpret and that *they may seek to shape based on these understandings and interpretations.*"

In order to look comprehensively at Anderson's political contexts, this study moves then to consider three specific aspects of the institutional system: government clarity of responsibility, structure of the party system, and characteristics of the voting system. All of them are considered not only for their direct effect on the dependent variable, but especially for their conditional effect to be able to strengthen or weaken the accountability mechanism.

Regarding government *clarity of responsibility*, we hypothesize electoral accountability to be weaker in a situation characterized by highly unstable, divided, and minority governments (H_2). A fair amount of literature on this topic (Powell and Whitten 1993; Anderson 2000; Hobolt – Tilley – Banducci 2013) shows how voters' ability to punish/reward the incumbent is highly influenced by the extent to which it is clear who is responsible for what, i.e. government responsibility for economic performance is evident. This is undoubtedly clearer in cases of stable, majority, and small-size coalition governments.

Turning to the structure of *the party system*—i.e. the degree of fragmentation—and its conditional effect, we can hypothesize that performance voting is stronger in contexts characterized by a small number of *effective* parties (H_3). The literature on this point has shown that in order to facilitate the accountability mechanism it is important for voters to have *clear* and *credible* alternatives (Anderson 2000; Bengtsson 2004). When the opposition is extremely fragmented, voters are likely to refuse to vote for these parties, considering them not able to form a government after the elections. They will refuse to cast their vote against the incumbent and so breaking, to some extent, the link performance-accountability.

Considering the characteristics of the electoral system, we can hypothesize that elections held using proportional systems tend to favor the fortunes of the incumbent government (H_4). Several studies show how majoritarian systems provide for a more accountable system for two reasons—one more practical and the other more theoretical. On one hand, majoritarian systems often imply that an incumbent vote loss corresponds to a decisive turnover replacement, while under proportional formulas the government's punishment tends to be less direct. In addition, because of the single-member constituency system, voters hold more power to directly reward or punish incumbents at the elections. On the other hand, proportional systems are often based on party-list, blocked list, or wide-nation list that could impede the direct voters' assignment of responsibility at the polls (Powell 2000; Hobolt – Klemmensen 2008; Van der Eijk – Franklin 2009).

However, even in an archetypical "high clarity" system, in fact, the relationship between an incumbent's performance and his survival in office is relatively weak precisely because the incumbent government benefits from the electoral system's distortion of a plurality of votes into a majority of seats (Hellwig – Samuels 2008). Clarity of responsibility alone, in fact, could not completely explain the relationship between incumbent performance and incumbent re-election. The main aim of this work, in other words, is to understand what *contextual variables* deeply affect voters' possibility of sanctioning/rewarding incumbents in the new European democracies. This consideration leads to the last hypothesis.

Our fifth hypothesis, in fact, concerns the moderating effect of the media on electoral accountability. In this case we expect a pluralistic and free mass media to have a positive conditional effect, making voters more aware of the economic performance of the incumbent government (H_5). A great deal of literature is devoted to the relationship between the media and politics. A part of it analyses the effects of the media on electoral participation (Smets – Van Ham 2013), while other studies focus on its role in the development of political knowledge (Fishkin 1991; De Vreese – Boomgaarden 2006). Studies have also demonstrated that political debates contribute to long-term political engage-

ment and voters' issue knowledge and salience. However, a number of studies on electoral accountability do not include the media as an independent variable. That is, while many of them do analyze the influence of media coverage of the economy on individuals' economic evaluations and perceptions (Mutz 1994; Haller – Norpoth 1997; Soroka 2006), substantially fewer studies analyze the impact of the media on individuals' vote choices. Nevertheless, the media play a relevant role in ensuring accountability, since they work as a harness on government action and political institutions in general (Birch 2011; Birch – Van Ham 2014). Their "watchdog" action, in other words, allows citizens to be informed about problems, making them aware of incumbent's performance (Norris 2015). Government accountability to the citizens turns out strengthened where independent media make the public aware about, for instance, the national economic situation. An independent and pluralistic media system has been proven to have positive effects on the quality of elections as well for two reasons. First of all, by providing an unbiased source of news, especially about the performance of the incumbent government in terms of public and economic policies. For this reason, we very frequently assist the media in emphasizing mostly negative information about the governing parties (Sokora 2006), strengthening the link between performance and vote choices at the basis of the accountability mechanism.

This article tests these hypotheses by looking at eleven new democracies in Central and Eastern Europe. The decision to focus on these countries lies in their peculiarities. The existence of relatively new party systems, usually characterized by high fragmentation, implies that citizens could have difficulty finding targets for accountability (Bunce – Csanadi 1993; Birch 2003; Rose – Munro 2011). Moreover, recent data as well as the literature have shown that citizens in post-communist countries are far less likely to participate in politics than those belonging to Western Europe or other new democracies (see Howard 2002; Eurostat 2013). Less interested and politically active citizens will tend to acquire less information about governance outcome. As a result, they may not possess the necessary information to practice performance voting since more informed voters are better able to use elections to screen and discipline elected officials (Besley 2006; Glaeser – Ponzeto – Shleifer 2007).

Data and methods

In order to test our theoretical propositions, we use individual level data from the 2014 European Election Study (EES), which is a cross-national survey that covers all EU-28 countries and, among them, our eleven CEE countries. Since the present research analyzes only eleven Member States, the total sample is composed of roughly 12,000 respondents. Since the questionnaire is administered in the 28 countries during the same period, the EES represents an

interesting instrument to examine how cross-national variation in the political context shapes individual-level voting behavior at the same time (Hobolt – Tilley – Banducci 2013).

Table 1: Descriptive statistics

Variable	N	Code	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Incumbent vote	8,647	0-1	0.32	0.46	0	1
GDP growth	8,647	-	2.44	1.11	-0.36	3.67
Unemployment	8,647	-	10.3	3.7	6.20	16.70
Inflation	8,647	-	0.03	0.61	-1.42	1.7
Clarity index	8,647	0-3	1.45	0.93	0	3
ENEP	8,647	-	4.96	1.60	2.54	7.59
Electoral system	8,647	0-1	0.18	0.40	0	1
FoP index	8,647	0-100	70.72	8.56	58	84

Our dependent variable is an individual-level measure for national vote intention. It is measured using the traditional question in the EES questionnaire: "...and if there was a general election tomorrow, which party would you vote for?". Answers to this question are dichotomized, building up a binary dependent variable that runs from 0 (vote for opposition parties) to 1 (vote for incumbent government/party).[4] It allows us to use multilevel logistic regression models to analyze the relation between the dependent and the independent variables.

To test the direct accountability effect we use three key independent variables. We adopt macroeconomic indicators for inflation, unemployment and annual GDP growth (International Monetary Fund, 2014). *Inflation* is measured as the change in percentage of average consumer prices year by year. *Unemployment* is measured as the percentage of people who are currently not working but are currently searching for work. *GDP growth* is measured as the annual change in percentage of gross domestic product.

In order to analyze the conditional effect of Anderson's political "contexts," indicators for government clarity of responsibility, party system structure, type of electoral system and freedom of the media are used in the analysis. As measure of *government clarity*, we adopt an additive index that collects specific characteristics of government status: minority/majority government (0–1), coalition/one-party government (0–1) and stability (0–1). For each country

4 We thus exclude non-voters from the analysis. We also dropped "Don't know," "No answer," and refusals from the dataset. In this way, we obtained roughly 8,000 responses.

the scores are added creating an index running from zero to three. To measure the structure of the *party system* we use the effective number of parties at the election (Gallagher 2015). A categorical variable is employed to classify the different *electoral systems* (Bormann – Golder 2013). We distinguish between mixed and proportional system, taking the first one as the reference category.[5] Media freedom is measured using the Freedom of the Press Index published in 2014 by Freedom House (2015). We reversed the original index, so that each country is given a total press freedom score from 100 (best) to 0 (worst) on the basis of 23 methodology questions divided into three subcategories.[6]

Findings

Given the different nature of the data—collected at both the macro and micro level—data are analyzed using logistic multilevel models (Steenbergen – Jones 2002). Table 1 presents fou*r models with a logit link because the binary nature of the dependent variable (0–1). The first model tests the traditional propositions of economic voting, i.e. the propensity for voters to vote for the incumbent government according to its economic performance (H_1). The aim of Models 2–3–4 is to test the main and conditional effect of our institutional variables on electoral accountability, introducing the clarity of responsibility index, the availability of governing alternatives, and the electoral system (H_2, H_3, *and* H_4). The fifth model tests the moderating effect degree of media freedom on voters' ability to assign responsibility for economic performance, so explicitly testing H_5.

Table 2: Multilevel logit regression models of incumbent vote intention in Central and Eastern Europe

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Unemployment	-0.11** (0.02)	-0.23** (0.02)	-0.16** (0.08)	-0.11** (0.02)	-0.15** (0.02)
GDP growth	0.05 (0.08)	0.04 (0.05)	0.03 (0.07)	0.01 (0.09)	0.01 (0.08)
Inflation	-0.07** (0.01)	-0.11* (0.04)	-0.09* (0.07)	-0.12* (0.02)	-0.10 (0.03)
Clarity of responsibility index		-0.63** (0.21)			
Clarity * GDP		0.32* (0.29)			
Clarity * Unemployment		0.49** (0.15)			
Clarity * Inflation		0.43 (0.12)			

5 We do not consider majoritarian systems that failed to be adopted by the sample countries. Among them, only Hungary, Lithuania and Romania use a mixed voting system. Data are available at http://www.ipu.org/parline-e/parlinesearch.asp.

6 For details see the complete report available at: https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/FreedomofthePress_2015_FINAL.pdf

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Party system fractionalization			0.49* (0.22)		
Party system frag. * GDP			-0.41 (0.18)		
Party system frag. * Unemployment			-0.36* (0.19)		
Party system frag. * Inflation			-0.33 (0.23)		
Electoral system				-0.23 (0.46)	
Electoral system * GDP				0.29 (0.33)	
Electoral system * Unemployment				0.18 (0.25)	
Electoral system * Inflation				0.21 (0.37)	
Freedom of the Press index					-0.83* (0.27)
FoP index * GDP					0.39 (0.19)
FoP index * Unemployment					0.50** (0.10)
FoP index * Inflation					0.13* (0.05)
Constant	0.46** (0.15)	0.74 (0.26)	0.46* (0.27)	0.65 (0.33)	0.82* (0.23)
N: countries	11	11	11	11	11
N: individuals	8,647	8,647	8,647	8,647	8,647
Log likelihood	- 4,358.16	-4,533.43	-4,635.56	-4,646.65	-4,761.78
Nagelkerke Pseudo R^2	0.52	0.49	0.43	0.47	0.51

Notes: Dependent variable: support to incumbent government. Standard errors in parentheses. Coefficients: *p< 0.1; **p < 0.05; ***p < 0.01

Model 1 simply collects the results of a multiple regression of national vote intention on our three macroeconomic variables. It indicates that two out of three economic indicators, i.e. unemployment and inflation, are very statistically significant (at 95 percent), also the coefficients point in the correct direction: higher unemployment and inflation make people less likely to be incumbent government voters. These findings seem to support our first hypothesis. Voters in our CEE countries look "retrospectively" at the incumbent's economic performance when they cast their vote and are particularly sensitive to specific economic indicators, such as unemployment and inflation. The almost absence of unemployment during the Communist regime, together with skyrocketing inflation rates[7] after its fall in the 1990s (for instance, in Poland it reached 525

7 For an overview, see World Bank data available at: http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.DEFL.KD.ZG?page=5.

percent), has probably made citizens in these countries more sensitive to some aspects of the economy rather than others, such as GDP growth (Przeworski 1996; Roberts 2012; Coffey 2013).

Model 2 tests the main and conditional effect of our first systemic variable, i.e. government clarity, on the accountability process. Results seem to confirm our theoretical statements: lower levels of government cohesion and government stability seem affect the propensity to vote for the incumbent. Moreover, in this case interaction coefficients are consistent and statistically significant, in particular for unemployment and, surprisingly, for GDP growth as well. Hence, our hypothesis is partially confirmed: in contexts in which "lines of responsibility" are clearer voters" ability to sanction/reward incumbents according to their performance is enhanced, with particular regard to unemployment policies and GDP growth. In Model 3 the results show that in countries with less fragmented party systems, economic effects increase more than countries in which ENEP is higher. Interaction terms, in fact, suggest that in contexts in which there are fewer and sizeable alternatives to the incumbent government, voters tend more to sanction it for bad performance, this time in the area of unemployment. These results lead to a partial acceptance of our third hypothesis. Model 4 tests how the electoral system influences link performance-accountability. However, the existing—negative—relationship with our dependent variable finds support in recent literature on voting behavior in Western Europe. The main effect indicates that non-proportional voting systems tend to affect negatively electoral support for the government. Moreover, the positive coefficient of the interaction terms suggests that mixed systems tend to favor accountability dynamics much more than PR systems. However, none of these values show statistically significant effects, so we should reject our fourth hypothesis. In Model 5 our fifth hypothesis is tested. In this case, the model gives strongly statistically significant results, with both the main effect and the interaction terms pointing in the expected direction. In this case the media seem to play an undeniable role in favoring electoral accountability in our eleven CEE countries. It means that in countries where citizens can count on a fairer media—in terms of both political pluralism and concentration of economic resources—are less likely to vote for the incumbent government. Moreover, the highly significant interaction between this variable and our macroeconomic indicators—in particular unemployment—confirms that more freedom of the media makes citizens better informed to carry out retrospective voting.

Conclusion

The aim of this article is multiple. It aims to contribute to the existing literature on electoral accountability. For long time, it has focused almost exclusively on economic voting, studying the relationship between electoral outcomes

and the state—or the perception—of the economy. In the last decade, a large body of literature moved its focus to the influence of the institutional system on electoral accountability. This cross-national study aims to contribute to this literature, focusing on eleven countries belonging to Central and Eastern Europe but also addressing economic voting theory and adapting clarity of responsibility assumptions to these specific cases. Moreover, it aims to be a first attempt to also include the mass media in a cross-national analysis of electoral accountability. The results seem to corroborate the general findings. Contexts with higher *institutional clarity* have more pronounced levels of performance voting than countries with more government instability and fragmentation of the party system. Moreover, it seems confirmed that greater media pluralism improves the accountability mechanism, furnishing citizens with useful information about the state of the economy that can be used when they cast their votes at the polls.

We started from the general assumption that citizens' ability to perform retrospective voting is enhanced when electoral accountability is simple. In post-communist EU Member States real economy—and unemployment above all—matters, but it is not enough. Our results show that as for consolidated democracies, in Central and Eastern Europe voters' economic assessments have stronger effects on government support when it is clear who is responsible for whom, when voters have only a limited number of (credible) alternatives to throw their support to and when there is a free media system able to surveil government and identify problems. Hence, this study demonstrates the relevance—also for these new democracies—of the "political contexts" represented by the government, parties, voting systems and mass media, and in which areas economic voting takes place. Who is in charge? How much responsibility does that person have? What are the alternatives to the present government? These, as well as the watchdog function of the mass media, represent key elements that seems to dramatically influence whether and to what extent voters hold governments to account for their actions.

The results suggest that clarity matters, and it is twofold—on the side of government/incumbent and on the side of opposition/possible incumbent. Voters blame/credit the national government, but if it is not *strong*, cohesive, and able to make decision they will find it difficult to effectively sanction the incumbent. Moreover, too fragmented alternatives are associated with higher levels of support for an incumbent government: it will be more difficult for voters to estimate what an alternative government would look like, since more parties compete for power. In other words, in order to work, the circuit of electoral accountability needs *clarity* on different levels of the political system: government, opposition/political parties, and finally the media. Regarding the media, this article underscores their importance in strengthening accountability in CEE countries. As already found in previous research (Sheafer 2008; Aker – Collier – Vicente

2010), citizens pick up cues regarding the situation of the economy from the media, and this eventually affects their voting behavior. The findings of this article go in this direction, in particular looking at the interactions between the media and the economy in influencing voters' decisions. Of course, this is one of the first attempts to study the influence of the media on the electoral accountability process, and there is still such a long way to go, in particular in the selection of fitting indicators.

Nevertheless, new problems emerge with the presence of European Union—in particular for the countries belonging to the Eurozone—because its presence risks blurring the lines of responsibility and making it more difficult for voters to assign responsibility and sanction governments on the basis of their performance. Zielonka (2007) stresses that the limits of the EU structure of democratic decision making are much more multilayered and multicentered than at the national level. Evidence from Latin America tells us that citizens often blame policy outcomes on international actors, to which they, as voters, have no direct influence (Alcaniz – Hellwig 2010). A further step in the study of electoral accountability in CEE countries could be to test voters' attitudes. Do they continue to consider national governments responsible for national economic performance, or do they blame the European Union for the recent—and potential future—economic troubles? In any case new theoretical and methodological problems and for researchers and policymakers inevitably seem to rise.

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Anti-Romani terrorism in Europe[1]

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Politics in Central Europe (ISSN: 1801-3422)
Vol. 12, No. 2
DOI: 10.1515/pce-2016-0013

***Abstract**: This article analyzes terrorism against the Roma in Europe. It identifies acts of terrorism in violence that targets the largest stateless nation on the continent and categorizes this terrorism according to current research methods. Focusing on events in both Western and Eastern Europe, the article analyses and compares the most significant terrorist acts against the Roma of recent years. It concludes that anti-Romani terrorism is heterogeneous in terms of tactics, strategies, and ideological justification, yet can usually be subsumed into the broadly conceived category of far-right terrorism. The variety of attacks suggests that terrorist acts are an offshoot of the broad spectrum of anti-Romani activity, and are influenced by contemporary trends in inter-ethnic violence.*

Key words: ***Romani people, terrorism, Europe, far right, racist violence***

Introduction

For several decades now, a wave of substantial anti-Romani violence has been present in Europe, a continent on which the Roma are the largest stateless ethnic group or *nation*. This article analyzes violence against the Roma through the prism of terrorism. The issue is examined from the point of view of the victims—members of the Romani population or its constituent ethnicities. Building upon this basis, the strategies of the terrorists themselves are analyzed and categorized according to the generally respected typologies of terrorism. In order to do this, a framework for analysis is first introduced; this is based on the typologies of terrorism in general and those of far-right terrorism in

1 This article was written as part of the grant project GAČR GA408/11/0709 "Contemporary challenges of democracy in East Central Europe," funded by the Czech Science Foundation. Translated by Štěpán Kaňa.

particular, as most acts of anti-Romani terrorism to date have been classified as right-wing extremism (Backes 2012: 61). The issue of anti-Romani violence is then described and an overview provided of those anti-Romani acts which fulfill the characteristics of terrorism and its various categories. In conclusion, the significance of anti-Romani terrorism is evaluated in view of its strategic use of violence.

The fundamental research question of the article is the following: what forms does terrorist violence against the Roma take in Europe? The complementary question is: how important is anti-Romani violence in terrorist strategies? To answer both, descriptive and historical methods are used, as well as an analytical approach that applies typologies to actual cases. Anti-Romani violence is not limited to Europe, it also appears in North America and the Middle East (Yıldız 2015); the focus of this article is, however, on the situation in Europe.

Anti-Romani terrorism from the viewpoint of the typologies of terrorism

There is no agreed definition of terrorism, either among experts or within the international community more generally. An analysis of the factors that make defining terrorism so difficult is beyond the scope of the present article; a number of renowned scholars have been involved in this effort, and the reader is referred to their findings (Graborsky – Stohl 2010, Martin 2013, Schmid 2011). The main causes are the normative viewpoints assumed and the heterogeneity of the phenomena described as terrorism. The normative issue is that the concept of terrorism has negative connotations, and thus there is a tendency not to use the discrediting term *terrorist* to describe oneself or one's allies.

The heterogeneity is linked to the great variety of violent acts that are described as terrorism. Among other things, there is discussion as to whether terrorism involves only subversive activities against those in power, or whether the term can also be used to describe repressive measures taken by power holders against their populations (e.g. the Stalinist purges in the Soviet Union). What constitutes a terrorist target is also problematic. According to some authors, one should speak of terrorism only when innocent civilians are targeted; others also consider peacetime attacks against power holders and military/security personnel as terrorism. The issue of terrorism during war also presents a challenge for conceptualizing the phenomenon. There are more such problems (Mareš 2005: 27–31).

Well-known terrorism scholar Alex P. Schmid has analyzed several hundred definitions of terrorism and identified the following core features:

1. The demonstrative use of violence against human beings;
2. The (conditional) threat of (more) violence;
3. The deliberate production of terror or fear in a target group;

4. The targeting of civilians, non-combatants and innocents;
5. The purpose of intimidation, coercion and/or propaganda;
6. The fact that it is a method, tactic or strategy of waging conflict;
7. The importance of communicating the act(s) of violence to larger audiences;
8. The illegal, criminal, and immoral nature of the act(s) of violence;
9. The predominantly political character of the act;
10. Its use as a tool of psychological warfare to mobilize or immobilize sectors of the public (Schmid 2011: 74).

Many of the characteristics cited above are present in one of the most accepted definitions of terrorism, adopted in UN Security Council resolution 1566 (2004). This resolution describes terrorism as "criminal acts, including against civilians, committed with the intent to cause death or serious bodily injury, or taking of hostages, with the purpose to provoke a state of terror in the general public or in a group of persons or particular persons, intimidate a population or compel a government or an international organization to do or to abstain from doing any act, which constitute offences within the scope of and as defined in the international conventions and protocols relating to terrorism" (UN Security Council 2004).

Thus, the essence of terrorism is that it is aimed at targets not directly associated with combatants in a military conflict and, by doing so, intimidates a broader public (government, the general public, or a specific group of people). In terms of terrorism being employed as a strategy, what matters is that terrorists or terrorist groups choose to commit terrorism when they deem it suitable for achieving their goals. Terrorism is therefore an intentional excessive anthropogenic threat.

The definition of terrorism is difficult, and so is its typology. Acts of terrorism can be classified according to many criteria. One of them focuses on the ideological motivations or goals that drive the terrorists. In this respect, one can speak of religious, extreme-left, extreme-right, ethnic-territorial and single-issue terrorism. A discussion is underway as to whether violence employed in the support of democratic ideas—for example, against a dictatorship—should be classified as terrorism. Another possible criterion for defining terrorism focuses on whether it must be undertaken by purely non-state subjects, or whether state actors may be variously involved (by funding, secret services activities, etc.; Kraus 2014). Terrorism can be committed by groups or individuals with variously weak or strong links to an organization or movement, and includes acts committed by so-called *lone wolves*.

In terms of the strategies in support of which terrorist methods are deployed, one may consider the simple intimidation of an adversary by the brutality of a terrorist act (or threat thereof), or a more elaborate approach that aims

to recruit new supporters by means of the terrorist act (the terrorists' self-understanding as an avant-garde). Acts of terrorism against persons or groups which are perceived by a significant segment of society as aberrant, can send out a strong message that the perpetrators would be better able to secure *law and order* than the existing powers (vigilante terrorism). Terrorism can also be used to create chaos, or organize false-flag operations (imputed to political opponents), so that the political wing of the terrorist organization gains the sympathies of the general public to the detriment of those to whom the attacks have been ascribed (a strategy of tension). All of these variants of terrorism send out an ideological message, whether by the act itself (the symbolism of targets, etc.) or in accompanying communications (Bötticher – Mares 2012: 237).

All of these categories need to be understood as an analytical framework; the typologies may complement each other, and individual categories within a typology may permeate; for example, ethnic terrorism may be motivated by a far-left, far-right or religious ideology, or vigilante terrorists may think of themselves as an avant-garde. Terrorism may also be classified according to the means of implementation (e.g. suicidal terrorism), its geopolitical origin (Middle East terrorism), the space in which it is executed (cyber terrorism) or the targets it chooses (airline terrorism). Within the last category, the targets can also be of a group character (for instance, anti-Semitic terrorism), an important point for defining anti-Romani terrorism.

Existing studies on terrorism that have at least partially concerned themselves with violence against the Roma have mostly analyzed extreme-right terrorism (Backes 2012: 61, Mareš 2014, Ravndal 2015: 26) and, to a small degree, lone-wolf terrorism (Hartleb 2013: 83), and terrorism within a regional framework (Mareš 2011: 243–244, Marton 2011: 18–19). Hence one needs to focus, above all, on an analytical framework for the study of extreme-right terrorism.

Scholars have chiefly studied this kind of terrorism either in Western Europe and the US (Holbrook – Taylor 2013, Ravndal 2015), or in Russia (Laryš – Mareš 2011). Although anti-Romani violence does appear in these areas, it is not as prominent there as in East-Central and South East Europe (Mudde 2005: 274–275). Yet the study of anti-Romani terrorism must be conceived in a broader geopolitical context. Violence against the Roma materializes in many places where stateless nations are to be found.

In the mid-1990s, Ehid Sprinzak undertook a global summary analysis of extreme-right terrorism (without explicitly mentioning violence against the Roma). He categorized extreme-right terrorism as follows:

1. Revolutionary terrorism (seeking to establish a far-right regime);
2. Reactive terrorism (seeking to preserve a far-right regime or restore its power);
3. Vigilante terrorism (seeking to establish or maintain order in an existing regime);

4. Racist terrorism (seeking to establish a society based on racial hierarchy);
5. Millenarian terrorism (terrorism of religious groups believing that the end of the world is imminent and they have been chosen; they use terrorist violence against the *society of sin* that surrounds them);
6. Youth counterculture terrorism (terrorist violence is used as part of youth--counterculture rebellion; as Sprinzak points out, only a small part of the violence committed by subcultures or countercultures such as skinheads can be classified as terrorism) (Sprinzak 1995: 22–37).

An important criterion within the typology of terrorism is selectivity. Maxmilián Strmiska writes about the "individualization" of selectively targeted victims on the one hand, and he describes a general framework of the choice of victims of non-selective terrorism on the other hand (Strmiska 2001: 41). An affiliation to a specific ethnic, religious or political group can be a specific criterion of partial selectivity of the victim from the point of view of a terrorist perpetrator. Another approach can be connected with symmetry, or asymmetry, of a terrorist group in relation to the targeted group (Souleimanov, 2006: 20–21). The concept of symmetric or asymmetric threats can also be connected with so-called "group security" (Juříček, Rožňák, 2014: 92), which is related to the security of specific societal groups within the state, for example, ethnic entities. These entities can be threatened by violent representatives of the more powerful groups.

Bearing in mind the definitions and typologies of terrorism provided above, the key criterion for identifying anti-Romani terrorism is that of excessive violence targeted specifically against the Roma. It is terrorism aimed against an ethnic group or a stateless nation, i.e. people who do not formally hold power. The objective is to send a threatening message to the Roma people either locally or more widely. In order to qualify as terrorism as defined above, the act in question must be motivated by at least a simple strategic calculation; it cannot be, for instance, a random skirmish between two youth gangs. In many cases, instances of extreme-right terrorism overlap with those of hate crime (Transnational Terrorism, Security & Rule of Law 2008: 5); the distinguishing features of terrorism are, precisely, the exceptional brutality of the violence involved, the presence of a strategic calculus, and the dissemination of a threatening message.

Anti-Romani violence in contemporary Europe

Even with this definition, it is difficult to differentiate anti-Romani terrorism from other forms of anti-Romani violence, as such violence can take very different forms, and an element of intimidation of the Romani community (or part thereof) is present in many of them. There are currently about 12 million Roma in the world (European Union 2015). Roma are considered an ethnic group, or the sum of various subethnic groups, by some scholars (Jakoubek

2008), or as a stateless nation by other scholars and by a large part of Roma representation) (Pečínka 2009). A significant proportion of them are exposed to marginalization, which according to some definitions fulfils the conditions of what has been described as structural or systemic violence (e.g. segregation in education, failures in child protection, denial of access to health care, and social assistance, etc.; European Roma Rights Centre 2012c). A more detailed typology of violence against the Roma can be found in the following scheme, devised on the basis of an analysis undertaken by the European Association for the Defense of Human Rights (2012).

Table 1: Violence against the Roma

State violence	Physical violence against Roma by individuals or groups	Social violence
- Anti-Roma rhetoric by political parties	- Racist bias maintained by the media	- Poor quality, unsanitary housing
- Violence of the authorities towards Roma	- Roma as victims of violence by the people	- Exclusion from the health system
- Detention of Roma people	- Roma people particularly are victims of trafficking	- Segregation in the educational system
- Segregation of Roma		- Difficult access to employment
- Illegal sterilization of Roma women		
- Official refusal to recognize the Nazis' Romani genocide		

Source: European Association for the Defense of Human Rights (2012)

Even if we focus solely on physical violence against the Roma by individuals or groups, the spectrum of its forms is very broad. Anti-Romani violence has been developing ever since the arrival of the first Roma into Europe, where they have been subjected to repression. Examining the strategies of those opposed to the Roma today, one finds references to historical forms of anti-Romani violence, such as the brutal punishments of European rulers meted out to the Roma since their arrival in Europe, or the celebration of the Romani genocide committed during the Nazi period. For instance, at a demonstration in Varnsdorf, Czech Republic, in 2011, the inscription on one woman's T-shirt read "Revive Hitler—Roma to the gas chamber" (Policie České republiky 2011).

The main forms of non-state, physical anti-Romani violence in contemporary Europe are the following:

1. Anti-Romani riots, in which a crowd of people, usually led by extreme-right activists, attempts to attack housing estates inhabited by Romani people (e.g. in Bulgaria or the Czech Republic);
2. Non-state vigilante patrols, usually made up of members of extreme-right paramilitary organizations, who intend to prevent *Romani crime*;
3. Non-premeditated, situational violence against the Roma;
4. Premeditated extremist violence, which does not reach the intensity of terrorism;
5. Terrorist violence against the Roma;
6. The planning of a Romani genocide or ethnic war against the Roma (Mareš 2012: 285–294).

State violence might be committed by police forces when they take unreasonable measures against the Roma (for example, anti-racism organizations have criticized the steps taken during the clearing out of Romani camps by French authorities; Amnesty International 2015: 15–17), or, in specific cases, by quasi-state military forces (e.g. the violence committed on the Roma during the crisis in Ukraine by the armed forces of the separatist republics; Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe 2014: 28–29).

The total extent of anti-Romani violence is difficult to estimate, as no clear and comprehensive statistics of these acts are kept. Internationally, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe does some work on the issue as part of its monitoring of hate crimes; however, only a handful of states and international organizations supply information as part of this monitoring, and statistics are available only from 2008 onwards (Organization for Cooperation and Security in Europe 2015). Materials by other non-governmental organizations contain merely listings from certain countries or areas (Amnesty International 2015, European Roma Rights Centre 2012a, b). Studies do exist that investigated the situation in the 1990s; however, they are focused on other aspects of anti-Romani racism and exclude statistics concerning its victims (Mudde 2005). One can also find thorough case studies focused on individual countries (Kučera 2011).

An approximate but expert estimate on the basis of the above-mentioned sources indicates that since 1989 about 500 Roma have been killed in Europe in racially-motivated acts of physical interpersonal violence, about two-thirds of them during the 1990s. The number of injured has been greater by an order of magnitude, and apparently a large part of the Romani community fears such attacks. Though most often occurring in East-Central and South East Europe, in recent years anti-Romani violence has also flared up in Eastern Europe (Ukraine) and Western Europe (in connection with the migration of Roma from Central and Eastern Europe) (Human Rights First 2008: 111–112).

Specifying anti-Romani terrorism

Anti-Romani violence in Europe covers a broad spectrum, creating among the Romani population a widespread atmosphere of fear, which acts such as planned attacks, mass anti-Romani protests featuring elements of violence, attempts at lynching real or supposed Romani criminal offenders, etc contribute to. For that matter, even in the study of other forms of terrorism, mob attacks directed by terrorists that have atrocious consequences are sometimes described as terrorism, for example, the killing of the U.S. ambassador in Libya in 2012 when a mob stormed the embassy (United States Department of State 2013: 6).

Considering such acts of anti-Romani countercultural or subcultural violence, one observes elements of at least some premeditation and attempts to intimidate the Romani community in a number of deeds not otherwise described as terrorism, thus rendering them terrorist in character. For instance, when racist skinheads mounted an assault in Písek in the Czech Republic in 1993, they had planned a *punitive expedition* against the Roma in a specific town. During this *expedition*, a young local Rom was murdered, having been driven into the river where he drowned. This was real intimidation of the Romani community in the Czech Republic (Mareš 2014).

Subcultural violence—committed in particular by skinheads—has been behind the deaths and injuries of many Roma in Central and Eastern Europe, especially during the 1990s and 2000s. As already indicated above, within this violence one must differentiate various forms of attack on the Roma. Racist skinheads, who were dominant among the young extremist groups, were responsible for the overwhelming majority of these attacks. Yet there were also anti-racist and leftist currents within the skinhead movement, for example, Skinheads Against Racial Prejudice (SHARP). Nonetheless, from around 2005 onwards these groups were gradually replaced by new subcultural phenomena, principally the Autonomous Nationalists (Vejvodová 2014: 80–88).

Within the skinhead subculture groups appeared that began to think of themselves as the main vehicles of violent and armed struggle. Principally these were branches of the organizations Hammerskins Nation (HSN, founded in the USA in the late 1980s) and Blood & Honour (established at the same time in the UK). Originally created as an independent entity in Great Britain, Combat 18 gradually associated itself with Blood & Honour, serving as its militant wing (Bötticher – Mareš 2013).

As early as the first half of the 1990s, these organizations expanded into Central and Eastern Europe, where the Romani population (alongside immigrants, leftist adversaries, etc.) became the targets of their hateful propaganda. Whether the specific attacks on the Roma that took place were committed by actual members of these groups or by people who were passive recipients of their propaganda without themselves being incorporated into the organizational structures of

these groups is, however, difficult to judge. The judiciary did not always investigate these aspects in cases such as the murder of a Romani woman in Slovakia in 2000 or the attack in Vítkov, Czech Republic, in 2009 during which a two-year old girl suffered severe burns (Mayer – Odehnal 2010: 159–160). In other cases exhibiting the traits of terrorism, an organized background was not proved.

Even where such affiliations are proven, the cases are not necessarily judicially recognized as terrorism according to the prevailing law, for instance, due to the allegedly low intensity of violence and its consequences. An example of this is the arson attack committed in Aš, Czech Republic, on 26 February 2011 by two young neo-Nazis who claimed allegiance to the regional branch of Combat 18 Sudetenland (Vegrichtová 2013: 156). There have also been cases where an organization understood to be terrorist made threats against the Romani, but without violence occurring. For instance, Combat 18 in Northern Ireland made threats against Roma who had immigrated into the area from East-Central Europe (Breen-Smyth 2009).

More well-known is the case of Anders Breivik, who in 2011 aimed his act of terrorism against the government of Norway (though in actual fact he killed several civilians close to Norwegian government buildings) and young left-wing activists, whom he considered bearers of "cultural Marxism." In his manifesto Breivik also made mention of the so-called *Romani question*, proposing resettlement of the Roma into Eastern Anatolia (Berwick 2011: 1307).

All of the examples provided above fall into the definition of terrorism as broadly understood, though the exact designation may be a matter for discussion. In the following three case studies, a clear terrorist element has been identified in the form of intimidation by brutal violence, and this violence has claimed human lives. Nevertheless it needs emphasizing that, of the three examples, only the case of Franz Fuchs has been officially described as terrorism, in the documents of the Austrian government (Republik Österreich. Bundesministerium des Inneres 1999). At the time these acts were committed, there was no law in force in Austria that directly described certain behavior as *terrorist*. By contrast, the case from Hungary was not heard by the court as one involving terrorism. The same is true for the case from Bulgaria, where, furthermore, the real culprits remain to be convicted.

Case-study: Bomb attack on Roma in Austria in 1995

A bomb attack on Roma was committed on the night of 4/5 February 1995, near the village of Oberwart in Burgenland, Austria. A tripwire explosive device was attached to a sign stating "Roma back to India" (*Roma zurück nach Indien*), designed to look like a traffic sign and placed at a junction close to the municipality. The item was discovered, apparently shortly after midnight, by four Roma, who probably attempted to remove it. They were alleged to be members of a Roma

patrol, which at that time regularly monitored the situation around Oberwart, as the local Romani population had faced threats there before (Ivan 2005). The bomb, containing 400 g of TNT, exploded, instantly killing all four Roma: Josef Simon (aged 40), Peter Sarközi (27), Karl Horvath (22) and Erwin Horvath (18). They were found by the uncle of two of the victims, who called the police (Tozzer – Zellsacher 1995: 163). The police initially suspected that a relative of the murdered men had constructed the explosive device. However, the next day a charge exploded in the town of Stinatz, largely inhabited by members of the Croatian minority. Thanks to a letter connected to the second attack, both bombings were ascribed to the Bajuwarische Befreiungsarmee (BBA) (Antifaschistisches Autorenkollektiv 1996: 31).

This putative organization was responsible for sending letter bombs and placing explosives in Austria and Germany from 1993 to 1996. A total of 25 letter bombs were sent in five lots, with an additional device dispatched in December 1996. The attacks were committed in Klagenfurt (where the explosive was uncovered by police officers in time), Oberwart and Stinsatz. The main victims of the attacks were members of ethnic minorities, persons of foreign origin, and public figures known for helping immigrants and minorities. Nine letters claiming responsibility for the attacks were received (Republik Österreich. Bundesministerium des Inneres 1999: 50). As the overview of the attacks below shows, Roma were only attacked directly in Oberwart; they were, however, the only group to have suffered fatalities as a consequence of the incidents.

Table 2: Attacks by the Bajuwarische Befreiungsarmee

Series/Attack	Date	Targets	Results of the attacks
First series of letter bombs	December 1993	- August Janisch, pastor from Styria involved in aid to refugees - Helmut Zilk, then mayor of Vienna - Helmut Schüller, head of the Church organization Caritas, which aids immigrants - Silvana Meixner, ORF TV station journalist for minorities - Wolfgang Gombocz, activist of the Slovenian cultural union in Steiermark - Madeleine Petrovic and Terezia Stoisits, two Green Party politicians helping immigrants - Johanna Dohnal, then minister for women - ARGE (an association facilitating the employment of foreign nationals) - Islamic Immigration Aid Society	Four wounded (Janich, Zilk, Meixner and the clerk at a law office in Vienna who opened the letter addressed to the Islamic Immigration Aid Society), six of the ten bombs were seized and defused.

Pipe bomb in Klagenfurt	24 August 1994	- Driving school in Klagenfurt (Slovenian, according to the perpetrator)	Bomb found, exploded in the detector during the police investigation. Three police officers were wounded; Theo Kelz lost both hands.
Second series of letter bombs	October 1994	- A publishing house in Klagenfurt that issued works by Slovenian writers - Advisory centre for foreigners at the Dornbirn diocese - AG Papier Hallein factory (employed foreigners) - The company Stift Wilten (helpful to foreigners)	All four bombs uncovered, no injuries.
Pipe bomb in Oberwart	4 February 1995	- Inhabitants of a Romani settlement, bomb placed at nearby junction	Four Roma killed: Josef Simon, Peter Sarközi, Karl Horvath and Erwin Horvath.
Explosive charge in Stinatz	6 February 1995	- Croatians from the village, bomb disguised as a spray can	Bomb exploded when waste container was being handled, seriously injuring employee of waste-disposal services Erich Preißler.
Third series of letter bombs	June 1995	- Arabella Kiesbauer, dark-skinned presenter of the TV station Pro 7 in Munich - Intercontact, a mediatory agency in Linz - Dietrich Szameit, deputy mayor in Lübeck	Three people wounded (Kiesbauer and Szanmeit were unharmed, as the letter bombs were opened by their colleagues, Sabine Dammann in Munich and Thomas Rhoter in Lübeck).
Fourth series of letter bombs	October 1995	- Maria Loley, refugee aid worker - Mahmoud Abou-Roumie, Syrian doctor - A medical couple from Korea	Two wounded (the aid worker and the doctor; the bomb addressed to the Korean couple was intercepted).
Fifth series of letter bombs	December 1995	- Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Vienna - An Indian family living in Vienna - A dating agency based in Hungary - Angela Resetarits, mother of three sons of Croatian descent, who were well-known in cultural and media circles in favor of immigration	Two bombs exploded in the mailbox, wounding one passer-by; two others were intercepted.
The last letter bomb	December 1996	- Lotte Ingrisch, writer, stepmother of the then-minister of the interior, Caspar Einem	Bomb intercepted and defused.

Sources: APA 2013, Republik Österreich. Bundesministerium des Inneres 1999, Tozzer – Zellsacher 1995.

Responsibility for the attacks was claimed by the putative group whose full name was Salzburger Eidgenossenschaft – Bajuwarische Befreiungsarmee (The Salzburg Confederation – Bajuvarian Liberation Army, BBA). Based on German nationalist ideas, the, BBA promoted in its letters an ethnically *pure* German Austria without foreigners and ethnic minorities. The name alluded to the

Germanic tribe of the Bajuvari, who, around the middle of the first millennium AD, settled in parts of what is today Bavaria and Austria. However, the letter writer also signed off using fictitious names referring to important figures from Austrian history, such as Odilo, the eighth-century fighter against the Slavs in Carinthia; Siegfried Mahrenberg, the thirteenth-century leader of the Styrian uprising against Přemysl Otakar II; Friedrich II der Streitbare, the thirteenth-century ruler; Graf Ernst Rüdiger von Starhemberg, one of the victors over the Turks who laid siege to Vienna in 1683; and Andreas Hofer, the leader of a Tyrolean uprising at the time of the Napoleonic wars. One of the letters also questioned the holocaust of the Jews, calling it a fabrication (Tozzer – Zellsacher 1995: 139–214).

In the end only one perpetrator was apprehended. This occurred on 1 October 1997 during a police check on a driver whom two women had accused of stalking them. Upon the arrival of the police, the driver detonated an improvised explosive device, losing both of his hands. The perpetrator was Franz Fuchs from Obergralla, Austria, born in 1949. At the time of his arrest, Fuchs was unemployed, his most recent job having been as a measurement technician. He suffered from emotional and psychological issues about his low social standing and his qualities being insufficiently appreciated. He had been unable to complete his university education due to a lack of funding. He did not have a permanent partner (he allegedly experienced issues during a relationship he had with a Slovenian woman) and suffered from sexual anxiety. He thought the termination of his last employment was unjust (Müller 2006: 34). He put the blame for his problems on foreigners and members of ethnic minorities.

On 10 March 1999, Franz Fuchs was given a life sentence for the crimes of murder, attempted murder, grievous bodily harm, intentional endangering by explosives, aggravated blackmail, serious damage to property, and coercion of the federal parliament, the federal government, the Constitutional Court, the Supreme Administrative Court, or the Supreme Court, as well as the offence of coercion of *Bundesland* (Müller 2006: 33). On 26 December 2000, Fuchs committed suicide in prison.

The official version was that Fuchs was the, BBA's only member, but this has been called into question by various authors (Scheid 2001). Various conjectures exist as to Fuchs's accomplices, and the possibility that he was merely a cover. With respect to anti-Romani terrorism, the version proposed by Ana Maria Ivan is interesting: she attributes the, BBA attacks as well as the bombing in Oberwart to operatives of the former Romanian secret service, Securitate. One of Ivan's arguments is that in early June 1995 seven letter and parcel bombs were sent from Austria (Graz, Salzburg, Klagenfurt, and Innsbruck) to politicians in Romania who were members of the Hungarian, German, and Romani minorities, including the Romani political activist Gheorge Nicolae. Ivan spoke with a relative of two of those murdered in Oberwart, who said that one woman

had made threats to his family over the telephone. One of these two above mentioned persons allegedly met Fuchs accidently in 1994, and spoke to him in friendly terms and hence, supposedly, Fuchs had no reason to attack the Roma. By contrast, there were apparently some individuals who were looking to resolve disputes and had links with Romania (Ivan 2005). It needs to be emphasized that this is unconfirmed speculation by one author; the sender of the letter and parcel bombs from Austria to Romania was never apprehended, and the cases of the, BBA (Fuchs) and this series of bombs were not linked, according to the official investigation. Still, it is interesting that an anti-Romani element appears in both, within the context of their broader targets of multiple ethnic minorities.

Heeding now the official explanation, the case fell into a period of Austria's politics in which there was a substantial increase in anti-immigrant sentiment, which was accompanied by the rise of the party-political extreme right. At that time in Austria there was also a strongly militant extreme-right movement whose members were originally suspected of having committed the, BBA attacks. The *Romani question* was not dominant in either the, BBA campaign nor in Austrian politics of the time; yet memories of the attack remain evident within Austria's Romani community to this day. A memorial was erected at the place of the Oberwart attack, and on its twentieth anniversary a number of commemoration services for the victims were held at the site, some with the participation of Austria's President Heinz Fischer (Bundespräsident der Republik Österreich 2015).

Case study: Death Squad in Hungary, 2008–2009

The series of attacks that claimed the most lives among the Roma was committed by a group of racists in Hungary between 2008 and 2009. Though they issued no proclamations, or even the name of their group (if they used a name, this remains unknown), the media dubbed them the "Death Squad" (Halálbrigád), or described the case as the "murders of the Roma" (Romagyilkosságok). The group consisted of four individuals, Arpád Kiss, István Kiss, Zsolt Pető, and István Csontos, who over the period of their group's activities murdered six Roma and exposed 55 people to clear physical danger. They fired 78 gunshots and threw 11 Molotov cocktails at homes inhabited by Roma (Athena Institute 2013).

The members of the group were activists of the extreme right for many years, chiefly among the local skinhead movement in Debrecen. István Kiss took part in a 1995 attack on a synagogue there, later becoming a member of the local organization Bloody Sword (Véres Kard) and, subsequently, the Hungarian section of the Hammerskins. Arpád Kiss participated in events organized by Blood & Honour in Budapest. István Csontos was a former soldier; he was involved in the Kosovo mission, where he also acted as an agent of military intelligence, his task being to report potential unrest among soldiers (Vágvölgyi

2014: 4). Otherwise the perpetrators had ordinary jobs (sound engineer, cook and pastry cook). The attacks were planned from Debrecen and the targets chosen throughout Hungary (K. B. I. 2013). According to the information available, the plan of the four was to incite retaliation from the Roma against ethnic Hungarians, thus provoking a civil war in the country in which the Roma would be exterminated (Mareš – Tvrdá 2014: 12).

The perpetrators planned their attacks, in several cases, reconnoitering sites in advance. They used maps and satellite imagery, choosing some targets at random and others according to media reports, including those where there was increased tension between the Roma and the majority. They would drive to their destination, leaving their car parked at some distance and continuing on foot; then they would attack and withdraw. The attacks were mostly carried out at night, and the perpetrators used night-vision equipment. They started with attacks on property—though even in these there was the possibility of injuring or killing people—later shifting to purposeful murderous assaults on people. The group was very interested in how its activities were presented in the media, and this also contributed to the escalation of the group's violence (Kuria 2016, Vágvölgyi 2014).

Table 3: List of attacks committed by the Death Squad in Hungary

Place	Date	Description of attack	Consequences
Besenyszög	7 March 2008	Brothers Kiss and Pető robbed the house of Csaba G., a professional hunter.	Seven hunting weapons stolen.
Debrecen	2 June 2008	Brothers Kiss and Pető fired two shots at a refugee camp from a distance of 260 meters.	Bullet hole in a window, one inhabitant slightly injured.
Galgagyörk	20 June 2008	Brothers Kiss and Pető fired shots at houses in the Romani part of the municipality.	Damage to property, lives of several Roma put at risk.
Piricse	7 August 2008	Brothers Kiss and Pető threw Molotov cocktails and shot at two Romani houses.	One Romani woman injured, damage to property, lives of several Roma put at risk.
Nyíradony-Tamásipuszta	4 September 2008	Arpád Kiss fired shots at a house inhabited by Roma.	Damage to property, lives of about ten Roma put at risk.
Tarnabod	28 September 2008	Brothers Kiss and Pető threw a Molotov cocktail at a house and fired shots at several others.	Damage to property, lives in danger (contrary to the expectations of the perpetrators, the houses shot at were not inhabited by Roma).
Nagycsécs	2 November 2008	Brothers Kiss and Pető threw two Molotov cocktails and shot at two Romani houses.	Two casualties (József Nagy and F. Nagy), one seriously injured (Tibor Nagy), lives of other Roma in danger, damage to property.

Alsózsolca	15 December 2008	Brothers Kiss shot at several Roma near their home.	One injured with lasting consequences (Krisztián Rontó).
Tatárszentgyörgy	23 February 2009	Brothers Kiss and Pető threw two Molotov cocktails and shot at a house and also shot at people leaving the property.	Father Róbert Csorba and his young son shot dead; mother and daughter Bianka Csorba seriously injured, two other family members in danger and hospitalized.
Tiszalök	22 April 2009	Brothers Kiss and Csontos (for the first time) opened fire through the window of a Romani house.	Jenő Kóka shot dead.
Kisléta	2 August 2009	Brothers Kiss, Pető and Csontos assaulted a Romani house, shooting at two victims.	Maria Balogh shot dead, her 13-year old daughter Tímea Pótor seriously injured.

Sources: Kuria 2016, Vágvölgyi 2014

After a lengthy investigation, and apparently with the aid of the FBI, the perpetrators were apprehended on 21 August 2009 at a discotheque in Debrecen; weapons and munitions were found in an adjacent building (Vágvölgyi 2014: 9). On 6 August 2013, Arpád Kiss, István Kiss and Zsolt Pető were handed life sentences, István Csontos a 13-year prison sentence. A court of appeals upheld the verdict on 8 May 2015 and on 13 January 2016 Hungary's Supreme Court affirmed the life sentences for brothers Kiss and Pető (Kúria 2016). However, the judgments were handed down for murders, not for acts of terrorism, for which there was no provision in Hungarian criminal law at the time. The victims were awarded compensation by the state (Vágvölgyi 2014: 11).

The case occurred at a time of heightened tension between the majority populace and the Romani minority, at the turn of the first and second decade of the twenty-first century. This period was also characterized by the rise of the party-political extreme right in Hungary and, in particular, by the public activities of extreme-right paramilitary groups such as the Hungarian Guard. Although outlawed in 2009, this group spawned successor organizations. At the same time, paramilitary units were active in other countries of Central Europe and in the Balkans (Stojarová 2014). Nevertheless, a connection between the murders of the Roma and the Hungarian Guard or other paramilitary organizations was not proven. Since Roma were the Death Squad's primary target, the murders and the wider context of events seriously intimidated the Roma population in Hungary and were watched with apprehension by Romani activists throughout Europe (Pape 2016).

Case study: Bomb attack against Euroroma party offices in Bulgaria in 2012

A case that bears the external signs of terrorism, but where no perpetrator was clearly identified, occurred in the town of Sandaski, Bulgaria on 29 July 2012. A bomb was planted outside the office of the Euroroma party and exploded. As the European Roma Rights Centre reported, the bomb "fatally injur[ed] 59-year-old Malin Iliev."

"On the day in question, Mr Iliev found a suspicious package and went to move it when it blew up in his hands. He was hospitalised and died a couple of days later. Investigations led to the arrest of four men who belonged to local nationalist groups. According to media reports, they left letters at the party headquarters before the attack, expressing their hatred of Roma." (European Roma Rights Centre 2012a).

Founded in 1998, the Euroroma party focuses on defending Romani rights, though it also counts ethnic Turks and Bulgarians among its members (Albert 2012). Although it gradually became one of the most influential Romani parties in Bulgaria, it has not been able to poll a serious share of the vote in parliamentary elections. As in other countries, the placing of Romani candidates on the lists of *ordinary* parties has proved a much more viable strategy in Bulgaria (Pečínka 2009: 46–50). The Euroroma party did, however, score some successes at the local level, including the Sandanski municipality (Albert 2012).

Shortly after the attacks, four young Bulgarian nationalists, Stojan S., Aleksandr A., Vasil G. and Nikolaj J. were accused of attempted murder. They were held in custody until 2013 and later investigated at liberty. However, as far as available information indicates, the case has not yet been judicially resolved. All four accused denied guilt and a campaign was mounted in their support (Bulgarski Nacionalni Sojuz 2014). In March 2014 court proceedings started in Blagoevgrad, but—according to the information available—the court has not yet arrived at a judgment. During the trial it transpired that the charges were based on information provided by a police informer, which the counsel for the defense disputed (Apostolova 2014). In January 2015, the former boss of the fan club of the CSKA Moscow football club supported the accused in court (BLIC 2015).

Whereas the attack itself was widely reported in Bulgaria and the world, information about the results of the trial is scarce (despite efforts by the author to obtain information from Bulgarian police experts on extremism). Sources from within the Bulgarian extreme right indicate that the trial continued in 2015 (Alter Media 2015).

The case needs to be understood in the context of escalated anti-Romani attitudes in Bulgaria and prior anti-Romani violence in the country. Things came to a head in the summer of 2011, when a wave of anti-Romani demonstrations occurred, spurred by the controversial behavior of the members of one Romani

clan. According to NGO reports, at least 22 people were attacked in Bulgaria in the space of a year, of which three died (European Roma Rights Center 2012a).

In this atmosphere, the attack on the office of a party known for its defense of Romani rights had a strong symbolic resonance. The attack attracted international attention and Romani political organizations protested forcefully (Albert 2012). The site of the attack, its execution and consequences indicate that its purpose was to send a threatening message. Even if actual perpetrators are not convicted, the connection of this attack with extreme-right circles is highly probable, given the previous threatening letters sent to Euroroma in Sanadanski.

Evaluation

As the analysis of three main identified cases of terrorism against the Roma indicates, their aim was to intimidate the Romani population by attacks on selected members of this ethnic group or nation. The campaign of the Death Squad in Hungary was the most intensive and incurred the greatest number of casualties; the greatest loss of lives in a single attack was, however, recorded in the Oberwart, Austria, atrocity.

If we take into account Schmidt's criteria (Schmid 2011: 74), we can apply the majority of them to the above-analyzed cases of anti-Romani terrorism. The demonstrative use of violence against human beings is typical of all three cases, and the conditional threat of more violence is also included in these acts. Symbolism of these activities and clear intentions against Romani people are connected with the criterion of deliberate production of terror or fear in the target group. Targets of the terrorism were civilians and innocents. The purpose was intimidation and propaganda, despite the fact that Death Squad and Hungarian perpetrators did not publish their statements. However, these acts were by perpetrators perceived as part of a racial or ethnic conflict, and they were used for communication with a broader audience (including media attention). All cases researched were illegal/criminal acts. They were primarily politically motivated, because right-wing extremist ethnic or racial hate are serious political issues. The elements of psychological warfare to mobilize sectors of the public against Romani people are very likely also in the cases of the, BBA and the Death Squad; in the attack in Bulgaria it is not clear (more evidence is needed for this argument).

In terms of selectivity, Fuchs chose a site close to a Romani settlement where Roma were expected to be present; the Death Squad attacked several Romani homes and persons who were in their vicinity; and in Bulgaria the office of a political party connected with the Romani minority was attacked. The selection of targets according to the ethnic origin is typical of all three cases; however, in Bulgaria we can see a higher selectivity focused on a political party (this is

a specific actor of Roma representation consisting of politically active members of the Roma community).

Whereas the attack in Bulgaria appears to be a one-off, in Austria and Hungary they were parts of campaigns. Although in Austria a Romani target was chosen only once, the, BBA campaign was also aimed against people aiding minorities, and, BBA letters contained anti-Romani diatribes (Tozzer – Zellsacher 1995). In Hungary, Roma were the main target, with the exception of the attack on the refugee camp. An ideological background can be identified particularly clearly in the case of the, BBA, which espoused pronounced German-Austrian nationalism and racism. In Hungary and Bulgaria, the perpetrators of the attacks issued no proclamations, but in Bulgaria the Euroroma party had been threatened previously. In Hungary, the function of the acts appears to have been propaganda, where the message is contained in the choice of targets and the execution of the attacks.

In Hungary one may speculate about neo-Nazi connections of the perpetrators on the basis of their pasts. As far as the suspects in the case in Bulgaria are concerned, they were strong nationalists with possible neo-Nazi links. Ideologically, all three attacks can be classified as right-wing extremism, though it needs to be emphasized that in Bulgaria the accused have not been convicted, and it is uncertain whether they were the perpetrators.

If these cases of anti-Romani violence are evaluated in terms of Sprinzak's criteria, the, BBA and Death Squad campaigns can be placed on the borderline between revolutionary and racist terrorism. If the version proposed by investigators is confirmed in Bulgaria, that case can be defined largely as countercultural terrorism. Given how the Romani minority is perceived, the presence of vigilantism can be considered in all three campaigns.

In sum, we can subsume the campaign of the, BBA as a form of lone-wolf terrorism (if we accept the official version) with a specific ultra-nationalist, right--wing extremist background, aimed against a broader set of targets (including the Romani people). Death Squad in Hungary was a systematic campaign of a well-organized and equipped small cell (probably with a neo-Nazi background, with elements of Hungarian national socialist legacy). The Romani people were the main targets of the campaign in Hungary (despite the fact that it started with an action against a refugee camp). In Bulgaria the bomb attack was a single action (it could be the start of a campaign; however, there is no clear evidence of this), probably connected with a small group, which arose from the subcultural right-wing extremist milieu. As this article shows, the anti-Roma terrorism can be identified in very different forms.

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DISCUSSION

Czech Protest Movements in the 2014 European Parliament Elections

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DE GRUYTER OPEN

Politics in Central Europe (ISSN: 1801-3422)
Vol. 12, No. 2
DOI: 10.1515/pce-2016-0014

Abstract: *This article explores the performance of ANO 2011 and Dawn of Direct Democracy—two new subjects of the post-2013 Czech party system—in the 2014 elections to the European Parliament. Programs and statements of both movements are analyzed in order to determine whether a link exists between protest and populist characteristics on one side and Euroscepticism on the other side.*

Key words: ***party, political party, elections, European Parliament, European Union, Euroscepticism, ANO 2011, Dawn of Direct Democracy***

Introduction

The 2013 elections to the Chamber of Deputies in the Czech Republic marked the success of several protest and populist movements, such as the Action of Dissatisfied Citizens (ANO 2011) and Tomio Okamura's Dawn of Direct Democracy (*Úsvit přímé demokracie Tomia Okamury*), in particular with ANO 2011 coming in second and becoming one of the ruling coalition parties.

Since then, a lot has been written and analyzed concerning the reasons and consequences of the 2013 Chamber of Deputies election result; however, not much has been studied concerning the performance of these populist and protest parties in subsequent, second-order elections. Despite its second-order status these election can help us answer how the new players have adapted to all levels of governance, and whether (and with what results) are they able to compete on all other levels and not only the first-order and cabinet-related Chamber of Deputies.

Table 1: Election Results—2013 Chamber of Deputies

Party / Movement	Votes	%	Mandates
ČSSD	1,016,829	18.65	50
ANO 2011	927,24	18.65	47
KSČM	741,044	14.91	33
TOP 09	596,357	11.99	26
ODS	384,174	7.72	16
Úsvit	342,339	6.88	14
KDU-ČSL	336,97	6.78	14

Abbreviations: ANO 2011—Action of Dissatisfied Citizens; ČSSD—Czech Social Democratic Party; KDU-ČSL—Christian Democratic Union – Czechoslovak Peoples Party; KSČM—Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia; ODS—Civic Democratic Party; TOP 09—Tradition, Responsibility, Prosperity; Úsvit—Dawn of Direct Democracy.
Source: Czech Statistical Office—Electoral Section, 2013.

From October 2013, when the Chamber of Deputies elections were held, until now (beginning of 2016) there have been three other second-order elections in the Czech Republic: the European Parliament elections in May 2014, local (municipal) elections in October 2014 and elections to one-third (27 seats) of the Senate, also in October 2014.

This article focuses on the European level and tries to answer the questions: How did ANO 2011 and Dawn of Direct Democracy perform during the 2014 European Parliament elections? What were their major *European positions*? and most importantly, does their protest and populist nature and features corresponded with Euroscepticism? The key hypothesis is that, according to Petr Kaniok, party-based Euroscepticism is present in other parties as a form of protest and therefore can be observed among protest, anti-establishment, or extreme political parties (Kaniok 2006: 10–13).

The Czech Republic's 2014 elections to the European Parliament in general

Seven Czech political parties or movements crossed the 5 percent threshold and entered the European Parliament in 2014. While ANO 2011 defended its position in the party system also during this second-order competition, Dawn of Direct Democracy failed and did not enter the European Parliament. Instead one new political party, not present in the Parliament on a national level, won one seat (the hardline Eurosceptic Party of Free Citizens [SSO]).

This marked the first time since the Czech Republic's entry to the European Union in 2004 that a hardline Eurosceptic party gained representation in the European Parliament. Euroscepticism existed previous, but it was manifested through two traditionally *soft* Eurosceptic party formations, the right-wing Civic Democratic Party (ODS) and the left-wing Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia (KSČM). In the first term (2004–2009) there were also two members representing Eurosceptic views, but they were elected from the list of a declared non-Eurosceptic movement known as the Independents (Just 2015: 116).

Table 2: Election Results—2014 European Parliament (Czech Republic)

Party / Movement	EP faction	Votes	%	Mandates
ANO 2011	ALDE	244,501	16.13	4
TOP09+STAN	EPP	241,747	15.95	4
ČSSD	S&D	214,8	14.17	4
KSČM	GUE/NGL	166,478	10.98	3
KDU-ČSL	EPP	150,792	9.95	3
ODS	ECR	116,389	7.67	2
SSO	EFDD	79,54	5.24	1
…				
Úsvit	-----	47,306	3.12	0

Abbreviations (Czech parties): ANO 2011—Action of Dissatisfied Citizens; ČSSD—Czech Social Democratic Party; KDU-ČSL—Christian Democratic Union – Czechoslovak Peoples Party; KSČM—Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia; ODS—Civic Democratic Party; SSO—Party of Free Citizens; STAN—Mayors and Independents; TOP 09—Tradition, Responsibility, Prosperity; Úsvit—Dawn of Direct Democracy.
Abbreviations (EP factions): ALDE—Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe; ECR—European Conservatives and Reformists; EFDD—Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy; EPP—European People's Party; GUE/NGL—European United Left – Nordic Green Left; S & D—Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats.
Source: Czech Statistical Office – Electoral Section, 2014.

Dawn of Direct Democracy

The Dawn of Direct Democracy movement represented soft Euroscepticism during the 2014 European Parliament elections, although their rhetoric sometimes sounded more radical. The movement generally called for a "stronger position of the Czech Republic within the European Union and preserving national sovereignty and identity" (Úsvit 2014). They criticized the too bureaucratic and expensive structures of European institutions.

Their 2014 program for the European Parliament elections included several critical statements towards the European Union and its policies, e.g. against the current state of EU migration policy or against Turkey's and Ukraine's membership in the Union (Úsvit 2014).

This critical approach could also be seen in their position towards the euro currency and its adoption in the Czech Republic—a typical Eurosceptic issue. Dawn of Direct Democracy opposes euro adoption without a referendum, and they also predict that the referendum—once it is held—would fail (Úsvit 2014).

However, there were no plans or calls for a withdrawal of the Czech Republic from the European Union. They even, a little bit pathetically, praised the idea of a "common European house" (Úsvit 2014). On the other hand, quite surprisingly, they called for a common European Union defense policy and for the EU to assert more control over its common food safety policy Úsvit 2014). However, the movement failed to get to the European Parliament, as it got only 3.12 percent of the vote.

The movement faced several internal crises and clashes in 2015, which eventually led to a split, wherein some members (including movement founder and chairman Tomio Okamura) leaving and founding a new political party. The new party, Freedom and Direct Democracy (SPD), unlike Dawn of Direct Democracy, launched a very hardline Eurosceptic program, which included open calls for a referendum on the Czech Republic's withdrawal from the EU.

Since then, however, national-level preferences for both movements have been below the 5 percent threshold, and it has not changed—even with the rise of new issues and agendas related to migration, in which both movements very actively champion anti-immigrant positions. Both movements lack strong, charismatic, and trustworthy leaders, and their strategies when merging and cooperating with other political groups and movements are rather controversial (such as cooperating with the radical Anti-Islamic Bloc, led by Martin Konvička, or the anti-Semitic activist Adam Bartoš, or Miroslav Sládek, the former iconic leader of the xenophobic Union for the Republic – Republican Party of Czechoslovakia).

Action of Dissatisfied Citizens (ANO 2011)

The ANO 2011 movement was founded by billionaire businessman and media mogul Andrej Babiš. Its program was based on a critical attitude towards "past corrupt cabinets." As stated above, following its success in the 2013 Chamber of Deputies elections, the movement became a part of the ruling coalition, alongside the Social Democrats and Christian Democrats. However, since the government was appointed just four months before the European Parliament elections, the ruling parties avoided the negative impacts of second-order elections, as the European Parliament elections fell into the *honeymoon period* after the

cabinet appointment. Moreover, even while being a part of the ruling coalition, the movement maintained its protest potential and continued in its criticism of predecessors, "uncovering all the evil that was left after previous cabinets."

While the classification of Dawn of Direct Democracy as a (soft) Eurosceptic party is quite clear, it is much more difficult to classify ANO 2011's position. Generally speaking, ANO 2011 is a programmatically and ideologically ambivalent movement.

ANO 2011 spoke against adoption of the euro and against any deeper EU integration during and after the 2013 Chamber of Deputies elections (Rakt 2013). A few months later, before the 2014 European Parliament elections (and already as a ruling party) they carefully admitted that the Czech Republic should consider adopting the euro, but only after stabilizing the budget and reducing the deficit (Santa 2014). According to their European Parliament elections program they were in favor of signing the European Fiscal Compact (which had been opposed by previous right-wing governments) and criticized the Eurosceptic positions of former President Václav Klaus as well as the rather reserved positions of previous cabinets towards the European Union (ANO 2011, 2014)

The movement also criticized the no-confidence motion against one of the previous Czech cabinets initiated by the opposition (and passed) during the period of the Czech Presidency in the Council of the European Union (in March 2009), and the under-representation of Czech citizens in European Union bodies (ANO 2011, 2014). In May 2015, one year after the European Parliament elections, the movement came up with the idea of holding a "non-binding control referendum" on the issue of euro adoption (Kopecký 2015). This proposal, however, begs the questions, what does such a thing actually mean? since referenda are not included in the Czech Republic's constitutional system. And even if it had, many politicians, legal experts and commentators got stuck on the term "non-binding control referendum," since nothing like this actually exists.

As we stated above, ANO 2011's position towards European issues is not quite clear. On one side, the pro-European position of ANO 2011 could clearly be seen in the profiles of most members of the European Parliament elected from the ANO 2011 list. Three of the four ANO 2011 MEPs had worked at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as professional diplomats, and all were associated with the Czech Republic – European Union accession talks. The list leader, Pavel Telička, was the chief negotiator for Czech accession to the European Union, former Secretary of State for European Affairs and the first member of the European Commission from the Czech Republic (2004). Petr Ježek, second on the list, is also a former diplomat specializing in European affairs who used to serve as Deputy Secretary of State for European Affairs. The third ANO 2011 MEP, Dita Charanzová, worked on Pavel Telička's team in negotiating the Czech

Republic's entry to the European Union. However, it is true that none of them is actually a member of ANO 2011. They were all elected as non-partisans on the ANO 2011 list.

Membership in the pro-European EP faction, the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE) could serve as an argument in favor of classifying ANO 2011 as pro-European leaning. However, this could also be seen as a rather pragmatic step by Andrej Babiš to gain international and European recognition for his newly founded political movement.

Conclusion

This paper examined the performance of two populist and protest movements, which became part of the Czech party system after the 2013 Chamber of Deputies elections, toward the European Union and European issues generally. The research was based on documents related to the 2014 European Parliament elections. As we saw, the first one, Dawn of Direct Democracy, was at that time a typical representative of soft Euroscepticism. After the foundation of a new movement, Freedom and Direct Democracy, the hardline Eurosceptic features prevailed.

Where the second movement, ANO 2011, is concerned the situation is not so clear. The movement's position on European issues reflects a general lack of foreign and European policy skills among party leaders, and its positions are usually based on how it is advantageous for the movement. Both Eurosceptic and pro-European features can be found in the party program and statements of its leaders, which only highlights the populist characteristics of the movement.

We can also conclude that ANO 2011 strengthened its position in the Czech party system by spreading its representation to the European level. On the other hand, the failure of Dawn of Direct Democracy showed only the episodic potential of this populist movement without any major attraction for voters, although second-order elections could theoretically be a much better environment for that type of political party.

ANO 2011 proved to have acted more pragmatically in recruiting candidates for the European Parliament elections, as most of its top leaders were former professional diplomats closely related to European Union issues.

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REVIEWS

Adam Markus, Geschichte des ungarischen Nationalismus (2013), Peter Lang, Frankfurt am Main.

PŘEMYSL ROSŮLEK[1]

The book focuses on the development of Hungarian nationalism with an emphasis on the modern period from the 19th century until the parliamentary elections held in 2010. The rise of nationalism and specifically of anti-Semitism and militant right-wing extremism (p. 11) in 2006 had a direct influence on the author's plans to write this book.

The author's assumption is that nationalism is not a new issue in Hungary but one that has been an important part of Hungarian politics over the last two centuries. He shares a belief in the modernist roots of Hungarian nationalism, holding that the French Revolution and subsequent Napoleonic movement had the most decisive impact. In the 19th century, the Hungarian *Staatsnation* was purely a construct of political elites. The *Kulturnation* was far more relevant (p. 30).

The author begins with a brief description of nationalism and terms like *nation*, *Volk* and *Staat*. This initial section also provides a useful account of the specifics of pronunciation in the Hungarian language, understood from the perspective of the German language.

After a very short introduction to 1000 years of the Hungarian nation's presence and continuity in Europe, more attention is paid to events influenced by the French Revolution and subsequent Napoleonic movement. The nationalism of political elites was based on a policy of Hungarisation and assimilation even before the 1848/49 revolutionary period but the Hungarisation policy after the revolution is described in more detail in this book. This section also addresses ethnic minorities in Hungary.

In what follows, the author deals with the development of Hungary and Hungarian nationalism during the First World War, the revolution and subsequent Soviet Republic and counter-revolution. Naturally, the Treaty of Trianon and its immediate consequences are emphasised. Horthy's regime was based on nationalism, Christianity, Hungarisation and irredentism. Anti-Semitism was an integral part of nationalism in interwar Hungary whether its slant was

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right-wing or left-wing. The introduction of *Numerus Clausus* in 1920, which restricted the attendance of Jewish students at Hungarian universities, marked the first openly anti-Semitic law in Europe in the 20th century (pp. 51–52).

The next section reflects on the Second World War period. Here the author focuses on Hungary's cooperation with Nazi Germany, their attack on the USSR and the annexation of the Transcarpathian region, but no less important are the disunity and internal struggles in Hungary about the approach to these events.

Among the major events identified and analysed in the post-war period are the changes caused by Hungary's liberation, the Red Army's presence and the rise of the Communist Party into a monopoly over state and society. The main stress falls next on the revolutionary events of 1956. The 1956 generation heavily influenced the development of the era known as Kadarism or Goulash Communism. More important for the issue being scrutinised, nationalism in the Communist era found support from several prominent writers within the cultural sphere. In addition, the ruling Communist political elites could not be characterised solely by their Marxism-Leninism without a national dimension. The importance of exile to nationalism and internal developments is also not ignored.

Turning to the post-Communist period, the author sees the development of political pluralism and party systems as most important, analysing parties and figures whose profiles are tied to anti-Semitism and right-wing extremist attitudes. Logically, the phenomena of the MIÉP and Jobbik parties and István Csurka as a political figure are explored in more depth than other issues. In general, there is clear evidence of the rise of nationalist attitudes during the 2006 political crisis, and this crisis deepened further due to the economic crisis of 2008. The book ends with the results of the 2010 parliamentary elections, leaving open the question of the FIDESZ Party's temptation to misuse its electoral gains in the future.

This book is a short but effective overview of the modern history of Hungarian nationalism, offering interested general readers and students as well as social science scholars some general knowledge of Hungary's realities.

On the other hand, I would argue that there are some weak points in this volume. Most notably, its title suggests that its ambition is to describe the complete history of nationalism in Hungary. This is, however, not the case. A qualifier such as "modern" or "(1800–2010)" should have been added. Secondly, nationalism is not examined in its proper sense; rather, its meaning has been reduced and some issues are therefore ignored. As part of the introduction, the author should have explained the meaning of nationalism for the purposes of this book. The nationalism under discussion here is more concerned with its particular expressions such as anti-Semitism, right-wing extremism and, for example, the problem of Roma criminality (p. 109). However, broader forms of nationalism are circumvented or ignored. Among these are, for example, the

role of myths and legends (e. g. a thousand years of Hungarians in Europe, the role of Christianity, Muslim Turks as "Others," the Slavic Sea etc.); Hungarian irredentism; attitudes towards neighbouring countries after the Treaty of Trianon and most recently the stance on Slovakia following the controversial language law and conversely as a consequence of Slovakia's own language law. Similarly, issues linked to such "banal" nationalism are either underrated or generally ignored. Nationalist attitudes within the church, media and education system are also not analysed systematically. The short note about the Greater Hungary map shown in schools to reflect the territorial consequences of the Treaty of Trianon after the First World War is quite useful but unfortunately such issues are dealt with incidentally rather than systematically in this book. Nor is there any chapter that reflects on and defines the specific character of Hungary's national awakening and the approaches of major figures in that movement. Ethnic minorities in Hungary are described very briefly and their nationalist ambitions are not analysed. This applies conversely to subsequent, and earlier, patterns of Hungarian assimilationist policy and their impact on this peripheral or reactive nationalism. It is not clear at times whether the author is focusing on nationalism or on general developments in Hungary. I believe that these issues could have been better separated thematically. Surprisingly, Horthy's nationalist policy is described in less than one paragraph (p. 45), while the events of 1956, which only contributed to nativist or patriotic leanings, enjoy far more attention.

I would also suggest that there are some minor issues which should have been dealt with better in this study. The Little Entente was not only about the cooperation of countries against interwar Germany (p. 46). To the contrary, as the author himself states later (p. 55), another reason for the Little Entente was Hungary's irredentism. Similar inconsistencies can be found on pages 80 and 89 where the reader may be puzzled about whether the number of Hungarian refugees in 1956 reached 150,000 or 200,000. Elsewhere, the fact that Cardinal Josef Mindszenty escaped to the US embassy in 1956 is mentioned three times (!) (pp. 83, 88 and 97). The tensions within the nativist/patriot and Marxist--Leninist wings of the Communist Party should also have been more precisely described. Surprisingly, there is no mention of the contents of the Bibo Memorial Book of 1981, surrounding events and further developments. After the end of Communism, the most intense promoters of nationalistic discourse in Hungary were neither Csurka's MIÉP nor Jobbik. [This fact is easily missed since t]he role of Orbán and FIDESZ is almost completely ignored. Orbán's shift from a liberal to a conservative political approach had already started in 1993. However, that early departure by FIDESZ from youth-oriented and liberal attitudes on a range of national identity and Christian issues in 1993-along with its further turn to populist conservatism and an anti-EU stance around the millennium are not reflected at all.

On the other hand, the book has many positive features. The author concisely explains nationalism's core events and figures in Hungary over the last two centuries. Moreover, the book is enriched by interesting passages containing details not known to general readers such as the fact that the modernisation of Hungary started in 1930, or that the major reason for the annexation of Transcarpathia was not the presence there of a Hungarian minority but the goal of having a common border with Poland. Another factor enhancing the book is its thesis about the defeat of the second Hungarian army at the Don River, which was labelled "Hungarian Stalingrad." The reflections on the contemporary image of General Horthy are also useful (p. 67). Readers will appreciate the frequent appearance of quotations such as those linked to the Treaty of the Trianon and the inclusion of extra notes in box format (e.g. p. 47).

Despite some of the criticisms raised above, this book can be recommended to readers who are students of modern history, political science, sociology and Central and Eastern European political systems as well as to any social science scholar with a strong interest in general issues surrounding Hungarian nationalism in modern times.

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Since Bull (1977) has shown that. This is in results attained later (Buzan – Jones – Little 1993: 117). As contemporary research shows (Wendt 1992), are states the.

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