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ESSAYS

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Which conservatism? The identity of the Polish Law and Justice party[1]

Adam Folvarčný and Lubomír Kopeček

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Abstract: *This article deals with Poland's Law and Justice (PiS), considered a conservative party in the scholarly literature. Drawing largely on party manifestos, the article demonstrates the character, the specificities and the evolution of the party's identity and ideology. A theoretical basis for the undertaking is provided by Klaus von Beyme's concept of party families, Arend Lijphart's seven ideological dimensions and classic texts on conservatism. The analysis finds that the most important components in PiS's current identity are Catholicism itself and the great emphasis the party places on the role of the Catholic Church. Also important for the party's identity are visions of a nation conceived on ethnic principle, a strong and active state able to form society with a national spirit, anti-communism and a negation of developments in Poland since 1989. A substantial role is played by the quasi-religiously conceived legacy of the party's co-founder, Lech Kaczyński, who tragically perished in an aircraft crash. With its Catholic-nationalist profile, PiS is close to the Christian current within the conservative New Right, and to Polish National Democracy in the interwar period.*

Keywords: *the Law and Justice party, PiS, Jarosław and Lech Kaczyński, Catholicism, nationalism, the Smolensk crash, anti-communism*

Introduction

There are not many political parties that have radically changed the life of their country within a few years. Undisputedly, the Polish Law and Justice party (*Prawo i Sprawiedliwość,* PiS) contrived to do just this. Thanks to radical transformations in the judiciary, media, education and culture, today's Poland is in many respects a different country than in 2015, when PiS won the parliamentary elections and formed a single-party government.[2] Some authors even argue that the foundations of a new political regime have been laid down. Although they differ in how they classify it, it is evident that this is no longer a liberal democracy (e.g. Sadurski 2018, 2019; Markowski 2019). In the 2019 elections, PiS confirmed its dominance of Polish politics, improving on its result four years previously.

In seeking the roots of this dramatic change of Poland, we need to analyse the PiS ideological profile and identity, which is the aim of this article. We first present our theoretical and conceptual points of departure and formulate the two fundamental questions we seek to answer. This is followed by an excursus on historical Polish conservatism, the context in which PiS emerged, its development and its founding fathers, Jarosław and Lech Kaczyński. At the core of the article PiS is analysed in the major ideological dimensions.

Party identity and conservatism as an ideology

This article proceeds from the premise that PiS is a conservative party. This is the prevailing opinion in literature on Polish politics (e.g. Dančák 2002: 302–304; Kubát 2005: 104; Kowalczyk and Sielski 2005: 168; Szczerbiak 2006a: 96; Wojtaszczyk 2007: 91). However, the character and specifics of this conservatism are rarely analysed systematically. Our first research question, therefore, is projected into the very title of this article: What sort of conservatism does PiS embrace? We take our inspiration from Klaus von Beyme's (1985) concept of party families, which is a useful instrument not just for Western politics but also for East-Central Europe (Hloušek and Kopeček 2010; Gallagher, Laver and Mair 2011). Beyme reflects the origin and the evolution of the given party, which influence its identity, and pays even greater attention to how its values and ideas are projected into party documents. This reflects his understanding of ideology as the key pillar of the party family, and this includes the conservatives.[3] For our analysis, we use – in accordance with von Beyme's approach – party documents and secondary literature, a common methodological approach

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2 Politicians of two other tiny right-wing parties, who stood for election on the PiS ticket, were involved in governance, so formally it was not a pure single-party government. However, PiS was so dominant in this political arrangement that we can abstract from this quasi-coalition aspect for simplicity's sake.

3 For reasons of space we omit the frequently discussed question: Is conservatism truly an ideology?

(e.g. Hendl 2008: 130–131).[4] This allows us to examine the ideological dynamics of PiS, that is, to answer the following question: How did the party's ideology develop over time, if it did develop at all? This second research question is justified by the fact that nearly two decades have now elapsed since the foundation of PiS. We understand ideology in line with Peter Mair and Cas Mudde (1998: 220) as 'a belief system that goes right to the heart of a party's identity'.

It is, however, impossible to identify a 'single' conservatism, because understandings of this concept differ. This is connected with the extensive changes and development of conservatism over the past two centuries. Among other things, von Beyme attributes this to the transforming social base of its supporters. Originally, conservatism's stronghold was the nobility and clergy, moving to the upper middle class in the 19th century, only to be embraced in the 20th even by the working classes. This development was influenced by the weakening of the original class structure of European societies, as well as by increasing social mobility (Beyme 1985: 52; cf. Scruton 1993: 58).

In order to understand the genesis of conservatism, we need briefly to outline its two fundamental historical traditions, as they established themselves in the 18th and 19th centuries: the British one and the authoritarian-continental one. Both responded to the challenge of the French Revolution and the critique of this revolution. Essential for the former was its drawing on the traditions of the British Tory party and its development, with an emphasis on paternalism, moderation and adaptation, including the gradual acceptance of mass democracy. Its key thinker was Edmund Burke, and the successful practical implementers of the reform included Benjamin Disraeli (Heywood 2007: 82–83). By contrast, the second, continental European tradition tended towards authoritarian notions and solutions. Characteristic were the opinions of Joseph de Maistre, who rejected reform and defended absolute monarchy and the principles of the *ancien régime*. Connected with this was a vigorous denial of the revolutionary abandonment of religion, and of seeking human happiness via political action (O'Sullivan 2013: 294). Unlike with religiously moderate Anglo-Saxon conservatism, God and dogmatism were the focal points of de Maistre's conservatism. Imperial Germany and especially Chancellor Otto von Bismarck – the creator of the first backgrounds of the welfare state – provided inspiration for the political practice of the authoritarian-continental branch of conservatism. Yet the fact that in Germany it combined with nationalism, militarism and, to a certain extent, anti-Semitism, proved destructive for this conservatism. David Allen (1981: 591) points out that these conservatives admired war, seeing it as an institution with a vitalising character. In the closing years of the Weimar democracy, in the early 1930s, this led German conservatives to collaborate with

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4 We include government declarations and other materials from the period of the single-party PiS government after 2015 among party documents.

the Nazis, compromising with them after 1945. Something similar happened in France, where implacable anti-republicanism led the conservatives towards extreme-right positions.

Thus the British version of conservatism, accepting democracy, became much more important for the prevailing future understanding of the ideology. But this conservatism evolved too as the United Kingdom changed. First, under the influence of a social shift to the left after World War II, the Conservatives came close to Labour in their economic interventionism. This created a counter-reaction in the last quarter of the 20th century, with a wave of anti-statist and anti-progressivist conservatism. Some representatives of this New Right, as this strand of conservatism has been called, in the zeal of their pro-market orientation even came to reject some of the classic conservative premises. Beyond patriotism, order and hierarchy – common with conservatives – British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher also emphasised individualism and denied the importance of society, contradicting one of the fundamental values of this ideology.

Let us try to delimit – albeit somewhat eclectically – the fundamental characteristics of the conception of conservatism that currently prevails in Europe, as this will allow us to note the specifics of PiS. We proceed from the Anglo-Saxon understanding, largely linked with Britain, but have no ambition to 'standardise' the understanding of conservatism. In order to provide a synoptic overview, we use the seven ideological dimensions, in which, according to Arend Lijphart (1990: 253–265), party-political views of politics clash with each other. These dimensions, outlined alongside a commentary in Table 1, allow us to undertake a systematic analysis of the PiS ideology and core identity.

Naturally, the chosen approach has its limits. A focus on these generalised dimensions implies simplification of what is after all a more complex image of party identity. It is also worth noting that an analysis largely of party documents cannot access some important aspects, for instance, a certain heterogeneity in PiS which is due to the colourful spectrum of its cadres. Despite these limitations, our approach allows us to capture the main characteristics of PiS relatively faithfully.

Table 1: The conservative view of the world, according to Arend Lijphart's dimensions

Dimension	Key issues	Conservative positions and manifestations
Socio-economic	Type of property, redistribution of resources and social programmes	• Largely aim to have a state that cares for the public sphere, but with limited powers. • An emphasis on the free market, but with a mediating and regulating role for the state; the degree of admissibility of state intervention differs from party to party, as does the extent of social programmes, which nevertheless always provide a certain basic minimum. • Vigorous support for private ownership, protection of property and the autonomy of the private sphere.
Religious	Position on religious values linked with politics; related issues of marriage, divorce, abortion etc.	• Church and religion are central to society and important for its functioning. • Religious beliefs should not be imposed. • Natural groups of belonging constitute the basis, which forms people; these include, beyond families, parishes and the Church in general. • On related issues, traditional views are preferred and liberalisation is rejected.
Cultural and ethnic	National homogeneity and position on minorities	• Frequent emphasis on the importance of the nation, linked with patriotism; reserve towards radical nationalism. • An understanding of the nation based on shared history, traditions and a sense of belonging prevails. • The approach to minorities is not arbitrary, but may be restrictive; restraint towards or rejection of the enlargement of minority rights and multiculturalism.
Support for the regime	Idea of a political regime and calls for its change, type of government	• Opposition to reforming and universalist liberalism, rejection of the idea of unlimited human rationality. • People should proceed on the basis of experience, which is accumulated in tradition (and is revealed in history). • The state should be sufficiently strong and maintain its authority vis-à-vis the hierarchical society, but authority and leadership are not unlimited in character. • Separation of powers with an emphasis on judicial independence.
Urban vs. rural	Promotion of the interests and lifestyle of one or the other	• Support for business and a separation between urban and rural areas (not necessarily strict). • The electoral stronghold of the party in the one or the other type of area may exert an influence.

Dimension	Key issues	Conservative positions and manifestations
Foreign policy	Position on Euro-Atlantic structures and international orientation	• Support for the principles and interests of the nation state with an emphasis on patriotism, protection of borders and preservation of national identity. • An accommodating position on NATO, support for EU membership but in a pragmatic understanding, without Eurofederalist ambitions.
Post--materialist*	Position on economic growth and environmentalism, importance of the environment, centralisation and participation	• Rejection of 'environmentalist ideology'. • Aim for a balance between the demands of growth and environmental protection; the environment is not to suffer from radical devastation, yet everything else should not be subordinated to care for the planet. • Increased attention to environmental issues might be linked with the party's specific identity.

Sources: Lijphart 1990; conservatism is outlined according to Scruton 1993; Heywood 2007; Hecke 2008; Šmíd 2008; Vincent 2010; Nisbet 2011.

* Post-materialism is usually understood more broadly, with an emphasis on toleration of various minorities, alternative lifestyles etc. – issues we discuss in connection with other dimensions.

Polish conservatism and the *Kaczyński* brothers

Like almost everywhere else in Europe, the beginnings of conservatism in Poland are linked with the aristocracy. However, its character was strongly influenced by the division of the country between Austria, Russia and Prussia (later Germany), which lasted until World War I. This division contributed to the great political fragmentation of the aristocratic conservatives, and created the problem of their positions towards these powers. Loyalty to the monarchy – the form of government of all three powers – clashed with the aristocratic conservatives' aspiration to renew Poland as an independent state. The result was paradoxical: proximity to the continental conservative tradition, combined with (frequent) opposition towards the existing conservative political system. The Austrian, Prussian and Russian political regimes, nevertheless, were different in character. The aristocratic conservatives could therefore also opt for a close symbiosis with the existing regime – as was the case in Galicia, the Austrian part of Poland, in the decades before World War I (Nałęcz 1994: 138–139).

The complicated dilemmas faced by the aristocratic conservatives and their narrow class-based outlook played into the hands of the expansion of another conservative force, the National Democrats, whose main political and spiritual father was Roman Dmowski. Unlike the exclusive aristocratic conservatives, the National Democrats (commonly called *endecja* in Poland) were a mass movement, and a relatively heterogeneous political camp. Generally it was true that they entirely subjected individual values to the collective national interest – the

renewal of the Polish state. This was accompanied by a negation of liberalism, seen as a threat to the national idea; in combination with nationalism, national solidarism and, often, anti-Semitism.

Once Poland was renewed in 1918 – an effort to which Dmowski made a significant contribution – the National Democrats showed at best reserve towards the new democratic regime, and in the worse case, resisted it. The extreme National Democrats sometimes used violence against their political opponents and initiated anti-Jewish pogroms. Remarkably, thanks to Dmowski, Catholicism became a stronger influence in the party identity, even though he himself had previously been cold towards it. This shift was influenced by the strong interweaving of Catholicism and national identity, which occurred over the last decades of the divided Poland. In the era before 1918, the Catholic Church was the only uniting national institution, and the clergy naturally became the agents of patriotic agitation and activism. Concurrently in Prussia/Germany and Russia, the anti-Polish repression hit the Catholic Church, thus paradoxically strongly cementing the model or stereotype of the Catholic Pole (e.g. Łuczewski 2016).

Beyond Catholicism, the National Democrats in the 1920s emphasised autarky and a vision of strongman politics inspired by fascist Italy (Wapiński 1989: 356; Lukowski and Zawadski 2003: 217). However, it was not the National Democrats but Marshal Józef Piłsudski who destroyed Polish democracy in 1926. Paradoxically, it was fear of the National Democrats' excesses that helped to bring his authoritarian regime into the power.

Although the National Democrats were not among the forces who collaborated with the Nazis during World War II, this did not save the party after 1945. During the construction of the communist regime, conservatives and conservative thought were marginalised. Although there were some attempts later to reactivate conservative groups, most of whom more or less endorsed the national-democratic tradition, until the late 1980s conservatism was largely limited to a means of intellectually escaping the official communist line (Matyja 2009: 50–54, 2015: 204–205).

The protagonists of the later PiS, the almost indistinguishable twins Jarosław and Lech Kaczyński, became involved in opposition activities at the turn of the 1960s and 1970s. For many years, the mass trade union Solidarity, which the communist regime had to legalise in August 1980 due to the pressure created by extensive strikes, served as their political platform. Although a year-and-a-half later the government introduced martial law, Solidarity survived the subsequent years by going underground. Testifying to how the communist regime saw the Kaczyńskis is the fact that from late 1981 Lech was jailed for ten months for his activities.

Neither brother was a key figure in Solidarity until 1989, although they were not politically unimportant. Thus they did not have a major influence on the course and the results of the roundtable talks in early 1989, which *de facto*

brokered a compromise between the Communists and Solidarity. The round-table allowed semi-competitive elections and ensured the Polish transition to democracy. But at the same time, it served the brothers Kaczyński (and others) as a reason for criticism, and a point against which they defined their subsequent political careers. In their interpretation, the liberal-left wing of Solidarity betrayed the idea of a complete break with the communist regime (Dudek 1997: 25–27 and 30–60; Matyja 2009: 72–74 and 78–79; cf. Araloff 2005; New Internationalist 2007; Łątkowska and Borowski 2016a, 2016b; Foy and Wasik 2016).

The growing influence of the two brothers after summer 1989 was ensured by their alliance with the Solidarity leader, Lech Wałesa. When Solidarity fell apart in 1990, they used their new party, Centre Agreement (PC), to help elect Wałesa as Polish president. Jarosław became the chief of his office (Mlejnek 2011: 195). But as early as 1991, the brothers parted ways with Wałesa, disappointed that the idea of radical decommunisation would not be put into effect. Jarosław later described his support for Wałesa in the presidential election as his greatest political mistake (Karnowski and Zaremba 2006: 209; Szczerbiak 2006b: 61).

There were multiple factions in the Centre Agreement and the party's ideological orientation was relatively broad, though it placed strong emphasis on conservative values. In the Polish context, this was a logical step, not least because of the pre-communist past, when the Polish and Catholic identities were blended together, as noted above. During the communist era, Christianity and the Catholic Church served important roles as bases of anti-regime resistance, and the efforts of the Polish Communists to introduce atheism failed. The social authority of the Church was particularly strengthened by the election of Pope John Paul II, who was a Pole. At a time when most of the continent – including Western Europe – experienced a strong secularisation trend, Poland went its own way. The Polish right – of which the Centre Agreement was a part – therefore naturally absorbed Christianity after 1989.

However, the organisational structure of the Centre Agreement was loose, and it only won seats in parliament in 1991. In the next elections in 1993, when a five-per-cent threshold first applied for the Sejm (the lower chamber), the party failed. This meant a temporary loss of political importance for the brothers.[5] Though their party was involved in efforts to integrate the Polish right, they themselves did not play a major role in this. Their major political reboot came only with the appointment of Lech as justice minister during the reshuffle of Jerzy Buzek's right-wing cabinet in 2000. Lech enjoyed great popularity in office, largely thanks to his anti-corruption rhetoric, and this proved a major boon to PiS, which the brothers founded (Dudek 2016: 428; Subotić and Stankiewicz 2001).

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5   In 1997, Jarosław was elected to Parliament on behalf of the National Revival of Poland, but his relationship with the party was very unstable. In 1995, Lech was elected chair of the Supreme Audit Office.

In the 2001 Sejm elections, PiS polled 9.5 per cent of the vote and, after a stint in opposition, went on to win the 2005 parliamentary elections, taking 27 per cent of the vote. Soon afterwards, Lech also won the presidential election. In 2006, Jarosław Kaczyński became prime minister, creating a remarkable political arrangement without parallel in Europe, in which the two most important offices of the state were occupied by two brothers. The government of the heterogeneous coalition involving PiS, the ultra-Catholic League of Polish Families and the agrarian-syndicalist Self-Defence was, however, unstable, and resulted in an early election being called for 2007. In this and the subsequent 2011 elections, PiS placed second, although it took around 30 per cent of the vote. Donald Tusk's Civic Platform (PO) was victorious, successfully employing a strategy of scaremongering about PiS, largely using references to the controversial PiS government of 2005–2007. This worked best on liberal voters.[6]

An important formative moment for PiS identity was the crash of a government aircraft in April 2010 near Smolensk, Russia. Among the nearly 100 victims – members of the Polish political and military elite – were Lech Kaczyński and his wife. Although the state funeral became a show of national unity, the disaster quickly started to influence relations between the two major political actors, PiS and PO, and their chairs, Jarosław Kaczyński and Donald Tusk, and also created discord in Polish society. This was much facilitated by the emotive dimension of the disaster, because the journey had been to honour the memory of the victims of the Katyn massacre, that is, Polish Army officers murdered in 1940 by the Soviet NKVD.

PiS rejects the official inquest into the causes of the Smolensk plane disaster and to this day seeks to prove that it was a murder of Polish leaders. It does not eschew conspiracy theories in its programme, claiming, with respect to relations with Russia, that there was 'evidence of secret and influential mechanisms of dependence' and 'total subordination of the investigation to the Russian side' (PiS 2014a). Thus, PiS rapidly 'turned the tragedy into a clear political symbol' (Osiecki 2010: 293). As the political scientist Vít Dostál aptly noted, the remembrance of the Smolensk tragedy 'became part of the PiS narrative and of the party's internal mythology' (Česká televize 2017).

The 'Smolensk element' in PiS identity is two-fold. First, it serves to create identity and to mobilise, employing symbolic aspects that verge on the quasi--religious (grand remembrance projects on the anniversary and the emphasis placed on memorials to the victims). This offers people the option of identifying themselves with a critique of the post-1989 political regime through an event that had an important social impact. Second, it is constantly updated, by emphasising various disputed aspects of the event, primarily by lending

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6   For the debate about the divide into a liberal and a conservative Poland, see e.g. Szczerbiak 2006b, Koubek 2007 or Pospíchal 2017.

support to various conspiracy theories, such as that there was an explosion on board the aeroplane. This is done with the intention of creating internal and external enemies of PiS and, ultimately, of Poland (PiS 2011b; Dudek 2016: 619; Newsweek Polska 2017).

In 2010, following his brother's death, Jarosław Kaczyński failed to win the presidential election, succumbing to a PO candidate. His popularity never matched that of his brother; what is more, many Poles mistrusted him (e.g. CBOS 2014 and 2015). For that reason, he eventually decided no longer to pursue major public office, and PiS was represented in the 2015 presidential and parliamentary elections by the younger, less polarising figures, Andrzej Duda and Beata Szydło. Yet Jarosław Kaczyński has remained crucial for the PiS internal operations, enjoying despite his advanced age unshakeable respect and authority. He is the strategist and chair of PiS. The fact that he totally controls the party is illustrated well by his sudden decision that Prime Minister Szydło should resign in autumn 2017. This decision was accepted by everyone without reservation, including the prime minister herself. According to the PiS statutes, the chair is an independent body of the party, directing its more important bodies as well as the parliamentary party. Kaczyński's speeches at party meetings are seen as the most important, despite the fact that the prime minister and president are both also members of the party (e.g. Kowalczyk and Sielski 2005: 164–167; Borowiec, Sobolewska-Myślik and Kosowska-Gąstoł 2016: 321; PiS 2016; Jasiewicz and Jasiewicz-Betkiewicz 2018: 132–134; BBC Monitoring 2018).[7]

The founders' ideological conception for PiS

At the beginning of its existence, PiS established an anti-establishment party profile, demanding the cleansing of Polish politics and rejecting the developments in Poland since the end of the communist regime (the Polish People's Republic, PRL). The party documents described the state of Polish democracy as 'post-communism' and declared their intention to change or even remove most of the institutions introduced after 1989. Thus PiS defined itself as an alternative that sought to depart from the post-communist tradition and to establish Poland on different foundations. In this context, the party's official proclamations to the effect that it did not wish to threaten what has been achieved by

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7   It is worth noting that the ancient link between the PiS founders and the Solidarity trade union continues to be beneficial for the party today. The union, which remains influential, under the former chair Janusz Śniadek openly supported the Kaczyńskis' candidatures for president in 2005 and 2010. The current chair of Solidarity, Piotr Duda, regularly appears at various state ceremonies. An interlinking of the personnel is apparent: for example, Janusz Śniadek was elected a member of parliament for PiS in 2011, and similarly other trade-union figures won public offices thanks to PiS support. Although Solidarity officially denies that it has a link with the party of government, its positions towards the government are evaluated as very accommodating, in marked contrast to the previous governments led by the Civic Platform (Nizinkiewicz 2019; Woźniak 2019; Wprost 2010).

the removal of PRL, seem contradictory. The objective of creating a different Poland *de facto* seems revolutionary; but this is moderated by the proclamation that changes would be pursued through parliament (PiS 2001a a 2001b). The parliamentary majority obtained in the 2015 elections allowed the party to embark in just such a fashion.

The initial points of departure of the party programme were largely linked with the anti-communist proclamations by which PiS sought to define itself in opposition to the PRL period, the legacies of which were seen as the source of current problems. In its founding manifesto of 2001, the party did not openly avow any political or historical tradition, bar anti-communism. Yet it positively noted the periods and actions described as 'heroic'. These were, specifically, the interwar Second Polish Republic (1918–1939), the struggle against German and Soviet oppression, and the activities of Solidarity. In foreign policy, the party endorsed a pro-Western orientation (PiS 2001a, PiS 2001b). What is surprising from today's perspective is that there was originally no strong identification of the party with the Catholic Church, although the manifesto did, of course, mention Christianity. This started to change around 2005 (see below for details).

Also characteristic of the founding manifesto was PiS's emphasis on several specific topics, such as decommunisation, especially by proposals to adopt lustration legislation and ensure better law enforcement. This reflects the fact that PiS originally did not have a polished and visionary project; rather it sought to mobilise against the ex-communist left. A change started to shape up after 2003, when a more comprehensive vision was born of establishing a Fourth Polish Republic (*IV Rzeczpospolita*), which was to replace the Third Republic that had existed since 1989. Although in its more recent party documents PiS does not explicitly endorse the Fourth Republic project and some of its important elements are obviously no longer topical (especially the idea of strengthening the position of the president), the influence of this project on the party's policies continues to be apparent. In some of his speeches, Jarosław Kaczyński in discussing the radical changes made since the 2015 elections made references to the project (see the dimension of support for the regime below).

The socio-economic dimension

Characteristically, PiS anti-communism is also projected into the socio-economic sphere. In its founding documents, the party highlighted the enduring pathologies of the communist regime, linked largely with corruption and political clientelism. The consequence was an insufficiency of public resources. The instruments proposed by PiS to improve the state's financial efficiency and transparency included the publication of lists of people in tax arrears (the party did not bother with the issue of personal data protection; PiS 2001a). The party programme also suggested enlarging the province of the public prosecutor-

-general, who would be turned into a kind of universal representative of the state in judicial matters, with the power to act as an enforcement officer to collect debts. Such a change would greatly increase the influence of the state.

On the one hand, PiS supported private ownership, small and medium-sized enterprises, and tax decreases for physical and legal persons. On the other, the party was critical of banks, calling for their greater regulation, as well as regulation of the stock market and large enterprises, because 'the stock market destabilises the economy more than it creates capital' (PiS 2001b). The party also wanted to maintain state influence in crucial businesses, e.g. the PKN Orlen petrochemicals company, the Polish State Railways and the Polish Post (PiS 2006), and sharply criticised neo-liberal approaches (PiS 2014a). The party continuously expressed support for Polish businesses and argued that there was a need to 'rationalise foreign investment' (PiS 2001b) and introduce sectoral taxes. Both measures were evidently largely aimed against the influx of foreign capital. This was accompanied by appeals to national and social solidarity.

Manifesto promises deployed ahead of the 2015 elections, such as free medication for the over-75s, the lowering of the pension age and an extensive pro-family programme, Family 500+, which proposed what was in Polish terms a large financial contribution per child, were certainly attractive to the socially disadvantaged (PiS 2014a; Kancelaria Prezesa Rady Ministrów 2015). After the elections, these promises became political reality, and thanks to this agenda PiS was able to fill the space that was previously occupied by the ex-communist left. In the 2019 election manifesto, this agenda was broadened further: promises were made of free medication for pregnant women, no income tax for the under-26s, increases in the minimum wage (up to 4,000 zloty/about € 1,000 per month in 2023) and the sustaining of a regular, so-called thirteenth pension payment. This was first paid by the PiS government in 2015 (PiS 2019). In PiS rhetoric, these measures were about achieving the Polish welfare state and rectifying the insensitivities of the transformation era after 1989. Opinion polls ahead of the 2019 elections showed that social programmes were among the crucial issues that interested voters most (Tematy kampanii 2019). The fact that PiS took nearly half of the vote suggests that the party opted for a strategy that was electorally efficient.

Characteristic of the PiS profile in this dimension overall is an orientation towards ensuring economic growth while favouring the nationalistically motivated protection of domestic entrepreneurs, maintaining state ownership in major enterprises and what is in Polish terms a grandiose public welfare policy oriented towards various social groups. The important, even essential, role of the state in all this evidently goes far beyond the 'conservative norm' today. PiS is certainly not an economically liberal party; rather, it opposes the liberals with hostility. In its socio-economic positions, it is close in many respects to the old National Democrats, although the latter have never considered an extensive welfare state, given the poor economic conditions of interwar Poland.

The religious dimension

The public endorsement of a strongly Catholic public profile, and developing links between PiS and the Catholic Church, were gradual. The earliest manifestos were vague in this respect. A change started to shape up after several years, in connection with the 'Fourth Republic' project and its fundamental document, the Catholic Constitution, which made Catholicism the exclusive religion, seeking to project it into public social life, and hoping to rectify what were seen as the weak aspects of the 1997 constitution. The introductory preamble was unambiguous: 'in the name of God Almighty'; this was complemented by a 'PiS commitment to Christian values' (PiS 2005a). In this document, Christianity is understood in a broad as well as a personal sense, as one of the foundations of the nation and society. The intensity of the feeling is evident from this formulation: 'for believers, Catholicism is truth; for non-believers, it represents civilisation.' (PiS 2005a) Faith is seen as a value important for the cultural and political organisation. In a country where religious belief and God are still considered by many as a natural part of life, and where few are openly atheist, such an orientation makes sense.

This is accompanied by unqualified support for the traditional arrangements of the family and marriage, seen as a union of a man and a woman. There is a continuous line, linking a number of manifestos including the most recent one (PiS 2019). The party describes the family as 'the basic unit of society with unquestionable rights.' (PiS 2005b) Beyond the nation, the family is the key community, through the prism of which PiS views society. By contrast, the party describes 'gender ideology' as dangerous, and rejects the demands made by LGBT minorities. PiS sees these as manifestations of 'social demoralisation [...] which causes problems in many areas of social life' (PiS 2005a).

Similarly, PiS sharply rejects abortion and strongly supports the legal protection of life including unborn life. Characteristically, of human rights PiS attaches the greatest importance to the right to life; followed by the right to freedom and the right to equality rooted in human solidarity. The party also aims to create a moral order in society (PiS 2005a, PiS 2005b, PiS 2014a, Murphy 2017).

The party assigns a major role to the Catholic Church in the building of Polish society. In the era of a communist Poland in particular, PiS believes, the Church served as 'a pillar of Polishness and a substitute for the non-existent sovereign state' (PiS 2014a). This quotation reflects the historical blending of Polish national and religious identities; what the party adds is a major emphasis on the importance of Catholicism and the Catholic Church. Catholic teaching, together with tradition and patriotism, are defined by PiS as 'mutually interlinked in the construction of the political identity of the nation' (PiS 2014a). The Catholic Church is to have an important position not just in the private, but also in the public sphere. In its programme, the party pledges to

maintain the Church's position, because it sees it as having a clearly positive society-wide impact.

The alliance with some in the Catholic hierarchy can be seen today as one of the defining characteristics of PiS, as well as a source of its success. Particularly important for the party are its links with the influential Radio Maryja, its director, Father Tadeusz Rydzyk, and other associated media. It was in part thanks to this that, after the collapse of the ultra-Catholic League of Polish Families, PiS has taken virtual control of the right wing of Polish politics since 2007 (cf. e.g. Pankowski 2010: 187–189).[8]

Catholicism is evidently an important – perhaps the most important – element of the party's conservative identity. Religion cannot be seen as a supplement to the PiS identity, but as a fundament of many of its core values. It influences the party's views of how society should be arranged and on the family and human rights. In this respect, PiS again deviates significantly from the much more moderate approach towards Christianity and the churches that prevails among contemporary conservatives in general. Yet for the ancient authoritarian continental conservatism of the 19th century and the first decades of the 20th, the strong emphasis on God and Christian dogmatism was, by contrast, typical. Interestingly, the increasing importance of Catholicism in the PiS party identity parallels a similar development in the interwar Polish National Democrats. The party's overall dogmatic conservative-Christian orientation, combined with its protectionism in the socio-economic sphere as described above, has created a rather peculiar social conservatism in contemporary Europe. Its characteristics are completed by the other dimensions, including the cultural and ethnic dimension, to which we now turn.

The cultural and ethnic dimension

The topic of the Polish nation resonates strongly in the PiS programme, and is deemed crucial for the contemporary state and society. The nation is understood as a community in a cultural, political and historical sense (PiS 2014a, PiS 2019). Beyond the family, PiS emphasises the nation as the fundamental political and social unit. This understanding is projected into the party's critique of the Third Republic. PiS argues that 'the nation is divided into those who came to terms [with the change wrought by transformation] and the millions who found themselves on the margins' (PiS 2001b). Characteristically, PiS claims that 'Poland must be a state for Poles' (PiS 2001b). This implies an ethnic conception of the nation, and its delimitation by excluding minorities.

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8 The party's only competitors are the radical-nationalist Kukiz'15, established by the rock singer Paweł Kukiz, which won seats in the national parliament in the 2015 elections, and the Confederation Liberty and Independence, which won parliamentary representation four years later.

In more recent documents, PiS claims that 'it does not define the nation in the ethnic sense' (PiS 2014a). However, the quotations above, as well as the party's harsh anti-immigration position during the refugee crisis and the openly anti-Semitic positions of some (albeit marginal) segments of the party, signify that PiS is close to the ethnic conception (cf. PiS 2014a; Cieński 2017; Krzyżanowski 2018). Similarly, the party's sharp rejection of LGBT minorities indicates that it does not see them as part of the nation. It is interesting to note in this context the party's view of the millions of Poles abroad, who problematise the party's understanding of 'Poland as the state of the [whole] Polish nation' (PiS 2001b). The party says that cooperation with the Polish diaspora needs to improve; this is linked with the importance conservatives attach to the unity of the community, and the role of national identity. PiS deems it necessary to 'build a strong and meaningful community' (PiS 2014a).

In summary: PiS places enormous emphasis on the unity of the nation and national homogeneity on an ethnic basis, and wants to defend or support this both inside and outside Poland. The party employs strong nationalism which goes substantially beyond the common patriotic conservative positions. In the PiS view, minorities are not an element that ought to be supported. A traditional view of the shape of society prevails in the social-cultural area as well. As we shall see below, the radical nationalist orientation has significant repercussions in the dimension of support for the regime.

The dimension of support for the regime

PiS emphasises a notion of the greater efficiency of the state. The aim is a state that will be strong externally and internally; will be able to provide security, command respect and promote national values. The party considers the Polish state since 1989 as 'weak and powerless when it should defend the interests of the individual, the family, society and the nation' (PiS 2014a). The state with a clear authority is supposed to rely on a moral and historical legitimacy, and this is accompanied by references to the interwar Second Polish Republic in particular (PiS 2001a; PiS 2001b; PiS 2014a).

As noted above, the PiS position on the regime of the Third Polish Republic (established since 1989) is very critical. The party considers the elites the greatest problem; hence in its founding manifesto it called for the 'removal of dishonest politicians' reliant on businesses and 'organised crime' (PiS 2001a). The cleansing of politics should start with a clear break with the PRL legacy. Among the measures proposed by PiS were: allowing access to communist archives; asset declarations for public officials; and setting qualification criteria for people holding public offices, including elected offices (PiS 2001a, 2001b). In the spirit of its name (Law and Justice party), PiS also established itself on the issues of order and security, proposing to strengthen the powers of the police

and make sentencing harsher. The *Kaczyński brothers also spoke about reintroducing the death penalty, though this was never explicitly mentioned in any manifesto.*

The emphasis on decommunisation, especially by dealing with PRL cadres through a wide-ranging lustration policy, was one of the main topics of the PiS government in 2005–2007, but the policy was halted by the Constitutional Court (Dudek 2016: 580–582). The project of the Fourth Polish Republic dates to the same period. It can be considered an attempt to achieve a political breakthrough, and a transition from the parliamentary Third Republic to a regime with a strong executive, which would in fact be a semi-presidential system.[9] The vision of a strong presidency was later abandoned, perhaps because following the death of his brother Jarosław Kaczyński failed in the presidential election, and later gave up the ambition of ever occupying that office. Before the 2015 elections, the party documents pushed the earlier emphasis on changing the system into the background (this was largely for tactical reasons) and instead only mentioned 'change to various parts of the state apparatus' (PiS 2014a).

Yet the efforts at centralisation, the enormous concentration of political power, and the disruption of the system of checks and balances between the legislative, executive and judicial branches, which were contained in the project of the Fourth Republic, endured. These proposals served precisely as the blueprint for change that PiS set in motion after coming to power in 2015. It is also worth noting that the project of the Fourth Republic emphasised its nationalist and conservative aspects. One of the state's fundamental tasks was to 'protect the nation and its continuity for future generations' (PiS 2005b). This is a nationalist vision that PiS projected during the second half of the 2010s into many aspects of its governance, including the transformation of public service television and radio.

Here we need to note PiS's views on media pluralism. Before coming to power in 2015, the party often complained of the media's disfavour. The programme spoke of the 'necessity to rebuild' media plurality (PiS 2014a). The greatest attention was paid to public service broadcasters, which, the party argued, should uphold national traditions and promote education in history (PiS 2014a). In a speech she made when coming to office in late 2015, Prime Minister Beata Szydło explicitly spoke about the 'mission' of public service media (Kancelaria Prezesa Rady Ministrów 2015). This was followed by a lightning-fast change of personnel and structure, which turned public service radio and television into

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9   To give the reader an idea of what this system would involve: the president would have the power to reject minister and prime minister candidates; he could chair the government in extraordinary cases (what these are would actually be defined by the president himself); would ratify and revoke international treaties; and within six months of the presidential election could dissolve parliament. The project of the Fourth Republic did not explicitly mention any powers of parliament beyond oversight of the government and the option of expressing no confidence in it. The proposal did not formally weaken the position of the government, but in practice it would be limited to executing domestic and foreign policy, and would not set those policies. This again reflects the idea that the president is the key player who decides strategic matters (PiS 2005b).

government mouthpieces. This is one of the reasons why the media in Poland today are deemed only partially free (cf. Freedom House 2018).

Before coming to power, PiS was strongly critical of the judiciary. Not only did the party oppose the continued service of many judges who had started their careers under the PRL; it also criticised low efficiency and corruption, which, the party argued, created injustice. Yet PiS denied the very principle of judicial independence. Its programme was telling in this respect: 'the people cannot be denied influence over the functioning of this third power' (PiS 2014a). As PiS sees it, courts of law should be to serve society, not to dispense justice. The party aimed for stronger control of the judiciary by the sovereign (the people), via its parliamentary representatives, i.e. it sought to bind the judiciary with the legislative, and, derivatively, with the executive. The same problematic logic commanded the efforts to merge the Ministry of Justice with the Office of the General Prosecutor – this was *de facto* aimed at subjugating the latter (PiS 2014a).[10] As with the plans for public service broadcasters, these visions came to be implemented after the 2015 elections, when the offices of the minister of justice and general prosecutor were combined, the importance of the Constitutional Court was drastically limited and its independence curtailed, the retirement age of Supreme Court justices was lowered, and retirees were replaced with people close to PiS (cf. O'Neal 2017: 39–42; Sadurski 2018; Council of Europe 2018).

Characteristically for the continuity in PiS positions, irrespective of criticisms voiced inside and outside Poland, in the 2019 election manifesto the measures that had already been taken were described as the 'policy of good change' and the party proclaimed its intention to conclude its reform of the judiciary, including, for instance, changes to the extent of judges' immunity (PiS 2019). What this would entail precisely was unclear. However, the developments in the judiciary are subject to the pressures exerted by the European institutions to some extent (e.g. Cieński and Wanat 2019).

Thus, in the dimension of support for the regime, PiS established itself as a stringent critic of the liberal-democratic system. The party argues that the character and principles of the post-1989 political system are false. Following the death of Lech Kaczyński, which meant the *de facto* end of the semi-presidential project of the Fourth Republic, PiS adjusted its vision towards a populist democracy. In this vision, the democratic legitimacy of parliament, derived from elections, stands above everything else. In practice, this approach led to the dismantling of some pillars of liberal democracy. This has been most conspicuous in the radical interference with the judiciary and public service broadcasters. In this dimension, PiS has nothing in common whatsoever with the evolutionary adaptability of moderate conservatism, and goes entirely against its spirit.

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10 Here it needs noting that this problematic arrangement was still in place in Poland for quite some time after 1989.

Urban vs. rural dimension

The PiS position in this dimension allows us to see the party as an advocate of the countryside and rural interests. In its very first documents the party said it would endeavour to 'equalise living standards and development in the cities and in the country' (PiS 2001b). The importance of this dimension is well illustrated by the party's special agricultural programme of 2014, which noted the rural identity and understood agriculture as a strategic segment of the economy (cf. PiS 2014b, PiS 2019). This is not just because the proportion of people employed in agriculture is still high in Poland, but also because the greatest PiS electoral strongholds are the eastern and south-eastern parts of the country, which are more rural and traditionalist. Also important is the fact that in its rhetoric, PiS often links its main rival, PO, with a liberal urban environment that fails to listen to rural concerns.

However, PiS does not explicitly advocate a rural lifestyle, though it considers it necessary to conserve certain aspects of the countryside, which 'ought to preserve the traditional built environment and the way rural spaces have been formed' (PiS 2014b). Rural development should be 'based on family farms' (PiS 2014a).

This dimension demonstrates particularly well PiS's willingness to push market principles into the background. PiS promoted instruments such as 'green diesel' – not fuel from renewable sources but tax exemption for fuel used by farmers – and defends massive subsidies which the European funds have provided to Polish farmers. Another example of the party's emphasis on rural interests was its advocacy for keeping the ownership of land in Polish hands after the end of the so-called 'transition periods' that Poland negotiated when it joined the EU (European Commission 2019; PiS 2014a; PiS2014b). Likewise evident in this dimension are a focus on redistribution and an effort to provide social concessions to various agrarian groups. For instance, in the 2019 election manifesto the party promised to top up small farmers' expenses and to stabilise crop prices (PiS 2019).

Overall, for PiS the countryside is part of the conservative vision of the world, linked with tradition, faith and family, as well as an instrument the party can use to define itself in opposition to PO, which is sometimes portrayed as a proponent of metropolitan interests. Rural areas are seen as supporters of the traditional arrangement of society, yet on many issues the PiS position is rather pragmatic. The party highlights problematic aspects of the countryside, and assumes at least a partial accommodation of contemporary trends. The state is supposed to play an important role in all this, but the party does not have a comprehensive vision for the countryside's future, and largely seeks to respond to its current needs and expectations.

Foreign policy dimension

The party argues that its fundamental principle in this dimension is to pursue and protect the 'Polish *raison d'état* and national interest' (PiS 2001b; PiS 2014a). NATO and the EU are deemed the most important supranational institutions. The role of the United Nations is seen as less important, despite efforts to become a non-permanent member in the Security Council (PiS 2014a), which Poland achieved in 2018. Particularly important – and in the context of Polish 20th-century history, entirely understandable – is the emphasis on ensuring Poland's security. Here PiS highlights the country's sensitive geopolitical position (PiS 2014a) and proposes (1) strengthening and modernising the armed forces and gradually increasing defence expenditure (up to 2.5 per cent of GDP in 2030) and the number of active personnel; and (2) continuous support for Polish involvement in trans-Atlantic structures, with 'our membership of NATO' serving as the foundation (PiS 2001b). Poland's strategic partnership with the USA is particularly important for point (2). Tellingly, a recent manifesto included the objective of establishing a permanent American base in Poland (PiS 2019).

The party's representatives often assumed the position of supporters of the USA, for example by backing the American engagement in Iraq, where Poland had a relatively large military contingent. As far as EU projects are concerned, PiS is formally inclined towards 'closer cooperation of states on the question of security', without this creating a fully-fledged alternative to NATO (PiS 2014a). Submission to the EU's common foreign and security policy is out of the question for the party.

With respect to European integration, PiS is a soft Eurosceptic (Taggart and Szczerbiak 2002), and this is informed by the elements of the party's identity already described. Since its inception, the party has placed emphasis on national aspects within the integrated Europe, because 'the basic premise must be the preservation of the nation state' (PiS 2001b). PiS admits that the EU has had many successes, and thanks to its original idea it has 'achieved a common market, freedom of movement...' (PiS 2014a). Yet PiS rejects anything that goes beyond the framework of general cooperation and economic integration. It is very critical of closer integration and has long rejected the option of turning the Union into a federation, emphasising the issues of 'defending national identity, tradition and culture' (PiS 2014a). The PiS position is nonetheless pragmatic, and its programme notes the positive effect European funds have had on agriculture in particular.

The PiS position on Russia has undergone an interesting development; historically, Russia was a major threat to Poland. At its inception, the party was quite neutral, emphasising the necessity of maintaining 'good neighbourly relations' and of making efforts to 'overcome negative historical experiences', although the programme noted certain risks (PiS 2001b). However, the party

gradually became tougher, largely in response to Russian policy (Russia's resistance to the installation of the US anti-missile system in Poland, the Russian attack on Georgia in 2008, etc.); and the Smolensk crash was very influential as well. A more recent PiS manifesto proposes to establish interaction with Russia by 'returning to realistic and reliable partnership relations […] based on mutual respect', but it highlights issues that are seen as conflictual. In particular, PiS argues that the accession of Ukraine and the Caucasian countries to NATO needs to be supported, and returns to the 2010 aircraft crash noting the 'necessity of it being explained in full' (PiS 2014a).

From the viewpoint of conservative thought, historical experience provides the grounds for Polish membership of NATO, because the aid that Western Europe alone could provide would be insufficient to defend Poland. During the era of the Cold War against the Soviet Union, NATO managed to ensure the security of the Western world. The USA is evidently Poland's only ally to have sufficient capacities at its disposal that could be deployed to aid Poland should it be attacked. The PiS position is therefore linked not only with its support for NATO and the USA – which are common among conservatives generally – but also with the fact that there is no credible alternative that would be able to guarantee security and the primary national interest: the survival of an independent and sovereign Poland. There is a broad social and political consensus about this in Poland. The PiS position on the EU is typically national-conservative. The party prefers the nation state over closer supranational cooperation, which it sees as limiting in certain respects, and even dangerous in that it transfers some powers to a level which the representatives of the Polish state cannot control. This disrupts one aspect of the conservative-realist conception of the state as a sovereign and independent territory. However, PiS does not propose a clear alternative arrangement for the EU, even if there is an evident effort to highlight regional groupings such as the Visegrád Group (or Visegrád Four, V4) or the informal Three Seas Initiative (cf. PiS 2019).

The core of the PiS position on Russia is not just conservative, but informed by long-term relations between the two countries – which have been far from ideal – and in particular by the dangerous past. From a conservative position, guardedness is warranted by Russia's specific approach towards the international system. Russia does not respect this system, or its approach is unpredictable, and, from a conservative perspective and that of the Polish national interest, this is clearly undesirable and threatening (cf. e.g. Reeves 2010).

The post-materialist dimension

Some aspects of this dimension have already been suggested above. As far as PiS's approach towards the functioning of the state is concerned, there is an evident tendency towards greater centralisation, although this does not ex-

plicitly exclude the possibility of citizens participating in decision making via referenda, and there are occasional mentions of strengthening the position of local government. Yet in the party's founding manifesto, there was the contrary idea of 'stronger oversight by the voivodeship [region] over local government' (PiS 2001a). The party's ideas about resolving many issues are often similar: to create an umbrella office at the central level (the Central Anti-Corruption Bureau, the Chief Inspectorate of Environmental Protection, etc.). Control from the centre is supposed to facilitate better functioning in a number of areas. PiS aspires to create a state that exercises numerous functions and is active (cf. PiS 2001a; PiS 2001b; PiS 2014a).

PiS is clearly a pro-materialist party, which has long favoured economic growth and a decrease in unemployment. The economy and the advantages of development are among the major themes of the party's programme, which emphasises that these must benefit every member of society. Post-materialist values are explicitly considered as secondary. The programmes tend to contain generic and platitudinous mentions of 'the need to protect natural resources and prevent their unlimited exploitation' (PiS 2001b), or of efforts at 'economic development while respecting our nature and landscape' (PiS 2014a). More specific positions on environmental protection tend to be rare. The nationalist economic orientation is apparent even here, in that the party wants to preserve state ownership of (or influence in) forests and water resources.

The PiS identity in this dimension is revealed by the harsh criticism the party made of the PO-led government for adopting the EU climate and energy package. Similarly, PiS justifies the questionable exploitation of natural resources, such as when the PiS government in 2018 permitted logging in the Białowieża Forest. The party is essentially satisfied with some of the changes in environmental protection that have been adopted since 1989. When it is positive about environmental protection, it is largely with respect to non-problematic questions such as landscape reforestation (Kancelaria Prezesa Rady Ministrów 2017), or situations where it must respond due to the pressure of circumstances or public criticism. Examples include the objective of pollution reduction by subsidies for environmentally-friendly boilers (PiS 2019).

In summary, by its emphasis on centralisation and the very active, even all-pervading, role of the state, PiS comes into conflict with Anglo-Saxon conservatism, which is much more moderate and cautious in this respect. Post-materialism is unimportant for the party, and this contrasts with the more common conservative efforts to achieve a better balance between the economy and the environment. The fundamental PiS positions in this and other dimensions are summarised in Table 2.

Table 2: PiS positions in the ideological dimensions

Dimension	PiS position
Socio-economic	Support for business, but a tendency to regulate the market strongly via the active role of the state; a nationalist motivation and extensive redistributive social programmes are evident.
Religious	Catholicism as the foundation of Poland; a privileged role for the Catholic Church in society and public life; emphasis on the traditional family.
Cultural and ethnic	Emphasis on national homogeneity and unity based largely on an ethnic conception of the nation; minorities are tolerated; efforts to strengthen cooperation with Poles abroad, with the notion of a shared community.
Support for the regime	Criticism of the liberal-democratic system, concentration of power, lack of respect for the separation of powers, a radical reconstruction of the state in a national and Catholic spirit.
Urban vs. rural	Efforts to preserve some characteristics of the countryside and a certain (limited) emphasis on a rural identity; efforts to present the party as an advocate of the rural areas of the country are combined with a pragmatic approach.
Foreign policy	Determined support for NATO membership and emphasis on the alliance with the USA; reservations about greater EU integration; antagonistic and mistrustful relationship with Russia.
Post-materialist	Clear pro-materialist orientation, post-materialism is wholly secondary; centralisation of the state.

Source: Authors.

Conclusion: a Catholic-nationalist rebuilding of Poland

In summing up the answers to the questions which we posed at the beginning of this article, it is best first to address the dynamics of PiS ideology, that is, how it changed over time. Over nearly two decades, party ideology was modified to some extent; in particular, it was broadened. Originally, PiS was a narrowly focused anti-communist entity, and this was complemented with anti-corruption appeals and an emphasis on law and order. Gradually, the party identity evolved into a form the most important components of which are Catholicism and, linked to this, strong emphasis on the role of the Catholic Church; an ethnically conceived nation; and a vision of a strong and active state able to form society in a national spirit. This has been accompanied by a harsh negation of the developments in Poland since 1989; support for the authority of soldiers and teachers in society; the leadership of Lech Kaczyński, understood in mythical and quasi-religious terms; and various conspiracy theories. The party sees society as comprising two fundamental building blocks of community: the nation and the family. The individual is very much pushed into the background in the PiS conception. Personality should be formed in the family, in the spirit

of love for the nation and for Poland. The family is the most important unit in the country's day-to-day functioning, and, in the traditional sense, provides the fundament for the survival of the nation. This conception is close to a historical tradition that is particularly linked with the interwar National Democrats.

The relationship with history is very important for PiS, and this is projected into notions about the importance of historical education and the politics of memory. Apparent in the party's identity is its inspiration by patriarchal society, and its praise for certain historical periods and heroic deeds, such as resistance against Nazism and communism. The interwar Second Polish Republic is to serve as a model, and its values are to be enforced in Poland today. PiS does not distinguish between the parliamentary democracy up to 1926 and the authoritarian regime of Józef Piłsudski that followed. Here we can observe a connection with PiS's lack of respect for the principles of liberal democracy. It is also characteristic that, as in the era of the Piłsudski regime after 1926, since 2015 the actual locus of power has been translated outside the framework of constitutional institutions and into Jarosław Kaczyński's party office.

The importance which PiS attributes to history and tradition is linked with an enormous emphasis on another community: the Catholic Church. The strong connection with the Church and faith implies a notion of society based on religious values and premises, and not entertaining relativistic morals or values. The party supports the preservation of the position of the Church, which has historically been important; its values and principles are seen as desirable and positive. On these points, PiS is similar both to the Polish National Democracy of the interwar era (and, more generally, to the ancient continental authoritarian conservatives), and to a specific strain of the contemporary conservative New Right, albeit one that is largely influential outside Europe. Its representatives include the Christian associations and groups that contributed to Ronald Reagan's political success at the turn of the 1970s and 1980s. (They were evangelical rather than Catholic, however.) This religious current has maintained its political influence, both during Reagan's presidency and subsequently, and has been an important force in the Tea Party, for instance.

PiS's notions of the ideal society and state are similar in many respects to the notions entertained by the US religious right. Society is not to be fragmented; its organisation is viewed in traditional terms, and PiS supports a fundamental role for the Church in public and private life. PiS corresponds to Gilles Kepel's (1996: 13) characteristic of this religious current: it is about 'rebuilding [society] on the basis of Christian principles', with an obvious messianic dimension. Through references to the dysfunctions of society and the state, Kaczyński's party has largely managed to control the public debate in Poland, which the party has focused on the nation, traditions, religious belief and solidarity. PiS is an actor that provides answers to this type of question, and is able to disqualify other actors that lack a similar strategy. This is linked with the vision of a state that

supports re-Christianisation, but only has a weak link with democracy, as it is primarily based on disseminating the Catholic 'truth'. Hence PiS's close links with the dogmatic Catholic discourse, spread by Radio Maryja above all others. Thus PiS can be ranked alongside parties and groups with an Orthodox Christian, Judaistic or Islamic focus, which Kepel identified in the USA, Israel and the Muslim areas. In America, these activists are sometimes described as social conservatives (e.g. Haidt, Graham and Joseph 2009; Marietta 2012), and this label can be used in Poland too.

The link between PiS and the neo-conservative New Right is only partial, because it can be observed only as leading to the social-conservative, religious branch of the latter. Two points are noteworthy in this respect. First, both Reagan and Thatcher were characterised by a pro-market spirit and an emphasis on free economic competition, as well as by notions of limiting the role of the state to its indispensable functions. With PiS, an entirely opposite position is apparent, and the party's protectionist scepticism of the market is accompanied by efforts to build a strong state in many areas. Similarly, the emphasis on extensive social programmes, and the robust discourse of decreasing social differences would be unthinkable with US or British neoconservatives. In this area, earlier domestic influences, once apparent in Roman Dmowski's thought, evidently prevail in PiS. The party simply combines militant Catholicism, nationalism and socio-economic protectionism.

Second, the neoconservative right never aimed – under Reagan or Thatcher – to destroy liberal democratic institutions once coming to executive power. In contrast to this, PiS political practice has been marked by its deployment of radical measures, destructive of existing institutions. This is accompanied by references to controversial, or even clearly autocratic, moments in Polish history, sometimes without any religious background. Jarosław Kaczyński pursued a concentration of power that is in many respects redolent of Józef Piłsudski's. This tendency of PiS goes beyond efforts to strengthen the authority of the state in the neoconservative sense, and has nothing in common with moderate conservative political reform, pushing PiS towards authoritarian conservatism.

Beyond the conservative slogans about the revitalisation of Poland, we can discern in the PiS programme and actual political practice a successful strategy of the pursuit of power, which is aimed towards a fundamental reconstruction of the state and society. In this context, how the party deals with the symbolic and emotive elements is often quite politically expedient. This can be seen from the examples of the Smolensk disaster and the exploitation of the figure of Lech Kaczyński. Outwardly, the party seeks to establish a tradition; but actually, the event and the tragically perished politician have served the party political strategy. But from a conservative viewpoint, a tradition cannot be imposed and created merely by regular repetition (cf. Scruton 1993: 51).

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How Eurosceptic is Fidesz actually?

Tibor Hargitai

Abstract: *Until now there is no consensus in the academic literature as to whether Fidesz is a (soft) Eurosceptic party or rather Europragmatic. By identifying the manifestations of Euroscepticism on the policy level rather than the party level, this article sheds light on the dynamics of Fidesz's Euroscepticism. It also looks at the party strategy of Fidesz regarding its main Eurosceptic competitor Jobbik, and how this facilitated further Euroscepticism. Hungary's vision of the EU is at odds with the vision of most member states and EU institutions, which makes Fidesz not only Eurosceptic; but there is a form of inverted soft Euroscepticism characterising Fidesz's vision and policies towards the EU.*

Keywords: *party-based Euroscepticism, EU policies, Fidesz, Jobbik, contagion, accommodative strategy Hungary*

Introduction

The ruling party in Hungary since 2010 is Fidesz[1]. Their rule has since then remained virtually unchallenged nationally; although the municipal elections of October 2019 mark a notable change in cities across the country, where opposition politicians won. Across Europe there has been much criticism on the way Fidesz governs Hungary, and on its attitude towards the European Union (EU). These are two different things though. Democratic backsliding (see for instance Ágy 2013; Sedelmeier 2014; Kochenov and Bárd 2018; Procházka and Cabada 2020) does not have to imply a Eurosceptic attitude towards the EU. Nonethe-

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1   Officially Fidesz-KDNP. However, Fidesz-KDNP is considered to be one party, since the KDNP has been in a permanent alliance with Fidesz since 2006, and KDNP did not make it into the Parliament the last time they ran on their own, receiving 3.9% of the votes in 2002, below the 5% threshold.

less, it was Fidesz's political decision-making that led it to be suspended from its own European party group, the European People's Party (EPP) (Thorpe 2019). At the same time, much of Fidesz's criticism directed at the European Union seems to be rhetorical in nature. But how Eurosceptic is Hungary's ruling party actually? The purpose of this paper is to offer an answer to that question; it does so by reviewing attitudinal and substantive manifestations of Euroscepticism.

Firstly, the academic debate on whether Fidesz is Eurosceptic or not serves as the basis of the argument. Secondly, the vision of the Hungarian government party on the EU is captured, which illuminates the party's position on the EU. In order to capture the actual positions of the party, the third section discusses the specific policy areas in which Fidesz is Eurosceptic. Fourthly, Jobbik is added to the equation and the section looks at how Fidesz has adopted an accommodative party strategy to weaken Jobbik. Lastly, the paper reflects on the notion of 'inverted soft Euroscepticism'.

The academic debate on the Euroscepticism of Fidesz

There is no clear consensus in the academic literature on whether Fidesz is a (soft) Eurosceptic party, or rather Europragmatic.[2] On the one hand, Batory (2008) classifies Fidesz in the period 2002–2006 as soft Eurosceptic. She argues that during the campaign in the wake of Hungary's accession to the EU, Fidesz positioned itself strategically between the pro-EU parties (MSZP and SZDSZ) and the hard Eurosceptic Hungarian Justice and Life Party (MIÉP). Fidesz campaigned in favour of EU accession, but 'it was... a „yes, but" stance that characterised Fidesz politicians' statements in the run-up to the referendum on EU membership' (Ibid.: 272).

The focus on the national interest comes back in Fidesz' election programme of 2006, where the party focuses specifically on economic convergence with Western Europe, and emphasises the need to strengthen security and 'the need to strengthen the representation of the interests of the Hungarians in all areas' (Fidesz 2006: 38). Furthermore, Fidesz emphasises that the 'Hungarian people have made great sacrifices to become an EU member' (Ibid.: 37) and it is the government's task to ensure they experience the benefits of membership. That

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2   There is a lengthy debate in this same literature as to what party-based Euroscepticism constitutes and how it should be measured (see for instance Szczerbiak and Taggart 2018); however, for the purpose of this paper Taggart and Szczerbiak's distinction of soft and hard Euroscepticism will be used.

Hard Euroscepticism: 'there is a principled opposition to the EU or the European integration and therefore can be seen in parties who think that their countries should withdraw from membership, or whose policies towards the EU are tantamount to being opposed to the whole project of European integration as it is currently conceived' (Taggart and Szczerbiak 2008a:. 7).

Soft Euroscepticism: 'there is not a principled objection to European integration or EU membership but where concerns on one (or a number) of policy areas lead to the expression of qualified opposition to the EU, or where there is a sense that „national interest" is currently at odds with the EU"s trajectory' (Taggart and Szczerbiak 2008a: 8).

said, Fidesz does not take a clear Eurosceptic in 2006. Nonetheless, Batory observes that Fidesz adopted a political strategy where it 'made its support for EU-related constitutional amendments conditional upon the government's acceptance of part of its own economic programme, which they saw as essential for Hungary's preparation for accession' (2008: 271).

Enyedi (2006, in Várnagy 2013) considers Fidesz to be a party that uses populist rhetoric towards the EU, yet had a relatively pro-European, albeit less visible, Euromanifesto in 2004. Várnagy (2013) similarly finds that Fidesz was moderate in its criticism towards the EU during the 2009 EP elections and directed its criticism mostly towards the national government, in anticipation of its electoral victory in 2010.

Furthermore, Duró does not consider Fidesz to be a Eurosceptic party after 2010 either, because it continues to have a 'clear pro-European policy in practice, i.e. it has always supported the deepening of the European integration' (2016: 44). He goes on to say that the confrontational rhetoric of Fidesz is a consequence of the sizeable share of Eurosceptic voters in Hungary. Similarly, Treib (2014) does not add Fidesz to the list of Eurosceptic parties in the European Parliament after the 2014 EP elections.

On the other hand, looking at Fidesz in office since 2010, Taggart and Szczerbiak (2013) highlight that Fidesz continued to be a soft Eurosceptic party and that the party feels immune to criticism on EU policy since its large electoral victory in 2010, although Jobbik has been considered a strategic competitor on several policy areas. In fact, there has been a notable convergence of policy positions between far-right Jobbik and Fidesz. While Jobbik has moderated its position towards the EU since 2014, and stopped striving for an EU-exit of Hungary, Fidesz's position has become more critical towards the EU (Enyedi and Róna 2018).

All in all, there is an ambiguity as regards the Euroscepticism of the party that has been in power in Hungary since 2010. In the absence of a party manifesto by Fidesz(-KDNP) for the 2014 and 2018 elections, survey data by Göncz and Lengyel provide insights regarding the position of Fidesz on European integration. Göncz and Lengyel (2016) surveyed members of the Hungarian Parliament, and their findings show that Fidesz became more focused on intergovernmentalism between 2007 and 2014. However, in 2007, Fidesz was already much more inclined towards intergovernmentalism as compared to the average in the Hungarian parliament. Furthermore, for Fidesz competitiveness is considered the main aim of the EU, which over time has become relatively more important than the social dimension. Despite these changes, the attachment to Europe remained virtually unchanged between 2007 and 2014.

What follows are the visions, or strategies, of Fidesz towards the European Union. The attitude of the party is far from straightforward, but there are recurring themes that help understand Fidesz's approach towards the EU.

Visions of the European Union

A good starting point for the analysis of Fidesz's EU vision is the 15 March 2016 speech of Prime Minister Orbán on the occasion of the commemoration of the 1848 Revolution. In his speech Orbán depicts the EU to be unfree and 'fragile, weak and sickly as a flower being eaten away by a hidden worm' (Orbán 2016). The Prime Minister argues that Europe is not free, because 'it is forbidden to speak the truth' about how the majority of the actors in the EU are 'constructing schemes to transport foreigners here as quickly as possible and to settle them here among us' (Ibid.). He goes on to say that mass migration is used 'to redraw the religious and cultural map of Europe and to reconfigure its ethnic foundations, thereby eliminating nation states, which are the last obstacle to the international movement'. He added that the current policies of the EU pose an existential threat to the survival of the continent as it has been known, therefore the 'anti-immigration' forces need to be in the majority in EU institutions.

A second critique of Fidesz towards the EU is the transfer of competences. During the same speech in 2016, Prime Minister Orbán's attacks how 'Brussels is stealthily devouring ever more slices of our national sovereignty, and that in Brussels today many are working on a plan for a United States of Europe, for which no one has ever given authorisation'. The EU's threat to Hungary's national sovereignty is a recurring theme in the rhetoric of Fidesz. Also former Foreign Minister János Martonyi (2010–2014) refers to the 'creeping transfer of power from the member states to the Union', which follows from the self--interest of the 'rival common institutions' (Martonyi 2014: 362) – the European Commission and European Parliament. Thirdly, the national consultation in April 2017 entitled 'Let's Stop Brussels' was dedicated specifically to that issue.

National consultations in Hungary are devices used to sway voters into believing they have a direct say on the future of the country regarding major domestic issues. Prior to a national consultation, every Hungarian citizen receives a letter from the government explaining the motivation for the Consultation. In April 2017, the letter said that: 'The title of the consultation perfectly expresses the position we represent: Let's stop Brussels! Let's stop the appropriation of national powers by Brussels! Let's stop Brussels' policy of continually seeking to exceed the powers given to it in the Treaties! And let's stop efforts which – through the promotion of migration – seek to change the ethnic composition and cultural foundations of the European Union, and Hungary within it!' (Government of Hungary 2017). However, while the EU has outstepped its competences, the Hungarian government defends itself as being pro-European: 'The European Commission has called the Government of Hungary anti-European. This is either a misconception or a malicious political attack. Hungary is on the side of Europe, it works for a strong Europe, and wishes to reform the policies pursued in Brussels so that Europe can remain the best place in the world. Europe must

put an end to terrorism, regain its security, and once again become competitive in the world economy. Through a common foreign and security policy it must deliver peace and stability to the surrounding regions, including Ukraine and the Balkans' (Ibid.).

It is this ambiguous attitude towards the EU – in favour of transfers of competences back to the member state coupled with a mocking rhetoric towards actors in the EU on the one hand, and reaffirming the commitment towards a strong EU on the other hand – that Fidesz uses to manoeuvre itself through the European institutions, and in the national and foreign press. By framing the critique of democratic backsliding in Hungary as a critique against *the Hungarian people*, Fidesz fosters nationalist sentiments among voters: 'the people… gave good advice, good command to the Hungarian Parliament [for adopting the basic law], which it carried out. In this sense, when the Hungarian constitution is criticized… it is not meant for the government but for the Hungarian people… It is not the government the European Union has a problem with, much as they want us to believe…, the truth is they attack Hungary' (Orbán (2013) quoted in Batory 2015: 8). Such statements of Fidesz/Orbán are populist in nature, whereby the corrupt elite acts against the will of the people (Csehi 2019).

According to Fidesz, the transfer of competences to the EU puts the European institutions against the will of the people. Therefore, Fidesz cautions for the risk of a 'continuous rise in the popularity of radical, extremist political forces outside the current mainstream' that can follow from the 'widening gap between European leaders and the common sense of the European people' (Orbán 2015b). The same tactic was used in 2018, when Fidesz argued that the Sargentini report was an attack against the Hungarian people.

An earlier report of the European Parliament that scrutinised the rule of law in Hungary was the Tavares Report in 2012. It mostly investigated the new Constitution of 2011, amendments to the Constitutional Court's structure and controversial changes to the media law. In response to the adoption of Resolution 2012/2130(INI) in the European Parliament in July 2013, a senior member of Fidesz declared that '[w]e Hungarians no longer want a Europe where freedom is restricted and not complete. We no longer want a Europe where the larger [member states] abuse their power, where the sovereignty of nations is violated, and where only the smaller ones have to respect the larger [members]' (Rogán – Gulyás – Kocsis 2013). The Fidesz party defends its position against criticism from other member states or by Members of the European Parliament or the European Commission as attacks against the sovereignty of Hungary.

A third tactic, or rhetorical device, of the ruling party in Hungary has been to express its critical approach on the content of the EU while leaving the structure intact. An example of this was in the wake of the European Parliament elections of 2019, when Prime Minister Viktor Orbán highlighted that Fidesz has two goals related to the EU it wants to achieve with the elections. 'It is Hungary's goal

for anti-immigration forces to be in the majority in every institution within the European Union's institutional system… Our second goal is to be – as has been the case in the past – the most successful party in Europe; but at all events we want to be the most successful within the European People's Party' (Orbán 2019a). Here, Orbán does not go into how the EU itself is problematic, but that the composition of the institutions is what has to change.

The fourth, and last, tactic focuses on the structural EU funds of which Hungary is the largest net beneficiary. During the first phases of the negotiations of the Multi-Annual Financial Framework (MFF) for the period of 2021–2027 – the MFF is the EU's budget for a period of seven years – the idea has been to condition receiving the structural funds on the rule of law. This has been condemned by the Hungarian government, on the grounds that there are enough mechanisms in place to safeguard the rule of law (Than 2019). The government considers the EU funds to be a right that should not be challenged. When, at the height of the migration crisis, there was a debate about whether EU funds might be conditioned on cooperating with the migrant quota scheme, Prime Minister Orbán argued that he does not see EU funds as aid from Western Europe, but as what is means to be 'part of a common economic zone' (Orbán 2015a). The Hungarian government thus frames the fact that Hungary receives such high EU funds as payback for the opportunities it missed for economic development under communism (Ibid.). This is a way of framing the structural funds much at odds with those countries that support the rule of law conditionality.

Beyond these visions of the EU, what are the actual policy positions of Fidesz, and which are Eurosceptic, if any?

Party-Euroscepticism in the policy level

In order to clarify the uncertainty around Fidesz's Euroscepticism, this article will use a more fine-grained approach of party-based Euroscepticism by looking at the manifestations of Euroscepticism on the policy level (Hargitai 2018). It is easily imaginable that a party is in favour of deeper integration in the field of environmental policy but rejects the idea of a European army; or a party is against the common migration policy, but favours the further enlargement of the EU (the opposite also holds true). For this reason, the unit of analysis is not the party, but the party's position in a policy area. Not 'is Party A Eurosceptic?', but 'does Party A have a Eurosceptic position regarding policy XY?'. A Eurosceptic position is then one that rejects deeper and/or wider EU cooperation and/or an increased influence of a supranational institution like the European Commission.

A further specification of Euroscepticism on a policy level is Taggart and Szczerbiak's definition of Euroscepticism. For those authors soft Euroscepticism means 'where concerns on one (or a number) of policy areas leads to the expression of qualified opposition to the EU, or where there is a sense that

„national interest" is currently at odds with the EU trajectory' (2002: 4). Opposition to current EU trajectory is an assumption the authors make, so 'if someone supports the EU as it currently exists and opposes any further integration, that they are effectively Eurosceptic because this is at odds with what is the dominant mode of integration that is on-going' (Ibid.: 4). The idea of the current EU trajectory being at odds with the party's view of the national interest can also be considered on the policy level.

While I use the notion of the *national interest being at odds with the current EU trajectory*, it should be noted that Szczerbiak and Taggart later re-evaluated that element of their definition in 2008, and deem it to be over-inclusive. Be that as it may, for the purpose of testing whether Fidesz should be considered Eurosceptic, the party's conception of whether the EU's current trajectory goes against Hungary's national interest should be part of the discussion. I am thus aware of the fact that the notion is considered to be over-inclusive even by the authors that added it to their definition back in 2002, but including it does help to understand the party's position more accurately.

A second point of reflection from Taggart and Szczerbiak is in response to a criticism termed by Kopecký and Mudde (2002) as 'phoney Europhilia'. Kopecký and Mudde (2002) argue that the definition of soft Euroscepticism might be too broad, and that it might include parties that are proponents of European integration. Taggart and Szczerbiak's reasoning for including those parties nonetheless is based on the above-mentioned 'phoney Europhilia': there are parties 'that endorse EU membership for strategic reasons and claimed to be pro-EU membership in principle but whose actions and underlying values suggested a fundamental hostility to the European integration project' (2008: 242). Such an attitude would undermine the European integration project that could be Eurosceptic in nature.

Since the focus here is on a more specific unit of analysis than the party, there is no need to find the correct label of Euroscepticism to describe the party, but it will suffice to qualify a policy position to be Eurosceptic or not. A discussion of the policy areas where Fidesz has a Eurosceptic position follows.

Firstly, and hardly surprisingly, Fidesz is in favour of a transfer back of competences in the area of migration. During an annual speech at a summer camp in Transylvania, Prime Minister Orbán stated that 'the Commission must withdraw from the question of migration. It must create a council of interior ministers from the Schengen Area Member States, just as there is already a council of finance ministers from the eurozone countries. And all powers and responsibilities related to migration must be redirected to this council of interior ministers' (Orbán 2019b). Elsewhere, Fidesz positioned itself against cooperation in tackling migration on the European level, since 'Brussels has already decided to also launch resettlement programmes with no upper limit on numbers' (Government of Hungary 2017: 3). In fact, much of Fidesz's election

campaign during the national elections in 2018 and the EP elections in 2019 focused on stopping migration and campaigning against the burden-sharing agreement proposed by the European Commission in 2015, and passed by the European Council later that year.

Secondly, on the establishment of an Energy Union. The Hungarian government highlights the threat of increased utility prices, if it would begin to abandon regulated pricing. This is at odds with the policy of Fidesz, because '[t]his would again favour multinational corporations over Hungarian families' (Ibid. 2). Also, the Hungarian government lashed out against the European Commission's proposal of an Energy Union, because it would compromise Hungary's national sovereignty (Gotev 2015).

In terms of employment policy and fiscal policy, which are national competences, Fidesz argues that the European Commission has 'attacked' Hungarian national policies; and it is those attacks that strengthen the desire for keeping these policy areas national (Government of Hungary 2017).

Fifth, Fidesz opposes the creation of a European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO). On 30 October 2018, 100% of the Fidesz MPs voted against the proposal to join the EPPO. In April 2019, the State Secretary of Justice, in a reply to a written question from MP Bertalan Tóth (MSZP, Socialists) on the topic, stated that the opposition to the EPPO is 'a matter of sovereignty' and that the Commission seeks 'more power at the expense of the Member States' (Völner 2019).

Beyond the above five policy areas where Fidesz holds an unambiguous position on European integration, a policy area where the qualification of party-based Euroscepticism requires further explanation is the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). Back in 2012, in its National Security Strategy, the Hungarian government stated itself to be a strong proponent of a strong EU through the CFSP (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Hungary, 2012). Their actual policies may, however, work against exactly that.

The Treaty text helps to illustrate the point. Article 24(3) of the Treaty of the European Union states that 'Member States shall support the Union's external and security policy actively and unreservedly in a spirit of loyalty and mutual solidarity and shall comply with the Union's action in this area' (European Commission 2010). This article expresses the expectations enshrined in the Treaty regarding the level of commitment from member states to CFSP, even though they are frequently disregarded (Keukeleire – Delreux 2014). Nonetheless, single member states might prevent the EU from speaking with one voice, and thus hinder the support of 'the Union's external and security policy actively and unreservedly in the spirit of loyalty and mutual solidarity'.

On this basis, Fidesz's Russia and China policy can be said to be acts of Euroscepticism. Prime Minister Orbán was opposed to sanctioning Russia and continues to be opposed to the sanctions that were imposed following Russia's annexation of the Crimea in 2014 (BBC 2014; France24 2014), despite

voting in favour of sanctions in the European Council. The natural gas deal between Hungary and Russia and a large Russian investment into the construction of a nuclear power plant in Hungary are considered controversial issues that 'destabilise the EU' (Gricius 2019). Odenstein and Kelemen (2016) consider Hungary to be one of the *Trojan horses* of Russia within the EU, that serve Russian interests and that undermine the functioning of CFSP.

Fidesz has a similar pragmatism towards China, which compromises the effectiveness of CFSP, being the government of the only EU member state that did not sign the joint statement denouncing China's Belt and Road Initiative for hampering free trade (Elmer 2018). The government puts the national interest above all else and 'shall not accept any kind of external ideological pressure' (Government of Hungary 2019a).

These attitudes are echoed in the findings of the European Council of Foreign Relations' (ECFR) Coalition Explorer. The Coalition Explorer is an expert survey on the attitudes towards European integration and coalition formation within the EU. The Hungarian government is shown to pursue policies towards Russia and China that strongly deviate from the policy preferences of almost all other member states. More than half of the experts indicated that Hungary prefers a solely national policy for China, Russia and the United States, while all the other member states even prefer cooperation on an informal group level – the only exception being Poland's preference to a national policy towards the United States (ECFR 2018).

This strategic positioning of Fidesz within CFSP is here considered to be Eurosceptic. The party embraces the overall aim of CFSP but subsequently acts against an effective execution of the CFSP by opposing the position of the majority of the EU member states on issues related to Russia and China. This contrasts with other policy areas, where the Hungarian government openly declares their preferences against further European integration. While it is true that the CFSP is an intergovernmental domain and therefore a deviating position does not go against European integration, such a position can still be considered Eurosceptic, in that it departs from TEU article 24(3)'s 'spirit of loyalty and mutual solidarity'. More generally, Hungary is the least committed of the member states to deeper integration (ECFR 2018).

Back to the definition

When applying Taggart and Szczerbiak's 2002 definition of soft Euroscepticism, which includes the 'current EU trajectory being at odds with the national interest', Fidesz's overall attitude towards the EU is rather at odds with the interests of the majority of the member states, which makes for a kind of inverted soft Euroscepticism. That similarly holds true for the democratic developments in Hungary, to which the overwhelming vote in favour of the Sargentini Report

in 2018[3] would attest. They imply that the trajectory of Fidesz is at odds with that (of the rest) of the EU.

While this sounds like an interesting concept, its relevance should be carefully considered. Szczerbiak and Taggart (2008) decided to reject these kinds of critics of the EU since any party, no matter how pro-European, would be able to use such Eurocritical language at times. Pro-European parties make critical statements about the current functioning of the EU, directing their criticism – for instance – at the lack of democratic accountability, which they might want to solve with the direct election of the President of the European Commission. For the evaluation of policy-level Euroscepticism, however, this article looks at utterances that are directed at specific issues, and not at general statements of discontent. This calls for reflection on another point that Szczerbiak and Taggart deemed necessary of critical evaluation; namely that 'opposing only one or two EU policy areas is clearly not sufficient to qualify a party as Eurosceptic' (Ibid.: 249). Regarding this critique, my counterargument is that it is exactly the policy level that is relevant to look at, for this is where the definition becomes useful also for practitioners. Labelling a party as soft Eurosceptic allows for the general identification of the attitude of a party towards the European Union, but it is that party's (Eurosceptic) attitude towards specific policy areas that captures the potentiality of issues to be contentious in the debates on the national and EU level.

Having established that Fidesz can be considered Eurosceptic on several and attitudinal substantive grounds, the following section goes beyond this definitional debate and looks at the consequences of a Eurosceptic party in government; in the case of Hungary, a single party with very extensive legislative and executive competences due to its (close to) supermajority in Parliament.

A spatial theory of policy influence

The influence of party Euroscepticism in government can be analysed by looking at the party strategy of a given party and how it approaches EU policies. Here we look at the party strategy of Fidesz regarding the EU, specifically the strategy in dealing with other Eurosceptic parties. Bonnie Meguid's spatial theory of party competition will be used to look at the strategy of Fidesz in reaction to the electoral success of Jobbik.

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3   In September 2018, the majority of the European Parliament voted in favour of the Sargentini Report – the report evaluates the state of the rule of law in Hungary and concludes that punitive actions are to be initiated against Hungary. The Hungarian Government offered a 109-paged rebuttal, where it offers their position on the different issues of the report. The report is a European document that focuses on the democratic developments in a member state. However, the motivation for the European Parliament to draft a report on the developments concerning the rule of law in Hungary was 'the existence of a clear risk of a serious breach by Hungary of the values on which the Union is founded' (Sargentini 2018).

How Eurosceptic is Fidesz actually?   Tibor Hargitai

Meguid's spatial theory considers the political aim of mainstream parties to be the electoral loss or electoral elimination of niche parties that compete for the same or ideologically similar voters. The model comprises of three dimensions that shape the success of the mainstream party in dealing with the niche party, namely issue ownership, issue salience and policy convergence. As shown in table 1, Meguid elaborates three distinct party strategies for mainstream parties to react to the electoral success of niche parties; there are the dismissive, accommodative and adversarial strategies.

In the case at hand, the expectation is that Fidesz has been adopting an accommodative strategy towards Jobbik, since earlier research has shown a policy convergence of Fidesz towards the position of Jobbik on a number of policy areas (e.g. Krekó – Enyedi 2015). When an accommodative strategy has been used successfully, the salience of the issue at hand will increase relative to the period before the mainstream party started to compete on the issue, there will be a policy convergence of the mainstream party towards the niche and the ownership of the issue will be transferred from the niche party to the mainstream party. This would then result in a decrease in electoral support for the niche party.

Table 1: Predicted effects of mainstream party strategies

Strategies	Mechanism			Niche party electoral support
	Issue salience	Issue position	Issue ownership	
Dismissive	Decreases	No movement	No effect	Decreases
Accommodative	Increases	Converges	Transfers to mainstream party	Decreases
Adversarial	Increases	Diverges	Reinforces niche party's ownership	Increases

Source: Meguid 2005: 350

The following section will test whether Fidesz indeed adopted an accommodative strategy, and whether this strategy delivered the desired results.

The policy influence of Jobbik

It is known that Jobbik's policy positioning has had a contagious effect on Fidesz's policies. Krekó and Enyedi (2015) argue that on a number of occasions Jobbik has served as a testing ground for new right-wing policy approaches; like Jobbik's vocal support of far-reaching restrictions on immigration and their 'opening to the East' (Enyedi – Róna 2018: 263). What kind of a party is Jobbik though?

Jobbik first entered parliament in 2010 as a far-right and anti-European party, with a xenophobic and antisemitic agenda which far-right parties like Front National in France and PVV in the Netherlands even refused to cooperate with (Hebel – Schmitz 2013). In the first years, its position regarding the European Union was that of a hard Eurosceptic party that fits the categorisation of Taggart and Szczerbiak: the rejection of Hungary's membership in the EU and the conception that membership to the EU has been detrimental for Hungary and the Hungarians. In the words of Styczyńska: 'Jobbik is anti-European, and subscribes to an identity- and economy-based Euroscepticism, rejecting the very idea of European integration and the European project' (2018: 146). It has grown out to become the second largest party in the Hungarian parliament in the general elections of 2018, receiving 19.06% of the votes.

While Fidesz does not reject Hungary's membership in the EU, the positions of Fidesz and Jobbik have been converging on the broader topic of the EU. Particularly the political and policy developments since 2015 surrounding migration policy show the contagion effect of Jobbik on Fidesz. Of the two most salient issues in migration policy in Hungarian politics – the rejection of the migrant quota scheme and the Stop Soros legislative package – both cases saw policy positions of Jobbik subsequently adopted by the Fidesz government.

Following the turbulent times of the migration crisis, with a stark increase in the amount of migrants flowing into the European Union, the European Council voted in favour – by a qualified majority – of the European Commission's proposal for the implementation of a mandatory migration scheme meant to ease the migratory pressures in Greece, Italy and Hungary (Council Decision 2015/1601). Specifically, the Commission's proposal of 9 September 2015 focused on the relocation of 160,000 people 'in clear need of international protection from Italy (15,600), Greece (50,400) and Hungary (54,000). The relocation would be done according to a mandatory distribution key using objective and quantifiable criteria (40% of the size of the population, 40% of the GDP, 10% of the average number of past asylum applications, 10% of the unemployment rate)' (European Commission 2015). Hungary, along with the Czech Republic, Romania and Slovakia, vehemently rejected this proposal. Prime Minister Orbán spoke of the migration policy of the EU as a 'left-wing conspiracy against Europe', whereby the daily inflow of thousands of migrants into Europe serves as a deliberate construction that needs the government to turn to 'the people' [in order to stop it] (Orbán 2015). Jobbik response to the Council Decision was that Hungary should focus on the protection of Hungary's borders, not of Europe's borders (Jobbik 2015).

One of the Hungarian government's decisions was to call for a referendum on the migrant quota system in 2016, subsequently held on 2 October 2016. On 9 May of that year a parliamentary debate took place on the topic of a referendum on the migrant quota scheme, where Jobbik voted in favour of the

referendum. However, in that same debate then-Jobbik leader Gábor Vona told Prime Minister Orbán that his party had proposed a referendum on the migrant quota scheme back in 2015 (Vona 2016), an idea that dates back to May 2015 (Vona 2015). Back then, Jobbik's proposal for a referendum on the migration quota scheme was rejected by Fidesz caucus leader Lajos Kósa. In October 2015, Kósa argued that such a topic is not suitable for a referendum, since Hungary is bound by international treaties (Mandiner 2016a). In order to overcome this legal hurdle, Jobbik proposed a constitutional change that would make a referendum on issues to which Hungarian has international obligations possible on 23 February 2016 (Vona – Apáti – Kárpát 2016). It was the next day that the Prime Minister announced that a referendum would take place (Mandiner 2016b).

Jobbik's policy position on the migrant scheme seems to have played a formative role in the decision-making process of Fidesz. While the party initially considered a referendum to be at odds with international treaties, months later the Hungarian government took issue ownership of the issue of the referendum.

The second policy item where the Jobbik appears to have been an influential actor in shaping the government's position is on the Stop Soros legislative package, introduced in 2018. The legislative package criminalises the assistance, by persons or organisations, of undocumented immigrants. The official motivation for this legislative package is in 'order to create common social responsibility', and therefore organisations supporting migrants are 'obliged to pay an immigration financing duty if it receives any financial or property benefit either directly or indirectly from abroad' (Hungarian Helsinki Committee 2018). The legislative package was the next step following the 2017 National Consultation on the Soros Plan – a questionnaire sent to every Hungarian citizen containing seven statements related to migration and whether they agree with those statements.[4] In legislative document T19776, the government argues that the results of the consultation show that the Hungarians want 'strong border protection and decisive action against those organising and facilitating illegal immigration. Hungarian citizens unanimously reject all plans facilitating and encouraging immigration. Hungarians do not wish Hungary to become an immigration country' (Hungarian Helsinki Committee 2018).

However, the criminalisation of immigration was not a new idea. It was in 2016 that Jobbik Mayor Toroczkai decided to press charges against NGOs that were supporting immigrants illegally, and that were receiving 'billions of HUF from abroad' while 'these organizations operated with a complete lack of transparency [in 2015], deceiving the Hungarian authorities' (Jobbik 2016).

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4   For instance, question two stated that 'Together with officials in Brussels, George Soros is planning to dismantle border fences in EU Member States, including in Hungary, to open the borders for immigrants' (Novak 2017).

Toroczkai claimed that Open Society Foundations, founded by George Soros, was one such organisation that illegally gave aid to immigrants (Alfahír 2016). Toroczkai's attack on NGOs is likely to have triggered Fidesz to pick the issue and attempt to take issue ownership of it. The products of this attempt were the Soros Plan National Consultation and the subsequent Stop Soros legislative pack.

As can be seen in table 2, the results of the accommodative party strategy of Fidesz towards Jobbik regarding migration policy are mixed. First, the issue salience of migration policy has been very high in Hungarian politics since 2015 and was a salient issue in the 2018 general elections and the EP elections of 2019. Second, the positioning of both parties on the issue of migration has converged significantly. Fidesz seems to have been inspired by Jobbik to initiate the national consultation on the Soros Plan in 2018 and the referendum on the migrant quota scheme in 2016. The results for the third dimension, issue ownership, are less obvious though.

Jobbik successfully managed to take issue ownership of nationalist issues when it entered politics in the late 2000s and has continued to defend that ownership since then (Pytlas 2016). Fidesz did manage to claim some ownership in the above two cases. Firstly, Jobbik voted in favour of the government's decision to hold a referendum, which Fidesz framed as being their own idea (Bíró-Nagy 2018). Secondly, the Stop Soros legislative package is likely to have been inspired by Jobbik's mayor Toroczkai, but was introduced quite a bit later, and was also presented as an original plan by Fidesz.

Table 2: Results of Fidesz's accommodative party strategy

	Issue salience	Issue position	Issue ownership	Change electoral support of niche party (2014–2018)
Fidesz/Jobbik migration policy	Remained high	Convergence	Partial	−1.16 % (from 20.22 % to 19.06 %)

Source: author's own findings, based on Meguid (2005)

Interestingly though, the electoral loss of Jobbik in the period 2014 to 2018 was relatively insignificant, with a net loss of 1.16%. Meguid's spatial theory therefore does not seem to give a complete picture in the case at hand, and other conditions might be needed to trigger the electoral loss of the niche party. One factor that appears to dampen the impact of Fidesz's accommodative strategy are the diverging concerns of their voter base.

A survey of voter concerns across partisan lines shows that the priorities of Jobbik and Fidesz voters are different (Boros and Laki 2018). While voters of both parties consider uncertainty about their future to be the most concerning, Fidesz voters are more worried about migration (second place) than Jobbik

voters (fourth place). For Jobbik voters their financial situation and the risk of diseases are considered bigger threats than migration. Furthermore, much of Jobbik's political campaigning is directed at Fidesz and corruption scandals involving Fidesz. These factors might help to explain the limited electoral losses of Jobbik, despite the policy convergence of Fidesz towards Jobbik's position and the high salience of migration policy.

When looking at the above two cases, some points can also be made as regards the Euroscepticism of Fidesz and its relationship with the European Union. Jobbik's idea of a referendum on the migration quota system turned out to have a contagious effect on Fidesz and drew a bigger wedge between Hungary and the EU, because the Hungarian government used the result of the referendum[5] to legitimise its continued rejection of the migrant quota system, despite the political isolation that followed.

Furthermore, the Stop Soros legislative package took on a European character when the European Commission initiated infringement procedures in 2018 and decided to refer Hungary to the Court of Justice of the European Union in July 2019 (European Commission 2019). This put further strain on the relationship between the European Commission and the Hungarian government.

Conclusion

Whether Fidesz should be considered (soft) Eurosceptic or not, has also been the subject of debate and disagreement. However, by looking at Euroscepticism on a policy-level rather than a party-level and upon a strict reading of position on several EU-related policy domains, this article offers a more detailed description of Fidesz's approach to the EU. The following quote captures the Hungarian government party's general behaviour towards the EU well: 'For Orbán, the goal is no longer to keep the EU out of domestic Hungarian affairs, it is to subject it to Orbán's vision; not to get the EU leadership to finally leave him (Hungary, as he terms it) alone but to replace them with people like Orbán' (Győri et al. 2018: 37).

Fidesz uses three rhetorical arguments to defend its approach towards the EU. Firstly, and specifically on the topic of migration, is the existential threat that the majority's approach towards migration poses on the future of Europe. Mass migration would damage Europe's Christian values and erode its heritage. Secondly, Fidesz cautions for the risk that transfers of competences have on people's support for the EU. It utilises the populist argument that the bureaucratic elites have lost touch with the people, while they do listen to the Hungarian people. Therefore, an attack on the Hungarian government is framed as an

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5   In fact, the results of the referendum were invalid, because the voter turnout was below the threshold of 50%.

attack on the Hungarian people. A second argument to be against the transfer of competences is that it is 'a matter of sovereignty', as State Secretary Völner argued in the case of the opposition to the establishment of the European Public Prosecutor's Office. Thirdly, as the quote by Győri et al. captures, the aim of Fidesz is to change the EU from within.

On the policy-level the specific policy domains where Fidesz has a Eurosceptic position are migration policy, employment policy, fiscal policy, the creation of a European Public Prosecutor's Office, the Energy Union and Hungary's Russian and China policy (part of CFSP) are policy areas. In the case of CFSP, despite officially valuing CFSP highly, the actual political decisions of the Hungarian government towards China and Russia are obstructing a unified EU position on controversial developments in those countries.

In the last section, a spatial theory was used to show Fidesz's policy strategies regarding the EU-related dimensions of migration and showed that policy proposals of Jobbik were adopted to transfer issue ownership of these issues to Fidesz. Jobbik's succeeded in the election after Fidesz adopted an accommodative strategy to take voters away from Jobbik had largely failed, probably as a consequence of the principled opposition of Jobbik voters against the dominance of Fidesz in Hungarian politics.

Concluding, there is a kind of inverted soft Euroscepticism that characterises Fidesz's vision and policies towards the EU. The vision of Fidesz is captured by Minister of Justice Judit Varga. Reacting to criticisms coming from the EU about the rule of law in Hungary and Hungary's EU policies, she summarised the government position as follows: 'When they come up with this mantra that we are destroying Europe and are dismantling European values, I always warn them that for us European values are so important that not only did we give our blood and lives for them for centuries, but we are also proud that we can lay this down in our national avowal. This says all that needs to be said about our approach to the European project' (Government of Hungary 2019b). For an EU member state that has been the largest net per capita beneficiary of EU funds, the Fidesz government has been particularly outspoken and Eurosceptic, seeing how far it can go within the confines the EU.

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Trajectories of social democracy in the Baltic countries: choices and constraints[1]

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Abstract: *This article focuses on social democratic parties in the Baltic states. The evolution of the democratic left in these countries deviates from more researched cases of social democratic parties in the Visegrád countries. Although the Lithuanian Social Democratic party (LSDP) had been developing in a similar way to its counterparts in Hungary, Poland and Czechia, its efforts to rebound after a crushing defeat in the 2016 parliamentary elections have proved to be far more successful. Meanwhile, Estonian and Latvian Social Democrats from the outset had to compete under the prevalence of right-wing parties in highly heterogenous societies. However, despite similar initial conditions, their eventual trajectories crucially diverged. Hence, a research puzzle is double: how to explain LSDP's deviation from similar Visegrád cases, and what are the main factors that led to the differentiation of Estonian and Latvian social democratic parties? While the current research literature tends to emphasise structural and external causes, this paper applies an organisational approach to explain the different fortunes of the democratic left in the Baltic countries as well as other East-Central European states.*

Keywords: *Baltic states, social democratic parties, party presidentialisation.*

Introduction

Since the global financial crisis in 2008, there has been an almost ubiquitous decline of electoral support for the centre-left parties in the European Union (EU) – the process itself intrinsically linked with global political fluctuations started in the 1980s. While most analysts concentrated on the fortunes of social democracy in Western Europe, the development of social democratic parties in East-Central Europe (ECE) has been less researched and mostly focused on the Visegrád countries.

There are, however, at least three reasons why it is worth studying social democratic parties in the post-communist EU member states. Firstly, it denotes a broader category of post-communist parties. In many ECE countries, Social Democrats are among the most established parties with particular ideological aspirations in overly fluctuating post-communist politics. Secondly, having in mind challenges that have been faced by Social Democrats in Western Europe since the 1980s, it is worth it to see how these trends manifest in the post--communist part of Europe. And, thirdly, a more general motive derives from an observation that Social Democrats historically were a vital moving force in establishing and advancing democracy in Europe and beyond it. Therefore, status and current trends of these parties in the ECE countries is an important dimension to evaluate the prospects for democracy in the region.

The case of the Baltic countries is unique because of their highly securitised political systems. Securitisation, mostly stemming from perceived threats from Russia and vivid memories of the fifty year Soviet occupation, both supports and obstructs continuity of the democratic left in the Baltics. On the one hand, it restricts right-wing populist forces that usually compete with centre-left parties for the support of more socially conservative voters. In contrast with such cases as Poland and Hungary, where initially the social democratic tradition was arguably the strongest among ECE countries acceding to the EU, a more pronounced security dimension of the Baltic party politics restricted the rise of right-wing populism. On the other hand, it has shaped these countries in a direction contrary to aspirations of Social Democrats. Challenges are multiple – ranging from difficulties of integrating ethnic minorities to lack of attention on welfare issues to efforts by external actors to influence the domestic agenda of these states.

The article is divided into the following sections. Firstly, I will provide a theoretical framework to present possible explanations for the different fortunes of social democracy in ECE. Secondly, I will discuss how social democratic parties in the Baltic countries have developed in these circumstances.

In the latter empirical part, I will apply a methodological strategy of paired comparisons with a greater focus on its process-tracing qualities (Tarrow 2010). I will firstly explore the Lithuanian case, in which Social Democrats were one of the dominant forces since the country regained independence. Against this

background, I will later jointly analyse the Estonian and Latvian cases as the most similar systems. In the concluding part, I will try to generalise common traits of all three cases, which might be subsequently investigated in other ECE countries and beyond them.

In the text I will use the terms of social democracy, centre-left and democratic left interchangeably. Also, I will put aside normative discussions about whether Social Democrats in the region genuinely belong to the political left. Although they are distinguished by certain organisational and ideological differences from Western European counterparts, we should not take it as an argument to disqualify them. Instead of looking for a single definition of a centre-left (social democratic) party, it is more reasonable to acknowledge diversity within the social democratic parties' family (Schmidt 2016; Keman 2017). Therefore, I have chosen two primary criteria to classify a post-communist party as social democratic. Firstly, it is a party that through mergers or re-founding is connected with its inter-war predecessors. Secondly, it is a party that has formal relations with the Party of European Socialists (PES) – either being its member or observant.

Theoretical framework

In contrast with an established research tradition on trends of social democracy in Western Europe, comparative analyses of social democratic movements in ECE countries are scarcer. Nevertheless, there have already been several phases of research on ECE Social Democrats in correspondence with the main issues of their development at a certain time. Scholars focused on the challenges for social democracy in the region during the first decade of the post-communist transformation (Coppieters, Deschouwer, Waller 1994; Cook, Orenstein and Rueschemeyer 1999; Dauderstädt 1999; Gerrits 2002), on the communist successor parties that rebranded themselves as the representatives of the democratic left (Orenstein 1998; Bozóki and Ishiyama 2002; Grzymala-Busse 2002; Curry and Urban 2003; Dauderstädt 2005), and on relations between Social Democrats in the region and the broader family of this political ideology (Hough, Paterson and James 2006; Hloušek and Kopeček 2010; Holmes and Lightfoot 2011; Cabada, Hloušek and Jurek 2014). Most recently, studies of ECE social democratic parties concentrate on their decline that has become particularly acute since the global financial crisis in 2008 (De Waele and Soare 2011; Vachudova 2015; Ágh 2018; Grzymala-Busse 2019).

According to Jean-Michel De Waele and Sorina Soare, centre-left parties in the region suffer from a lack of civic participatory culture and absence of robust intermediary organisations as well as from squeezing between EU requirements and satisfying national and local transitional needs (De Waele and Soare 2011).

Milada Anna Vachudova (2015) singles out corruption scandals that have struck political systems in ECE. Although the scandals affected not only Social

Democrats, these parties were much more vulnerable due to a widespread association of the left with the communist past. Conservative societal attitudes towards minorities' rights, according to the author, is another factor that complicates the situation of the democratic left in the region. The more Social Democrats in ECE declare and support liberal positions regarding issues of human rights, self-expression and tolerance, the more they alienate voters of lower-income and socially conservative dispositions (Vachudova 2015: 65–66).

Meanwhile, Attila Ágh (2018) has systematically explored the incongruity of ECE social democratic parties' principles and their actual policies as a background for their eventual decline in many countries of the region. According to Ágh, due to the failure of democratisation and Europeanisation to improve social security within broader societal strata, we may observe a gradual shift from neoliberalism towards authoritarian neopopulism. This process also signifies the change in the power balance between the left and the right forces. By the late 2000s, the continued socio-economic crisis weakened the left, gradually making its narrative about Social Europe non-reliable. A mass sliding to the right and even to the extreme right began, as the nationalist and conservative forces overtook the leftist promises for solving social issues and protecting people from poverty. They did that by arguing that outside forces caused the failure of catching-up, which in general meant increasingly Eurosceptic rhetoric (Ágh 2018: 20).

The aforementioned accounts present a comprehensive list of structural or external factors that make the prospects for the democratic left parties in the region rather bleak. Nevertheless, one should bear in mind an insight made by Herbert Kitschelt from his pioneering study of the transformation of social democracy in Western Europe in the 1970–1980s that structural developments 'are not the primary and direct cause of social democratic political fortunes' (Kitschelt 1994: 281). In his words, 'political parties are not prisoners of the external societal environment and the distribution of citizens' political preferences; rather, their electoral trajectory and legislative power depends on internal conditions in the arena of party competition, inside party organization, and in their own political discourse, all of which affect their strategic choices in appealing for popular support' (Ibid).

A recent explanation of the breakdown of Hungarian and Polish ex-communist social democrats provided by Anna Grzymala-Busse partially addresses this research lacuna. According to the author, the main causes of the fiasco in these parties directly stem from their expansive development during first fifteen years of post-communist transformation. At the outset, the Polish Left Democratic Alliance (*Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej*, SLD) and Hungarian Socialist Party (*Magyar Szocialista Párt*, MSZP) successfully transformed themselves from former ruling parties of the communist regime into moderate centre-left forces and were able to win substantial electoral support by emphasising their competence and professionality. However, their development was not perfectly

sustainable. On the one hand, the image of competence was hard to retain in the circumstances of complicated regime transformation. On the other hand, both parties struggled to cope with the exponential increase of party membership while their administrative capacities largely remained intact. On the contrary, it led to decentralisation and the emergence of 'local barons', internal disagreements and public accusations of corruption. Against this background, the reputation of SDL and MSZP as united, disciplined and competent political organisations was greatly damaged, which eventually led to their collapse and further fragmentation (Grzymala-Busse 2019).

However, to have a full picture of the decay of those formerly prevailing left--centre forces in their countries, we also need to consider the organisational development of their main rivals such as Fidesz in Hungary and 'Law and Justice' (*Prawo i Sprawiedliwość*, PiS) in Poland. In both cases, there is a high degree of power centralisation and consolidation in the hands of their leaders – Viktor Orbán (Enyedi 2005) and Jaroslaw Kaczynski (Bucur and McMenamin 2015) respectively.

We may observe a similar process in the Czech Republic. Although its Social Democrats (*Česká strana sociálně demokratická*, ČSSD) did not emerge from the communist regime unlike their Hungarian and Polish counterparts, they experienced a comparable fate in disastrous parliamentary elections in 2017. Despite a relatively good economic performance during the premiership of their leader Bohuslav Sobotka from 2013–2017, ČSSD unity suffered from various internal disagreements and divisions (Perottino and Polášek 2013; Kudrnáč and Petrúšek 2018; Cabada 2015) as well as by unwelcome interventions by president Miloš Zeman, their former disgruntled leader (Hloušek 2014). Moreover, like in Hungary and Poland, fragmented Czech Social Democrats had to confront a much more centralised ANO led by billionaire Andrej Babiš whose way of ruling the party resembles the top-down management of a business company rather than chairing a democratic political organisation (Kopeček 2016; Hloušek and Kopeček 2019).

Among social democratic parties in the Visegrád countries, only Slovakian SMER has so far avoided a similar breakdown. However, from the outset it has been highly centralised under the rule of Robert Fico (Malova 2013; Grzymala--Busse 2018) which makes it organisationally more akin to likewise presidentialised ANO, Fidesz and PiS than to its social democratic counterparts in the region.

The observed trends that highly centralised parties are becoming prevalent in the Visegrád countries – and more broadly in East-Central Europe – echoes developments in Western Europe. As Peter Mair noted in his last book before his untimely death, Western European democracies experience a gradual 'hollowing-out' caused by a double failure of parties to attract disenchanted voters and serve their leaders in advancing their executive careers (Mair 2013). Likewise, Thomas Poguntke and Paul D. Webb denote party presidentialisation

as the 'hollowing-out of party government'. The main drivers of this European--wide process are internationalisation of politics and growth of state as well as media change and erosion of cleavages, both of which also induce parallel patterns of political personalisation (Poguntke and Webb 2018: 194).

In East-Central Europe, those trends, however, are likely to be even more pronounced as their democracies were to a large extent 'hollowed-out' from the very start, and after joining the EU they became even more intensified (Greskovits 2015). For most social democratic parties in the region, it has poised an acute challenge, especially if they originally evolved as relatively diffused and inherently fragmented organisations. To follow a genetic model of party organisation proposed by Angelo Panebianco (1988), if a party was created by diffusion rather than penetration, it will struggle to adapt itself to the challenges stemming from party presidentialisation (Passarelli 2015).

Development of social democratic parties in the Baltic states, however, presents an interesting case of deviation from the aforementioned trends in the Visegrád countries. Firstly, the Lithuanian Social Democratic party (*Lietuvos socialdemokratų partija*, LSDP) developed in a similar fashion to MSZP, SDL and ČSSD, i.e. through territorial expansion and relative decentralisation. They also experienced a humiliating defeat in parliamentary elections in 2016 against the centrist-populist Farmers and Greens – a 'business-firm' party single-handedly run by agro-tycoon Ramūnas Karbauskis. Yet, unlike their Visegrád counterparts, LSDP has managed to bounce back and remain one of the main political forces in the country. Meanwhile, the Estonian and the Latvian Social Democrats have never managed to run the government and thus have not experienced a significant expansion of their party membership. Nevertheless, despite their similar initial conditions they have evolved in completely different directions.

The theoretical premises discussed above allow us to raise an organisational explanation of all three Baltic cases. Namely, in order to survive, the Lithuanian Social Democrats had to implement internal reforms that enhanced their presidentialisation. On the other hand, the Farmers and Greens themselves should have experienced fragmentation problems, which would have limited their competitive advantage over their main rivals. Speaking about differentiation between the paths of the Estonian and Latvian Social Democrats, voluntary decisions of party leadership concerning their brand and identity should have played a major role in shaping their future.

Trajectories of the Social Democrats in the Baltics

Given the high salience of national security in Baltic politics, their party systems have also taken a somewhat different shape than in other countries in the region. In most ECE countries, we observe that the transformational division (communism versus anti-communism) is losing its relevance prominent in the

1990s. Meanwhile, other cleavages such as a socio-economic one or a pro- vs anti-EU stance are becoming increasingly more prominent (Cabada, Hloušek and Jurek 2014: 99). However, it is not the case in the Baltic states.

In Lithuania, the communism vs anti-communism division still is the most crucial dimension of party competition (Ramonaitė et al. 2014, Jastramskis et al. 2018). Meanwhile, in both Latvia and Estonia, the ethnic-linguistic divide remains a fundamental cleavage, although in Estonia it is somewhat over-shadowed by the communism vs anti-communism clash (Saarts 2011). While these two cleavages have their mutual differences, both of them, against the background of the post-independent Baltic countries, should be treated as geopolitically significant.

For sure, it is not the best environment for social democracy to thrive. One the one hand, due to the historical association of the political left with com-munism, the social democratic ideas have been intensively stigmatised in the public discourse. Moreover, in a heavily securitised environment, it is more difficult to articulate and promote a pragmatic socio-economic platform rather than pursue ideationally intensive political communication. However, under such circumstances, the Eurosceptic forces have also been tamed. Nevertheless, despite somewhat similar conditions, the Baltic social democratic parties took different paths and eventually appeared in different situations.

Social Democrats in Lithuania: struggling with the past

The Lithuanian Social Democratic Party (LSDP) emerged in 1989 (during Mikhail's Gorbachev's *perestroika* and *glasnost* era) as both a part of the pro--independence movement and as a successor of the historic Social Democratic Party founded in 1896. It took its current shape, however, in 2001 when it united with the ex-communist Lithuanian Democratic Labour Party (LDDP). While the original title of LSDP was retained, the ex-communist LDDP as a more significant force prevailed. The first LDDP's leader and later President of Lithuania from 1993–1998 Algirdas Brazauskas became the first chair of the united LSDP and ruled it until his retirement from politics in 2007. He was succeeded by another former LDDP politician and the then Prime Minister Gediminas Kirkilas. Only in 2009, after losing parliamentary elections in the preceding year, did the party congress choose Algirdas Butkevičius, a member of the original LSDP, to take the lead.

While Butkevičius ruled LSDP for eight years, the party course, however, hardly changed during his tenure. To some extent, this path-dependent devel-opment of LSDP had been enhanced by restrictions of the party leadership. As Algis Krupavičius, writing in 2013, maintained, 'The party chair or leader heads the party, but he is far from being an omnipotent leader; rather, he is forced by a party statute to act in a collegial manner via the executive LSDP Board, the party praesidium, and the council. The party leader is not an autonomous politi-

cal force within the LSDP as in other parties' (Krupavičius 2013: 491). An earlier comparative study focusing on the degree of internal party democracy within major Lithuanian parties also established that LSDP had the most democratic procedures to enrol new members, to form local and national party institutions, to elect and control party leadership (Žvaliauskas 2007: 250).

Such a seemingly democratic character of the party is closely related to a relatively large party membership base. While at the end of the 1990s, the original LSDP had only around 3,000–4,000 individual members, after the unification with the ex-communists in 2001 the party membership tripled. During long years in power (2001–2008, 2012–2016) it increased further and gradually outnumbered its closest rivals. In 2012, it reached 22,000 or one-fifth of the total party membership in the country (Krupavičius 2013: 493). After losing elections in 2016 and an eventual split in 2017, the party membership has dropped somewhat to around 17,000–18,000. Nevertheless, LSDP has so far remained the largest party in Lithuania.

Given these numbers, the ratio of party members and their voters fluctuates around 5–10%, which is tantamount to an average size of a political party in Western Europe (Kitschelt 1994). While one has to consider these official numbers with a grain of salt, LSDP has also so far been relatively effective in collecting individual party members' fees and again besting other political parties.

However, this organisational entrenchment of LSDP came with a price. On the one hand, a steady expansion of party membership was primarily achieved via well-developed patronage practices, especially at the municipality level. It significantly contributed to the character of LSDP as the 'party of the power' or a technocratic nomenclature detached from broader societal strata and insensitive to their grievances. On the other hand, it significantly reduced its capacities for strategic adaptability to external challenges in the increasingly volatile political environment. The decentralisation of the internal decision-making process helped maintain relatively powerful electoral machines at the local level. On the same time, it also meant that parties' representatives at the parliament were also largely autonomous and non-accountable to the rest of the party. It greatly complicated circulation of policy ideas within the party and led to the actual freezing of the party establishment.

While few figures coming from the original LSDP (such as Algirdas Sysas and Juozas Olekas) were leaders of national trade unions' associations until the early 2000s, the cooperation with trade unions has always been somewhat limited. On the one hand, the very trade unions have struggled to develop their organisational and lobbying capacities. On the other hand, the Social Democrats have been criticised for a long time for their susceptibility to corporate business interests. Although they have ruled most of the time since 1990, they have done little to challenge an unusually high-income inequality and very low redistribution in comparison with other EU member states. Arguably, the last nail in the

coffin of the Social Democrats' dominance in Lithuania was the adoption of a liberal and also widely unpopular labour code just before the parliamentary elections in September 2016 (Jastramskis et al. 2018). Despite sharp public criticism from the opposition and the president's veto, the then prime minister and party leader Butkevičius proved to be capable of securing votes needed for passing the legislation. However, it also revealed how little the then LSDP leadership cared for maintaining the ideational credentials of the democratic left.

In this regard, Lithuanian Social Democrats mostly followed their Hungarian and Polish colleagues' path. In both latter cases, their socially conservative right-wing competitors outmanoeuvred the centre-left parties by becoming more left in economic matters than the former. Their increasingly pro-market stance left an open space for right-wing populist parties to appeal to the disgruntled voters from economic peripheries and of lower socioeconomic statuses. Nevertheless, despite more acute income inequality in both Hungary and Poland, Lithuanian Social Democrats, for a long time, had relied on several vital safeguards to avoid such a scenario.

Foremost, due to a high degree of securitisation in the political system, there have so far been fewer opportunities for socially conservative and thus effectively Eurosceptic-inclined parties to emerge. The main centre-right party Homeland Union – Lithuanian Christian Democrats (*Tėvynės Sąjunga – Lietuvos krikščionys demokratai*, TS-LKD) until recently did not shy away from taking conservative positions on specific socio-cultural issues. However, it has been cautious enough not to confront the EU directly and most recently, in the presence of numerous challenges for the EU, has resolutely reinforced its pro-European character (TS-LKD 2018). What is also essential is that it has remained committed to the economic right. Also, both periods when TS-LKD ruled (1996–2000 and 2008–2012) were significantly affected by the external economic crises. Consequently, TS-LKD was forced to pursue austerity policies that significantly undermined its popularity. Against this background, while TS-LKD's electorate is one of the most stable among all Lithuanian parties, prospects for its expansion are limited. Moreover, its potential for making coalitions has also been restricted mainly to liberal centre-right parties. In such circumstances, the Social Democrats could enjoy a somewhat secure pivotal position in the political system. A mixed electoral system, when half of the MPs' seats are distributed in single-mandate districts and another one in a multi-mandate district, was also thought to be beneficial for LSDP and TS-LKD as two major parties.

Nevertheless, LSDP was not immune to challenges from other parties, especially from newcomers challenging the whole political establishment. Despite an economic boom, accession to the EU and NATO and the personal charisma of then prime minister Brazauskas, a new Labour Party founded by tycoon Viktor Uspaskich had already scored a convincing victory in a multi-mandate district in parliamentary elections in 2004. Eventually, Brazauskas exploited a strategic

advantage of a pivotal LSDP's position in the party system to make a coalition agreement with the Labour Party, which allowed him to keep the post of prime minister. However, it was a strong warning signal that the guarantees for the Social Democrats to dominate in the political system should not be overstated.

It seems, however, that they did not learn this lesson properly, and in the last parliamentary elections it experienced another severe blow – this time from the Lithuanian Farmers and Greens Union (*Lietuvos valstiečių ir žaliųjų sąjunga*, LVŽS). Despite their overall centrist character, the Farmers and Greens deliberately cultivated an image of a people-oriented political party, while in economic terms it sought to accentuate its leftist values. Like the Labour Party, LVŽS essentially is a vertical organization also headed by a tycoon involved in agribusiness, Ramūnas Karbauskis. The form of an 'entrepreneurial party' helped them develop its infrastructure during a relatively short time and promote an image of a party with strong and decisive leadership.

The parliamentary elections in fall of 2016 were disastrous for LSDP. The Farmers and Greens secured 56 of 141 mandates, while LSDP got only 17 seats and ended up in a distant third, also beaten by TS-LKD. Poll surveys did not predict such a convincing victory for LVŽS, and they finished second in the multi--mandate district after TS-LKD. However, in the second round of single-mandate districts, voters evaluated the Farmers and Greens as a viable alternative to both major parties, which eventually determined the outcome of the elections.

These parliamentary elections were also a turning point for LSDP from their previously taken path. In spring 2017, for the first time in the party's history, direct elections of the party chair were organised to include all party members in selecting a new leader. The decision emulated a TS-LKD practice that has been directly electing its leader since 2009. As Butkevičius declined to run in these elections, they were widely perceived as an opportunity for the rejuvenation of its leadership and the whole party. Two young, yet already experienced politicians got into the second round – 37-years-old Vilnius deputy mayor Gintautas Paluckas versus then Minister of Economy Mindaugas Sinkevičius, who was five years Paluckas' junior.

Eventually, Paluckas narrowly won the elections by managing to appeal to ordinary party members with a promise to substantially reform the party and bring back its leftist values. The outcome was a shock to most of the party establishment who were supporting the more moderate candidacy of Sinkevičius, a son of Rimantas Sinkevičius who was an influential LSDP member, parliamentarian and Transport Minister in Butkevičius's 2012–2016 government.

A few months after he took the lead of the party, Paluckas organised a party referendum whether to leave a ruling coalition with the Farmers and Greens. The will of the ranks and files again did not match the preferences of most of the old party elite. In October 2017, based on the referendum, the party council decided to go to the opposition and in such a way to seek to renew its leftist credentials.

However, 10 out of 17 members of LSDP's parliamentary faction decided to disobey the party decision. Eventually, they left the party and created a new organization – the Social Democratic Labour Party (LSDDP). Notably, the dissenters included both former prime ministers and party leaders Kirkilas and Butkevičius though the latter only joined LSDDP's parliamentary faction. Most of them (with the notable exception of Butkevičius) were originally from LDDP, while the majority of those MPs who followed the party decision came to politics via the original LSDP.

In the wake of the departure of former party leaders, public support for LSDP plummeted further. However, the party got an opportunity to launch a comprehensive both programmatic and personnel renewal. Results of the local and European elections in spring 2019 have shown that the party is gradually regaining its former popularity. The party got the largest share of mayors (15 out of 60) and finished in second place in the European Parliament's (EP) election behind only TS-LKD. In these elections, LSDP not only surpassed the ruling LVŽS but also got the largest number of votes since 2004.

By the end of 2019, LSDP reached second-place in the poll surveys (receiving around 12% of popular support) only behind TS-LKD (17%) while LVŽS got 7% and fell down to the fourth-place also yielding ground for the Labour party (9%). Given that the support for the ruling Farmers and Greens at the end of 2016 was around 34%, their decline over three years had been indeed dramatic (Brunalas 2020).

Although the failure of LVŽS to maintain its initial support after the parliamentary elections in 2016 necessitates a separate analysis, one of the probable reasons for their decline had been a certain degree of their fragmentation. Despite the fact that the very LVŽS party is highly centralised, from the outset of their parliamentary victory its leader Karbauskis had to share powers with their delegated Prime Minister non-partisan Saulius Skvernelis, a popular former Interior Minister in Butkevičius's government. His agreement to lead LVŽS's electoral list was one of the main factors of the Farmers and Greens success in 2016 but also pe-determined a relative fragmentation of their future rule. Party popularity also suffered from the eventual exit of several of its key MPs – mainly due to disagreements with Karbauskis – including the then most popular LVŽS politician and Seimas's speaker Viktoras Pranckietis.

Estonian and Latvian Social Democrats: between Scylla and Charybdis

A few important reasons allow separating LSDP from its counterparts in the other two Baltic countries. Firstly, post-independent social democratic parties in Estonia and Latvia did not dominate as it had been for a long time in Lithuania. Their party membership has remained rather small, and they have so far never won elections so they could form a government or head a ruling coalition.

Secondly, ex-communists did not play such a role within the parties as in the case of LSDP. Ultimately, Social Democrats have had to compete with their opponents in the presence of a prominent ethnolinguistic cleavage in both countries.

Estonian and Latvian societies became increasingly heterogeneous as a result of the mass migration of Russophones after the Second World War. In 1989, just before regaining independence, there were respectively around 35% and 42% residents who identified themselves as Russians or Russian speakers in Estonia and Latvia. While their proportion eventually decreased sequentially by 6% and 8% in 2009, the ethnic division has remained a defining feature of these political systems. One contributing factor to its salience was that during the Soviet rule there was virtually no integration between the Russian-speaking population and the titular nations. Moreover, the then government did not seek to remediate the situation (Auers 2015: 46–47).

From the outset of transformation, such segregation pushed ethnic Latvians and Estonians to support right and centre-right movements to confront the forces representing the Russian-speaking population. Many Russophones in these countries were in a worse socio-economic position and usually somewhat nostalgic regarding the previous order. Therefore, the movements that claimed to defend their interests were often espousing leftist economic views.

For Latvian and Estonian Social Democrats, it was a double challenge. On the one hand, the very image of the political left was framed as having significant geopolitical and ethnicity-related connotations. It was challenging to popularise social democratic ideas despite the high social costs of the so-called 'shock therapy' economic reforms. On the other hand, Estonian and Latvian Social Democrats were confronted with the dilemma with which side to form coalitions after national and local elections. Their positions on socio-economic issues were similar to the movements supporting the interests of Russophones. However, due to the salience of the ethnic division, they were pressured to participate in coalitions headed by generally pro-business centre-right parties.

To cope with the first part of the challenge, social democratic parties in both countries tried to increase their political and electoral relevancy. For that purpose, they committed to a series of mergers with other parties. The Estonian Social Democrats even strategically agreed to sacrifice their party name for the sake of unity with other like-minded forces.

The founding of the Estonian Social Democratic Party (ESDP – *Eesti Sotsiaaldemokraatlik Partei*) in September 1990 was the outcome of the unification of three local social democratic groups (the Estonian Democratic Labour Party, the Estonian Social Democratic Independence Party and the Russian Social Democratic Party of Estonia) with the émigré socialist party. Further, ESDP decided to contest the first post-independence elections to Riigikogu in 1992 together with the Rural Centre Party (EMKE) under the name Moderates. This union succeeded in taking 12 mandates in the 101-seat parliament and was invited to

take part in the government led by Mart Laar and his nationalist-conservative Pro Patria alliance. After a setback in parliamentary elections in 1995, ESDP and EMKE decided to form a united party under the already established Moderates name. Later, the party once again changed its name to the People's Party Moderates, but soon this appeared to be not the most successful move. The party took only 6th place in the 2003 elections (with six mandates) amid widespread criticism that it cannot be treated as left-wing. To address the issue, in 2004 the party decided to bring social democracy back to the title and renamed itself the Social Democratic Party (*Sotsiaaldemokraatlik Erakond* – SDE) (Pettai and Saharov 2013: 436).

Eventually, such strategic flexibility and openness to electoral alliances and mergers paid off. The party in its different forms and names was not immune to electoral losses and questions about their true political identity. However, they performed rather well in most elections, winning from 10 to 19 seats. The party was frequently invited to participate in forming the government and even had their former leader Toomas Hendrik Ilves elected as the country's president in 2006. The Estonian Social Democrats were criticised for systemic collaboration with right-wing parties, beginning with the first Laar's government in 1992–1994. Nevertheless, they often controlled the Ministry of Social Affairs, which allowed them to carry out essential reforms of the welfare sector. In this regard, they have contributed to the relatively high level of well-being in Estonia in comparison to other ECE countries. Estonia has reached 12th place among 28 EU member states in the latest rankings of the EU Social Justice Index, although their GDP per capita is still below the EU average (Social Inclusion Monitor Europe 2017).

Therefore, it is difficult to agree with Tavits's description of the Estonian social democratic leaders as 'amateur ideologues' who did not bother to create an expansive party network (Tavits 2013). While they might have avoided rather mundane party-building activities, they were quite pragmatic and strategic enough to guarantee a relatively stable party performance. However, they did not dare to cross the line and start cooperating with Savisaar's Centre Party (except a short-lived attempt to work in the Tallinn city council in 2009–2010). Arguably, it significantly contributed to the fact that around 95% of SDE voters are ethnic Estonians. Despite the efforts of social democratic leaders to spearhead the development of pro-active minority integration policy, Russophones continued to see the Social Democrats as yet another pro-Estonian political force (Pettai and Saharov 2013: 446).

The fate of the Latvian Social Democrats Workers Party (LSDSP) reveals what could have happened if the Estonian Social Democrats had decided to cooperate with the Savisaar's Centre Party. LSDSP was re-founded in December 1989 thanks to a critical role played by the foreign committee of the Latvian Social Democrats in exile. It is therefore considered to be the only political party in Latvia to have

retained its organizational continuity throughout the Soviet occupation (Ikstens 2013: 471). LSDSP was not initially successful. While quite a few left-wing or populist parties got into the parliament in 1993 and 1995, the LSDSP could not make it through. The situation had changed when it started to cooperate in 1995 with the Latvian Democratic Labour Party (LaDDP) founded by pro-independence communists before finally merging in 1999 under the name of LSDSP. This rapprochement between the two left-wing parties soon bore fruit. In elections in 1998 the joint list of the two parties gained fourteen seats in the 100-strong national parliament. Moreover, in local elections in 2001 LSDSP scored a clear victory. They were the only party to get representation in big Latvian cities and also won enough seats to claim for themselves the post of Riga's mayor.

However, it was a Pyrrhic victory. During negotiations regarding the mayoral position in Riga, the right-wing parties did not want to give this post to LSDSP. They calculated that the Social Democrats would not dare to make a coalition with the 'For Human Rights in United Latvia' (Ikstens 2013: 475), but that is what happened. With the help of the pro-Moscow movement, the then LSDSP leader, former member of LaDDP, Juris Bojārs ensured that his son Gundars Bojārs would become a new mayor of Riga city. Eventually, the public support for the party dropped. Moreover, this move provoked an internal dissent, which ended when a group of MPs of LSDSP protesting against the party leadership left the party in 2002. After these events, LSDSP did not get any seats in the next parliamentary elections and has never recovered from the crisis.

For some time, after the fall of LSDSP, there were no relevant parties in Latvia that would belong to the PES. Eventually, the Social Democratic Party 'Harmony' got such recognition in 2012. The party (founded in 2010) originated from the electoral alliance 'Harmony Centre' formed in 2005, which comprised of several pro-Russian and leftist parties. Most of them were also members of eventually abolished 'For Human Rights in United Latvia'. Ironically, the Latvian Social Democratic Party, founded by the same dissenters who left LSDSP protest-ing its cooperation with the 'For Human Rights in United Latvia' movement, joined the alliance in 2009. This move helped to legitimise 'Harmony Centre' as a social democratic force. Eventually, it paved the way for founding in 2010 a party that included names from both Harmony and the Social Democratic Party and was accepted into PES. From the outset, however, the new party, led by Riga's Mayor Nils Ušakovs, has been dominated by the 'Harmony' politi-cians. They ultimately rest their case on the ethnic-linguistic cleavage rather than on the socio-economic platform. The Latvian Social Democrats' strategic errors in forming coalitions and their failure to build a strong party organisa-tion have significantly contributed to the dominance of the ethnic cleavage in Latvia's party politics.

Meanwhile, in Estonia, the ethnic division was less prominent. It was linked with the communist/anti-communist cleavage and to some extent balanced

by the socio-economic divide. In November 2016, a ground-breaking political experiment was launched. SDE, together with the Pro Patria and Republic Union, decided to make a ruling coalition with the Centre Party. They made such a decision after the latter finally pushed out its long-serving chair Savisaar and replaced him with Jüri Ratas, a politician of the young generation. By taking this step, the Conservatives and the Social Democrats broke the coalition treaty with the pro-business Reform Party that had been in the government since 1999 and led the minister cabinets for most of the time.

On the one hand, such a government reshuffle has signalled that the ethnic and communist/anti-communist divisions are becoming less prominent. On the other hand, it was a risky move, which might have cost SDE. Its popularity quite sharply dropped at the beginning of 2017 and did not recover till parliamentary elections in March 2019. Eventually, SDE lost five of their previous 15 seats in a new 101-member Riigikogu and fell to (the last) 5th place. Furthermore, the Social Democrats lost their former dominance in poorer South-East Estonia to EKRE. This right-wing populist and Eurosceptic party has significantly increased its share of votes and with 19 mandates took third place in the new parliament – only behind the Reform (34 seats) and the Centre (26 seats) Parties.

Such poor SDE results prompted the resignation of its chair Jevgeni Ossinovski. Among the reasons of the defeat, the observers singled out a lack of appealing candidates as well as a failure to convey its key messages (Toots 2019). Arguably, the permanent role of a minor coalition partner in ideologically different governments hindered SDE from providing a clear and convincing vision in the last parliamentary elections. Despite this loss, the party bounced back in the EP elections in May 2019. SDE headed by Marina Kaljurand, a former Foreign Affairs minister and candidate for president, came in second place (just behind the Reform party) and won two out of the country's six MEP seats. Considering that both the Centre Party and EKRE performed worse, Social Democrats in Estonia have so far retained their political relevance.

Conclusions

The analysis has supplemented the current literature that has so far mostly focused either on external challenges to understand the political fortunes of Social Democrats in ECE. It has demonstrated that strategic choices made by leadership might be of crucial importance for determining party development in future.

Choices of particular importance have involved the politics of mergers and coalition-building. From the outset, Social Democrats in all three Baltic countries were actively engaging in seeking allies, firstly, to survive, and, secondly, to get access to power. However, these alliances usually entailed tensions between the goals of power-seeking and guarding the profile of a left-oriented party. In highly securitised Baltic political systems, Social Democrats took significant

risks of severely damaging their reputation by trespassing certain identity boundaries.

In some cases, such moves helped to solidify the parties and paved the way to power. Despite apparent controversies, both Latvian and Lithuanian Social Democrats merged with the ex-communist forces at the turn of the century to become stronger and more competitive in volatile party politics. Estonian Social Democrats did not follow suit. Nevertheless, they also accomplished several mergers, temporarily renamed themselves and pursued cooperation with the prevailing centre-right parties.

Such mergers, however, usually came with a price. For the genuine Social Democrats who aimed to restore the inter-war tradition, the collaboration with organisationally endowed and inherently managerial ex-communists largely meant relinquishing the front positions to the latter in the joint structures. For their part, the 'pragmatic' ex-communist leaders of the merged units, such as Bojārs and Brazauskas, were not so scrupulous to live up to the parties' claimed ideals.

The decision by Bojārs to install his son as Riga's mayor thanks to the ruling coalition with pro-Russian forces proved to be fatal for LSDSP. Facing similar dilemmas in an ethnically divided society, Estonian Social Democrats took a different route and avoided such a scenario. Nevertheless, the enduring cooperation with more powerful liberals and conservatives had been increasingly raising questions about their leftist credentials. This pressure at least partially explains why SDE in 2016, albeit not without significant risk, decided to switch the sides.

In the case of Lithuania, the consolidation of the original LSDP and the ex-communist LDDP allowed a dominant power to emerge that has, however, done little to tackle inequality and other social malaise in the country. When an attractive centrist-populist alternative of a 'business-firm party' LVŽS emerged, LSDP suffered a major setback in parliamentary elections in 2016. In the following year, it led to the direct election of new party leader Paluckas for the first time in party's history. It eventually resulted in the organisational overhaul and the exodus of key political figures from the ex-communist LSDP wing.

A post-2016 development of LSDP reflects a rather successful adaptation to changed patterns of competition that increasingly favour a more centralised and presidentialised party organisation. Furthermore, in comparison to Fidesz and PiS, Karbauskis's Farmers and Greens were neither fully centralised nor enjoyed sweeping legislative powers, which made LSDP efforts to rebound more likely to succeed.

It is necessary to further explore how the recent LSDP developments are related to the fact that the merger with the ex-communists happened only in 2001, which separates it from 'paradigmatic' Polish and Hungarian cases where the ex-communists prevailed almost from the outset of democratisation. In addition, considering that strategic political choices by parties and their leaders (either miscalculated or eventually successful) can make the difference how

parties develop in future, one has to investigate intra-party processes in the Baltic and other ECE social democratic movements more closely. Likewise, it is worth it to research how they engage their supporters and members to build up resilience against numerous challenges of today.

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Cleavages in the Post-Communist Countries of Europe: A Review

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Abstract: *This review of the historical studies of cleavages and seeks to bridge the gap between the historical study of cleavages and frozen cleavage theory and the post--communist states of Europe which have transitioned to democracy. The study identifies the literature on frozen cleavages and new divides which have arisen transition, as well as the primary actors in their political representation and issue positioning. The key literature in the development of studies on cleavages was provided by Lipset and Rokkan, but their work focused mostly on Western democracies and did not include any of the countries which were behind the iron curtain at the time. However, the transition of the post-communist nations of Europe are now several decades old. Since the demise of communist regimes in Europe, much literature has been produced on the newly democratic regimes developing there. This article provides a broad overview of general trends in cleavage literature and more specific developments for Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Slovakia. The main findings were that there are frozen cleavages present in the post-communist countries of Europe, but that much of the developments since the fall of communism seem to be unpredictable and change-able — a fact reflected by the instability and constant change in the party systems.*

Keywords: *social cleavages, political divisions, post-communist transitions, comparative politics*

Introduction

This article seeks to better understand the cleavages in the post-communist countries of Europe and bridge the gap between academia focused on these cleavages and Lipset and Rokkan's (1967) seminal work 'Cleavage Structures,

Party Systems, and Voter Alignments'. There is a particular focus on the frozen or unfrozen nature of the cleavages in the selected countries, as well as political parties' ability to remain relevant despite potential changes in cleavages. Frozen cleavage theory can be traced back to the aforementioned Lipset and Rokkan (1967) study, where cleavages were defined as having three central characteristics. Firstly, a cleavage involves a kind of social division which separates people by socio-cultural or socio-economic characteristics. Secondly, those involved in this division must be aware that they are, they must be self-aware of their collective identity and willing to act on the basis of that collective identity. Thirdly, and finally, a cleavage must also be expressed in organisational terms, through political parties or interest groups for example.

Cleavage theory has produced a huge amount of literature and has been an influential element of the development of political science. This article presents an overview of some of the most important works on the following countries: Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Slovakia. In seeking to bring together a considerable amount of literature on the cleavages in the post-communist countries of Europe and ask pertinent questions about the relationship between the frozen cleavage theory, the development of the literature on the selected cases and the present reality of these countries, this article seeks to bridge the gap between the seminal Lipset-Rokkan study and the reality of three decades of academic development on the topic, since the demise of communist regimes. The logic at the heart of probing in the direction of frozen cleavage theory is, naturally, to clearly and explicitly illuminate the political reality across a broad range of countries and to attempt to understand whether across the post-communist and transitional experience parties have successfully and consistently been able to provide representation on the basis of real existing cleavages.

The Most Similar System Design (MSSD) stands out as a highly suitable framework of the comparative method of the present study. Lijphart's (1971) work *'Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method'*, traced the comparative method all the way back to John Stuart Mill,[1] more specifically we follow the Anckar's (2008) 'looser interpretation of MSSD'.[2] All of these countries are EU member states, with either fully proportional or mixed, in the case of Hungary,

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1   Other notable pieces of scholarship, such Przeworski and Teune's The Logic of Comparative Social Inquiry have noted the long tradition of seeking as objects those which are as similar as possible in order to maximise the usefulness in comparing them – especially in finding causality. Theodore W. Meckstroth noted that whether the form of comparative method employed is conceived as the most similar or most different systems design, what is vitally important is the presence of well-formed   concepts, hypotheses, and theories which encompass any and all variables whose explanatory importance is to be evaluated.

2   It involves choosing countries that appear similar in as many background characteristics as possible, while a strict application involves choosing countries that are similar in a number of specified variables, leaving only one aspect as different.

electoral systems. Moreover, all of these countries are ranked free or partly free by Freedom House (2019) and all have either average Democracy Scores (DS) or better as per the Nations in Transition report also by Freedom House (2018).

The numerous and significant similarities between these countries does not mean to suggest that their historical experiences have been identical, naturally there were differences between the various interpretations of communist ideology in each of the former communist countries, especially following the death of Stalin, which led to more ideological diversity (Brzezinski 1957). Nonetheless, most scholars make a very clear distinction between the twelve former union republics of the Soviet Union who were internationally recognized to be so, and the Baltic States and Eastern Europe (Beissinger – Kotkin 2014), these states experienced a shorter period of communist rule and more experience with free trade and western partners — most famously via the New Economic Mechanism and Goulash Communism (Kornai 1996). Hence, former USSR countries are excluded from consideration.

EU membership status has been taken as the second criteria for case selection. Much research has been produced on the effects of EU conditionality on the transitioning post-communist countries of Europe, with a large amount of this research focusing on the effectiveness of EU conditionality as a mechanism (Schimmelfennig – Sedelmeier 2004). The ability of a country to successfully become an EU member state, meeting all the entailed conditions and requirements, can be seen as incredibly strong concrete evidence of the state's level of democratic consolidation, economic success and level of stateness (Mrak – Rojec 2013). There is also a need to acknowledge that smaller countries may have experienced successful transitions, but are not suitable for comparison with countries tens of times larger than themselves. As of June 2019 Poland had a declared population of 38,386,000 (Statistics Poland 2019), considering, and trying to compare, countries which are less than one tenth of the size would not be comparable in this case.

In analysing the existing literature on these countries special consideration will be given to whether or not the cleavages of post-communist Europe are frozen, this means that as in Lipset and Rokkan's study, cleavages which were present several decades earlier are reflected in the present party system. The possibility of different degrees of frozenness should not be overlooked, although may not be of central importance. Also under consideration is whether a persistence in the ideological axis is present despite evolving cleavages. Plainly, have parties representing the opposing sides of societal divisions in present today the same as the ones representing the division at the end of communist era? The specificity and more general changes since Lipset-Rokkan study should be retained at the forefront of minds as each nation is considered. Taking into account the transition period and the post-communist past the research identifies active social cleavages and their political representation.

The study analyses the literature produced on the region, bridging the gap between the current situations and Lipset and Rokkan's work, a broad overview of the general existing literature is first critically engaged with, before addressing each case, one by one, providing the necessary context to understand the selected cases. The study identified a tendency for historical cleavages to be more likely to be frozen, with considerable changeability associated with newer cleavages and party systems across the region, where clear patterns of representation have not been fully crystallized even three decades after the communist demise.

Review of the Theoretical Development of Studies of Cleavages

A considerable body of literature exists on the topic of cleavages, the most notable being the aforementioned *'Cleavage Structures, Party Systems, and Voter Alignments'* by Lipset and Rokkan. However, this was far from the first study which dealt with questions of voting behaviour and voter patterns. The roots of the research of electoral behaviour are in the Columbia Studies, beginning in the 1940s with Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet (1944), followed by '*Voting: A Study of Opinion Formation in a Presidential Campaign'* (Berelson *et al.* 1954). Followed by Dahl's (1956) *'A Preface to Democratic Theory'* and a series of studies from the University of Michigan, notably *'The American Voter'* both which argued that partisan loyalties were relatively stable, but by no means unchanging (Campbell *et al.* 1960).

Lipset and Rokkan's (1967) study concluded that with the introduction of universal suffrage and once cleavages are formed, institutionalized party systems freeze along the lines of division, creating a more or less permanent party system structure. The challengers to the theory of freezing hypothesis during 1970 signified the change in reality and academia alike (Nie – Petrocik – Verba 1999; Pedersen 1979). Later studies showcased the changes in the institutionalized party systems as well (Mair 1997; Dupré 2018). Mair, Müller and Plasser (2004) added that freezing hypothesis was applicable in the decades after the publication, but did not hold in the aftermath of social changes and movements in the West challenging the applicability of the freezing hypothesis in democracies.

The lack of a clear definition of *cleavage* in the Lipset and Rokkan study, combined with the ambiguity in the operational criteria for the freezing hypothesis allowed for a variety of conceptualisations of 'cleavage'. Bartolini and Mair's (2007: 216) conceptualisation of a cleavage encompasses three elements — an empirical, normative and behavioural — which must coexist in the same period and for which changes occur at the same time so that the cleavage can be seen „*as a form of closure of social relationships*". While, for Bornschier (2010) cleavages represent a long-standing pattern of political behaviour of structurally defined groups. In their influential 'The Analysis of Political Cleavages',

Rae & Taylor (1970) describe three roles cleavages might take – a cleavage based on tribe, caste, or other socially constructed group; an opinion cleavage which refers to ideological divisions; and a cleavage seen through the voting patterns and joining division-based organisations.

Some long term cleavages, such as social class and religion, seem to have lost some of their power in society has led to a reduction in lifelong voter predictability which opposes the freezing hypothesis by Lipset and Rokkan (Hooghe – Marks 2018). Dupré (2018) agreed with Mair (1997) that the cleavage once formed, and intensified by the institutional interaction with the social systems, freezes the party system along a specific division, while marginalizes, or ignores the rest of the issues. Posner (2005) argued for the minimum-winning-coalition approach, where elites tend to support the initiatives that allow them the highest gains while minimally sharing resources with others. Mair and Mudde (1998) suggested that individual parties can experience fundamental changes in the frozen party systems, while five years later concluded that religious identities are far from being fixed since societies are ever-changing, therefore if political alignments seem fixed, it is not due to constant cleavages (Mair 2003).

Significant work has been produced to identify different social and political conflicts. Bendix's (1952) Social Stratification and Political Power, mainly focused on Marxist, class based cleavages. Others, such as Donald Horowitz's (1985) '*Ethnic Groups in Conflict*' or Posner's (2005) '*Institutions and Ethnic Politics in Africa*' identify and analyse ethnic cleavages and their roles in shaping political institutions and conflicts, while Mylonas (2013) studied religious, and Sturm and De Haan (2015) ethnolinguistic political divides. The utilisation of geographical cleavages for understanding of the voting patterns has been used by R. P Woolstencroft (1980) in '*Electoral Geography: Retrospect and Prospect*'.

In 2016 Hooghe and Marks (2016) identified three essential attributes of the cleavage theory: 1. Former external forces in society can cause periodic breaks which then determine the party system; 2. Parties have inflexible programs; and 3. new-rising parties imply the change in party systems. This relates to the work of Schattschneider and Adamany (1975) who observed that in the period of normal politics, the party system does not address new issues society is divided upon, because existing cleavages already organize the lines of divisions upon the issue. However, Bornschier (2010) followed slightly different logic, and assumed cleavages had an evolving nature — they remain stable however the issues that appear with time tend to be addressed through the same opposing sides of the persistent ideological axis. In the mainstream left study by Carvalho and Ruedin (2018), it is shown that in the west, parties stay loyal to their core ideologies. Hooghe and Marks (2016) conclude that the new issues on which society divides will be represented only by new challenger parties, not by the old established ones, which, as argued by Klingemann, Hans-Dieter Hofferbert and Budge (1994), are historical beings. Even specifically on the topic of cleav-

ages and the party systems which exist around Eastern Europe a large amount of literature exists. The literature produced on cleavages in post-communist Europe tends to take a slightly ambiguous view on what exactly constitutes a cleavage. In '*Cleavages, Parties, and Voters: Studies from Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Romania*', cleavages are defined as „long-term structural conflicts that give rise to opposing political positions, which may or may not be represented by parties" (Lawson – Römmele – Karasimeonov 1999). Karasimeonov preferred a four-fold typology for Eastern Europe which identified four types of cleavages: historical, temporary (transitory), actual and potential. Whereby, residual (historical) cleavages are inherited from pre--communist society, temporary (transitory) cleavages are related to the period immediately after the fall of communism, actual cleavages relate to new cleavages created by post-communist reforms, and potential cleavages are those which may transform into actual cleavages in the new economic and political system (Karasimeonov – Lyubenov 2013: 408).

Not all experts in the field find the concept of political cleavage useful for the post-communist world (White – Rose – McAllister 1997; Elster *et al.* 1998). On the contrary, Lijphart seems to take the concept as given and states that the existence of cleavages allows the strengthening of the party-public relations, gives rise to democratic stability and increases the predictability of political outcomes (Lijphart – Rogowski – Weaver 2010). Fukuyama (2006: 418) has completely dismissed the existence of cleavages in the region and argued that the end ideological competition[3] and the victory of liberalism marked the end of political cleavages which have been active during the industrial era, anticipating only the conflict between the winners and losers of transition. More recently, Hloušek and Kopeček (2008) highlighted the notable fluctuations in party identities and the frequent changes in the party composition[4] of government coalitions in the post-communist East-Central Europe political parties, which were arguably affected by the political and economic transition during the 1990s, as well as the legacy of both, communist and pre-communist history. Robert Rohrschneider and Stephen Whitefield (2009) found that in the case of CEE countries there was considerable literature to suggest that early in the transitions there were no coherent party cleavages; there was one single ideological cleavage in the region as a whole, which was support for and opposition against liberal regime change; and, that a number of common cleavages across the region supplemented by some national specificities existed.

The post-communist context has some considerable differences from the kind of context which Lipset and Rokkan were considering. More to it, significant

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3 Between liberalism and communism.

4 They add that though parties can be flexibly to some extent they almost never position themselves at the new conflict dimension.

literature has been produced since this study and that even the countries of that original study have undergone significant change. The literature indicates that if stability in the cleavages and party systems of post-communist Europe are lacking it may well be due to general changes, alternatively it has also been indicated that it may be the unique position of these countries.

Case-based identification of cleavages

Bulgaria

Karasimeonov and Lyubenov (2013: 421) have noted that in the Bulgarian case social and political cleavages experienced a complete reversal during the communist era. Traditionally the main cleavage in Bulgaria was one of urban versus rural, but this was changed by the seizing of power by communists who put class at the forefront of all politics. Initially, like most post-communist states, the major divide within society was one of communism versus anti--communism, deeply entrenched enough for it to be considered a cleavage, according to Karasimeonov and Lyubenov the salience lasted from 1990 to 2001. In the political party the reformers were represented by the Union of Democratic Forces (SDS) and those with a more cautious approach to change were grouped in and around the communist party Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP) (Karasimeonov – Lyubenov 2013: 409). However, later Rohrschneider and Whitefield (2009) found that the three most important cleavages in Bulgaria were welfare, economic regime and the democracy dimension. This indicates that issues which most would consider to be directly connected to post-communist transition remained salient even in 2008 as well as connected with the amount of corruption in Bulgaria, a regular focus of research studies (Gawthorpe 2010). In 2015, Moreno (2015: 133) noted that the socio-economic dimension neatly resembles the Western template.

An enduring cleavage however exists between the ethnic Bulgarians and Turkish minority. The rise of the mainly Turkish party DPS (The Movement for Rights and Freedoms) has not gone unnoticed by the Bulgarian majority and has on occasion led to some conflict in society (Ganev 2004). There have also been accusations of interference from Turkey in Bulgarian elections (Cheresheva 2017). This may have returned deep-rooted feelings to the surface, as Bulgaria was so close to the heart of the Ottoman Empire the fighting was particularly fierce, but liberation was only secured by the Russo-Turkish war (Lawson – Römmele – Karasimeonov 1999). As such Russia and Turkey have traditionally occupied a special place in the political understanding of the world of Bulgarians. During communist rule there was even a proposal to join the Soviet Union as another Soviet Republic, although there was little encouragement for this from Moscow (Bideleux – Jeffries 2007: 88).

The importance of Russia has not entirely disappeared from Bulgaria but the role has diminished and Turkey, the Turkish minority and relations between them and Bulgaria has ascended to one of undoubted importance. The impact of Turkey's Presidency of Religious Affairs (Diyanet) on Bulgaria has also not gone unnoticed, although the Bulgarian state has resisted the urge to attempt to directly finance or control the Bulgarian Grand Mufti's office (Öztürk – Sözeri 2018). Bulgaria's relationship with its more powerful neighbours has been an important element of Bulgarian identity and politics for centuries but this has not been particularly stable and due external change, be that of the Ottoman Empire, Russian Empire or USSR – who all collapsed – or modern day Turkey which is becoming more assertive and looking for different foreign policy tools, as important neighbours change this often has important ramifications for Bulgaria and Bulgaria's internal politics and identity.

The relationship with Muslims and Turkish people is complicated by the actions of the Turkish state, but the relationship with The Roma does not exactly suffer from the same complications. The Roma community has been reported to suffer from much worse health conditions, ghettoisation and being forced to the economic outskirts (Nenkova 2013). Their otherisation through education has been documented (Lambrev – Traykov – Kirova 2018) as has their traditional and historical viewing of Roma as 'alien' (Cviklova 2015). Having joined the European Union and ratified the ECHR Bulgaria still does not live up to the anti-discrimination norms expected from such a state. Like many transitioning European nations, the role of the EU in Bulgaria is one of undoubted importance, even if it will take considerable time to fully understand the impact. While the elites of Bulgaria still lack some of the skills and expertise required to fully tackle problems like corruption, the EU has had a sizeable impact especially on the speed of change in Bulgaria (Kostova 2016). However, as of yet the othering and alienation of Roma has been persistent and shows no signs of abating.

Most persistent cleavages in Bulgaria seem to be related to Roma and Turkish minorities, but significant, if dynamic, socio-economic cleavages continue to be relevant. The failure of the Bulgarian government and any European mechanism to further integrate the Roma indicates that the ethnic cleavage is frozen will persist; similarly, the more assertive Turkish state seems to dictate that the Turkish-Bulgarian cleavage will remain relevant. The same may be said of the socio-economic cleavage, as three decades after the fall of the communist regime it is still important, despite changing its form somewhat over the years. Representing something of a rarity in the post-communist countries of Europe, the BSP is over 100 years old, albeit with a name change in 1990, and The DPS is almost 30 years old. While others were formed later the endurance of these two parties does suggest that perhaps parties in Bulgaria seem to be able to endure changes in the political landscape and evolving cleavages, particularly notable is the evolution from the early days of transition to the present time.

Croatia

Academic research on social cleavages in Croatia identified significant geographical cleavages in Croatia, but it is notable that in general the foundation of modern cleavages can be traced back to the World War II period (Henjak – Zakošek – Čular 2013: 443). The mobilisation of social-turned-political divides started, as in other former Yugoslav republics at the beginning of the 1990s. After the transition period during the 90s and early 2000s, they somewhat changed but the literature and current salient divisions (Henjak – Zakošek – Čular 2013) reflect the historical influence mirroring Lipset and Rokkan's conclusions about the long-term persistence of cleavages and the importance of the organisation of divided groups is of utmost importance in this case, due to the dual representation of dividing sides articulated through two mainstream parties which construct the conservative-liberal duality (Franklin 2012).

The religious-secular conflict has been persistently socially and politically active since the World War II period. The conservative versus liberal ideologies present in the beginning of the 1940s when communists and fascists represented the unidimensional pole was politically eradicated by the communist regime in Yugoslavia. Following the unpleasant position of religious organisations under socialism, the catholic church has been actively supporting the national organisations right after Croatia left Yugoslavia and gained independence. Henjak, Zakošek and Čular (2013) highlight the oppression of the religiosity during the socialist time and its strong anti-Catholic views and forced secularisation in Yugoslavia as the reason for the freezing of political divisions even though society was evolving within Yugoslavia. Later, during the early 1990s the Church was actively engaged in promoting Croatian independence and relating itself to the strong Croat nationalist figures, namely the first president Franjo Tuđman. During this time the ideological-cultural cleavage, as Zakošek (1998) identified it, intertwined with the center-periphery division. Croatia has a very homogenous religious structure – 86.28% being Roman Catholics (Country Reports 2019), nevertheless the level of religiousness is different in different regions, where the East Slavonians are the most religious, while the most developed areas, such as Zagreb and Istra region have the lowest levels of religiosity (Slobodna Dalmacija 2017). The opposing views on the role of the Church in the state affairs, education and moral instruction started in the 1870s, but in modern times, the Church has taken an active role in politics and political preferences are expressed to the masses. In the present, the cleavage is structured on the opposing poles of the religious-traditionalists and secular-modernist concepts of culture incorporated into the duality of Croatian political system, both strongly present and politically articulated between the conservative-right HDZ (Hrvatska Demokratska Zajednica) and secular-leftist SDP (Social Democratic Party).

Apart from the persistent religious cleavage, Zakošek and Čular (2013) and Henjak, Zakošek, Čular (2013) identified two other territorial-cultural divides as well. Apart from what Siber highlights as the social perspective of the position of Croatia in different organisations, it mainly represents opposing views on how Croatian society should be structured and led (Kuhnle – Sokolović – Rokkansenteret 2003). Henjak, Zakošek and Čular (2013) argue that this cleavage had had a dual character. Firstly, it included the conflict between the Yugoslav states' and republics' centres in different settings, and secondly, the centre periphery divisions in Croatia itself. The inner center-periphery division in modern Croatia represents the division between the southern, coastal region of Dalmatia (Dalmacija) and the northeastern region Slavonia (Slavonija), and the centre — the capital Zagreb region. The first division between these two regions is in the dialect of the Croatian language they use.[5] The statistics from 2015 show that when completing mandatory courses, Croatian language had the largest percentage of unsatisfactory grades (Slobodna Dalmacija 2015). Nonetheless, the language divides do not only concern the varieties of dialects in Croatian language. Due to the violent past between Croats and Serbs in the northeastern parts of Croatia, society, the government and the opposition had been engaged in a variety of debates about the inclusion of the Serbian Cyrillic alphabet in schools, street signs and other public goods in areas populated with Serbian minority. The anti-Cyrillic protest in 2013 (Al Jazeera 2013) against the bilingualism are another dimension of the territorial and geographical cleavages in Croatia manifest themselves in a variety of ways.

Two main parties, HDZ and the opposition, SDP who held the office from 2008–2014, have been the ultimate mainstream parties since independence from Yugoslavia. After the abandonment of the single party system in Yugoslavia these two parties have gained political momentum and still strongly represent the duality of the Croatian society on the socio-economic pole, but especially regarding the religious cleavage. Croatian parliament has gained certain fragmentation currently consisting of 21 parties. Nevertheless, the left-right divide is still dominated by HDZ-SDP. HDZ, the winner of most mandates in Croatia representing the conservative society lost only in the time when corruption scandals of the government in 2003–2009 left the party weakened and without much electoral support. HDZ and SDP have a high tendency to keep representing the opposing poles of the societal divisions and adoption of the new cleavages through the framework of their party programs. Croatian social divisions have a longer salience and effect on the political sphere than it would be expected by the post-communist country that experienced the economic

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5   Dalmatian dialect (Chakavian dialect) greatly differs from the central Kajkavian and Shtokavian dialects. In the Croatian state examination upon completion of high-school, students from Dalmatia have difficulties passing the Croatian language due to significant differences.

transition. The dual nature of Croatian politics referring to the socio-economic divide successfully encompassed all social conflicts, whether religious-secular, center-periphery and transition-related issues which characterize the fully frozen political party system.

Czech Republic

In the Czech Republic the cleavage of the form the state should take failed to persist longer than the first democratic election, with economic cleavages being the primary kind in Czech political life, even if parties may somewhat waver on their positions (Mansfeldová 2013). The Czech Republic is a state which, thanks to mass deportations following World War II and the separation of Czechoslovakia into two states, is highly coherent. Given this high level of coherence it is unsurprising that socio-economic issues came to the fore in the development of cleavages. While Hloušek and Kopeček (2008), state that there is an array of secondary cleavages in the Czech Republic, which became more relevant as time went on, such as party attitudes towards European integration and the EU, but that the dominant position of the socio-economic cleavage of transformation has not been threatened.

In 2008, the political parties of the Czech Republic were placed on a socio--economic dimension and revealed the substantial division between the political representation of Czech society (Hloušek – Kopeček 2008: 13). For a country which has historically been one of the most developed in the region, with a low rural population and high levels of economic development, it is not surprising that parties would seek to position themselves in relation to socio-economic cleavages. If socio-economic cleavages are to be expected, and may even represent a moving past of Karasimeonov's temporary (transitory) type of cleavage, then the amount of patronage certainly flies in the face of this. Petr Kopeckỳ (2017) has highlighted this several times, as well as highlighting the fact that Czech parties have come to coalesce into two blocks. These two blocks are led by The Civic Democratic Party (ODS), the main party from the right, and the Czech Social Democratic Party (ČSSD) being the main party of the left (Kopeckỳ – Mair – Spirova 2012).

Havlík and Voda (2016) found that between 2010 and 2013 there was a loss in significance of the temporary transition divides and more salient socio--economic cleavage with stable voting patterns, fuelled by the influence of Catholic identification with the right winged the Christian and Democratic Union — Czechoslovak People's Party (KDU-ČSL). They also found that support for the traditional parties was more reliant on cleavages while support for newer parties relied more on socio-economic factors. Nevertheless, the stable right-left positioning prior to 2011 faced threats sooner than expected in the form of the populist movement ANO 2011. Their first important electoral victory

in 2013 with 18.7% of the votes and 47 seats in the Chamber of Deputies saw them secure second place behind the ČSSD. The party leader, a Czech millionaire Andrej Babiš quickly gained sympathy through his Action of Dissatisfied Citizens, which he then transformed into ANO 2011 with the focus on tackling down the macroeconomic issues such as unemployment and economic growth, and the aim of efficient public administration. In 2017 elections ANO 2011 won 78 seats in the Chamber of Deputies. ANO has been described as an extreme form of a business-firm party (Kopeček 2016), in speeches and general messages the party and leadership seek to invoke anger over the inefficiency of the public sector and unfairness of privatisation (Havlík 2015). Such issues are still socio-economic in nature, but would typically be associated with countries in an earlier stage of transition and do not confirm to general expectations of the development of political systems within transitioning countries, especially not according to Karasimeonov's typography.

It is clear that the Czech Republic has experienced huge changes in the politically active cleavages over the last three decades. Following the collapse of the communist state there has been concern over the health of Czech democracy, which has been described as under pressure (Pehe 2018), concerns have been raised about populism in the young democracy (Havlík 2015) and there has been questions raised over Euroscepticism (Kaniok – Havlík 2016) and democratic backsliding (Hanley – Vachudova 2018). The clear socio-economic cleavage mildly visible before the 2010s has had doubt cast over it, particularly with the rise of populist, economic-oriented ANO 2011, which might suggest that perhaps Czech divides are in the process of formation of the new economic division. While before this rise the socio-economic cleavage appeared to be frozen, or at least freezing, the rise of a populist party which subverts expectations and invokes what are typically considered transitional cleavages places this in doubt. Cleavages which might have previously been considered stable now appear less so; in addition, the dominant parties before the 2010s with strong socio-economic ideologies, ČSSD and ODS had shown very strong signs of survival despite evolving political situations, this is now also in doubt.

Hungary

In recent years, Hungary has attracted most attention for its response to the refugee crisis in Europe and its seeming move away from liberalism (Kallius – Monterescu – Rajaram 2016), it would be reasonable to expect either modern changes in cleavages and problems in the democratic system based on such concerns. Nonetheless, literature on Hungarian political cleavages lacks the important research ground work. This has also been noticed in the related fields of political studies, namely the voting patterns and electoral studies by Tucker (2002: 279) who couldn't find an obvious explanation for it.

Tóka and Popa (2013: 295) reflected in the early 1990s period and the failure of the existing parties to clearly define the differences between each other and between the policies advocated for. Hence, they concluded that the anti-communism divide was represented by the small orthodox communist party (MSZMP – Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party) against the liberals (SZDSZ – The Alliance of Free Democrats — Hungarian Liberal Party, FIDESZ –The Federation of Young Democrats), and some smaller right-wing parties. Nevertheless, the socio-economic cleavage has never become a major line of conflict as in Poland or Czech Republic (Tóka – Popa 2013: 302). Körösényi as well identified the lack of socio-economic cleavage as demonstrated in Western Europe by Lipset and Rokkan, in Hungary (Körösényi 1993).

In 1995, Evans and Whitefield's (1995) study of Hungarian cleavages identified long-standing conflicts regarding social liberalism, attitudes towards Roma population and the status of Hungarians in neighbouring states. Later in 2000, the same authors studied the social and ideological bases for partisanship in post-communist states. They identified 6 bases for political divisions: age, religiosity and class, being social; while economic liberalism, and social and political liberalism (having two distinguished lines of conflict – Jews and nationalism) reflected the ideological base (Evans and Whitefield, 2000).

Despite the fact that Hungary became a state with vastly reduced ethnic diversity, it did not become a state with absolutely no ethnic diversity and it certainly did not become a state with no ethnic division turned into a persisting cleavage. The existence of large Hungarian minorities in neighbouring states (Romania, Slovakia and Serbia) and a significant Gypsy population within Hungary play into this salience (Evans – Whitefield 1995). Butler (2007) goes even further and relates Hungarian decision to join the EU as means by which neighbouring states could be forced to provide certain rights for ethnic Hungarian minorities. The Movement for a Better Hungary (Jobbik), formed at the beginning of the 2000s, representing the far-right extreme of the ethnic pole. The national radical and Christian self-characterisation of the movement has gained attention on the mass scale due to its anti-Roma propaganda (Bartlett *et al.* 2012). The other extreme of ethnic cleavage, represented by minorities in Hungary has been found as openly expressed where authors such as Prelić (2011) characterized minorities as strongly expressing their symbols of identity – language, religion, cultural heritage, artistic creativity – and have their institutional organisations.

Nevertheless, the lack of real left representation, there was no shortage of concern about the level of anti-liberalism in Eastern Europe, and especially the political representation articulating the divides between anti-liberal/conservative/far-right movements to both, less radical parties and ethnic minorities. Hungary is at the forefront of such developments, three decades after the fall of communism the cleavage of nationalism versus liberalism or liberalism versus anti-liberalism very much exists in Hungary (Murer 2015). Hence, the

ethnic cleavage being an old one, more recent, but still not entirely new is the idea of nationalism-liberalism division in Eastern Europe. The rise of nationalist regimes in several Central Eastern European nations with FIDESZ in Hungary as the most prominent examples of anti-liberalism in the region. The tightening of control over academia (EUA 2018), the media (Freedom House 2017) and the judiciary (Kingsley 2018) all point towards an incredible amount of anti--liberalism. Similar concerns over anti-liberalism are present in Poland, due to increased control over the media (BBC News 2016) and judiciary (Khan – Huber – Shotter 2018), and in Slovakia, where there is much concern over the murder of a journalist and his girlfriend in an apparent contract killing (The Guardian 2018). Apart from the anti-liberal agenda, FIDESZ under Orban's leadership successfully encompassed the welfare state and economic issues within its Christian conservative agenda. Tóka and Popa (2013: 308) especially highlight the „*newly introduced subsidies*", „*hefty tax-cuts for middle to high-income families raising children,*" reintroducing the „*tuition-free status for about half the university students.*"

At the aftermath of communism and up until the present time the ethnic cleavage concerning all minorities in Hungary has been socially active but politically expressed only on several occasions for immediate issues at hand. Indeed, the ethnic social conflict in Hungary existed in the past, however we cannot support the statement that it froze due to several aspects. Ethnic identity without arguing represents one of the key aspects of right winged Hungarian parties, from FIDESZ's support for Hungarian minorities in neighbouring countries to Jobbik's radical anti-Roma activities. Nevertheless, the issues surrounding the ethnic conflict have been evolving without the freezing of the political system on the ethnic dimension. Whether or not there exists any political organization capable of expressing such divide is more doubtful due to FIDESZ's successful integration of welfare divides into political party agenda. The second divide concerning the liberal-antiliberal cleavage is too ambiguous to provide the evidence for the clear political cleavage. FIDESZ being one of the oldest parties, having been formed over three decades ago, with increasing anti-liberal policies and the lack of a strong opposition to such stances is not strong enough evidence to conclude that the liberal-antiliberal divides are represented by the mainstream parties today. In the period of establishing Hungarian democracy there was a clear line between socio-economic polarity which transformed into the weak liberal-antiliberal conflict after the disappearance of pro-communist parties. The case of Hungary is representing the strongest evidence for inapplicability of the Lipset-Rokkan framework for identifying cleavages. Social organization around the issues sometimes exist, but it is not politically addressed, and political organization around one line of conflict encompasses other social issues — as argued by Bornschier (2010). Thus, the freezing of the cleavage never occurred in Hungary, but the strongest party successfully managed to incorporate the evolving divides in the society.

Poland

Early in the transition Poland was a country in which divides could best be understood through the prism of the attitudes to shock therapy and literature tended to focus on this issue. Peter Murrel (1993) wrote that the divide between radicals and evolutionists was not simply a matter of technical judgements but rather reflected fundamental disagreements about the way human societies function. Around the same time, Simon Johnson, and Marzena Kowalska (1994) were exploring the political economy of shock therapy in Poland. Advocates, most famously Jeffrey Sachs (1995) and Leszek Balcerowicz (1995), advocated strongly the merits of shock therapy, even if Balcerowicz often rejected the term itself. However, once the path which Poland had taken has been justified by the results, a fact which was not lost on Balcerowicz (2019), it seemed that other divides and cleavages would be able to come to the fore.

Despite being often considered to be a rather homogenous nation, where one may expect a country of limited cleavages, the spatial issue is one which is regularly explored in studies (Marcinkiewicz 2018). Many of the geographical cleavages which exist in Poland can be explained through history, which is central to Zarycki's (2015) study The Electoral Geography Of Poland: Between Stable Spatial Structures And Their Changing Interpretations. Poland's history of partition has far-reaching consequences in the present, but the fact that the country was split into three is interesting in that three different areas allowed differing levels of *Polishness* to exist. The differing levels of freedom were important, but also the differing levels of development can still be seen today. There are a number of ways through which the history of Poland can be seen in the present and not all of them are overtly political. For example the maps which compares the level of railway development in modern Poland with whom the areas were controlled by during partition and show that the level of railway development in the area formerly controlled by the Russian Empire is strikingly lower (Uzar 2008).

Election maps are so commonplace in Poland that there is even a website dedicated to them (wyborynamapie, no date), in recent mainstream media outlets (Skowron 2017) and prominent sociologists (Flis 2014) have particularly noted the geographical divisions between PiS and PO. However, while maps are often produced to illustrate that these historical cleavages are present in the contemporary political system, specifically in electoral results, Stanley argues that they can be misleading:

> „*Shaded maps can exaggerate the degree of difference at the micro level, and it is notable that even within the regions dominated by PiS, major towns and cities tended to prefer PiS. However, this macro-level distinction has persisted and deepened over three parliamentary and two presidential elections, supporting the contention that*

the Poland A / B divide should be regarded as a 'protocleavage' expressing significant geographical and socio-demographic distinctions." (Stanley 2013: 196)

Ultimately though, geographical divides are present in Poland. They may influence a plethora of other cleavages, but there can be no doubt that they do exist. Furthermore, they particularly exist in the minds of Polish people, a fact which is perhaps more important than any other consideration.

As previously noted Poland is a highly homogenous country, one which does not seem to be a prime candidate for the existence of religious cleavages. However, the divide between Catholics and non-Catholics is an important cleavage (Deegan-Krause 2013a). In fact, it may be an area of future development. This can be exhibited in many ways, but the debate between how Catholic the official state organisations and laws should rarely be framed in a pro-Catholic/anti-Catholic context. On the contrary it tends to be framed as an issue of secularism versus morality. Even within this religious context the cleavage has been most clearly evident in legislation which focuses on women, with abortion being the prime example. The Financial Times reported that the mood had turned against the Catholic Church and during protests such overtly anti-Catholic signs, notable for their being preferred to anti-government signs, read: *„I decide about religion, not religion about me' and 'My uterus is not your chapel"* (Graff 2018). Media outlets, especially foreign media outlets, describing public opinion is something which ought to be treated with some scepticism. However, in this case it does seem to be backed up by domestic figures from Poland. In 2011, 62% approved of the activities of the Roman Catholic Church, but in 2018 that had fallen to 54% (Żurek *et al.* 2018). If trends continue then the religious cleavages of Poland may well become more salient. This is a cleavage which the governing party Law and Justice (PiS) have successfully relied upon, especially in the fact of a fragmented and disorganised opposition.

In terms of the age of this cleavage there are issues in judging due to the context of church versus state (one of Lipset and Rokkan's cleavages) being drastically changed from communist times. Therefore, it seems that geographical cleavages are historic cleavages which appears to be frozen, but church versus state in the post-communist sense seems to be, as of yet, one merely of potential. In terms of whether a persistence in the ideological axis is present despite evolving cleavages, it is clear that this is not the case. Moreover, the intense personification of leaders and their parties would make most question whether this is possible in the coming decades. The Kaczynski domination of PiS has continued since the foundation of the party in 2001 and despite the death of one of the twins, but this phenomenon is cross party and cross political spectrum as Robert Biedroń's domination of Wiosna and Janusz Korwin-Mikke of Wolność illustrate.

Romania

Research studies of the Romanian case tend to predominantly focus on the ethnic divisions and well-known sizeable number of ethnic minorities. Due to the peculiar Romanian political past, Crowther highlighted the inapplicability of cleavage analysis to Romania due to the lack of a strong and well-developed civil society (Crowther – Suciu 2013: 363). It would be reasonable to expect the sizeable Hungarian minority to form a considerable social cleavage and demand the political representation of such in Romania. Indeed, the division between ethnic Romanians and ethnic Hungarians is noted by many authors and is the centre of much discussion. Romanian and Hungarian nationalistic drives did manage to mobilise important sections of the public belonging to both ethnic groups, some deemed the confrontation between Romanian and Hungarian nationalists to not be based on a major interethnic cleavage (Lawson – Römmele – Karasimeonov 1999), while Pisciotta in her study of the center-periphery cleavage in East and Central Europe highlights the electoral weight of the ethnic and nationalist parties in Romania in 2000–2004 (Pisciotta 2016: 209). As noted by Stroschein (2001), the most successful titular party could be found in Romania. Therefore, while some may shy away from calling this division a fully-fledged cleavage it is a notable divide in Romanian politics, which more than in neighbouring countries is reflected in the party choice available to citizens of Romania. While the presence of nationalist parties in any size, shape or form, may be expected to cause divisions, it does seem that Romania has parties which ably represent both ethnic minorities and minority views (Pisciotta 2016).

Before becoming a member of the EU, Romanian society was framed on the authoritarian-democratic divide, mostly due to the inability to reject all communist aims (Dryzek – Holmes 2002: 250–251) and by the electoral victory of Vadim Tudor in 2000 who in the period prior to the accession to the EU didn't favour member status for Romania and came from the far right Greater Romanian Party (PRM). The PRM's irredentist character reflected through the aspirations of returning the borders of Greater Romania by reuniting all the Romanian minorities populating the regions in Moldavia and the southern region of Hungary (Pisciotta 2016: 209). In the more mainstream, centre ground of Romanian politics, there are parties which represent catch all policies and centrist ideas. The primary example of which was at one point considered to be the Liberal Democratic Party (PDL), which later merged with the National Liberal Party (PNL). However, the centre ground is occupied by multiple parties which are vote centric parties — often resulting in centrist policies which may not always appear logically compatible (Crowther – Suciu 2013). Moreover, these parties are often deemed to be leader centric and top-down organised. This perhaps reflects the weak nature of Romanian civil society, at least at the

moment of communist demise. Agh argues that the actual conflict between communist and anticommunist parties led to the emergence of the new multi-party and first generation parties (Lane – Pennings 2003: 211). Perhaps unexpectedly, especially given the fact that Romania is rarely viewed as an archetypical post--communist success story, the three main communist party-derived formations in Romania are much more pro free market than could be expected, even more so than the population average (Berglund – Ekman 2010). This goes to show that even those parties which most would expect to exist outside of, and be a challenge to, the mainstream are located closer to the centre than in many post-communist transitioning countries.

The Romanian ethnic divides and political organisation around minority rights cannot be ignored, ethnic divisions have been present in the aftermath of the communist era and do persist today. Nevertheless, their salience can be brought to question if we speak about the actual freezing of the ethnic cleavage. The loudest ethnic party and the clear opposition to PRM, the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (UDMR) has been advocating for the greater autonomy of the regions, namely because most Hungarians populate the Transylvanian region. Pisciotta (2016) stresses here the substantial losses of UDMR and other ethnic parties due to the Social Democratic Party (PSD) and PNL victories prior to 2016. On the other hand, smaller divides resulting from the transition period to market economy and resilience to full democracy have not been active for a substantial amount of time. Mainstream parties which have been constant in their stance to cleavages do not exist in Romania. Most of them seem less certain, as they jostle around the centre ground, without those which seek to represent the opposing poles in the society which tempts the conclusion that social divisions are not active enough to stimulate the political alignment.

Slovakia

The issue of ethnic cleavages were discussed in the Hungarian context, but once again Hungarians are also involved in ethnic cleavages across the border in Slovakia (as in Romania). In the population census in 2011, 8.5% of Slovak population declared themselves as Hungarians, the second biggest ethnic group in Slovakia (Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic 2011). Above all, it is notable that studies have identified the ethnic Hungarians in Slovakia as voting according to ethnicity above all else (Henderson 1999). Some parties, such as the Slovak National Party, defined themselves as antagonistic to the interests of the neighbouring Hungarian and the Hungarians which reside in Slovakia (Whitefield – Evans 1999). Overall though, it is noted that while this cleavage is deep it has a small direct impact on party preference, since Hungarians comprise only one ninth of Slovakia's population (Deegan-Krause 2013b). However, the

overall impact of the Hungarian minority should not be underestimated purely due to the relatively small size of the minority.

> „The depth of the cleavage between Hungarians and Slovaks ensured its endurance, but did guarantee its relevance. Certainly Hungarian parties played a crucial role in the formation of some governments but the presence of a strong national divide within the Slovak population limited the Hungarians' choice of coalition partners and prevented them from any plausible kingmaker role. Of course the intra-Slovak debate about national identity is in no small part the result of the existence of a significant Hungarian minority within Slovakia's population. So even though the cleavage between Hungarians and Slovaks itself remained politically relatively marginal, it helped to fuel the national competition among Slovaks which remained pivotal during the 1990s and seemed poised to return to prominence at times during the 2000s." (Deegan-Krause 2013b: 275)

It seems that in a country with relatively few cleavages, due in large part to separation from a markedly different partner, the ethnic issue was one which never went away even if it did not develop into a more divisive issue or politically hot topic.

In the Czech case, the loss of national minorities were somewhat to their advantage, in the Slovak case it has come to represent one of their biggest divides. This is especially so after the defeat of Vladimír Mečiar's ruling party People's Party — Movement for a Democratic Slovakia, however this may no longer be the case as Most–Híd have both become the largest Hungarian minority party in Slovakia and have also moved to represent Hungarians and Slovaks in Slovakia (Terry 2014). While voting is still mostly on ethnic lines, it does perhaps represent a break in the future whereby the cleavage could become less salient, this may simply be a case of the lack of representation of the Hungarian minority but the continued lack of success of the more extreme Party of the Hungarian Community suggests that this is not the case. Szabó and Tátrai (2016: 205) highlighted the fact that out of the three biggest ethnic minorities of Slovakia – Hungarians, Roma, and Rusins/Ukrainians – only the Rusins/Ukrainians have not organized their own ethnic party. Despite the existence of Roma parties, low participation of the minority in the elections has been characterized as the main reason for poor electoral representation, despite the size of the ethnic group. Szabó and Tátrai (2016: 206) and Petőcz (2009) reported that Roma voters supported mostly the national-populist and etatist-leftist parties in areas which marginalized Roma or where they constituted the local majority; and Hungarian parties in regions where Hungarian-speaking Roma live.

Studies have indicated that Slovakia's post-communist transition has been anything but straightforward (Goldman 1999; Deegan-Krause 2012), which has implications for cleavages, but for the entire democratic system. While studying

cleavages in 13 post-communist countries, Rohrschneider (2009: 295) came to the conclusion that the most salient issue divides in Slovakia, Estonia, Slovenia and Ukraine is the democracy dimension. Jointly with the center-periphery related conflicts – religion and regionalism – social rights and communist legacy have been considered as the driving force of Slovakian political positioning in the 2000s (Rohrschneider 2009: 311). Contrary findings to the most significant cleavage in Slovakia were given by Evans and Whitefield (1998: 133) in the study of political cleavages in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, where the ethnic dimension without doubt had the strongest effect on the political positioning.

While the ethnic cleavage is long-standing, it is difficult to conclude that it is frozen as one of the major cleavages of Slovakia is losing some salience, although perhaps it is a positive for an ethnic cleavage to lose salience. Cleavages in Slovakia do not seem stable or secure to any notable degree. Directly related to this reality is the changeable party situation which has led to the ruling party of the early transitional period no longer existing (Minarechová 2012) and extreme change in the makeup of parties representing the Hungarian minority (Rybář 2017), as noted in the beginning, one of the more stable divides in Slovakia. Therefore, there is no persistence in the ideological axis despite evolving cleavages.

Conclusions and implications

This article has sought to review the research studies of political cleavages in 6 post-communist countries of Europe which have transitioned to democracy. In many cases the continued existence of traits from the legacy of the pre--communist history in nations where religious divisions existed before a communist regime was established were found to still be present, as were societal divisions which survived under the communist regimes and represented a driving force for political organisation upon communist demise were expected to exist to this day. Moreover, they seemed to be more stable and more likely to be frozen than those which were more recent developments. This is the case in Croatia, with strong historical cleavages, and Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia, in terms of their ethnic divisions. Even in Poland the historical cleavage of geographical difference persists long after many thought it might have.

Conversely, those cleavages which developed since the fall of communism seemed less secure and more prone to change. With even quite secure and long-standing cleavages seemingly open to large and unexpected changes, e.g. the socio-economic cleavage in the Czech Republic. Returning to the theme of attempting to bridge the gap between Lipset and Rokkan, it seems that frozen cleavage theory can be applied to post-communist Europe only in the case of historical divides whose salience predates the communist regimes. The expected transitional (economic) cleavages have mostly been incorporated into the

political agendas of the mainstream parties. Hungary and Czech Republic are the clear outliers to this assumption — Hungary with one of the oldest parties articulating new divides and not, as might have been expected, aligning itself fully with the persistent cleavage; and Czech Republic's new populist challenger which disturbed the freezing of the socio-economic cleavage after almost two decades of the unidimensional political space.

This raises the question, especially for future studies of post-communist world, whether or not contemporary politics has fundamentally changed and frozen cleavages represent a relic, or whether or not in the coming decades more stability and frozen cleavages can be expected to be found in post-communist Europe. Moreover, as the post-communist countries move further and further away from their communist past questions will arise over which divides and cleavages are rooted in this past. Furthermore, the answer to this should be expected to become increasingly less clear with the passage of time. Given that the increasingly changeable nature of Western politics, future studies may be more inclined to view the changeable party system in post-communist Europe through a uniform lens with caveats about communist pasts and the uniqueness of this experience.

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Application of natural language processing to the electoral manifestos of social democratic parties in Central Eastern European countries

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Abstract: *The paper examines electoral manifestos of social democratic parties in Visegrad countries through a computer-driven method of content analysis. The analysis focuses on a sentence sentiment (how parties talk about their priorities) and a keyword examination (what parties mostly talk about). Such analysis is not widespread in the academic literature related to Visegrad countries, where a human-based approach to content analysis of electoral manifestos prevails. The paper, however, does not aim to nullify the findings of the previous research, but aims to improve the understanding of the content of manifestos through a different research method. The paper's findings have confirmed the pro-European support of social democratic parties as well as the focus on predominantly socio-economic issues in manifestos. Additionally, the paper explores the effect of incumbency on the manifesto's content. The incumbency seems to have an impact on the manifesto sentiment, but not on keywords.*

Keywords: *natural language processing, political parties, electoral manifestos, social democracy, sentiment analysis, Visegrad countries.*

Introduction

Electoral manifestos are a common subject of political studies. They provide researchers with valuable information about the priorities, goals and intentions of political parties. Many political science projects deal exclusively with them, such as the Manifesto Project, which offers a widely shared coding scheme allowing diverse kinds of analysis. Academic research related to electoral mani-

festos has come a long way. The content analysis of manifestos started in the 1970s (Volkens – Bara – Budge 2009) and developed into specialised projects that used a common framework for textual analysis (for example, *Electoral Studies*). Today, comparing and estimating policy positions based on electoral manifestos is quite common in the field of political science. The prevailing method of manifesto research is based on coding procedures, which depend on human judgement. This creates methodological problems, mainly objectivity, reliability and replicability (Rourke – Anderson – Garrison – Archer 2001). All these issues stem from the interpretative nature of coding. In fact, the coding procedures had to improve due to the criticism of their reliability and subjectivity. And the advent of greater computational power has brought new approaches to content analysis. Computer-driven methods have been developed to overcome the likely human bias. The arguments in favour of computer-driven analysis are that it processes large quantities of text faster and more cheaply than humans (Bara 2006) and the outcomes of such analysis are more reliable.

But computer content analysis has flaws as well. The main objection is that it lacks semantic validity. In order to understand the meaning of a text, a researcher must consider its cultural context and socio-economic environment (Volkens – Bara – Budge 2009). Human language is complex for computers to understand (its syntax, semantics and meaning). Computers do not get the right meaning all the time, because words have different meanings in different contexts and are used in idiomatic expressions and irony.[1]

This paper proposes using the computer-driven text analysis of party manifestos to add another layer of understanding to existing research. It is an opportunity to apply new methods to old content and come up with more reliable interpretations. It does not mean that previous academic interpretations and conclusions are obsolete. Natural language processing (hereinafter NLP) has become a useful technique in political science as it might provide new perspectives on the data or to test previous conclusions from other content based methods. This is connected with the availability of digital data (electoral manifestos, official statements, social media posts, etc.) provided by political parties and with the development of software capable of categorising text. NLP relies on increased computing performance to analyse such data. Computers can represent text numerically and analyse it in a way that is difficult for humans. Additionally, the results from NLP methods are quick and reproducible due to computer scripts (or algorithms) available on the Internet. Researchers with similar interests might continue where others have left off.

Computer-driven content analysis is more widespread in Anglo-Saxon countries, due to the quicker computer advances in understanding English as a language. Merz, Regel and Lewandowski (2016) show what is possible with the

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1   Idioms and irony are, however, less likely to occur in formal electoral manifestos.

fully digitalised corpus of manifestos collected by the Manifesto Project. Such data can be used for computing frequencies of texts, tracking policy ideas in manifestos, and even training machine algorithms to automatically code sentences. Slapin and Proksch (2008) propose an algorithm that estimates parties' policy positions based on word frequencies in texts. Having tested it on German political parties' manifestos from 1990 to 2005, they conclude that the algorithm estimated policy positions better than existing time-series estimates. Another aspect of natural language processing is opinion mining and sentiment analysis. Pang and Lee (2008) outline ways of extracting opinion-oriented positions from texts, while Young and Soroka (2012) apply computer-driven sentiment analysis to selected political texts and evaluate the validity of such an approach. Rudkowsky et al. (2018) test a different approach to evaluating sentiment with word embedding. Sentiment analysis has become one of the major areas of research in political communication.

Natural language processing has been little practised on electoral manifestos in Central Eastern Europe. The academic research related to social democratic parties in the region is mostly based on human-based content analysis and expert reviews. Typically, ideology and programmes are analysed only as part of a broader context and often by using case studies or qualitative comparisons (Kopeček 2005; Kopeček 2007; Curry – Urban 2003; White – Lewis – Batt 2013; Bozóki – Ishiyama 2002; Hloušek – Kopeček 2016; Koubek - Polášek 2017; Krašovec – Cabada 2018). The relative lack of a robust methodology influences the theory behind this paper that needs to rely on a general set of assumptions from a wider literature.

This paper aims to analyse the available manifestos of a single social democratic party family. Social democracy is considered one of the general party families in academic literature (Beyme 1985, Mair – Mudde 1998). There is an assumption of a unity in values, positions, and programmatic convergence in each party family (ibid.), something that makes social democratic parties closer to each other than to other political opponents. This party family is also considered one of the most coherent party families in Europe (Hloušek – Kopeček 2016). Some empirical observations contradict such close proximity within social democratic party family, at least in Western Europe (Delwit 2005; Keman 2017). Both in domestic politics and at the EU level, social democratic parties have been constrained by diverse economic, social and political reality (Lightfoot 2005). This theoretical contradiction whether social democratic parties are really similar or diverse in their priorities provides a first assumption to check with the analysis of electoral manifestos.

The second theoretical argument for the analysis of social democratic party family is its slow decline in politics. Social democratic parties are still being considered establishment parties[2]. They are connected with the support of lib-

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2   At least in European democratic countries.

eral democracy, the support for equal rights for everyone, the implementation of a welfare state, and moderate policies that avoid extreme, populist solutions (Meyer 2000; Sasoon 2014; Keman 2008). However, they are not as dominant a political force as they were in the past century. Researchers argue that the globalisation of economy and the limitation of powers of a nation state are one of the main reasons for the decline of social democratic parties (Pierson 2001; Thomson 2000; Gallaghan – Tuney 2000, Gallaghan 2000). Thomson (2000) summed up the problem as a social democratic dilemma – it is increasingly hard to achieve the political goals of social democratic parties in a globalised capitalism and international politics. From this point of view, it might be useful to knowhow these global developments are reflected in electoral manifestos and how often parties talk about it. This forms a second assumption of the paper.

The paper focuses its attention to the region of Central Eastern Europe (the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia). The selected social democratic parties are ČSSD (Czechia), MSZP (Hungary), SLD (Poland) and Smer-SD (Slovakia). These parties have been crucial in the democratic transition and consolidation of democracy in all the selected countries (a slight exception is Smer-SD in Slovakia). They have become well established actors in their domestic political systems but most have been losing political support and impact (except for Smer-SD in Slovakia). The parties share a similar political environment, they are all accepted as members of the Party of European Socialists (PES). Hloušek and Kopeček (2016) have confirmed that their manifesto claims are similar to the ones made in manifestos of PES.

Moreover, these parties have not been widely covered in academic literature when it comes to the computer analysis of their manifestos. The above mentioned analysis by Hloušek and Kopeček (ibid.) used the content analysis of manifestos. This is an opportunity to explore and test the computer-driven method on new cases, and evaluate whether such approaches yield similar results as previous content-based methods. A well-established social democratic agenda in most post-communist countries is generally missing.[3] Some parties might use a more nationalistic rhetoric or advocate for more protest issues. This makes the situation in the Visegrad countries even more complex for the analysis.

The selection of salient issues depends mostly on important cleavages in society (Lipset – Rokkan 1967; Bartolini – Mair 1990; Bartolinin 2000). Kriesi et al. (2008) argued that with the continuing influence of globalisation the parties have to take a position on socio-economic and cultural issues in the society. This theory is the basis for the examination of how the selected parties, in the framework of social democratic policies, have adapted their electoral strategies in their own political environment, and to study their goals, priorities

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3   The exception is the ČSSD party in the Czech Republic, which is considered by many in the academic literature a party with deep historical roots in socialism.

and intentions, and where they stand between socio-economic and cultural cleavages. The assumption of the paper is that parties in the post-communist democracies would still position themselves mostly on socio-economic issues, not the cultural ones.

Data and methods

The data for the analysis were obtained from the Manifesto Project. Only manifestos after 2000 could be considered because only they were available as digital texts readable by computers. The table below shows the years for which manifestos were transformed into textual data for each country.

Table 1: List of electoral years for which manifestos were available in computer-readable text

Party (Country)	Publication year of party manifesto
ČSSD (Czech Republic)	2002, 2006, 2010, 2013, 2017
MSZP (Hungary)	2002, 2006, 2010, 2014
SLD (Poland)	2001, 2007, 2011, 2016
Smer-SD (Slovakia)	2006, 2010, 2012, 2016

Unfortunately, many Natural Language Processing tools are available only in widely spoken languages (English, French, Chinese, Spanish and German), so once the manifesto texts were ready for analysis, they were translated into English. This brings additional problems in interpreting the results, but no other option was viable. Thus, the text files were translated by Google Translate API into English. The decision was practical due to easy access to the API (application program interface) and the reasonably robust English translation facility that Google has built. The translated texts are not a perfect end product, but they are of sufficient quality to apply selected NLP tools to them.

The NLP analysis focuses on two dimensions of manifestos: sentiment analysis and keywords. Sentiment is used to analyse how parties express their priorities (their way of communication – positive, neutral or negative) and keywords are used to determine what parties talk about the most (the content of their communication). The analysis uses two sentiment analysers,[4] Textblob and

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4   The reason to choose two tools for sentiment analysis is to cover the weaknesses of these tools. It is likely that both tools produce slightly different results because they use various criteria to evaluate

Vader, applied at the sentence level of the document. Both packages work with a scale from –1.0 to +1.0, where –1.0 is the most negative and +1.0 is the most positive. The package then evaluates whether a sentence is negative or positive by averaging values of polarity and intensity for each word in the sentence. Sentiment analysers refer to a well-defined lexicon of English words and take values of polarity and intensity from them.[5] The final interval of a sentence between [–1.0; –0.25] means the sentence is negative and the interval [0.25; 1.0] means that it is positive. Every sentence outside these intervals is considered neutral. The script then automatically counts the number of sentences in the text, and calculates the ratio positive and negative sentences in a given text.

The paper uses a combination of tools for the keyword analysis too. The selected tools complement each other and can point to different aspects of the manifestos. These tools are listed here:

RAKE[6] (Rapid Automatic Keyword Extraction) is an algorithm that determines key phrases in a body of text by analysing the frequency of word appearance and its co-occurrence with other words in the text. Ten keywords with the most impact on a selected manifesto are taken into account.

Noun phrase analysis is a part of the Textblob library used for sentiment analysis. It extracts noun phrases from the text and ranks them according to their impact on the text. Nouns usually carry important pieces of information about places, organisations, actions, etc. The extraction of such information from the text is beneficial for the comparison between various manifestos and also among various political parties. Phrases with at least seven occurrences are taken into account.

Frequency distribution counts occurrences of specific words in a text. It is necessary to conduct some text cleaning before running this method on a text. It consists of three steps – make all words lowercase, delete stop words[7] in a text and lemmatise each word to its lemma according to a dictionary. Words with at least seven occurrences in a manifesto are taken into account.

The Python development environment powered the NLP analysis. All of the code used for the analysis is stored in a public repository on OSF.[8] Any researcher can download the files and replicate the analysis.[9]

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the sentiment of the sentence. Thus by combining the results and making an average from them, the analysis gets a more accurate picture of the sentiment from selected manifestos.

5   More information about this technique is written in this article – https://planspace.org/20150607-textblob_sentiment/.

6   The Python package used in the analysis is available at this link– https://pypi.org/project/rake-nltk/.

7   The list of stop words in NLTK package is available at this link – https://gist.github.com/sebleier/554280.

8   Web link: https://osf.io/ndtqg/.

9   This, however, depends on the development environment on the researcher's computer. MacOS/Linux systems share similarities, while Windows has some other commands for dealing with the Python development environment. The analysis for this article was conducted on a Linux machine.

Research questions

The questions reflect broad theoretical assumptions from the Introduction section. These assumptions are, in short, as follows:

There is a unity in values, positions, and programmatic convergence in each party family, and social democratic parties are closely related.

Global challenges to social democratic parties are reflected in their manifestos and these parties need to take a position in the face of globalisation in economics and politics.

Parties in opposition use a more critical language in its manifestos, while incumbent parties prefer to mention more positive messages to the electorate.

The electorate of social democratic parties in European post-communist countries still prefers materialistic values (social security, employment, state support) to more post-materialistic values (gender, minorities, environment) as is the case in West-European democracies.

Sentiment and keyword analysis provide a method to answer these assumptions. The analysis of keywords aims at words in a manifesto that either occur very often or have an impact on the composition of the text. This is directly linked to the three assumptions above. A comparison within party manifestos gives an idea of main topics the party advocates. The analysis also evaluates if there are similarities or differences within a group of social democratic parties in the Visegrad countries.

The sentiment analysis provides more data for the third assumption about the difference in sentiment between an incumbent and opposition party. For the effect of incumbency, the analysis adds a categorical variable *is_incumbent* into the data table with two possible values.

Values	Description
0	the party competed in elections as an opposition party
1	the party held government office at the time of the election

The values were coded based on the historical records of governing coalitions in each state. The variable made it possible to check whether position in the government affects how the party speaks about its electoral priorities. To evaluate this effect, the analysis used a difference of means test (known as a t-test), a standard tool to discover whether differences between groups (measured in averages) could have happened by chance. The null hypothesis against which the test is conducted is that there is no significant difference between the groups. This determines whether there is a significant statistical difference in manifesto sentiment between an incumbent and an opposition party.

Problems with and limitations of the research

The first automatic objection to this type of research is the small number of cases in the analysis. Elections happen at four or five-year intervals and the selected countries in the analysis have been enjoying democratic regimes only since 1989. Additionally, not all manifestos have been available as digital texts. Thus, the analysis only included 17 manifestos from four countries. Naturally, results from such an analysis cannot be robust and need to be checked in the future with a larger sample. Translating the text into English further limits the value of the analysis as it is prone to changing its structure and meaning. Thus, this paper sets only modest research goals to adapt to this limitation and aims merely to test the new approach to analysis.

Some sources, also, question the usefulness of electoral manifestos as a source of data. It is reasonable to assume that these documents are mostly Public Relations texts aimed at voters, most of whom do not read them. Also, any post-election coalition negotiation alters the electoral priorities of a party, so what is written in the manifesto might not be set in stone. However, this criticism is not directed at the language of the manifestos that is the subject of this paper. Electoral manifestos might not decide election results, but they do reflect how a party expresses its priorities. They aim to convey what parties are trying to achieve and what kind of language they use in public to justify their goals. With that in mind, the paper aims to conduct a comparative analysis of language usage, rather than trying to make a logical link between manifestos and electoral outcomes.

Findings

The summary of the main findings is discussed below according to the type of analysis. Full tables are included in Appendices and also in the OSF repository[10].

Keywords analysis

In the ČSSD manifestos, the expected social democratic themes appeared. ČSSD consistently covered topics such as social policy and social spending (parental allowance, affordable housing and care-giving services) in its manifestos. Together with an emphasis on avoiding social exclusion (measures like indemnity obligation) and preventing negative behaviour (regulation of gambling websites), the party advocated the idea that a state has a legitimate power to regulate social relationships. Additionally, ČSSD consistently emphasised economic development in its manifestos. Ideas such as investment in transportation

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10 Web link: https://osf.io/ndtqg/.

(highways, railways, airports, etc.) and in underdeveloped regions appeared many times. Keywords covering corruption were not covered frequently in the party's official documents during the analysed period. In terms of frequency, the manifestos paid attention to words connected with the Czech state, being in Europe and the management of public services (such as taxation, state support and development). Other topics of the European Left (minority rights, environmental protection and migration) did not appear in the analysis.

The MSZP results were in many areas similar to ČSSD's. What distinguishes this party from ČSSD was its emphasis in its manifestos on agricultural topics. Keywords such as domestic cultivation, programme NATURA 2000, GMO food production, food control and landscape varieties appeared during the analysed period. Social programmes (health care, social security, pensions, subsidised housing), economic incentives (such as investments in roads) and agriculture played the dominant role in MSZP's manifesto keywords. Frequent words related to Hungary and Europe; the use of public powers to support people were also present. MSZP also frequently mentioned the Roma question in its manifestos. Moreover, mentions of FIDESZ and Viktor Orbán increased in the later manifestos. This is most likely connected with the changing status of MSZP in Hungarian politics, which saw the downfall of its electoral preferences and not holding government power.

The SLD manifestos did not confirm the trends set by ČSSD and MSZP. SLD manifesto keywords over time did not form a unified set of ideas. There was no strong theme that ran through all selected manifestos. It seems as if the party was trying to find topics that would attract voters from other parties. Economic regulations were represented by keywords such as bank credit guarantees, carbon emissions, protection against excessive imports, balancing trade and quantitative easing. Pension schemes were mentioned in social policy as well as keywords related to religion, tourism, culture and justice. But these keywords did not appear regularly in its manifestos as opposed to ČSSD or MSZP. Additionally, SLD manifestos stressed international matters such as the Frontex Agency and NATO. In terms of frequency, SLD used similar words to other parties. Words related to Poland and Europe, frequent terms such as state, development, people, health care and non-governmental organisations point to a more standard social democratic agenda.

Smer-SD showed the highest consistency of keywords in its manifestos. Smer-SD used similar wording, topics and some typical social democratic ideas. Keywords connected with economic development and social security have been a standard of the social democratic agenda. Where Smer-SD differed from the other selected parties was in its emphasis on the law and criminal issues. The party tended to emphasise keywords such as sanction regime, criminal code and punishment, restitution claims and constitutional provisions. Moreover, fiscal responsibility also appeared frequently in the manifestos. This was not

that common among the other selected social democratic parties. Smer-SD, as a Slovak political party, was constrained by Slovakia's membership of the Eurozone and its fiscal rules. Regarding word selection and frequency, Smer-SD consistently used language related to economic development and labour market policies. Words such as social, government, development, state and public often appeared in the results.

Sentiment

The positive sentiment in ČSSD's manifestos had a greater variation than the negative one. The party was trying to convey more positive messages, in general (approximately one-third of sentences were evaluated as positive). A significant change happened in 2010 when the percentage of positive sentences had dropped and the percentage of negative sentences had increased in comparison with previous elections. This was influenced by the global economic and Eurozone crises, and by the fact that ČSSD was competing in the election as an opposition party. The opposite trend is visible in the 2017 elections when ČSSD was running as an incumbent party and the economy was prospering.

The results for MSZP offer a different picture. The MSZP election manifesto in 2002 had the highest percentage of positive sentences and the lowest percentage of negative ones. The manifesto in 2002 was also relatively short in comparison with later manifestos. From 2002 on, positive sentences decreased, and negative sentences increased. Even though MSZP was part of the government from 2002 to 2010, its manifestos did not contain more positive sentences. Over that time, the change in the sentiment can be linked to MSZP's problems in domestic politics (corruption cases, the rise of other parties and a reputation for incompetence).

SLD is the only party in the selected cases that did not hold government office during the analysed period. Even though SLD tried to form broad left alliances with other leftist parties, such efforts were in vain. SLD contested all elections from 2001 as an opposition party. The election manifesto in 2001, the one before Poland joined the EU, showed the greatest proportion of positivity and smallest amount of negativity compared with the later manifestos.[11] Additionally, proportion of negative sentences was among the highest in the selected cases.

Slovak party Smer-SD had the most stable results in the group of parties over the analysed period. It was a successful national party that won the largest share of votes in every election from which the data were taken. A low variation among all the manifestos' sentiments means that the content of the election programme did not change much (it is in line with the findings from keyword

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11 The only exception in this case was the proportion of negative sentences in the 2016 manifesto that was slightly, but not significantly, lower.

analysis). Smer-SD stuck with what was apparently working, even when it was in opposition.[12] Positive sentences make up around 40% of the manifestos. This is in contrast to the cases of ČSSD and MSZP, which moved from incumbency to opposition with more dramatic changes in their manifestos.

Discussion

In this part of the paper, the empirical results from the analysis are discussed in the light of the theoretical assumptions stated at the beginning of the paper.

There is a unity in values, positions and programmatic convergence in each party family, and social democratic parties are closely related.

In general, traditional social democratic values are summed up in the values of PES on the European level. These are democracy, freedom, equality, peace, justice[13]. No selected party based its manifesto on protest or criticism of democracy. This is in line with the standard theory of social democratic parties, which assumes that social democratic parties accept the rules of the democratic game and are fully supportive of representative democracy. The pro-European direction of the selected parties was also evident from the analysis. Ideas of Europe and the European Union were present in every manifesto. The references to the EU in observed manifestos reached their peak around the time of accession to the EU in 2004. However, the idea of being in the EU and supporting integration and its values were constant even after accession. This supports the convergence of the selected parties into a unified set of values and positions in their manifestos.

In terms of general electoral priorities, the parties advocated ideas of economic development, social policy and belonging to international institutions such as the EU and NATO. These ideas fit into the typical social democratic agenda throughout Europe. This was confirmed by the keyword and frequency analysis. Topics such as the development of transport, the regulation of housing, unemployment, health care support and education were present, although not evenly, in the analysed manifestos. These topics fall under a general term of socio-economic policy, which is not the political domain of only social democratic parties.

But the variation in the socio-economic issues matters. This was the reason for the keyword and frequency analysis in the paper. The results of the selected parties mostly followed traditional social democratic ideas based on an emphasis on development and growth, state support, the public management of resources and support for the middle class. This is all in line with the theoretical

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12 The total number of sentences in Smer-SD manifestos was also consistent. One might assume that they did not change the content of their manifestos significantly. But this is not clear based on the sheer number of sentences in manifestos.

13 The official webpage of PES – https://www.pes.eu/en/about-us/our-values/.

argument of Hloušek and Kopeček (2016) from the Introduction. But there were also signs of contradiction to a general similarity of social democratic parties. As stated above, Delwit (2005) argued that when one observes priorities of social democratic parties more empirically, there is not a close proximity of these ideas. Lightfoot (2005) also pointed out that these parties are constrained by their own national political realities. These views reflected some observations from the analysis. Mainly, MSZP's emphasis on agriculture and the environment in its keywords or ČSSD's focus on industrial and employment policies rather than on protecting the environment[14], or the importance of law and order in Smer--SD manifestos. These aspects show the diversity of ideas that the parties work with. Empirically speaking, there is no blueprint for what a social democratic party should put its emphasis on.

Global challenges to social democratic parties are reflected in their manifestos and these parties need to take a position in the face of globalisation in economics and in politics.

The analysis did not provide much evidence in terms of tackling global issues in the selected manifestos or a novelty of ideas. These documents were still mainly oriented towards a national electorate, which is expected. Most frequent words did not mention anything global or international, but state, government, tax and public support. Even capitalism was not a frequent word in manifestos. This leads to the impression that the selected social democratic parties did not aspire beyond their national borders. They just used what had apparently worked in the past. They seemed to hold onto the approach of an independent nation state even though the reality of economic globalisation and internationalisation of politics leaves less and less space for the nation state to act independently. This evolution is not really reflected in the words of the manifestos. At least, the references to the European Union were constant, as mentioned above. This might qualify as a sign that selected social democratic parties looked beyond their national borders.

Additionally, the topic of migration was absent from the results of the analysis. This is a strange observation bearing in mind that migration has been a highly politicised topic in the Visegrad region in recent years. At least three manifestos were expected to be influenced by this topic – ČSSD in 2017, SLD in 2016 and Smer-SD in 2016. But migration was not present as a keyword in any observed manifesto, and words related to migration were not even represented among the most frequent words. Two explanations might be possible. First, the manifestos really did not have significant mentions of the topic of migration. Parties might have used other communication channels to state their position on the topic (TV debates, interviews or social media posts) that they deemed to

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14 This might be in line with its electoral strongholds in the north-east industrial regions of the Czech Republic, but not with the general direction of social democracy in Europe.

be more effective. Second, the most frequent words in mentioned manifestos were not related to security issues at all. But given the saliency of the issue in political agenda-setting, the result of the analysis seems counter-intuitive.

This observation is in line with the general theory behind the relative decline of electoral support for the social democratic parties. As Thomson (2000) coined the term 'social democratic dilemma', the selected parties in the analysis found it hard to react promptly to a changing global environment. Their manifestos looked like relics of the past. Nowadays, many areas of economic and social policy are constrained by global forces beyond the nation state. But it seems that according to the manifestos of the parties in four post-communist countries in Central-Eastern Europe, they have not started to reflect upon it. If the theory about the decline of social democratic parties has some predictive power, the selected parties will find it hard to gain a dominant position in national politics unless they change and react to the issues arising from the globalisation.

Parties in opposition use a more critical language in its manifestos, while incumbent parties prefer to mention more positive messages to the electorate.

Most of the sentences in the manifestos tended to be positive or neutral. Only once did the proportion of negative sentences in a manifesto exceed 10%. The small proportion of negative sentences in manifestos also points to the pro-system character of the social democratic parties, or at least to a lack of opposition to a democratic regime. On average, positive sentiment tended to be higher when the selected party was taking part in an election as an incumbent (39.11% as incumbent vs 35.21% as opposition). These numbers, however, do not constitute a causal mechanism. The t-test on positive sentiment between incumbent parties and opposition ones produced a statistically significant result ($p = 0.04$, two-tailed test). The difference in means was therefore not very likely to have been due to chance only. One can assume that this difference probably exists in the populations from which it was drawn. It is reasonable to assume that a party running in an election as an incumbent will present itself with a more positive sentiment in its manifesto.

On the other hand, negative sentiment followed the trend outlined by the positive one, with its values in a different order. Incumbent parties had on average 5.26% of negative sentiment, and opposition parties scored 7.13%. From the available theory, it is likely that when a social democratic party was in opposition, the ratio of negative words in its manifesto might be expected to be higher than when the same party was incumbent. The difference of means in the case of negative sentiment does not result in a rejection of the t-test's null hypothesis ($p = 0.1$, two-tailed test). The difference between the mean negative sentiment for incumbent (0.05) and opposition parties (0.07) was narrow. The paper cannot provide statistical evidence that this result was not due to chance only. More data need to be gathered in order to test this hypothesis further. A one-tailed (or directional) test, however, showed a significant level

(p = 0.05). A directional test only points to a directional relationship between two groups. The null hypothesis is: 'incumbent parties do not score a significantly lower negative sentiment in their manifestos than opposition parties.' Since the p-value was below the expected threshold of 0.05, one can assume that there might be statistically significant lower scores of negative sentiment in incumbent manifestos.

As results of the above-mentioned test, the assumption of the change in a sentiment of an electoral manifesto when being incumbent holds only partially. When taken into an account a positive sentiment, one can observe a statistical significance of change between incumbent and opposition parties, at least on the selected cases in the analysis. Other way around, however, does not fully work. A change in negative sentences in manifestos failed to pass difference of means test. It means that a ration of negative sentences in electoral manifesto is most likely not dependent on the position of the party in government or in opposition. Thus, the stated assumption in the beginning has to be rewritten into a statement similar to this: „Social democratic parties running for an election as an opposition party tend to articulate less amount of positive sentences to their voters as compared to the situation when they run in elections as an incumbent party."

The electorate of social democratic parties in European post-communist countries still prefers materialistic values (social security, employment, state support) to more post-materialistic values (gender, minorities, environment) as is the case in West-European democracies.

The emphasis of the selected parties on the socio-economic policies has already been established above. It is no surprise that social democratic parties deal with the issues of state subsidies, taxation, social benefits, health care, or education. On the other hand, the analysis proved that the post-materialistic dimension of progressive leftist politics was under-represented (issues such as gender equality, environment protection and minority rights) or missing in all observed cases. The keyword analysis of MSZP's manifestos included some mentions of a preservation of land and the Roma minority, but it was an exception from the general rule.

Based on the theory of Kriesi et al. (2008), the economic dimension takes precedence over the cultural one in the selected manifestos. This means that the selected social democratic parties try to focus on the preservation of social achievements and to protect social rights of citizens from the disruptive global market. It also shows where the priorities of a national electorate might lie. Voters still demand an improvement of their economic well-being and the standard social guarantees. This is understandable from the point of view of developing economies. Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia are catching up with the rest of Western European countries in economic development. This is in contrast with the social democratic electoral priorities in the developed Western

European democracies. Material well-being and a system of social welfare in these states is already established, so the post-materialistic values can be fully articulated by voters. Therefore, the difference in electoral priorities of parties from the same party family is influenced by the structural conditions in which parties compete for electoral support.

Conclusion

The aim of the paper was to test the theoretical assumptions related to the social democratic parties in Europe. The paper applied the method of Natural language processing to electoral manifestos. And since the computer-driven content analysis has only been applied minimally to electoral manifestos in Central Eastern Europe, the paper applied a new method on an old content. The results of the analysis, then, served as a check against the already established theory about the social democratic parties. Based on the analysis, the paper concluded the following:

It is not clear if social democratic parties converge in electoral priorities. Here, the theory about the social democratic parties is not unified. Some claim that these parties share a unified set of values and goals, some claim that there are still differences among these parties based on the empirical study of their priorities. The analysis has confirmed both views as valid. It is true that the selected parties, generally, accepted same values, like support for the liberal democracy, the European Union, emphasis on economic development and social policy. However, in terms of electoral solutions to voters, the parties were constrained by their nation-states.

The selected social democratic parties do not aspire for ideas outside of nation-state in their electoral manifestos. On the one hand, this is understandable, because the manifestos are primarily directed to a national electorate. On the other hand, the theory about the decline of social democratic parties argues that these parties need to find ways how to apply their ideas to a new global environment where economic and political forces are oftentimes outside the national borders. Based on the keyword analysis, these parties still rely mostly on the idea of an independent state power to change citizens lives for better.

A significant change in positive sentiment of manifestos happened when social democratic parties run in elections as incumbents. They stressed more positive sentences than when they were in opposition. The change was evaluated by a difference of mean test. However, more observations will be needed in the future to further confirm this conclusion.

Social democratic parties primarily competed on economic issues during election campaigns. The cultural dimension of the social democratic agenda was missing, or it merely appeared. No selected party strongly featured topics like gender equality, environmentalism or minority rights. Also, the topic of

immigration was excluded from manifestos from 2014 onwards, which seems strange considering the strong opposition to migration in the region during the recent migration crisis in Europe. Based on the theory of political cleavages, these parties and the societies where they compete for votes still hold mostly regards the socio-economic topics as more relevant than the cultural ones.

The NLP method of computer analysis proved to be an useful analytical tool, despite of all its discussed limitations. The method, nevertheless, does bring new perspectives and increases analytical rigour. Sentiment analysis and keyword extractions have found their place in the pursuit of better understanding how political parties shape their electoral manifestos. But while NLP can tell us what was said and how, it cannot tell us why. For this reason, the interpretation of manifestos will still be an important part of political science and should remain an integral part of any computer-powered method of analysing textual data.

Appendix

Table: Results of keyword and frequency analysis

ČSSD

Year	Keywords	Noun phrases	Frequency distribution
2002	„receiving parental allowance", „indemnity obligation", „belt tightening", „black sheep anymore", „50 thousand apartments"	eu (14), czech (13)	„want" (42), „support" (27), „year" (26), „people" (25), „family" (20), „state" (17), „education" (17), „would" (16), „work" (16), „citizen" (16)
2006	„R6 karlovy vary", „behavioral disorders", „minimal added value", „combating extremist movements", „10 million passengers", „environmentally friendly substitutes", „prefabricated housing estates"	cssd (157), czech (153), eu (40), european union (29), europe (17), public administration (15), health care (15), economic growth (13), labor market (12), roma (12), non-profit sector (11), non-profit organizations (11), prague (10)	„social" (169), „support" (166), „cssd" (165), „czech" (164), „public" (136), „development" (134), „state" (115), „education" (110), „european" (105), „system" (102)
2010	„wastewater treatment plants", „valuable raw materials", „upgrade river vessels", „traditional urban agglomeration", „licensed gambling sites", „heavy transit traffic", „dangerous traffic violations"	czech (57), eu (17), cssd (16), europe (12), european union (9)	„social" (87), „support" (77), „public" (67), „state" (61), „czech" (58), „tax" (44), „service" (42), „system" (42), „increase" (41), „development" (41)
2013	„resisting corrupt pressures", „4th railway corridors", „regional differences", „liberalized railway market", „individual constitutional actors", „socially excluded localities"	czech (34), european union (7)	„support" (50), „public" (48), „state" (46), „czech" (34), „social" (32), „tax" (28), „service" (28), „development" (27), „european" (24), „citizen" (23)
2017	„traditional agricultural crops", „railway stations", „gray zones", „mental health centers", „including rewarding caregivers", „television broadcasting act"	czech (65), europe (15), cssd (10), public services (10), large companies (8), european union (8)	„czech" (69), „support" (61), „people" (54), „state" (44), „care" (43), „public" (42), „social" (39), „tax" (39), „service" (37)

MSZP

Year	Keywords	Noun phrases	Frequency distribution
2002	„successful domestic cultivation", „obsolete hospital buildings", „incentives", „flexible retirement scheme", „flat rate optional", „180 thousand homes", „predictable agricultural policy"	hungarian (8)	„new" (14), „program" (12), „create" (12), „system" (11), „education" (11), „allowance" (9), „hungarian" (9), „public" (8), „social" (7)
2006	„someone else losing", „senior citizenship council", „scale hospital renovations", „per capita aid", „internet accessible everywhere", „blood supply", „gross national product", „natura 2000 program"	hungary (52), hungarian (39), roma (9), eu (8), young people (7), mszp (7), europe (7), european union (7)	„hungary" (55), „social" (53), „development" (50), „hungarian" (49), „program" (45), „security" (42), „people" (40), „country" (40), „state" (39), „national" (39)
2010	„recorded crimes fell", „preventing occasional infections", „placing dangerous foods", „genetically modified maize"	hungarian (74), hungary (62), eu (46), roma (30), young people (18), national modernization (16), public education (16), recent years (13)	„development" (126), „program" (121), „public" (113), „new" (112), „support" (109), „system" (103), „year" (101), „hungarian" (97), „people" (94), „education" (86)
2014	„lease contract", „traditional landscape varieties", „secret sound recording", „scale horticultural farming", „repair inferior roads", „locally produced goods", „frequent extremist thoughts", „declare zero tolerance"	hungary (73), hungarian (58), mszp (35), fidesz (30), hungarians (25), eu (25), europe (18), offer for hungary (13), economic growth (10), young people (10), orbán (10), labor market (7)	„people" (106), „hungary" (93), „hungarian" (86), „support" (71), „state" (71), „public" (69), „country" (69), „economic" (69), „social" (65), „government" (65)

SDL

Year	Keywords	Noun phrases	Frequency distribution
2001	„sensitivity regarding trade", „credit guarantee banks", „counteracts excessive import", „occupational pension schemes", „meets allied standards"	polish (23), poland (19), eu (12), european union (7)	„development" (59), „state" (54), „program" (49), „system" (46), „social" (45), „education" (34), „fund" (33), „government" (32), „polish" (27), „public" (27)
2007	„warsaw frontex agency", „violent behavioral patterns", „insulting religious feelings", „beautiful literature published"	poland (134), polish (87), european union (25), europe (24), left (21), eu (21), poles (17), pis (13), medical services (13), diagnosis (11), health care system (10), non-governmental organizations (10)	„poland" (143), „state" (96), „polish" (90), „social" (84), „system" (82), „development" (76), „european" (74), „people" (70), „country" (70), „policy" (69)
2011	„iustitia", „magnet attracting tourists", „urban communication", „solid defensive", „night watchman"	poland (200), polish (187), eu (67), diagnosis (54), left (47), suggestions (46), local governments (44), europe (38), young people (37), poles (35), forces (33), non-governmental organizations (33), european union (32), labor market (30), state budget (26), foreign policy (24), ministry (22), rural areas (19), internet (19), public finances (17), education system (15)	„state" (245), „system" (215), „development" (209), „poland" (209), „education" (206), „social" (197), „polish" (195), „public" (189), „government" (188), „service" (147)
2016	„square postal items", „north atlantic alliance", „carbon dioxide emissions", „called quantitative easing"	poland (69), polish (36), poles (27), european union (18), eu (16), support (11), europe (10)	„state" (101), „people" (77), „poland" (70), „right" (65), „social" (64), „public" (63), „development" (54), „care" (51), „school" (51), „citizen" (48)

Smer-SD

Year	Keywords	Noun phrases	Frequency distribution
2006	„stricter sanction regime", „negotiating probationary periods", „motor vehicle tolls", „macroeconomic figures", „jaslovské bohunice site", „genetically modified organisms", „electricity imports", „supplementary pension saving", „draft criminal codes"	smer (118), democracy (67), social democracy (61), slovak (59), slovakia (37), economic growth (11), european union (11), roma (10)	„social" (245), „democracy" (143), „state" (74), „slovak" (60), „government" (52), „tax" (51), „health" (50), „condition" (49), „development" (49)
2010	„satisfying restitution claims", „facilitate transitional insolvency", „danube river basin", „winning parliamentary elections", „eliminate money laundering"	slovak (86), slovakia (64), eu (61), european union (17), labor market (13), government (12), economic policy (12), sustainable development (11), economic growth (10), europe (10)	„government" (212), „social" (149), „development" (132), „economic" (104), „policy" (98), „state" (97), „support" (90), „slovak" (90), „quality" (81), „public" (74)
2012	„remove unconstitutional provisions", „jaslovské bohunice site", „railway", „danube river basin", „conduct expert discussions", „'stricter punishment mechanisms", „reduce carbon footprint", „reduce budget chapters", „supplementary pension saving"	slovak (98), slovakia (63), eu (55), european union (24), labor market (14), economic policy (12), government (11), sustainable development (11), economic growth (11), europe (10), public administration (10)	„government" (207), „development" (153), „social" (133), „economic" (109), „policy" (107), „slovak" (102), „state" (96), „support" (93), „public" (92), „quality" (87)
2016	„remove unconstitutional provisions", „jaslovské bohunice site", „railway", „danube river basin", „conduct expert discussions", „stricter punishment mechanisms", „supplementary pension saving", „varied family models"	slovak (98), slovakia (61), eu (56), european union (24), labor market (15), economic policy (13), sustainable development (11), government considers (11), economic growth (11), europe (10), public administration (10)	„government" (207), „development" (150), „social" (130), „economic" (107), „policy" (107), „slovak" (101), „support" (95), „state" (94), „public" (92), „quality" (85)

Table: Results of sentiment analysis

ČSSD

Year	is_incumbent	Share of votes %	No of sentences	% pos	Pos election change	% neg	Neg election change
2002	1	30.2	359	34.96	0.00	5.99	0.00
2006	1	32.3	1332	39.83	4.87	5.59	-0.40
2010	0	22.1	657	33.56	-6.27	8.45	2.85
2013	0	20.5	338	36.24	2.68	6.8	-1.64
2017	1	7.3	518	42.57	6.32	5.89	-0.92

MSZP

Year	is_incumbent	Share of votes %	No of sentences	% pos	Pos election change	% neg	Neg election change
2002	0	42.1	100	42.50	0	2.50	0
2006	1	43.2	588	36.73	-5.77	4.17	1.67
2010	1	19.3	1306	38.90	2.16	5.82	1.65
2014	0	25.6	1400	28.54	-10.36	8.07	2.25

SDL

Year	is_incumbent	Share of votes %	No of sentences	% pos	Pos election change	% neg	Neg election change
2001	0	41	214	39.72	0	6.78	0
2007	0	13.2	797	30.80	-8.92	10.41	3.64
2011	0	8.2	1953	29.70	-1.11	9.96	-0.46
2016	0	7.6	856	31.66	1.96	6.60	-3.36

Smer-SD

Year	is_incumbent	Share of votes %	No of sentences	% pos	Pos election change	% neg	Neg election change
2006	0	29.1	254	38.78	0	6.69	0
2010	1	34.8	579	40.93	2.15	4.75	-1.94
2012	0	44.4	578	40.57	-0.36	5.02	0.27
2016	1	28.3	596	39.85	-0.72	4.61	-0.40

Definitions of column names:
- *is_incumbent* – whether or not a party competed in a given elections as an incumbent.
- *Share of votes %* – how many per cent the party won nationally in a given election.
- *No of sentences* – number of sentences in a manifesto.
- *% pos* – percentage of positive sentences in a manifesto.
- *Pos election change* – computed metric showing the increase or decrease of positive sentences in a manifesto compared to the previous one. A positive number means an increase in positive sentences, a negative one means a decrease in positive sentences.
- *% neg* – percentage of negative sentences in a manifesto.
- *Neg election change* – the same principle as with *Pos election change*; however, a positive number means an increase in negativity and a negative number means a decrease in negativity.

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Polish Regional Elite Career Paths and the Impact of a Multilevel System

TATIANA MAJCHIERKIEWICZ

Abstract: *This paper aims to investigate the multilevel careers of members of Polish regional executives from the first direct election to regional parliaments in 1998 until the end of 2014. Formation of self-government in regions is assumed to have started the process of formation of the multilevel system in Poland. Consequently, political career paths began to be diversified and to take place at more than one level. Among the factors with a critical impact on the specificity of Polish regional careers was the fact that regionalisation was preceded by local government reform (1990), and it was assumed that the local elite would become its natural recruitment base. On the one hand, the challenge to the development of the multilevel system has to be recognised. First, regional politics has undergone rather limited professionalisation (only positions in regional executives are full-time political jobs). Second, the legacy of communist centralisation resulted in lukewarm regional decentralisation in 1998. However, one can observe a certain increased prominence of self-government due to access to EU funds and increased financial autonomy. Positions in regional executive boards, especially as heads of regional boards [marszałkowie], have been seen as increasingly attractive career choices for professional politicians. Therefore, modification of the traditional career model is expected, e.g. some inflow of national politicians into regional boards (from positions in the legislature to executive posts).*

Key Words: *Regional politicians – regional self-government – regional careers – multilevel system –central government – local government*

Introduction

Numerous recent studies focusing on political careers in democratic and de-centralised European countries show that career paths have been modified and diversified in multilevel settings as the institutional structure of opportunities has been transformed. Questions have been raised regarding the traditional 'political ladder', which assumed that politicians start their careers at a local level, ascend to the next step at a regional tier, before moving on to national politics (Borchert and Stoltz 2011a). This classic career pattern has become only one of the possible political trajectories. The individual ambitions affecting politicians' career choices vary, and have also been reshaped by the increased role of regional politics, especially as professionalisation of regional political positions has created an opportunity for full-time careers at that level. It is assumed that in Poland too, the formation of regional self-government in 1999 began the creation of a multilevel system, and thus it is expected that the political careers of regional politicians would also be diversified. The primary aim of the study, therefore, is to map this phenomenon: which institutions and which levels are the main recruitment base, and which are marginal in this process? Furthermore, 'post-ministerial' careers are investigated; which posts and which tiers have been attractive after occupying a post in Polish regional executives? Finally, the article examines the question of whether the politicians' careers are multilevel ones; on how many levels do they develop, and in which constellations?

This paper is divided into five parts. Part 1 presents regional government within the structure of the state. Part 2 is the methodological section. Part 3 presents a description of political and financial arrangements defining the performance of regional boards. The aim of this section is to provide the background information necessary to evaluate the availability and especially the attractiveness of political offices at the regional level, underlining their limited but increasing authority. Part 4, the main section, begins with an investigation of the movements between regional, national and European levels, followed by an analysis of movement between self-governing institutions: local and regional tiers. The last section of Part 5 focuses on the formation of a multilevel system in Poland. Although this is assumed to be at an early stage, and most members and heads of regional boards only move between two levels, it is important to define the scale of multilevel careers.

## Introduction: Regional government and the structure of the state

Twenty years ago, on 1 January 1999, administrative reform in Poland led to the establishment of self-government at regional level. A new and potentially powerful regional elite – members of the regional boards (*zarządy województwa*),

the Polish equivalent of regional government in other European countries – came to power. Swianiewicz (2014: 356 and 375), referring to the introduction of regional self-government institutions, argues: 'They were created […] as weak entities – with highly limited functions and even more scarce financial resources. Yet their importance in domestic politics grew significantly in the following years. […] One may say that using the opportunities provided by EU structural funds, the Polish regions have grown (as political actors) from ugly ducklings to very strong and powerful swans'.

Thus, in analysing the career paths of members of the regional boards (approximately equivalent to regional ministers – although one should bear in mind the above comments on decentralisation), it is critical to remember that this was a period of radical shift in the prominence of the regional elite, and one might therefore expect there to have been an increase in the political attractiveness of regional careers. It is assumed that over time their careers would have evolved to the extent that the positions of heads of regional boards (*marszałkowie* – roughly equivalent to regional prime ministers) and other members of regional boards (*wicemarszałkowie* and *członkowie zarządu* – roughly equivalent to regional ministers) would have started to be seen as attractive and sometimes alternative political careers.

The decentralisation in 1999 may be regarded as the starting point of the transformation of the Polish state towards a multilevel system. The territorial administration has since been split into regional and local. The latter is additionally subdivided into two tiers – communes (*gminy*) and districts (*powiaty*) – with no vertical subordination between them. Local government reform establishing communes was launched in 1990, but it took nine more years to conclude the self-government project, with districts and regions (or voivodeships (*województwa*)) being established in 1999. Polish regions were radically transformed, as 49 small units were merged into 16 regions (Map 1). It was assumed that this reform would overcome the communist legacy of centralisation and sectorial fragmentation, especially of economic management (Piasecki 2009: 183). However, regionalisation also aimed to improve the economic competitiveness of Polish regions in the European market. Polish regions, with their economic, political and social capacity expanded, were to become strong partners to their Western counterparts. The Polish administrative regions became European NUTS-2 level regions (Swianiewicz 2014: 359).

Map 1: Polish regions (NUTS II regions)
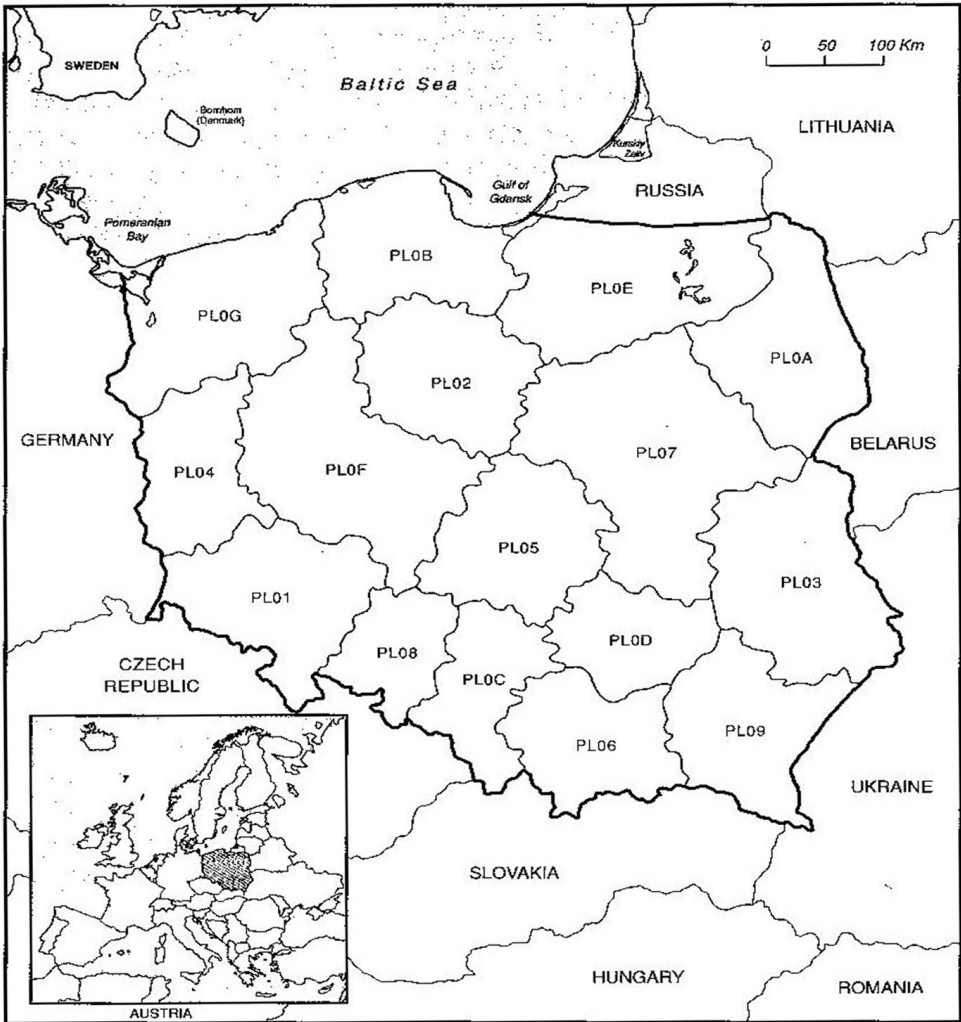
PL01 Dolnośląskie
PL02 Kujawsko-Pomorskie
PL03 Lubelskie
PL04 Lubuskie
PL05 Łódskie

PL06 Małopolskie
PL07 Mazowieckie
PL08 Opolskie
PL09 Podkarpackie
PL0A Podlaskie

PL0B Pomorskie
PL0C Śląskie
PL0D Świętokrzyskie
PL0E Warmińsko-Mazurskie
PL0F Wielkopolskie
PL0G Zachodniopomorskie

However, administrative reform did not completely eradicate previous institutional arrangements. As a result, since 1999 the Polish regions' new institutions of self-government have operated concurrently with the already existing central government, forming a dual administrative system. The central government is represented by a voivode (*wojewoda*), although the competencies of this position were substantially curtailed and the majority of his/her powers were transferred

to regional self-government, composed of a regional assembly (*sejmik*) and its executive board (*zarząd województwa*), with the most prominent position being that of its head (*marszałek województwa*; this term is sometimes translated as *marshal*, but its connotations might be misleading), and also including four other members. Evaluating the political arrangements in regions and central--regional relations, Swianiewicz (2014) classifies Poland as a 'regionalised unitary state' (referring to Loughlin's [2001: 14] typology of states in the EU).

The main function of regional government is strategic planning and implementation of regional development programmes. In addition, it provides a limited number of services, including the construction and maintenance of regional roads and the organisation of regional transport. Regional government is also responsible for the maintenance of the health service infrastructure, which is a significant financial burden for regional budgets. These tasks of regional boards do not affect citizens directly, and consequently, recognisability of regional elites is rather low when compared to town mayors, for example (this should be noted as it may have an impact on the attractiveness of these posts). According to the Regional Authority Index, Poland is somewhere in the middle of the scale, with 8 points in total – 4 for Representation and 2 each for Institutional Scope and Policy Scope (Hooghe et al. 2010).

In modern Polish history, some regions have had regional self-government or autonomous status, but it must be stressed that this was the first time that self-government institutions were established in all 16 regions.[1] Schakel and Dandoy (2013: 1), observing Western European regionalisation in the last 40 years, argue that: 'Not only has the authority exercised by regional governments increased, but the biggest driver of this growth of regional authority has been the proliferation of elected institutions at the regional level'. Thus, it is expected that these favourable conditions, at least in the long run, should lead to similar further decentralisation in Poland.

Methodology

The aim of this article is to examine Polish regional elite career paths and the impact of a multilevel system. Most recent studies on the political careers of regional politicians focus on Western European countries (Botella et al. 2010; Borchert 2011; Borchert and Stolz 2011a, b; Fischer and Stolz 2010; Stolz 2011; Stolz 2003; Stolz 2011; Stolz, Fischer 2014; Vanlangenakker et al. 2013; Jäckle 2013; Dodeigne 2018; Grimaldi and Vercesi 2018). In comparing the Polish

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1   In the interwar period, regional government was established in only two of 17 regions (Poznań and Pomerania provinces). In addition, the Silesian region had autonomous status. Its regional parliament was equipped with law-making competencies and its own regional budget, permitting regional politicians to be the main decision makers in regional economic development policies (Ujdak 1996: 53 and Izdebski 1996: 147).

case with its Western counterparts, it is worth stressing its distinctive feature, which is that although the state can be classified as a 'regionalised unitary state', decentralisation is still a very recent development and further regionalisation is required. Thus, in the case of movements between central and regional levels (whether *centripetal or centrifugal*), it is assumed that in the period under investigation this is still in the initial phase. In contrast to career models observed recently in Western Europe (Borchert and Stolz 2011), it is expected that in Poland the formation of regional self-government in 1999 did not so much modify the traditional, hierarchical model of political careers as create a new institutional structure in which the regional level was established and recognised. In other words, the hierarchical model assumes that experience in regional politics is a step towards national careers. However, serious doubts may be raised as to whether this role was performed by Polish regional politics prior to regional mergers. The existence until 1999 of 49 small regions substantially decreased the status of regional authorities (cf. Lewis 2009), thus limiting their chances of being a recruitment pool for national politicians. Applying Borchert's (2011) approach to the careers of Polish politicians, particular emphasis is placed on the issue of the *attractiveness* of regional careers, as it is assumed that their increased status is a precondition for the development of a multilevel system.

Furthermore, I argue, referring to opinions presented by heads of regional boards, that the formation of a fully-fledged multilevel system requires further regionalisation to the extent that its elite achieves sufficient authority permitting national political actors to begin to recognise regional politicians as partners and to overcome the still strongly entrenched tradition of centralisation. Nevertheless, as emphasised by heads of regional boards, in the last 20 years a substantial evolution has occurred, increasing the scope of decentralisation.

As mentioned above, the reform establishing regional self-government was preceded nine years earlier, in 1990, by local government reform. Thus, it is assumed that the local elite would have become the natural recruitment base for the new regional political strata. However, the inflow of local politicians is expected to have decreased since the 2002 local elections, when the direct election of mayors of towns and villages was introduced. I assume that this electoral reform substantially restrained movements between the local and regional levels, since candidates for mayoral positions prefer to present themselves during electoral campaigns as independents because being a party candidate in mayoral elections substantially decreases the chance of re-election (Drzonek 2016).[2] On the contrary, in the case of promotion to the office of regional boards, membership of the state-wide party is one of the main preconditions. Furthermore, the

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2　Since the communist period Poles have held rather negative attitudes towards political parties. The introduction of direct elections in 2002 therefore increased the tendency for 'local politicians' to distance themselves from political parties (statewide parties – SWP).

movements between these two types of posts may also be hindered by the fact that mayors have been popular local leaders, whereas regional elite members have been much less recognisable by citizens.

The study investigates the political careers of regional elite members elected between 1998 and 2014[3] (until the end of 2014 – including the newly elected regional politicians of the fifth term).[4] In total this was 402 people, holding 647 positions on regional boards.[5] Among them were 78 heads of regional boards,[6] while 352 were members of regional boards (those elected to these functions before or after promotion to the office of the head, altogether 28 individuals, are added to this group[7]). The number of members of regional boards involved in movements from regions towards the centre (or local level) was 339, since this group did not include those who held these positions at the time of the research,[8] and in the case of heads of regional boards their number was 62 (of 16 elected at the beginning of the fifth term, 14 were still in office).[9]

In addition, during 2014 and 2015, 59 unstructured interviews were conducted and voice-recorded in all 16 regions with heads of regional boards who held these positions from the first term to the beginning of the fifth (only 10 officeholders from 1999 till the end of 2014 refused to participate in the research). The interviews focused on their political career paths, but also on the role of political factors determining appointment to regional boards, especially the formation of regional coalitions and coordination of political bargaining with the centre (sometimes also with the local level). On average, the length of interviews with former heads of regional boards was between 1.5 and 2 hours (with the longest being 4.5 hours); for politicians in office, the interview time was on average 1 hour.

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3   In the case of legislative offices, the research also includes those elected as MPs in the 2015 general election.

4   In 2018 the next regional election took place, but this is not covered by the article, which ends at the beginning of the fifth term, and is part of a wider research project on regional politics and politicians (forthcoming Majcherkiewicz 2020).

5   The positions of members of regional boards are formally divided into so-called deputy marshals (or deputies to the head – *wicemarszałkowie*) and 'members of the regional board' (*członkowie zarządu*). However, in reality, this division does not indicate a different status between these positions. Accordingly, for the purpose of the calculations, they are treated as one group.

6   Among them, one politician only had the status of head of the regional board-elect (*marszałek elekt*) and his successor was a voivode and performed the functions of the head (*osoba pełniąca funkcje organów samorządu województwa podlaskiego)* in the interim period until the early election.

7   Three people were heads of regional boards before and after holding other positions on regional boards.

8   Exceptions were made for those who, despite having held positions at the end of 2014, had post--ministerial careers due to the fact that they had a break in their tenure in work on regional boards.

9   In some cases, the division on a position held before and after being a member of regional boards becomes further complicated when politicians had a break in work in the regions, and in the meantime continued political careers at other levels (both first and second posts were taken as the reference point).

The investigation incorporates both the movement from regions to the national centre – or, alternatively, to the local level – and in the opposite direction – from central and local tiers to voivodeships. In the regions, the research includes the political careers of both heads and members of regional boards. In relation to central offices, executive and legislative positions are included, as well as those of regional voivodes – representatives of the government administration in the regions.[10] At the local level, the research embraces executive offices in the commune and district tiers. Finally, the analysis incorporates the European level, that is the position of MEPs. Furthermore, the scale of multilevel careers is evaluated.

In other words, the investigation covered in the article incorporates full-time political positions in self-governing institutions, but also the central government (and EU). It is argued that despite the formal autonomy of appointment to these institutions in a multilevel setting, movements between them are not only the result of individual choices. Rather, personnel policy in Poland is coordinated by political party multilevel strategies (which confirms direct moments[11] – see especially the section on movement to and from positions of voivodes). The peak of these policies is assumed to have taken place during the Civic Platform (PO)/Polish People's Party (PSL) coalition government between 2007 and 2014, when these parties were cooperating in the centre and in the majority of regions (Majcherkiewicz 2018). This can be illustrated by the fact that agreement on the division of position of heads of regional boards within the PO-PSL coalition in 2010 was presented at a conference of the PO and PSL party leaders (who at the same time also held the positions of prime minister and deputy prime minister).[12] Similarly, the interviewees representing these parties saw the interconnection of personnel policy in institutions controlled by these parties. One of the heads mentioned a more indirect impact: in ministries, there is a rule that if a cabinet minister represents the senior party, his/her deputy will represent the junior party (and vice versa); a similar solution was also adopted for the positions of voivodes and their deputies. This way of thinking was then repeated in regional boards in a situation when one of the coalition partners (PO or PSL) could form one party board, although a second party was always invited to a regional executive.

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10 They are formally classified as representatives of government – central administration. In reality, however, they seem to be representatives of regional administration. It is symbolic that in numerous cases, Offices of Regional Self-governments have been located in the same building as Voivodes' Offices.

11 Direct moments are those where there is no time gap between two political appointments (a politician has to resign from one position to move to others).

12 First agreement of 2010 and second of 2014 (*Tusk: jest porozumienie PO-PSL o koalicji w sejmikach,* [25. 11. 2015] https://wiadomosci.wp.pl/tusk-jest-porozumienie-po-psl-o-koalicji-w-sejmikach-6082117185360513a, and *Koalicja PO-PSL będzie rządzić w 15 sejmikach wojewódzkich* https://www.tvn24.pl/wiadomosci-z-kraju,3/koalicja-po-psl-bedzie-rzadzic-w-15-sejmikach-wojewodzkich,492507.html.

Table 1: Movements within regional executive boards

Positions	Before promotion to the office of head of regional board	After promotion to the office of head of regional board
Members of regional boards	26.9 % (21)	12.8 % (10)

Regional government: political arrangements, regional authority and financial decentralisation

Elections to the regional assembly took place in all 16 regions at the same time every four years (see Table 2). Members of the regional boards have traditionally been chosen from regional deputies. In the case of positions as heads of regional executive bodies, in the 1998–2001 period, they had to be elected from regional deputies, although currently this requirement has been withdrawn, and they have usually been chosen from those sitting in regional assemblies. Comparing Polish deputies with their Western counterparts, it should be stressed that in the former case it is not a full-time job. Polish assemblies meet occasionally (usually once a month). Among their competencies are the enactment of regional development strategies and approval of a yearly budget, and the regional executive has to receive an annual vote of approval on implementation of the regional budget.[13] [14]

Table 2: Dates of regional elections and terms of office

Dates of regional elections	Terms of office
11 Oct. 1998 [13]	Term I (1998–2002)
27 Oct. 2002	Term II (2002–2006)
12 Nov. 2006 – 20 May 2007 early election in Podlasie region [14]	Term III (2006–2010)
21 Nov. 2010	Term IV (2010–2014)
16 Nov. 2014	Term V (2014–2018)
21 Oct 2018	Term VI (2018–2013 [term in office extended to five years]

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13 Elections took place three months before the regional government institutions came into operation, as this gave regional assemblies time to choose their executive board.

14 In the Podlasie region in the aftermath of the regular 2006 election, the regional assembly was unable to select the executive board in the required timespan.

In financial terms, the positions of heads of regional boards are rather attractive. Their salaries are comparable to those of national MPs and higher than those of junior ministers. In total, 80 offices in regional executives may be regarded as full-time political positions (as offices in regional assemblies are only semi-professionalised). The number of political offices at the regional level is therefore smaller than that at the national level (Borchert 2011; Stolz 2005).[15] Defining the political authority of the regional elite and the attractiveness of the offices of heads and members of regional boards, it is critical to determine the extent of decentralisation of finances. In the Regional Authority Index mentioned above, Polish regions received 0 points for fiscal autonomy. Table 3 shows that the regionalisation of 1999 was assisted only by restricted financial decentralisation. In the period under investigation, the share of regions in sub-national budget spending rose from just over 5% to less than 9% in 2012. The central government preserved its privileged position, but the regional budget share was low compared to the local government budget (municipalities and especially major cities [those with district status]) (Swianiewicz 2014: 358).

Table 3: Revenue and proportion of expenditure in revenues in local and regional self-government (in billion PLN)

Type/year	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Income of communes	33.9	45.5	51.4	56.6	62.6	64.8	72.2	75.7	78.3	79.9
Incomes of districts	12.3	13.6	14.6	16.0	18.3	20.1	22.5	23.5	22.5	23.1
Incomes of major cities (those with district status)	30.9	35.6	40.1	45.9	49.9	50.5	54.1	56.9	61.4	64.1
Incomes of regions	6.9	7.0	9.4	11.3	12.8	19.6	14.1	15.1	15.2	16.1
Total incomes of self-government	90.1	101.7	115.5	129.8	143.6	155.0	162.8	171.2	177.4	183.2

Source: Trochymiak (2017: 182)

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15 The number of political positions is formally smaller at the regional level, but as the interviews with heads of regional boards indicate, the positions of directors of departments in regional government office are treated as spoils. In addition, the civil service corps exists only in the central administration; no similar reform has been undertaken in self-government administration. In other words, there is no clear division between political and administrative posts.

Interviews conducted with heads of regional boards showed that they regarded the main challenge limiting the authority of the regional executive to be the preservation of strict financial control by the national government. Although several tasks were transferred to regions, the central authority financed them in the form of grants from the central budget, and specific rather than general purpose transfers dominated (cf. Bober et al. 2013: 46–48). Thus, heads of regional boards strongly advocated the necessity of what they called 'financial decentralisation'. Statistical data for 2014 indicates that regions received most of the revenue in the form of subsidies, whereas their own regional revenue comprised only 36.9% (6,546,100 PLN out of a total 17,745,600 PLN) (Błażej, 2015: 113–4). However, referring to the multilevel system, the impact of EU enlargement has to be recognised. For example, in 2014 regions received the largest share of financial resources for EU projects implemented by self-government (36.3% – 6,600,600 PLN) (compared with local government (municipalities, cities with district status and districts)) (Błażej, 2015: 40). In other words, although it is essential for deepening regional democratisation that regional authorities gain more autonomy over regional finances, at the same time one has to recognise two facts: first, progress made over time, and second, the critical importance of EU enlargement.

Multilevel-movements

Central–regional level movements

In analysing movements between political offices at the central and regional levels, the first striking feature is their disproportional intensity in some categories. In more than 20% of cases they had political experience of being a voivode or deputy prior to appointment as the head of a regional board; all other central-level categories were much less important sources of cadres for the regional executive.

In the case of post-ministerial careers, the most popular option – a parliamentary career – was chosen by nearly one third of heads of regional boards. The movement to the national legislature was also the most popular among all members of the regional boards, at over 20%.

At the same time, some central-regional positions can be seen as not incorporated in these multilevel movements. For example, heads of regional boards were rarely promoted to the positions of ministers (both cabinet and junior ministers).

Secondly, it could be argued that heads of regional boards have more distinguished careers than other members of regional executives in two ways. In some categories, they vary in intensity, with heads of regional boards having a more favourable opportunity for certain career options at the central level,

Table 4: Movements from the centre towards regions

Positions		Heads of regional boards		All members of the regional boards	
National parliament	**Parliament – both chambers**	**11.53 (9)**		**8.96 (36)**	
	Lower chamber	6.41 (5)		6.72 (27)	
	Upper chamber	6.41 (5)		2.49 (10)	
National Executive	**Offices in national executive**	**7.69 (6)**	**16.67 (13)**	**2.24 (9)**	**10.45 (42)**
	Prime minister	0 (0)		0 (0)	
	Cabinet minister	2.56 (2)		0.75 (3)	
	Junior minister	5.12 (4)		1.74 (7)	
Representatives of central government in regions	**Voivodes and their deputies**	**20.51 (16)**		**12.19 (49)**	
	Voivodes	10.25 (8)		4.48 (18)	
	Deputy voivodes	10.25 (8)		7.96 (32)	
TOTAL – ALL POSITIONS AT CENTRAL LEVEL		**34.62 (27)**		**21.64 (87)**	
(n)		100 (78)		100 (402)	

Comments: The values in the table do not sum up. The movements of one person can be inserted in more than one cell, where when he/she holds more than one central-level position. For example, a head of a regional board may have experience as a member of parliament (lower chamber) as well as senator, thus a supplementary cell for both chambers was added as well as the total number of all central-level positions.

and thus they represent a more intense inflow. Furthermore, in other categories heads of regional boards vary from other members of regional executive not so much in the intensity of their inflow, but in the type of positions they choose for their post-ministerial career. One might argue that some political career paths are neither as attractive nor as available for these two groups. In order to discern trends, therefore, the analysis is divided into three categories related to the type of positions: national executive, central legislature and offices of regional voivodes and their deputies – representatives of the central government in regions.

Table 5: Movements from regions towards the centre

Positions		Heads of regional boards		All members of the regional boards	
National parliament	**Parliament – both chambers**	**30.65 (19)**		**20.35 (69)**	
	Lower chamber	25.81 (16)		17.7 (60)	
	Upper chamber	8.06 (5)		3.54 (12)	
National executive	**Offices in national executive**	**4.83 (3)**	**32.26 (20)**	**7.08 (24)**	**23.01 (78)**
	Prime minister	0 (0)		0 (0)	
	Cabinet minister	0 (0)		1.18 (4)	
	Junior minister	4.83 (3)		6.49 (22)	
Representatives of central government in regions	**Voivodes and their deputies**	**3.22 (2)**		**4.13 (14)**	
	Voivodes	1.61 (1)		2.06 (7)	
	Deputy voivodes	1.61 (1)		2.06 (7)	
TOTAL – ALL POSITIONS AT CENTRAL LEVEL		**33.87 (21)**		**25.66 (87)**	
(n)		100 (62)		**100 (339)**	

Comment: The values in the table do not sum up.

The national executive

Investigation of the movements to and from national executive offices to the regional level will be conducted in three stages.

In the first stage it will focus on the movement to and from top positions of cabinet ministers. None of the heads of regional boards (in office during the period of investigation) was promoted to a position of national minister (or prime minister). Movement in the opposite direction was quite low – 2.6%. Two former cabinet ministers became heads of regional boards, and another a regional board member. The number is so low that these cases are analysed together. All these appointments took place before 2006. One head of a regional board was a minister during the communist era. The two other offices in the regional executive should be treated as interim positions, as former national

ministers resigned from them after being re-elected as MPs. The low centrifugal ratio was expected, even in federal states, e.g. in Germany former federal ministers very rarely decide to continue their careers at the regional level (Fischer and Stolz 2010: 14). However, compared with Poland's Western counterparts, it is puzzling that none of the 78 heads of regional boards became a cabinet minister. If observations were concluded at this stage, one could seriously question the formation of a multilevel system in the country. However, this pattern is modified if one includes the positions of junior ministers.

The second stage is therefore movements to and from the position of junior ministers (*sekretarz i podsekretarz stanu*) to heads of regional boards. Movements between these two positions are more common: 5.1% for movements from the centre towards regions and 4.8% in the opposite direction. However, it is worth investigating centrifugal movements in more detail. Four former junior ministers became heads of regional boards: one was elected in 2002, and the other three in the fourth term, and to move into a regional career all of them first had to resign from offices held at the central level.[16] This suggests that recently, for some former junior ministers (and some parliamentarians – see next section) as well as for national party leadership coordinating personnel policies, positions as heads of regional boards have begun to be seen as attractive. Analysis at this stage suggests that multilevel careers have started to evolve, but this is still at an early stage.

In the third stage, after extending analyses on all members of the regional executive, one more trend appears. The centrifugal direction of movements between the national executive (both ministers and their deputies) and regional boards positions is very low – 2.2%. At the same time, former members of regional boards relatively often choose the career option of moving to positions of deputy ministers and ministers. This is nearly three times more common (7.1%) than in the opposite direction (see details in Tables 3 and 4). In addition, it is worth emphasising that movement from regional executive positions to offices of national deputy ministers is slightly more popular among members of the regional executive than their heads (probably also because this is more attractive in financial terms than the second category). There is one more difference between movements from regions towards the centre for heads of regional boards and other regional politicians, as four representatives of the latter category became national ministers (and one national deputy also became prime minister) but no heads of regional boards were appointed to such posts (although among all members of the regional boards this type of career was very rare, at 1.2%). Finally, career patterns at this stage suggest a hierarchical model.

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16 Two people resigned from positions as junior ministers and one person was a former junior minister, but was a senator at the time he received an offer to become the head of a regional board.

Central legislature

Analysing movements in this category, high intensity is noticeable in both directions, to and from the national legislature. Nearly 9% of former MPs moved to positions in regional boards, and more than 11% became heads of regional boards. Movements in the opposite direction have been significantly higher – nearly three times as high in the case of heads of regional boards and twice as high among all members of regional boards. This direction of movements indicates the classic hierarchical model of careers. Furthermore, in these regional post-ministerial careers, movements to the lower (more powerful) chamber are dominant.[17]

Offices of voivodes and their deputies

An issue that has to be taken into consideration when analysing movement to and from the position of voivodes and their deputies is that they have been representatives of the central government, and appointments depend on this. In the multilevel setting, however, when the same party rules both centrally and in a region, their personnel policy includes coordination of both central government and regional self-government positions. It could be argued that the closed interconnection between these two types of institutions can be seen directly after the 2001 parliamentary elections, when six members of regional boards resigned to take the positions of voivodes (representative of the central government) or their deputies. An excellent illustration of this phenomenon is the policy of the PSL, characterised by mostly direct movements between both institutions despite the argument raised above, which might be expected to be an obstacle.[18] The extent of this coordination is illustrated by the career of

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17 An indicator which may show a potential rise of attractiveness of regional-level offices towards the centre is changes in direct movement to and from regions. The first type of direct movement from regions to the centre was intensive at the beginning; in the first term following the 2001 parliamentary election, three heads of regional boards resigned from the office to be promoted to the position of MP. This phenomenon did not appear for the next 14 years. This seems to suggest that regional careers began to be an attractive career alternative. However, this interpretation at least partially contradicts the fact that after the general election in 2015 two heads of regional boards resigned, instead choosing parliamentary careers. Movement in the opposite direction was much more even: in both the first and the second terms, one parliamentarian resigned to take up a position as the head of a regional board. In the fourth term there were two such cases, and in the fifth term one person. However, there is one interesting detail which suggests that the positions of heads of regional boards are gaining a certain prominence. The two direct movements which took place in the fourth term did not occur after the election, but in the middle of that period, as they were urgent replacements for the posts of heads of the regional boards in situations of political crises. Political parties chose as their representatives politicians whom the central structure of the party and its leaders trusted; national deputies who were induced to resign from their positions in order to take up posts as heads of regional boards.

18 The fact that this policy was mastered not by the main political party can probably be interpreted as meaning that it only has a limited pool of available professional politicians.

one politician from the Wielkopolska region; after the first regional election in autumn 1998 he resigned from the position of deputy voivode to take up a post in the regional board, and directly after the parliamentary election in 2001, when the PSL became a junior coalition partner, he resigned from work in self-government to again become a deputy voivode, a position in which he remained until 2003. In 2006 he again became a member of the regional board, and he still holds this position today.[19] Furthermore, one could argue that in the period from 2007 to 2014 coordination of political appointments was conducted within the PO-PSL coalition (which existed in the centre and in the regions; Majcherkiewicz 2016). Referring to the situation after the 2007 parliamentary election, Machelski (2008: 234) suggests the agreement of its leaders encompassing both types of positions: 'Your voivode and our head of regional boards', which means that in regions where the first position was held by the junior partner (PSL), the second would go to the senior one (PO).

Movements to and from voivode positions are in the opposite direction to national parliamentary posts, with movements in the centrifugal direction dominating, at 12.2%, compared to those from regions towards the centre, at 4.1%. This reflects a shift in authority between these two 'regional' centres of political power, with a decrease in the scope of authority of voivodes (although they are formally defined as representatives of the central government). Therefore, some of the interviewed heads of the regional boards emphasised that their movement from a position of voivode to a position in self-government was their individual career choice.

Furthermore, it is important to remember that after the mergers of territories in 1999 (reducing the number of regions from 49 to 16), a large number of regional politicians became unemployed, forming a recruitment base for regional executives. A substantial number (20) of the heads and members of regional boards who prior to their appointment held positions as voivodes or deputies – 49 individuals altogether – were appointed in the first term (1998–2002).[20] Former voivodes and their deputies were also reappointed in successive terms. However, the watershed was the regional election of 2014, after which none of the former voivodes or their deputies were promoted to positions of heads of regional boards. Concerning movement from positions of head of regional boards to voivodes, there was only one such case in 2011 – 1.6%.

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19 This was not the only case of shifts between those institutions; one person was a voivode in the gap between holding positions in the regional boards, and the other was a voivode before and after holding the position of head of a regional board.

20 The number of voivodes in the first term may be slightly underestimated (as data for the 1989–1999 period, when 49 regions existed, is incomplete).

European–regional level movements

In the case of movements between regional and European levels, as the first election to the European Parliament in Poland only took place in 2004, the impact of this level was expected to be rather modest. None of the heads of regional boards had experience being MEPs before being promoted to this position.

Table 6: Movements from the European level to regions

Positions	Heads of regional boards	All members of regional boards
European Parliament	0 (0)	0.5 (2)
(n)	100 (78)	100 (402)

However, six heads of regional executives (9.6%) chose this type of career afterwards. This career option seems to be more available in the initial period of regional self-government, as there were 4 cases among those ruling in the first term.

It is interesting to note that if the calculations of movements from regions towards national and European levels are analysed together, among heads of regional boards this is the second most popular choice after parliamentary careers. Notwithstanding, movements towards this level were rather insignificant in the case of members of regional boards.

Table 7: Movements from regions to the European level

Positions	Heads of regional boards	All members of regional boards
European Parliament	9.6 (6)	2.9 (10)
(n)	100 (62)	100 (339)

Local–regional level movements

The data gathered confirms that local government politicians were an important recruitment base for the regional elite. More than 42% of heads of regional boards and more than 28% of members of regional boards worked in local positions in communes. However, the proportion of popular local leaders (mayors of the main cities) is quite low: 6.4% among heads of regional boards and 3.2% among other regional politicians. The most recent occasion when

a former mayor of a main city was appointed as head of a regional board was in 2008. In other words, although the local elite is the main recruitment base for regional politics, this path is not seen as an attractive career option for local leaders of main cities – directly elected mayors. Furthermore, only 2% of former regional elite members became mayors of the largest cities. Nevertheless, they were already appointed after the introduction of direct elections of town mayors (pointing to the increased importance of SWP at the local levels in 2010 and 2014).

Table 8: Movements from local level to regions

Positions		Heads of regional boards	All members of regional boards
Communes	**Executive office in communes** (mayors and their deputies)	42.31 (33)	28.61 (115)
	Mayors of the largest cities (with district status)	6.41 (5)	3.23 (13)
Districts	**Executive offices on district executive boards** (heads of executive boards and their deputies)	6.41 (5)	7.71 (31)
	Heads of executive boards	5.13 (4)	3.98 (16)
TOTAL – ALL POSITIONS AT LOCAL LEVEL		**43.59 (34)**	**33.58 (135)**
(N)		**100 (78)**	**100 (402)**

Comment: The values in the table do not sum up.

A much lower inflow of cadres took place from districts. In the case of heads of regional boards, nearly all politicians promoted from that level were heads of executive boards (*starostowie*). The source of this limited movement between regional and district levels is probably related to the small scope of competencies transferred to districts. This movement is especially low for the direction of regions to districts – 2.3%. This low intensity of inflow to and from districts accompanied by more accelerated movement from communes to voivodeships can be recognised as adaptation of Polish politicians to the low attractiveness of district positions and, paradoxically, as an argument supporting formation of a multilevel system. Finally, out of 135 who moved from a commune or district to regions, 23 returned again to the local level after a short regional career (the overwhelming majority worked again in the same community or district).

Table 9: Movements from regions to local level

Positions		Heads of regional boards	All members of regional boards
Communes	Executive office in communes (mayors and their deputies)	6.45 (4)	11.5 (39)
	Mayors of the largest cities (with district status)	1.61 (1)	2.06 (7)
Districts	Executive offices on district executive boards (heads of executive boards and their deputies)	1.61 (1)	2.36 (8)
	Heads of executive boards	0.0 (0)	0.88 (3)
TOTAL – ALL POSITIONS AT LOCAL LEVEL		**8.06 (5)**	**13.57 (46)**
(N)		**100 (62)**	**100 (339)**

Comment: The values in the table do not sum up.

To conclude, in addition to the fact that the local level is the main recruitment base for the regional elite, the second crucial thing to note is that when analysing movements between different local tiers (communes and districts) and regions, centrifugal movements are more frequent than in the other direction. This suggests that for some politicians a hierarchical model of careers in Poland is still an attractive option. However, it is important to recognise the group of local politicians with interim work in regional self-government.

The movement towards multilevel careers

Taking into consideration the fact that Polish self-government has been in existence for only two decades, the formation of a multilevel system is a rather new phenomenon. Thus, in contrast to Botella et al. (2010), for example, focusing on the experience of regional prime ministers preceding their appointment, in the case of Polish politicians, their career before and after sitting on regional boards is investigated. Furthermore, seven levels were distinguished, adapting to the specific characteristics of the Polish political system: 1. local, type 1 – commune; 2. local, type 2 – district; 3. regional, type 1 – being a member of a regional board; 4. regional, type 2 – positions of the heads of regional boards; 5. central, type 1 – deputies of national parliament or ministers; 6. central, type 2 – positions of voivodes (and their deputies); and 7. European (MEP). Local, regional and central levels were divided into two. If a regional politician held positions at the commune and district level they were counted separately as two.

At the regional level, the decision to divide it into two categories was intended to enable a distinction between those heads of regional boards who before or after holding these positions were also members of regional executives and those who did not have such experience. In relation to the central tier, since the positions of voivodes can be seen as quite distinct from other types of central offices, this level was also subdivided into two.

Table 10: Type of careers of regional prime ministers and ministers

Type of career	Multilevel careers	
	Heads of regional boards	All members of regional boards
One level	**12.82 (10)**	**36.57 (147)**
Two levels	**37.18 (29)**	**39.80 (160)**
• Regional – local (including type I and II)	11.54 (9)	20.90 (84)
• Regional type I – regional type II	5.13 (4)	1.00 (4)
• Regional – central (including type I and II)	19.23 (15)	17.66 (71)
• Regional – central (voivodes)	8.97 (7)	6.72 (27)
• Regional – European	1.28 (1)	0.25 (1)
Multilevel	**50.00(39)**	**23.63 (95)**
• Three levels	33.33 (26)	18.66 (75)
• Four levels	12.82 (10)	4.23 (17)
• Five levels	3.85 (3)	0.75 (3)
(n)	78	402

More than 12% of heads of regional boards had single-level careers, over 37% worked in two-level careers, and half had multilevel ones. If one looks at all members of the regional boards, multilevel careers are strikingly less popular (nearly one quarter). Single- and two-level careers are similarly popular among them. For this category, it is not so much the limited range of multilevel careers that is surprising but the fact that the proportion of single-level careers is so high. To some extent, this low proportion of members of regional boards (and their members) with experience at more than two levels can be explained, as mentioned above, by the fact that regional self-government in Poland is only 20 years old. However, two more arguments may also be considered. First, the role of regional politicians has increased, but this has to be seen as a process which requires time, and centralisation tendencies have an impact on the pace of its development. Second, even if the multilevel system is less evident in the number of tiers, the example of trajectories of two-level careers shows its rising diversification, which is typical of the multilevel system.

Conclusion

The data gathered indicates that the careers of regional politicians evolve towards a multilevel system. Although a large number of regional politicians have had experience of only one level (nearly 37%), it is important to underline that the majority of careers are already highly diversified – a variety of types of two-level careers. Furthermore, already a quarter of all members of regional boards had worked at least three levels. Among heads, this proportion rises to even 50%, which suggests that in the case of this group of politicians the process of evolution towards multilevel careers is clearly more advanced. Although some movements suggest an evolution towards a hierarchical model of careers in Poland, this is only one of the possible paths, as career trajectories are highly differentiated. Interviews with the heads of regional boards suggest that the attractiveness of political posts has been changing, and it is worth stressing that for some politicians, executive jobs at the lower level are more attractive than those in the legislature at the national level.

Movements between local and regional levels to a large extent confirmed expectations concerning the career paths of regional politicians. First, at the local level, as assumed, communes became a recruitment base for heads and members of regional boards. One third of them were members of local executives (mostly communes and occasionally districts) prior to being appointed. At the same time, the low proportion of former mayors of the main cities among the regional elite is striking, although it was expected that the introduction of direct elections to the position of mayor in 2002 would hinder movements between the local and regional levels. Furthermore, inflow between local and regional institutions suggests evolution towards a hierarchical model, although for some local politicians work in a region was a short break in their career in a commune (or in rare cases in districts).

Secondly, even more complicated and ambiguous career paths appeared when analysing movements between the central and regional levels. This was only partially surprising, however, as in a multilevel system diversification of political career was expected. Movements between certain categories support the argument for the appearance of a hierarchical model (e.g. to and from the national parliament, additionally higher intensity of movement from the local level to regions than in the opposite direction). The lack of movements in other categories suggests not only the absence of hierarchical careers but that that development of a multilevel is in the early stages (to and from the positions of national ministers).[21] In addition, there are examples of national political

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21 Although the research does not extend to autumn 2019 it is worth noting symptoms of the change to this trend. In Mateusz Morawiecki's first government in autumn 2019, among its 21 members there were already two former members of regional boards (Skład Rady Ministrów, Biuletyn Informacji Publicznej, https://bip.kprm.gov.pl/kpr/bip-rady-ministrow/sklad-rady-ministrow/4574,Sklad-Rady-Ministrow.html).

careers (in this case posts of deputy ministers) whose attractiveness seems to vary according to positions in regional boards; they seem to be less attractive for heads of regional boards.

The main conclusion, therefore, is that although the traditional model has been a rather popular route, political career paths have been transforming and the impact of a multilevel system is noticeable in various areas. This diversification of movement hinders drawing a clear pattern of a new hierarchy of political positions. Nevertheless, some political positions are seen as having limited attractiveness (boards of districts), and it could be argued that in regions the balance of power shifted towards self-government (as indicated by the more intensive movement from the positions of voivodes and their deputies towards regional boards than in the opposite direction). Finally, this new hierarchy cannot be produced, as interviews with heads of regional boards showed that their political ambitions are diversified (although a large group of them would prefer if the institutional structure of opportunity enabled them to continue their career in the regional executive).

Acknowledgments

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Deliberation level of constitutional debates in Georgian Parliament

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Abstract*: In the given paper a discourse quality index (DQI) tool, rooted to criteria elaborated by Jurgen Habermas's in his discourse ethics, will be modified and used to assess the deliberation level of the 1995 Georgian Parliament. The methodology will accurately represent important principles of deliberation. Due to its focus on observable behavior and its detailed coding instructions, a discourse quality index can be a reliable measurement of the quality of political debates. The DQI for a parliamentary debate in the example of the 1995 parliament of Georgia will be illustrated in the given article. The parliamentarian debates concerning the adoption of the 1995 constitution of Georgia, according to its importance, will be taken as the specific case to be analysed. In the framework of the research, scholars will study and analyse over 200 pages of stenographic recordings of the parliamentary debates connected to the mentioned topic. The DQI score will be evaluated based on the analyses of the stenographic records.*

Keywords: *Deliberation, Discourse, Measurement, Parliamentary debate, Georgia, Constitution.*

Introduction

The study and analysis of deliberation processes are one of the controversial aspects of political sciences. A great number of papers, scientific articles and discussions are dedicated to this component because discourse ethics and the level of deliberation has vital importance in the process of democratic development of a country since it is a necessary constituent of the political life and

governance. The higher the degree of argument-based discussions in political organisations and state bodies of a country, the more stable and stronger is the state of democracy.

Thus, scientists are studying factors and external circumstances which can influence discourse ethics formation. Researching discourse ethics and deliberation level in developing states in the post-soviet countries, where the process of democratic transition is still ongoing (Wheatley 2017), has crucial importance. As most of these countries regained their independence only two decades ago, the consolidation and institutionalisation of the political system have not been completed yet. It is important to study these processes from the initial phase up to now, because it allows scientists to obtain a full picture of development of a political structure, thus facilitating the identification of existing drawbacks.

The purpose of this work was to consider the quality of deliberation and discourse based on the analysis of stenographic reports of the Georgian Parliamentary meetings, which would allow outlining the stages and periods of discourse quality index development and formation in Georgia. The main task of the research was to analyse the existing stenographic records, which could be evaluated by the DQI methodology.

The research aim was to analyse one of the major issues in the history of independent Georgia – the process of adopting the Constitution – in terms of discourse ethics. The conduction of the constitution-making process, the quality of discourse and the key issues identified during the constitution-making process were analysed in the research.

At the next stage of the study, the aim was to reflect the obtained results and the measurement of the deliberation level of the debates related in terms of Jurgen Habermas' discourse ethics and to elaborate the DQI index.

For the democratic development of aa country the effective operation of State and civil institutions is crucial. During the research of discourse ethics and the level of deliberation the research object is the state representative body, as the political elite with its own specific political culture is considered to have significant impacts on the process of democratic development of the country. Their debates, forms and methods of interaction, communication and attempts to reach the consensus are perceived as a possible way to define democratic processes. Thus, in the framework of the given article, a clear analysis of the events which shapes democratic development and formation in Georgia will be provided. It is possible to highlight a few important features of these processes:

1. Questions of statehood and self-determination for a country which recently regained independence;
2. How the political elite of the 1990s considered the role and place of the citizens in the political life of the country;
3. Relationship between political processes, politicians and the population.

The text is structured into major parts among which the first (Introduction) chapter covers the research aim and the relevance of the work. The second (Background) chapter outlines the situation in Georgia that prevailed at the moment of parliamentary debates on the adoption of the Constitution and had an impact on the debate process. The Theoretical framework chapter justifies the choice of Jürgen Habermas' methodology and gives an overview of the tool for measuring a discourse quality index. The Research Methodology chapter is focused on describing coding procedure and the DQI tool, which includes seven coding categories. This chapter provides justification to the criteria, analysed in this research. The Research findings chapter provides the results of the research for each of the accessed criterion. The last chapter presents the key findings of the study and defines the main topics of the discussions.

Background

On 24 August 1995, after three months of discussions, the Georgian Parliament adopted the Constitution of Georgia, which is the legal successor of the 1921 Constitution (Georgian Parliament Archive 2018). Twenty-four parties were represented in the parliamentary plenary sessions in 1995. In theory that suggests the pluralistic nature of the legislation process, which is one of the key values of democracy. Nevertheless, although the 1992–95 Parliament was marked by multiparty representations, the other questions were how far parliamentarians expressed their independent and individual positions, whether the body worked based on democracy, how important decisions were made, how well-founded the speeches were and whether the MPs were ready to face criticism from their opponents. To assess the dynamics of development of the Georgian Parliamentarian system, it is necessary to assess the work of the Parliament of Georgia about something as important as the adoption of the Constitution after the restoration of state independence. In 1995 after regaining independence, adoption of the Constitution became an important cornerstone for the future development of the country. However, during the constitution-adoption process, several questions were raised and opinions were divided. On the one hand, the 1995 Constitution is the legal successor of the 1921 Constitution, according to which it was mandatory to carry out the referendum in order to change the previous version of the document. On the other hand, owing to the political situation, the government was not able to hold the nationwide referendum. The reason invoked was that during that period the so-called Tskhinvali region and Abkhazia were run by self-proclaimed governments. The topic of the referendum had become the leading cause of disputes in the 1995 Parliament discussions about adopting the constitution. One group of Parliamentarians claimed that the Constitution could not be adopted with a violation of the 1921 Constitution. The other one considered that Georgia had to adopt the Constitution because

of the international political situation. Some of the MPs believed that for years after restoration of the country's independence the adoption of the Constitution would become an important milestone in developing the Georgian State (Sarishvili, 1995). These were the main issues during the parliamentary debate but in the end the Parliament adopted the Constitution. Based on the analysis of the stenographic recordings made at parliamentary plenary sessions the team of three researchers assessed a deliberation level of the parliamentary sessions using the criteria elaborated by the group of scientists based on Jurgen Habermas' discourse quality approaches.

Theoretical framework

As it was mentioned before, over the past decade research of discourse quality index has become one of the main pillars of deliberation research, and deliberation has become a crucial component of a responsive and responsible democracy (Carpini 2004). There are various theories about deliberation studies. According to deliberation theory, political decision-making is or should be 'talk-centric' rather than 'vote-centric' (Bohman and Rehg 1997). Some scholars even think that a 'discourse is nothing that can be contained within a closed-up room but is characterized by its capacity to spread and to permeate boundaries' (Landwehr 2010).

For a more accurate picture, it is necessary to determine the meaning of the discourse itself. The main contradiction in the twentieth century was between two great thinkers – Jürgen Habermas and Michel Foucault (Stahl 2004).

Michel Foucault, defined discourse as 'ways of constituting knowledge, together with the social practices, forms of subjectivity and power relations which inhere in such knowledges and relations between them. Discourses are more than ways of thinking and producing meaning' (Arribas-Ayllon 2008). Foucault is interested in discourse as the societal process of understanding and self-definition. His research is mainly concentrated on the way discourses are organised and defines who participates, contributes and who is excluded This question of inclusion or exclusion from discourse is the central topic of his notion. The procedures that control and organize discourses are manifold. They include truth, conversational taboos, madness, doctrine, (scientific) discipline and others (Foucault 1971).

On the other hand, in Habermas' theoretical writings the concept of discourse is as central as it is in Foucault's, but it takes on a different meaning. The *Theory of Communicative Action* (1981a/b), arguably Habermas' most important work, explains the concept and function of discourses. Communicative action is distinguished from other types of action such as pragmatic action or strategic action, which are based on bilateral respect between participants of the process. One of the most important aspects of Habermas' approaches are an ethical side of communicative action. The background to this is the conception of humans

as social beings who need to interact in order to survive and prosper. We need to collaborate and by employing communicative action we do so in a moral fashion.

Even today, scientist can't agree which is the best way to measure deliberation index. Throughout history we've seen many different examples of using various techniques to evaluate discourse. For example, Holzinger tried to study degree of discourse using quantitative research methods. He studied the debates regarding waste management in one of the German settlements. According to the results, he distinguished two aspects of the deliberation process – debates and negotiation. According to Holzinger, arguing occurs in most bargaining situations where bargainers seek to justify their positions even where no shared interests or generalisable reasons exist (Holzinger 2004).

Using discourse studies, Leitner tried to define which social and/or political forces determined or influenced broadcasting of Radio BBC English from 1922–1954 and ,Deutsche Rundfunksprache' radio broadcasting from 1923–1945 (Leitner 1980).

Despite different views and approaches, everyone agrees that deliberation plays a huge role in the political decision-making process. Decision-making is a process in which political actors discuss a variety of opinions, justify and evaluate their position and through a process of discourse eventually revise their initial preferences. (Habermas 1981, 1990, 1991, 1995, 1996).

Such a process of discourse improves the informational level of participants (Fishkin 1995) and therefore decisions made by decision-makers will be more legitimate (Cohen 1989).

Due to the fact that there are different approaches towards the deliberation phenomena, various scientists use different measurement instruments to evaluate the quality of discourse. In 2003 a group of scientists including Marco Steenbergen, André Bachtiger, Markus Sporndliand and Jurg Steinerbased created a tool for measuring a discourse quality index based on Jurgen Habermas' origins. Researchers defined 7 scalable components to measure the discourse quality index of an individual statement: I – Participation, II – Level of justification, III – Content of justifications, IV – Respect for the groups, V – Respect towards the demands of others, VI – Respect for counterarguments, VII – Constructive politics. The coding categories can be combined to form a scale that can serve as an overall measure of discourse quality. (Marco R. Steenbergen, André Bachtiger 2003). Thus, the DQI makes it possible to empirically research deliberation level.

Research Methodology

The study is aimed at analysing stenographic recordings made at parliamentary plenary sessions in 1995 based on the importance of the considered issue. As the Constitution is the basic document for the government and society, the

analysis of its pre-adoption period is extremely helpful in understanding the essence of one of the main state bodies of Georgia – the Parliament. For the analysis of stenographic recordings of parliamentary plenary sessions, we used the discourse quality index tool (DQI) elaborated by the group of scientists based on Jurgen Habermas discourse ethics motion.

It became necessary to analyse stenographic recordings made at the parliamentary plenary sessions in 1995, in total 91 speeches. At the same time each of the mentioned speeches had to meet four different criteria: it should be theoretically grounded, it should tap into observable phenomena, it should be general and it should be reliable. These 91 speeches were chosen because in accordance with Habermas' method they more effectively responded to the above-mentioned criteria.

Coding proceeded in two steps. First researchers defined which speeches were relevant to the study. In general, researchers studied 200 pages of transcripts about the debates regarding the adoption of the constitution and picked out 91 speeches which could be assessed using the DQI tool.

In the second stage relevant statements were assessed using the DQI tool, which included seven coding categories. Each of the categories possesses an individual sub-assessment system:

'Participation' – This refers to a speaker's ability to participate freely in a debate. We use two codes for participation:
- 0 – Speaker is Interrupted;
- 1 – Normal participation is possible;

The first code is reserved for situations in which a speaker is interrupted. This does not include situations when a speaker is interrupted because her/his time is up. This coding category depends least on the subjective opinion of the researchers. When assessing this aspect, codes of the three researchers were the same in overall.

'Level of justification' – During the debates each speech is assessed by the following codes:
- 0 – no justification; A speaker only says that X should or should not be done, but no reason is given. This code also applies if a conclusion is merely supported with illustrations.
- 1 – inferior justification; A speaker agrees on one of the positions outlined in the agenda but uses general and vague arguments.
- 2 – qualified justification; A linkage is made as to why one should expect that X contributes to or detracts from Y.
- 3 – sophisticated justification; In this case, at least two reasons are given, either to justify the demand of the speaker.

'Content of justifications' includes several sub criteria:
- (0) Explicit statement – concerning group interests: A speaker mentions one or more groups or Constituencies in a speech;
- (1) Neutral Statement – A speaker doesn't mention constituency or group of interests or the common good;
- (2a) Explicit statement of the common good in utilitarian terms – A speaker mentions the common good in utilitarian terms, including such terms in a speech such as the universal well-being for all citizens, etc.
- (2b) Explicit statement of the common good in terms of the difference principle – A speaker mentions the common good in terms of the difference principle, with reference to helping specific groups of a society.

'Respect towards the groups'
- (0) Neutral – The speech includes only negative statements about the groups;
- (1) Implicit Respect – There is no negative or explicit positive statements in a speech;
- (2) Explicit Respect – The speech contains at least one explicitly positive statement about the groups.

'Respect towards the demands of others' – This indicator uses the same codes as the group respect indicator. This is a specific criterion and to asses it we need to discuss the demand of the speakers and therefore evaluate the responses to these demands.
- Code 0 – Negative attitude;
- Code 1 – Implicit respect;
- Code2 –Explicit respect;

'Respect towards the counterarguments' – This type of respect is coded only if there are provided some arguments and the counterarguments responding to them. There are four codes to measure respect toward counterarguments:
- (0) Counterarguments ignored: A speaker ignores existing counterarguments;
- (1) Counterarguments included but degraded: A speaker acknowledges a counterargument, but degrades it by making a negative statement about it;
- (2) Counterarguments included – neutral: A counterargument is acknowledged but there are no positive or negative responses.
- (3) Counterarguments included and valued: A counterargument is acknowledged and is valued.

'Constructive politics' – This indicator measures a so-called consensus building process and it is assessed by 3 codes:

(0) Positional politics: Speakers stay on their positions. There is no compromise, reconciliation or consensus building;

(1) Alternative proposal: A speaker makes an alternative proposal. In such cases, the proposal does not fit the current debate, although it may be taken up in a different debate;

(2) Mediating proposal: A speaker makes a mediating proposal that fits the agenda.

In the framework of the given study, researchers assessed discourse quality index by the above-mentioned criteria, results obtained during the coding procedure were assigned points. The research undertaken allowed researchers to measure the quality of deliberation during these debates. However, two of the above-mentioned criteria were impossible to consider in the debate and, therefore, they were not included in the study.

Independent coding will serve as the basis for the reliability statistics reported in this paper, since it depends on the subjective judgments of the experts, which in turn increase the probability of biased results. For example measuring an indicator such as the level of justification is based on the subjective opinions of the researcher, he/she defines which speech can be assumed as sophisticated presentation with high-level argumentations or the opposite. In order to avoid inaccuracy, three researchers separately assessed each of the speeches. Eventually, researchers presented the results to each other and finally came to a joint decision. If none of the researchers altered their position, each of their codes would have been shown separately. This method is implemented to obtain the most accurate possible results.

After the speeches were assessed according to the DQI indicator and results were identified, the group of Georgian researchers tried to present obtained data in percentages. From the mentioned seven categories, scientists used five categories, which explicitly showed the quality of deliberation.

Although in the study the stenographic recordings were analysed in accordance with the seven criteria elaborated by Jurgen Habermas to obtain a discourse quality index, Georgian researchers used only five criteria (participation; level of justification; respect for the groups; respect for counterarguments; constructive politics), which better described a culture of debates. The remaining two criteria were assessed under the study, although this data was not used while elaborating the final discourse quality index.

For example, if only 70% of the speakers were given the opportunity to finish their speeches without an interruption, then the index of Participation would be 70% which is equal to 7 points, from the maximum of 10 points. The results will be summarised and the level of deliberation during the debates about the adoption of the 1995 Constitution will be defined.

Although many theorists believe that deliberative politics leads to better outcomes, there is no consensus on this matter, with some arguing vociferously that a connection between deliberation and just outcomes cannot be presumed (Sanders, 1997; Gutmann and Thompson, 2002). It should be pointed out at the outset that this is a measurement paper. We lack the space to investigate the impact of discourse quality on political outcomes.

Besides, a technical shortcoming of the research is that the analysis is conducted according to the stenographic recordings, where it cannot be identified whether the speaker is joking or speaking ironically.

We finalised the results and held the discussions about speech assessment. The data below is the result of the analysis of stenographic recordings conducted by three researchers on the basis of the discourse quality index.

It should be noted that not all the speeches were assessed by the researchers, since some of them were very short.

Research findings

As mentioned earlier, the DQI consists of seven coding categories and each of these categories possesses an individual assessment system.

The First criterion – 'Participation'

During the debates only 65 from 91 speakers, respectively, were given an opportunity to end their speeches without interruptions. Thus, in only 71% of cases interruption was not noted (Table 1). We can conclude that every third speech was interrupted, and this is a violation of the ethics of dialog and debate. As an example of interrupted speech, we can discuss the statement of the deputy Luiza Shakiashvili: 'Perhaps, our future Parliament will be staffed with people far worse than present one, for example (buzz, inaudible). Now you are joking even laughing but…'[1]

Since there are no audio recordings of the plenary sessions, the note in the stenographic reports represent that the conference room was noisy, and the speech could not be recorded. Therefore, the speech is considered interrupted and assessed by code 0.

The Second criterion – 'Level of justification'

During the discussions about the status of the document, Zurab Jvania in his remarks made rational argumentation on the necessity of concrete 'X action'

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1   Stenographic recording from the Parliament archive. Georgian Parliament session. Speaker – L. Shakiashvili – Page 33. 22 August 1995.

in order to achieve 'Y outcome'. In his speech, he explained why it was necessary to define the status of the document at first and only after that to discuss protective mechanisms of it: 'Ordinary law, organic law, even a constitutional law, doesn't need such strong protective mechanisms, we are discussing now. So, I agree that first, we should define on what type of document we are working on? Is it the constitution, or some kind legislative act?'[2]

In the given example the reader can see that there is a linkage between the Y reason (to discuss a protective mechanism) and the X action (which is discussion about the type of document). Researchers agreed that Jvania's statement was logical and had a linkage with the main purpose of the parliamentary discussion.

From 91 speeches about the adoption of the Constitution only 28 speeches respectively were satisfactory justified, the remaining 63 were not justified (Table 2). The arguments were not linked to the matter… The results clearly expose that most of the reports were not well-argued. Most of them were ill-founded, which decreases the quality of deliberation.

The Third criterion – 'Content of justifications'

For illustration we provide part of one of the speeches, where a member of the Parliament speaks about the greatest good for the greatest number: 'The Constitution must not be developed for a person, a group or an organization. It must be adopted for the country and for all people living in the country and believing this country to be their homeland. I agree with my colleagues that claim that Constitution must be regulated. I share the opinion that in today's environment it is wrong to adopt the Constitution against the law. However, there is an old saying „if the child has not been born and has never been young, he will never grow up". Therefore, despite the many shortcomings, I support the adoption of the Constitution'.[3] In his speech, MP Goderdzishvili explained why he supported the adoption of the Constitution despite many shortcomings. He was speaking from the perspective of Georgian society, underlining the fact that adoption of the Constitution would be beneficial for all Georgians, therefore he supported it.

During the discussion about the adoption of the Constitution, 41 speeches out of 91 accordingly addressed the protection of public interests. This code considers various associations, consisting of several persons. Based on the figures presented above, we can conclude that most of the speeches addressed the common good. In other words, the deputies used public interest to enforce their own arguments.

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2 Stenographic recording from the Parliament archive. Georgian Parliament session. Speaker – Zurab Jvania – Page 4. 22 August 1995.

3 Stenographic recording from the Parliament archive. Georgian Parliament session. Speaker – G. Goderdzishvili – Page 13. 22 August 1995.

The Forth criterion – 'Respect towards the groups'

From the total of 91 speeches respectively the negative attitude towards the group was explicit in ten speeches, and 30 speeches represented a pronounced respect. In nine speeches respectively, no sign of negative or positive attitude was revealed.

The Fifth criterion – 'Respect towards the demands of others'

This code is applied to the reports, representing positive attitude towards the speeches of other deputies or the agenda. We can consider as an example the speech of K. Garibashvili, Democratic Party deputy, who explicitly expressed his positive attitude towards the Constitution adoption process: 'Here we are 200 people and it is Impossible that 200 people had no claims against adopting this document as our Constitution. I, myself, don't believe that it will be a bad decision, on the contrary, it will be a good one'.

In this speech we can see a positive attitude towards the key requirement – to adopt the document as a new Constitution. Thus, this speech is assessed with code 2.

Respect towards the demands of others – codes of the above mentioned criterion are the exact analogs of the codes of the previous criteria This code is applied to the reports, depending on the content of the speech.

This indicator was recorded in 78 speeches from 91 speeches which accounted for 44% of the total number of speeches. In other speeches, respect towards the demands of others was not expressed.

Thus, it can be seen that there is no big difference between positive and negative attitude, indicating that an almost equal number of speakers expressed both positive and negative opinions in relation to the claims on the agenda or arising during the debates.

The Sixth criterion – 'Respect for counterarguments'

Below is an example of the speech in which speakers acknowledged the counterarguments and changed their opinion. For this example, we refer to the report of the deputy N. Natadze, where he speaks about Givi Lominadze's argumentation in a positive manner: 'I heard Mr. Givi Lominadze's who insisted that our Constitution must be adopted under the presence in Parliament Abkhaz deputies. I believe this argument to be an ultimate. That is why I will vote in favor of this proposal'.[4]

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4   Stenographic recording from the Parliament archive. Georgian Parliament session. Speaker – N. Natadze – Page 11. 22 August 1995.

Based on the specifics of the criterion this indicator was recorded the least number of times: 31 cases from a total of 91 speeches.

In view of the foregoing it is apparent that the deputies were intolerant towards criticism regarding their speeches. In 32 cases only five deputies expressed a positive attitude towards comments or criticism regarding their previous speeches. In 72% of the total number of cases the attitude towards counterarguments was starkly negative: counterarguments were overlooked or ignored or received poor evaluation. The data represents the positional nature of the debates.

The Seventh criterion – 'Constructive politics'

Based on the specificity of the category this indicator was recorded the least number of times: from 91 speeches on the adoption of the Constitution the indicator presented in only 36 cases of them, 15 speeches respectively included a negative attitude and the speakers stayed on their position without compromise. As for alternative proposals, 21 deputies introduced their initiation which didn't fit the agenda, but could be negotiated. For example, Sarishvili offered to postpone the adoption process and instead of a new Constitution, use already existing codes: 'I think there is one more option. We can leave the „the state government code", as our main law, which has almost the same power, like the constitution. If we don't adopt a new „election code", we could use an existing one. This will give us an additional 3 years...'

Nevertheless, Parliament adopted this document with the support of a majority of deputies.

An attempt to represent the percentage in figures made by Georgian researchers is given below. From the mentioned seven categories, scientists used five, which explicitly shows the quality of deliberation and democratic values. The received results are awarded with points from 1 to 10. In the end, the maximum score is 50.

The criteria are the following I – participation, II – level of justification, III – content of justification, IV – respect for the groups, V – respect towards the demands of others, VI – respect for counterarguments, VII – constructive politics. The percentage of the data will be determined, and points will be awarded accordingly from 1 to 10.

Considering the participation, the percentage of uninterrupted speeches is 70, therefore a category received 7 points. Considering the level of justification, only 30% of speeches are recognized as argued and thus this criterion is assessed with 3 points. Considering the respect for the groups, explicit respect was recorded in 35% of cases and thus it is assessed with 4 points. Considering the respect for counterarguments, only 28% of speeches contained a positive attitude, so this category received 3 points accordingly. Considering the con-

structive policy from 36 speeches, which were against the agenda, 15 (42%) of them stayed on their position and voted against adoption of the document, and 21 MP's (58%) who were against the current agenda initiated negotiable proposals, and this criterion can be assessed with 6 points.

In general, from 50 possible points, the level of deliberation of the Georgian Parliament during the debates over the adoption of the Constitution was 23, to convert this data into percentage, we get the following result: the debates over adoption of the Constitution of Georgia fulfills only 46% of high-level deliberative discourse ethics (Table N1).

Table 1:

Criteria	Maximum point 10
participation	7
level of justification	3
respect for the groups	4
respect for counterarguments	3
constructive politics	6
Overall points	23 = 46%

Conclusions

Since political science is still a new discipline for Georgia, there are many important historical events that need to be studied and analysed, in order to get a clearer picture of the political processes taking place in Georgia during the transition period. This study is an attempt to assess the political 'teenage period' of independent Georgia from different perspectives.

This rticle is an attempt to display the percentage of deliberation in figures made by the group of Georgian scientists working on this problem. From the seven criteria of the DQI index, Georgian scientists used the five which explicitly reflected the quality of deliberation (Participation; Level of justification; Respect for the groups; Respect for counterarguments; Constructive politics;) in order to measure the level of deliberation in Georgian Parliament during the discussion on the Constitution adoption process.

Thus, the study proved that the quality of debates in the Georgian legislature didn't meet the condition. Below are provided key findings of the study:

- Georgian politicians were easily swayed by the opinion of the strong political leaders.
- They were least focused on argued, rational and logical aspects of the discussion, by which consensus is achieved.
- If we compare the quality of Georgian political deliberation with Habermas' characteristics and the results, expected if they present, it can be said that the democratic processes in 1990s Georgia unfolded with mistakes and impediments.
- Legislators lacked strong political and civic culture, which is one of the main factors of a country's democratic development.
- They were not concerned with the role of citizens' participation in the decision making process. – During the debates mutual respect was rarely shown.

Using the DQI indicator in the research process made it possible together with an evaluation of the deliberation process in numbers, to show the importance of these discussions.

The adoption of the 1995 Constitution was one of the important steps in a statehood formation process of Georgia after regaining independence in 1991. Discussion and evaluation of stenographic analysis of debates related to the adoption of the Constitution made it possible together with the evaluation of the quality of debate, to define the main topics of the discussion.

On the one hand, a group of the deputies believed that Georgia had not been ready to adopt the Constitution and the document on which the discussions were held hadn't to be the Constitution of the country but the act of the Constitution. On the other hand, another group of MPs' had considered that Georgia needed the Constitution.

Both sides had their own argument. Some of the MP's that considered that the document should not be granted the status of the Constitution were appealing on Chapter 17 of the 1921 Constitution, where the rules for further revision of the Constitution were defined. The mentioned chapter covered 5 articles, two of them – articles 146 and 147 – became the subject of a special dispute:

Article 146 – A proposal for the revisal of the Constitution can only be heard in Parliament six months after the deposition of such a proposal.

Article 147 – A proposal or plan for the partial or entire revisal of the Constitution can only be adopted by a majority of two-thirds of the members of Parliament. This proposal only comes into force after it has received the approval of the people.

A group of the deputies stated that the new Constitution would have violated the main principles of the 1921 Constitution; in particular, adoption of the new Constitution without holding the referendum was a violation of the article.

Article 147 from the 1921s Constitution, according to which revisal of the Constitution could only be adopted after it has received the approval of the people.

In 1995 Georgia could not conduct a referendum because of the simple reason that after 1993 the Georgian government de-facto lost control over Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region and therefore it was impossible to conduct a survey in every region of the country.

Consequently, the Constitution of 1995 was based on the results of the 1991 referendum, the main topic of which was re-gaining the independence of Georgia.[5]

Most of the MP's believed that despite the resistance, Georgia had to adopt the Constitution, as it would have been a significant step forward for the state development process. Furthermore, according to their assumptions, after the adoption of the Constitution, Georgia could gain more international support and this fact could positively reflected on the issue of conflict resolution.

Finally, on August 24, 1995, Georgia adopted the Constitution that is still functioning today. It turned out that discussion on the Constitution adoption started in February 1995. It should be noted that the Constitution was adopted in conditions of urgency. That is reflected in the fact that the debates about this topic were held on the parliamentary meetings on 22 March and on 22, 23, 24 August 1995 and on 24 August the Parliament adopted the Constitution.

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REVIEW ESSAY

Identity according to Francis Fukuyama:
An obstacle to the end of history

FRANTIŠEK PAĎOUR

Abstract: *This review essay focuses on Francis Fukuyama's book Identity: The Demand for Dignity and the Politics of Resentment, which was published in 2018. The text emphasises placing Fukuyama's new publication in the context of his multi-year work for its correct interpretation. Fukuyama's conception of the human soul is analysed in confrontation with contemporary issues of liberal democracy. It mentions other authors criticisms of Fukuyama's work and, at the same time, it is defended by Fukuyama himself. The text can be seen as an introduction to Francis Fukuyama's reasoning regarding the modern problems of liberal democracy and as an attempt to understand his unsuccessful prediction of the end of history. The central theme of the text is the concept of identity, which Fukuyama describes as a source of conflicts and friction areas in modern societies. Fukuyama's findings are supplemented by the findings of other authors and current world events.*

Keywords: *Francis Fukuyama, Thumos, Identity, Politics of Resentment.*

The Neohumanist[1] Francis Fukuyama became known mainly due to his article *The End of History?* (Fukuyama 1989) published in 1989 in *National Interest*, which was elaborated into a book in 1993 called *The End of History and the Last*

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1 Similar to humanists in the 14th to 16th centuries, Fukuyama refers to historical, traditional philosophy (especially to Plato), responding to various modern speculative social science approaches. This approach is applied in the context of both historical and contemporary social sciences and is therefore described as a Neohumanist. At the same time, Fukuyama is oriented towards man and his peaceful development, which in his opinion is supposed to ensure the phenomenon of the second half of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century – liberal democracy.

Man (Fukuyama 1993). These publications reflect the atmosphere of the late 1980s and early 1990s, when, after forty years of the Cold War, the Western bloc represented by liberal democracy and the market economy managed to overcome the Eastern bloc, which symbolised the non-democratic communist order. After the triumph of liberal democracy, the winning camp perceived this victory as absolute, and it was expected that liberal democracy and the market economy would spread throughout the world as an ideal of the social and political order of states. Francis Fukuyama also succumbed to this atmosphere, predicting in the mentioned publication that the history of liberal democracy as a constant conflict of religious, ideological or political approaches that accompanied humankind until it reached a liberal democracy, which could no longer find an equal competitor, had come to an end. For Fukuyama, this moment means the end of history.

Francis Fukuyama ranks among macro-historians, looking at the course of history as a progressive whole, not examining the details of a particular historical event, but looking for common phenomena that characterises each period and demonstrates them at major historical events, such as the Great French Revolution, World War I, the rise of fascism in Europe, terrorist attacks, etc. It's evident that Fukuyama has popularised his publications successfully, making him widely read outside the academic community and able to attract a wide array of readers interested in world politics. He is doing well mainly based on the choice of „big topics". However, this fact doesn't deny the quality of academic work, which is rated higher than that of Fukuyama's best-known critic and opinion opponent Samuel Huntington in his popular publication *Clash of Civilisations* (Huntington 1996). In the case of Fukuyama, the operationalisation of terms is at a good level. Unlike Huntington, he provides his own grasp of terms to avoid misinterpretation.

Fukuyama's research method in the case of new and previous works can be described as qualitative. He tries to investigate themes in depth and find the causes of significant phenomena. Fukuyama's research is based on the search for the essences of phenomena instead of a quantitative collection of large amounts of information and calculating conclusions by mathematical methods. The reader can evaluate Fukuyama's work critically in terms of its liberal-democratic normativity. However, this fact is somewhat predictable, as Fukuyama is perceived as an „advocate" of liberal-democratic universalism of the late 20th century (Fukuyama 1991: 659 – 664). Fukuyama's new publication will find many critics amongst left-wing postmodernists as well as right-wing nationalists. Nevertheless, Fukuyama is trying to find a consensual solution to find unity in fundamental issues amongst opposing social segments (identities – see below).

Fukuyama perceives history through the lens of the Hegelian concept of progress, as mentioned above, history is perceived as a whole, which, based on

reason, human work and ideas, is still directed towards the ideal and ultimate organisation of humanity. Fukuyama advocates this positive historical progress with an empirical view of the course of history, and humanity is gradually succeeding in achieving a more free and peaceful arrangement. However, history's progress in Fukuyama's conception doesn't neglect the role of warfare and conflict. For Fukuyama, this progress is characterised by historical conflicts that have driven humankind to progress.

According to Fukuyama, historical conflicts are the epoch-making conflicts between Islam and Christianity, the dispute between the power of the sovereign and the Church, the conflict within the Christian Church, the conflict between the power of the sovereign and the will of the people. All of these historical conflicts have in common that in either case there was no clear winner, the dispute had cooled down, or power and sphere of influence had been divided among the competing parties, and therefore another conflict could have arisen, allowing history to continue as a permanent conflict. However, the difference came during, and especially at the end, of the twentieth century, when democracy and liberalism triumphed over non-democratic, firstly fascist and later communist regimes. These non-democratic regimes have ceased to be an equal competitor to liberal democracy. According to Fukuyama, such liberal democracy has lost whatever rival, the course of history has lost the always-present conflict, bringing history to its end.

It should be added that the events of the 1990s and the beginning of the 21st century refuted Fukuyama's prediction and optimism about the dominance of liberal democracy to a certain extent. One of the first arguments against Fukuyama's claim was the war conflict in Yugoslavia, which his critics (Maershaimer neo-realists, Huntington) mentioned most often.[2] Similarly, many other events occurring in the following years didn't really support Fukuyama's predictions. The terrorist attacks in the US on September 9th, 2001, also other terrorist attacks were not supposed to have a place in a world in which liberal democracy was supposed to spread universally. Instead, these events were arguments for Fukuyama's best-known critic, S. Huntington, and his work *Clash of Civilisations* (Huntington 1997). The modern conflict of religious fundamentalism with Western globalism could be considered, in a simplified interpretation, to bust Fukuyama's hypotheses. According to Fukuyama, liberal democracy was supposed to spread globally, with no competition; and enhanced Islamism wasn't foreseen.

As mentioned above, Fukuyama admits a conflict as a part of society's way towards better tomorrows. Therefore, Fukuyama was not a critic of a US armed intervention. However, even further developments didn't suggest that Fukuy-

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2   E-International Relations (2018) *Huntington vs. Mearsheimer vs. Fukuyama: Which Post-ColdWar Thesis is Most Accurate?* [cit. 17/05/2019] Available online at: https://www.e-ir.info/2018/04/22/huntington--vs-mearsheimer-vs-fukuyama-which-post-cold-war-thesis-is-most-accurate/(24 February 2020).

ama's predictions would be fulfilled. Other problems for the liberal-democratic world order also appeared at the last turn of the decade; this time within the Western liberal-democratic world. Specifically, it's the rise of right-wing nationalism across states. The phenomenon that hindered the path to liberal-democratic universalism, which was to be overcome by the past, reappeared. Donald Trump being elected as president of the United States, a rise in the preferences of radical right-wing politicians in Western and especially Central and Eastern Europe, can be mentioned randomly. Deficiencies in the democratic functioning of countries in Central, and Eastern Europe, such as the introduction of „illiberal" democracy by Viktor Orbán in Hungary[3] or the flaws in the democratic rule of law in Poland[4].

However, similar trends are also evident in western Europe. Examples include strengthening right-wing nationalists in Italy[5], nationalist populism on the rise in Austria[6] and many other countries. After all, Russia's attempt to introduce liberal democracy has also failed, and this superpower has slipped into some form of non-democratic regime under Vladimir Putin[7]. The People's Republic of China (PRC) has successfully responded to economic globalism and liberalism, but its political regime didn't go hand in hand with economic liberalisation and indeed can't be described as democratic. The Communist Party of the PRC is taking the opposite path, skilfully using modern technology to tighten control and restrict the population's freedom.[8] Since Donald Trump was elected as the US president, there has also been a global rise in protectionism and a partial return to real politics at the level of the great powers and some smaller states.[9] Although the Russian annexation of Crimea has created a rare consensus on the topic of foreign policy within the Western states on the imposition of economic sanctions on Putin's non-democratic regime, these events have certainly not added to the worldwide legitimacy of liberal democracy. The interpretation of sanctions by state-controlled media and top politicians for Russian citizens

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3   Available online at: https://freedomhouse.org/report/modern-authoritarianism-illiberal-democracies(24 February 2020).

4   Available online at: https://www.politico.eu/article/poland-democracy-failing-pis-law-and-justice-media-rule-of-law/(24 February 2020).

5   Available online at: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/dec/01/italians-first-matteo-salvini-the-league-rise-rightwing-populism(24 February 2020).

6   Available online at: https://www.usnews.com/news/best-countries/articles/2018-07-05/austrias-influential-rise-to-fuel-far-right-movement-in-europe(24 February 2020).

7   Available online at: https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2018-10-02/how-russia-and-china-undermine-democracy(24 February 2020).

8   Available online at: https://www.washingtonpost.com/gdpr-consent/?destination=%2fnews%2fthew orldpost%2fwp%2f2018%2f11%2f27%2fchina-authoritarian%2f%3f & utm_term=.d58e2ed0138d (24 February 2020).

9   Available online at: https://foreignpolicy.com/gt-essay/understanding-trumps-trade-war-china-trans-pacific-nato/(24 February 2020).

and citizens of Russian allied states creates a negative discourse regarding the Western liberal-democratic system.[10] Although the sanctions affect Russia on an economic level to some extent, the social and political effect of sanctions is more of a deepening of the gap between „Eastern" authoritarianism and „Western" democratic liberalism, rather than the desired convergence of the 1990s.[11]

Fukuyama's predictions about the end of history and the worldwide victory of liberal democracy have many flaws, and his critics are packed with arguments against his claims. Fukuyama's work, therefore, had become much more damned as a rash attempt to predict liberal-democratic universalism from the 1990s, when, in a euphoric atmosphere, it seemed that after the defeat of the Eastern Bloc, liberal democracy would no longer have an equal rival and historical conflict was at its end. However, the radical condemnation and denial of Fukuyama's thoughts are caused by their simplified and misleading interpretation to some extent. All arguments against Fukuyama are no surprise to him, and he admits these pitfalls for liberal democracy in his work and defends them in the opening part of his book *Identity: The Demand for Dignity and the Politics of Resentment.*

For a proper understanding and analysis of the reviewed book *Identity: The Demand for Dignity and the Politics of Resentment,* as well as a basic introduction to Fukuyama's previous work is necessary. In his new publication, Fukuyama, to a certain extent, continues his *End of History* and at the same time, in the introductory part, provides a look back at his predictions and responds to their criticism. Fukuyama admits and describes the problems that liberal democracy is currently facing. He doesn't seek to defend the dominance of liberal democracy, which would have a considerable demagogic effect. However, in the opening part of the book, Fukuyama highlights the misunderstanding and misinterpretation of his previous work by his critics.

Hegel, from whose conception of history Fukuyama draws his inspiration, found the Prussian State to be the pinnacle of history. Similarly, based on Hegel's dialectics, Karl Marx found the ultimate historical conflict in the proletariat versus bourgeoisie, with the proletariat as the winner. For Fukuyama, the end of history is the victory of liberal democracy. According to his claim, humanity has nowhere else to go, and it's impossible to find a more ideal social and political order. Fukuyama predicted that by the triumph of liberal democracy of the 1990s, humankind is entering a „post-historical" phase in which the engine of progress – a conflict of different approaches – disappears. Fukuyama understands the end of history as the end of History (with a capital letter), but

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10 Available online at:https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/us-russia-sancions-
-latest-putin-trump-washington-moscow-a8503371.html(24 February 2020).

11 Available online at:https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/09/26/new-sanctions-wont-hurt-russia-putin-
-oligarchs-rusal-deripaska/(24 February 2020).

that doesn't mean that it's a chronologically absolute state and that humanity cannot slip back from post-history to history.

The end of History in the form of a triumph of liberal democracy is therefore the highest degree of historical progress in the category of social, political and power organisation, but that doesn't mean that humanity will always live in the state of the End of History. At the same time, Fukuyama warns that if the problems that liberal democracy is facing continue and no ways are found to unite the various opposing groups inside and outside democracies, a return to a specific phase of history is possible. By returning to history is understood the decline of the world's influence of liberal democracy. It's precisely the identification and analysis of the causes of the problems of liberal democracy, as well as the attempt to remedy them that Francis Fukuyama focuses on in his book *Identity: The Demand for Dignity and the Politics of Resentment.*

The central concept behind Francis Fukuyama's previous work and *Identity* is the Greek term *Thymos*[12]*(English: Thumos).* Fukuyama's book is based on Plato's conception of the human soul, which he described in *the Constitution* (Platón 1993). According to Plato and Fukuyama, the human soul consists of three components: *desire, reason,* and *thumos*. According to Plato, the first of the three components of the soul is desire. Desire is the emotional need of a man who blindly drives human lust. If desire were the only component of the soul, it's inevitable that a man lacking opinions and driven only by his desires, wouldn't make much progress. Human beings acting unreasonably, being subject to their desires, would surely clash in the dead ends of their interests from which there is no way out.

However, according to Plato, reason is the second component. Thanks to reason, one can control or regulate one's emotions to some extent. Therefore, the emotional need in the form of desire is complemented by reason, which seems to be largely behind human progress. However, reason alone wouldn't be enough for human progress and success. Indeed, many prominent women and men of human history wouldn't have become significant if they had no desire to do extraordinary things. However, this phenomenon is not only present in the elites who are mentioned as the creators of historical events, but it constructs the soul of all individuals who, to a varying degree and with the relationship of desire and reason, participate in the historical progress of humankind without realising it. Therefore, according to Plato, man is a longing and thinking being. These two components of the soul distinguish man from animals and cause the *homo homini lupus*[13] state isn't society's only normative state, since man in his behaviour and decision is subject to reason and desire, not just instinct. However,

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12 „3. *Thumos, according to Plato"*[cit. 01-03-2019] Available at: https://classicalwisdom.com/culture/traditions/tradition-thumos/ (24 February 2020).

13 *A man is a wolf to another man*

this doesn't mean that one can't slip into this „natural state" (as referred to by realists). Man's nature is longing and thinking, but that doesn't mean peace or war.

Therefore, desire is driven by human lust, which is directed by reason. For each individual, one of these components prevails to a different degree, or they're in equilibrium. For instance, an example of the relationship between these two components is the desire for an expensive car, which is yet guided by reason, calculating to determine whether such an investment pays-off or whether the individual has the resources. If the human soul consisted solely of desire, the individual would have thoughtfully bought an expensive car, but would soon find out that such investment would ruin him or would create such debt, whereby he's unable to make repayments. Therefore, he loses all his property or his freedom. However, happiness is a desire balanced by reason. Though a reasoning man longs for an expensive car, at the same time, within a short time and almost automatically, he calculates in his mind, based on which he realises that such a calculation is disadvantageous for him and doesn't make sense.

As mentioned above, the human soul consists of three parts. Desire is complemented with reason, and conversely, reason completes desire, and these two components are further complemented with or determined by a third component, *thumos*. *Thumos* is central to Fukuyama in his thinking about society's political decision-making. According to Fukuyama, *thumos* was behind the birth and spread of democracy in the 19th and 20th centuries. It also causes the phenomenon of so-called identities, which is described in the reviewed publication *Identity: The Demand for Dignity and the Politics of Resentment*. Paradoxically, and to some extent, these identities are behind the current problems that democracies are facing worldwide. The paradox, therefore, is that the same *thumos* that was behind the birth of democracy is today a serious threat and an obstacle to democracy.

The third component of the human soul, *thumos*, was associated with warriors in traditional societies. *Thumos* captures their inner pride, which is, however, manifested towards the outside world as a means of external recognition. Therefore, it includes both internal and external dimensions. The satisfaction of the inner dimension of the thumos occurs through its outer dimension. Thumos represents the perception of oneself towards the outside world; it's internal self-determination concerning the whole. In other words, how I perceive myself based on how society perceives me. A good example is the model of an ancient warrior – a hero who was able to pay with his life to maintain his pride. If a warrior was disgraced or challenged to a duel of life and death, a warrior didn't hesitate to take part in such a duel, even though he knew he could lay down his life in the duel. Yet, the pride and respect of society was a higher value for a warrior than his own life, as it determined his existence and self-concept.

His pride, which determined his personality vis-à-vis the whole, was for him the highest value for which he was recognised and respected by society. Respect

for society and recognition of heroic status satisfied the warrior's *thumos*. *Thumos* can, therefore, be perceived as a need for the individual's recognition or identification by the outside world. Based on *thumos*, an individual perceives their position in the world. However, ordinary citizens, subjects, workers didn't have this value in traditional societies. Their role in society was given since birth and remained the same throughout their lives. If someone was born into a shepherd's family, he inherited this livelihood from his parents and exercised it throughout his life. The shepherd was satisfied with this role because he grew up as a shepherd and was a shepherd; having no other demands and needs than for supporting himself and his family. He didn't address aspects such as pride or respect from society; his role was to shepherd sheep and support his family. He left pride and respect to the warriors. Demands of *thumos* of ordinary people were therefore on lower level then in the cases of warriors.

According to Fukuyama, more intensive demands of *thumos* begins to appear among ordinary citizens, subjects, and workers in the context of events related to the French Revolution. Fukuyama closely links the subsequent emancipation of man and his demand for an extension of his rights, especially the right to vote with the issue of *thumos*. According to Fukuyama, *thumos* is the driving force behind the democracy boom in the 19th and 20th centuries. The French Revolution and its related events have increased the feeling of importance in the broad masses of the population. Ordinary citizens have ceased to think of themselves as subjects who were passively accepting this role. The representatives of society's working class began to recognise themselves as a rightful part of the whole, which should be perceived and acknowledged by the surrounding environment. Enlightened rational reasoning caused equality before God proclaimed by the Church lost its universal legitimacy.

A continually growing number of the population gradually started to demand recognition or visibility towards society. A need, which in the traditional community was a privilege of warriors and heroes, started to emerge in this social segment. The unsatisfied *thumos* in the majority of society began to awaken. People who were previously perceived as lower-ranking citizens began to demand a privilege that previously only belonged to a selected minority. Ordinary citizens, to some extent, wanted to feel equivalent to the „nobility". However, the equality of all members of society is apparently unreachable and undesirable for the ruling elite. It's hard to imagine how a class possessing movable and immovable assets shares their equity with subjects to achieve equality. This *thumos* demand was satisfied by the gradual extension of the right to vote and the establishment of democracy. Therefore, the broad spectrum of society felt recognised as a whole, and the same rights allowed all strata of society to satisfy their internal pride, as the ordinary citizen felt equal to the traditional elite before the law.

From the above, it may seem that liberal democracy is the most appropriate instrument to satisfy the requirements of the human soul. A liberal-democratic

consumer society based on economic liberalism can satisfy human desires based on material saturation. Individuals desire material goods, and in order to achieve them, they strive to increase their wealth. Simultaneously, they help to maintain the economic cycle and contribute to the wealth of states. On this basis, materialism and all-encompassing marketing, typical phenomena for Western liberal-democratic capitalist societies, saturate both human aspirations and the economic prosperity of states. With exaggeration, we can say that not the „inextricable hand of the market," but the material human desires are the primary driving force of the market economy.

At the same time, liberal-democratic Western societies provide space for the satisfaction of human reason. Modern Western society has grown based on the primacy of human reason, which to date, has developed a great deal in many ways. Scientific advancement, new scientific disciplines, an emphasis on education and its social prestige, a virtually unlimited supply of literature, an endless variety of information and easy access to it are typical features of today's Western society. The reasoning part of Plato's human soul has, therefore many variations for application. Nevertheless, it's complementary to human desires through materialism.

Finally, a liberal-democratic society reflects human *thumos* through equal suffrage and universal equality before the law. Citizens of liberal-democratic societies feel equality regardless of their socio-economic status. The voice and rights of workers have the same weight as the voice and rights of elites, soldiers (former warriors) or politicians. Therefore, human *thymus* should be saturated through these mechanisms in such societies. However, 20th century events and the problems faced by liberal democracy at the beginning of the 21st century point to the fact that this hypothesis has considerable flaws. Francis Fukuyama presents with an explanation of why this is the case. The assumption of the saturation of *thumos* in a liberal-democratic society could be true if *thumos* were universal in all people.

However, Fukuyama emphasises that *thumos* falls into two groups. The first group is defined as *isothymia*. *Isothymia* occurs in individuals whose need is to be recognised as equal to other members of society. It's associated with concepts such as solidarity, belonging, humanism, consensus, etc. *Isothymia* isn't radical and is usually found in societies. The second component is *megalothymia*. Unlike *isothymia*, it's present in individuals whose need is to be superior to others.

The second group is less represented in society and is demonstrated by Fukuyama on individuals who appear in positions of power, politicians, managers, top athletes, show-business stars, etc. Fukuyama attributes the pathological form of *megalothymia* to authoritarian leaders such as Adolf Hitler, Napoleon Bonaparte, or at present Vladimir Putin, but to some extent also Donald Trump and others. The common denominator of pathological *megalothymia* is the need to control others. Fukuyama is aware of the risks arising from the interaction

of these various *thumos* forms and points out that recent years have shown that liberal democracies have failed to satisfy both groups.

Liberal Democracy provides the means of satisfying *Megalothymia* such as climbing 8,000 metre peaks, achievements in sports, business, art, politics, etc., but it doesn't allow the „pathological" form of *megalothymia* that is present in individuals hankering after absolute power over others, present in individuals with authoritarian tendencies, according to Fukuyama also in Viktor Orbán in Hungary, Jaroslaw Kaczynski in Poland and others. That is, in countries where there is a tendency against the 1990s liberal-democratic assumption. *Megalothymia* is one of the threats to liberal democracy.

However, in the book *Identity*, Fukuyama especially examines problems associated with *Isothymia*. Fukuyama divides society into groups based on their identity, which is closely associated with *thumos*. It puts forward the hypothesis that the current political struggle isn't a struggle of classes or a struggle for a redistribution of resources from the Treasury, but a struggle of identities. It's the dissatisfaction of the different identities and their representatives that is the cause of the problem in today's liberal democracy. Fukuyama emphasises that the various segments of society (identity) feel overlooked or disadvantaged by the elites and the rest of society. Therefore, these identities feel inferior to the whole; they feel frustrated, believing that someone has the rights that „naturally" belong to them. Although their rights are guaranteed by a liberal-democratic constitution and their electoral vote has the same weight as anyone else's. However, this means that as a product of enlightenment, it's no longer sufficient to satisfy their *thumos*. In this way, their *isothymia* isn't satisfied. Groups of citizens who feel that someone (another group, government, etc.) has stripped them of their rights, and they consequently demand the recovery of their rights. Yet in most cases, this feeling is irrational, as in fact, their rights were not deprived. However, there is a phenomenon that various other minority identities, which had previously rights in some way different, succeed in gaining equality with other identities.

A similar phenomenon also occurs vice versa. Formerly marginalised identities feel disadvantaged against other identities and claim equality. This leads to a vicious circle, letting out different identities yet frustrated in the same way. They feel neglected by the system at the expense of other identities. According to Fukuyama, identities outperformed national identity. Identity members feel a stronger community than a national community. Therefore, it's not an international-level dispute, but a national dispute. National unity, face to face unity of identities, is weakening considerably and ceases to play the role of a sealant regulating disputes between different segments of state citizens. In many cases, identity requirements are internationalised, with identities with similar or similar interests getting interconnected across states, disregarding their own citizenship, and opposing their governments and other identities.

Identities are formed by the same requirements, lived and shared experiences, problems, also often racial, religious or ethnical. Fukuyama affords particular mention to the *lived experience* phenomenon as essential in creating identities. Different groups have taken different historical paths whereby they've experienced and shared experiences at the „intergroup" level. Through this lived experience, different requirements of different groups are formed. For example, despite today's racial equality, it's clear that the American black minority views its rights in a different way than the white majority. (Fukuyama, 2018: 110)

It's evident that within liberal-democratic states adopting multiculturalism, lived experience is not homogeneous among all their citizens. Heterogeneity and diversity are typical of Western societies. The same applies to different intranational group segmentation. In many cases, rather than a lived national experience, different groups within the state feel a lived group experience that's projected into the construction of their identities. This creates a large number of groups within the state that have different or opposite requirements and are linked by a deviation from the mainstream in different directions. Fukuyama describes the concept of identity based on the concept of Jean-Jacque Rousseau; that is, identity is not innate but is formed by experience, external factors, perceptual perception, and learning throughout life. Fukuyama mentions left-wing activists fighting for the emancipation of minority rights (LGBT[14], Black Lives Matter[15], MeToo[16], etc.) as examples of identities, as well as right--wing nationalism and religious fundamentalism. On this basis, Fukuyama is rethinking the established understanding of left and right wings. (Fukuyama 2018: 103 – 123)

While in the past, the right-left struggle was characterised on an economic basis, at present, this conflict is, according to Fukuyama, manifested by a struggle of identities. Understanding the left and right is now very different from its traditional concept. Fukuyama mentions that this change originated in the 1960s and 1970s when the origins of the policy of identities began to form in Western Europe and the US. The 1960s and 70s are characterised by an increase in many social movements, defined in their demands vis-à-vis the establishment, government decisions, or the system as such. Many of these minority movements were connected by the demand for being socially recognised and gaining equality with the majority of society. The most common themes of these movements were immigration, the status of women, the environment, etc. (Fukuyama 2018: 106). As an example, we can mention the so-called „1968 Generation", which brought together young people across Western Europe.

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14 Available online at: https://www.aclu.org/issues/lgbt-rights, https://www.hrc.org/, https://lgbt.foundation/who-were-here-for (24 February 2020).

15 Available online at: https://blacklivesmatter.com/ (24 February 2020).

16 Available online at: https://metoomvmt.org/ (24 February 2020).

The various „1968 Generation" movements identified themselves as the left, but instead of a class war, they were mentioning the rights of various minority groups. It's these events that laid the foundations of the modern conception of left and right (Rootes 2008: 295 – 305). The left-wing demands following the emancipation of various minorities and the change in the political and social status quo came with a right-wing response in the position of advocating traditional values and the social status quo.

On this basis, according to Fukuyama, the present conception of the left and right is formed, which has been polarised by significant events of the first two decades of the 20th century into today's form of policy of identities. Simultaneously, traditional voters of the left-wing now tend to incline to the right one and vice versa. At the present, the left is represented by progressive, often post-modernist groups that promote minority emancipation, a liberal approach to migration, post-material values, etc., while the right is a conservative advocate of the status quo, the nation state, and exclusivity of indigenous people, the standard concept of family, Christian values, and in extreme terms it refers to ethnic or racial origin.

With this assumption, the working class moves, from its position as the voter, from the left to the right as it defends order and the system known to it, while the progressive left ceases to understand this segment of society. In the case of Fukuyama's approach to shifting voters from the right side of the political spectrum, and vice versa, it's possible to find similarities to R. Ingelhart's concept. As early as the early 1990s, R. Ingelhart came up with the idea that in developed and modern western states, the working class was approached by right-wing leaders defending the status quo and conservative national values against globalisation progress, while traditional right-wing voters in the environment of the country's „welfare" after reaching the economic saturation voted for left-wing parties promoting post-material values (Inglehart 1990: 5 – 11). With regard to the above stated, it's clear that the approaches of both researchers are based on the same hypothesis, i.e. shift of voters to the other side of the political spectrum. However, the difference lies partly in the cause of this process, while Inglehart mentions economic principles, such as economic saturation, Fukuyama's approach is based on *identity* and *thumos*.

The common feature of these groups of identities is the feeling that they are deprived of the rights that they own. They feel neglected by society, elites, or the outside world, which don't seem to see their problems. These groups have antipathy towards other groups that „steal" their rights. The clash of identities in Fukuyama's presentation represents a conflict of opposing groups whose goal is identical – the accomplishment of their own *thumos*, but the concept of this goal is different or contradictory for each group. Therefore, a large number of groups with different requirements arise within states, seeking different and often diverse goals and requirements. This national heterogeneity consequently harms the stability of the democracy of the states in question.

In Fukuyama's approach to the fragmentation of the social spectrum concerning the stability of democracy, it's possible to find some common elements with the typology of Gabriel Almond's democratic systems, which Almond introduced in 1956 (Almond 1956). Almond describes four types of political systems: the Anglo-American political system (including Commonwealth countries, USA), the continental European system (without the Scandinavian and Benelux countries combining elements of the European continental and Anglo-American systems), pre-industrial or semi-industrial political systems occurring outside of Europe. North America and totalitarian political systems. Of particular interest to our needs are the first two types of G. Almond, i.e. the Anglo-American and European continental systems (Almond 1956: 392 – 393).

Almond argues that the Anglo-American system shows greater stability of democracy than the European one. Almond bases this assumption on the greater degree of homogeneity of political culture and social cohesion, which he believes is shown by states such as the United Kingdom and the United States, while strongly heterogeneous European societies show signs of less democratic stability (Almond 1956: 392 – 393). It's in this statement that one can observe certain similarities with Fukuyama, that is, the greater the homogeneity of society, the more stable the state's democracy. It's the strong heterogeneity and fragmentation of society that Fukuyama considers as one of the reasons causing the issues that democracies have been facing in recent years.

The difference between Fukuyama's and Almond's research largely lies in the variables that both researchers focus on. While identity is the key for Fukuyama, Almond focuses on political culture. Yet, both explore similar phenomena in different ways, i.e. social fragmentation or cohesion. Nevertheless, their conclusions are different, and Almond's hypotheses does not apply to Fukuyama's research. Almond argued that the Anglo-American system showed more stability for its homogeneity than socially fragmented political systems in continental Europe, while Fukuyama points out the fragmentation of society into many different identities in both the United States and Europe. Democracy is confronted with similar problems on both continents of the Western world. Therefore, Almond's typology isn't valid in Fukuyama's approach.

A common phenomenon that is present in both the US and EU countries is right-wing nationalism, described as a „white man revolt". This identity is represented predominantly by lower-ranked individuals on the socio-economic ladder, and its members also belong to long-term citizens of a given state with a family tradition of citizenship who see themselves as rightful citizens of that state. In recent years, this group has come to the belief that elites are advocating for minority rights more and more, have forgotten the „white man" and that his voice has stopped being heard in „his" country. This group, defending the conservative organisation of society, ceases to understand the „post-modern world", and „is getting lost" in it, and therefore is supporting the right-wing

nationalist leaders who speak „their" language and provide the representatives of these groups with an understanding of the world. The requirement of this group is furthermore to return to the „good old days", but this time it's often unspecified and therefore represents a construct of the myth of the „good old days". The most demonstrative example of this phenomenon is Donald Trump being elected as the president of the United States with the slogan „make America great again"[17].

Other identities described by Fukuyama lie on the left side of the political spectrum and are represented by groups defending the rights of various minorities and post-material or postmodern values. Examples include various LGBTQ community rights movements[18], Black Lives Matter movement[19], MeToo campaign[20], environmental movements, and more. The common denominator of these groups is the feeling of inequality as compared to the rest of society and the consequent demand for more rights and for their voice to be heard. Right-wing and left-wing identities naturally come into conflict without the ability to find consensus, since their discourse is very different. According to Fukuyama, the apparent cause of this dissatisfaction is the unfulfilled requirement of the thymus of the representatives from the given identities.

Another common feature of these identities is that the representatives unfolding animosity of individual identities poses a threat to liberal democracy in the Western world. Based on Fukuyama's analysis, it can be argued that the policy of defining identities is behind the problems that liberal democracies are facing. The litmus paper regarding the difference between the right-wing and the left-wing identities is their different view on the issue of migration. While the left has a positive attitude to migration, the right is more sceptical about it and in many cases even dismissive or hateful. However, there are several of such split between identities. The incompatibility of the requirements of individual segments leads to their radicalisation on both sides, thereby emptying the central segment, which has the potential for a consensual solution and simultaneously forms the backbone of liberal democracy.

Fukuyama's identity groups further include religious fundamentalism demonstrated on the example of Islamism in Europe. Fukuyama believes that Islam, like religion itself, isn't the cause of the crimes in Europe by Islamic radicals. Fukuyama argues that the cause of this issue is the radicalisation of the second to the third generation of Muslim immigrants whose parents have accepted coexistence with Western culture. Their children aren't raised to hate Western

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17 Available online at: https://www.politico.com/blogs/donald-trump-administration/2016/12/trumps--inaugural-slogan-make-america-great-again-232414 (24 February 2020).

18 Available online at: https://www.aclu.org/issues/lgbt-rights, https://www.hrc.org/, https://lgbt.foundation/who-were-here-for (24 February 2020).

19 Available online at: https://blacklivesmatter.com/ (24 February 2020).

20 Available online at: https://metoomvmt.org/ (24 February 2020).

culture; the origin of their hate isn't finding their own position in society. The minority Muslim community in Europe doesn't provide these youngsters with their identity, as it's unable to compete with the competition of the Western lifestyles in Europe, and its potential is becoming somewhat emptied. However, at the same time, young Muslims who, as a disadvantaged minority, mature into a society where they don't find their place and don't fulfil the sense of equality or respect, i.e. *thumos* fulfilment, are subsequently prone to radicalisation provided by the propaganda of radical Islamist groups. The same phenomenon of frustration among young representatives of Muslim minorities is described by many other authors, such as Robinson et al. in *Muslim youth in Britain…* (Robinson 2017: 266 – 289). Many of these young people unexpectedly disappear from their parents and are „recruited" by Islamist groups, where, based on indoctrination, they feel the fulfilment of their own pride and superiority to others, i.e. the fulfilment of *thumos* to *megalothymia*. The origin of this radicalisation again comes from *thumos.*

After analysing the causes of identity issues, Fukuyama comes up with a potential solution. Fukuyama sees strengthening national identity as the starting point for this issue, as this would be the connecting tissue of national unity on fundamental issues. Fukuyama doesn't propose to homogenise society and break down different identities but stresses the role of the state, which should give its citizens a sense of belonging. Liberal-democratic institutions should be the foundation of liberal-democratic societies. Therefore, to some extent, Fukuyama gives precedence to Western culture over others by arguing that immigrants to Western countries must accept Western culture as dominant in the given region, respecting its rules and not developing parallel rules, which are not congruent with liberal democracies.

Therefore. the task of political leaders should be strengthening society's confidence in liberal-democratic institutions and values and especially, their clear definition. This should create imaginary states' pillars in which citizens can believe and refer to them. According to Fukuyama, the foundation of societies shouldn't be their diversity as such, but instead, they should find the values and principles that create the connective tissue across identities. It's not his intention to completely empty conflicts between identities, but this conflict must be subdued by common foundations in such a way that it isn't a threat to the stability of a liberal-democratic system. It is a national identity that should serve as a „connective tissue" for society and consensual space for constructive resolution of conflicts across identities. Fukuyama analyses the EU Member States individually, as well as the US and others, but doesn't reject the idea of finding a collective European identity and establishing a European Federation.

Fukuyama's approach towards the construction of national identity resembles the concept of a „melting pot" (Hirschman 1983: 379 – 423). Western culture and its liberal-democratic institutions and the market economy in the

respective states should be maintained as dominant, as in Fukuyama's opinion, these are behind the success of the West. Therefore, national identity in Western countries should be constructed on a consensual and broad liberal-democratic basis. Other identities should be preserved, but shouldn't exceed the dominance of a national identity, which should be respected by all citizens of states regardless of their allegiance towards other identities. Therefore, to a certain extent, national identity represents a national unity in fundamental issues that suppresses conflicts between other identities. For example, under this assumption a Muslim in the Parisian suburbs, a Parisian feminist, a heterosexual right-wing nationalist from Calais, an African immigrant working in Nice, a homosexual man from Lyon or an Eastern-European worker should be able to accept French identity and share its values or norms through citizenship without significant hurdles, while preserving their own diversity, but living together as equal Frenchmen without major conflict[21]. According to Fukuyama, the prerequisite for such a situation is acceptance and trust in national liberal-democratic institutions and laws.

According to Fukuyama, the topic of migration shouldn't be polarised, as is the case today in many circumstances. Fukuyama doesn't see the solution to this issue in building walls, altogether banning migration or on the contrary, a completely unregulated liberal approach to migration. Both these radical positions and their abuse by populist politicians on the right and left prevent a genuinely constructive and integral solution to the issue. The way to solve the immigration issue should be the efforts of states to assimilate better and integrate those arriving into the dominant culture of the respective state. However, this integration can't take the form of a coercive or violent path, but rather through the motivation of migrants to participate in the established system of the given state and accept its dominant culture. This motivation should be supported in terms of facilitating access to jobs, offering public service positions, or integrating children into mainstream schools to minimise the risk of social exclusion and the forming separate closed communities for *ghettos* that are not compatible with the dominant culture.

On this principle, the majority of society shouldn't close itself to minorities living in the territory of a given state. The state should endeavour to include representatives of minorities into the structures of the majority society. An individual moving in a society without a sense of belonging to it and a sense of inappropriateness is prone to radicalisation not under his faith. The cause of his radicalisation is the non-fulfilment of requirements of his *thumos*, which leads to a problematic perception of his own identity. In this case, the state should play a crucial role and seek to motivate the representatives of minorities to integrate into its socio-economic system structures. As described above,

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21 Example created by the author of the review.

the state should provide minority representatives with the possibility of self-
-identification through a sense of belonging to the whole and own competi-
tiveness based on good access to work and social opportunities. The sense
of belonging to the whole is to be built upon the acceptance of the national
liberal-democratic identity, the construction of which is the state's responsibil-
ity. (Fukuyama 2006)

Fukuyama's book *Identity: The Demand for Dignity and the Politics of Resent-
ment* can be understood as a free continuation of his previous work and simul-
taneously as its defence. It's evident that Fukuyama continues in the norma-
tiveness of liberal democracy as in the ideal of the political and social order of
modern states. He recognises the shortcomings and risks of liberal democracy,
but instead of trying to overcome it, he attempts to analyse its problems. At the
same time, he's trying to find a solution to the problems of liberal democracy.
This publication may be seen as a handbook for contemporary political leaders
in the Western world and a guide on how to unify rival identities. At the very
end of the book, Fukuyama emphasises that *Identity can serve to division, but
it can also serve for integration. Moreover, this is ultimately a remedy for populist
politics today*[22].

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BOOK REVIEWS

Putin's Third Presidential Term

MARIA (MARY) PAPAGEORGIOU[1]

J. L. Black, *Putin's Third Term as Russia's President 2012–2018*, London and New York, NY: Routledge, 2019, 294pp

Putin's Third Term as Russia's President, 2012–2018 by J.L. Black is a compelling analysis of many aspects. It examines contemporary domestic policies, foreign policy agenda, the country's international role and the perceptions of Russian society.

The book revolves around the question posed by Vladimir Putin's supporters during his third-term presidential campaign: *'If not Putin, who?'* This question reflects the notion that the opposing forces did not form a trustworthy coalition or find the right candidate who could compete against him. Moreover, it provides a glimpse of backstage manipulations in the opposition's campaign that backfired, leading to a reinforced perception that Putin is the only 'candidate who can deliver'.

In this book, Black is focused on Putin's political leadership without focusing on the main determinants of Russia's foreign and domestic policy choices, such as historical, societal or even systemic factors. Black stays away from black-and-white judgments and provides a detailed overview of Putin's third term, based on a subtler depiction of what was promised and what was actually implemented as indicated in page two. The author's work purportedly seeks to depict Putin in a more neutral light without circulating the Western demonisation narrative that intentionally paints him as the 'villain'. The invoking parallels with Stalinism and the 'Russophobic paranoia' in the USA bring about a quote of Kissinger as mentioned in the book that 'for the West, the demonisation of Putin is not a policy; it is an alibi for the absence of one' (p. 9). This perception is evident in

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the Western objections on the prohibition of foreign-sponsored group (NGOs) activities despite similar legislation having already been adopted by the same countries or the dubious Skripal affair in the UK. The author highlights that these Western double standards entail a certain amount of hypocrisy transcending negative posturing towards Russia, which is perceived by Russian citizens as hostile. By mentioning the interpretations and perspectives of the Russian citizens, Black indicates how Putin's patriotic and conservative rhetoric is justified and regarded as a tool for shaping domestic and foreign policies.

There are eight chapters in the book, each of which focuses on a distinct area of policies, including an introduction and concluding remarks. The author has distilled a great deal of research from both Russian and foreign sources and has incorporated a series of quantitative data to further elaborate on issues, such as economic transactions, military expenditure and arms transfers. Additionally, he has been mining an extensive body of polling data and surveys conducted by the Levada Centre and the Central Electoral Commission to showcase the variations in Putin's popularity before and during the time frame under analysis and the official voter turnout of the elections.

In chapter four, an insightful and detailed documentation of events, the author puts the case of Ukraine in a new perspective, claiming that blame on Russia for the conflict's origins 'was always too glib' (p. 99) and did not address the conflict's general context. He characterises the massive circulation of 'fake news' during this period as 'journalism at its worst' (p. 100) with even official information provided by Ukraine's Prime Minister being fabricated or manipulated, especially the number of Russian troops present in the region, boldly stating that 'it is hard to see the events in Kyiv as anything else than a coup d' état' (p. 96).

The sixth chapter, titled Themes in Foreign Policy, is divided into three periods of two years, each with a distinct title focusing on Russia's bilateral or multilateral relations in different geographical regions. Despite the rich data and narratives that could be developed in this chapter, the author provides a more descriptive account. By focusing primarily on trade relations and agreements, key events are ignored, such as Russia's pivot to the East initiated in 2014, the close relations with China and the continuous antagonism towards NATO.

The next chapter focuses on military issues and addresses the importance of the defence mechanism in Putin's agenda for the sovereignty of the state, the fight against terrorism but also domestic order. Nonetheless, the arms sales and the army's modernisation are considered essential components of the country's quest for regional power projection and a vital pillar of its economy.

In the last chapter the author traces the trajectory of Putin's policies in domestic issues and quality of life. He provides details on Putin's pre-electoral proclaimed policies regarding the wage increase, reduction of unemployment rates and improvements in the health system and reflects on the degree to which

they were implemented. Of particular interest in this section is the documentation of the increasing social unrest regarding corruption and the actions taken to tackle this issue. A detailed overview of the anti-corruption bill articulated by the actual text and Russian sources strikes the author as a rather daring act of legislation for a 'perceived authoritarian' country. However, Black's references to the domestic politics fail to account for the historical nuisances, internal elite intrigues, the role of bureaucracy and Russia's distinct federal system in order to understand the internal dynamics of contemporary Russia that affect the voter's choice and Putin's domestic policies.

In conclusion, Black summarises the areas under analysis and adds few indications regarding the way the West has perceived Putin's fourth presidential win, with examples of his 'tsar-like' depiction in magazines and newspapers, indicating the continuous trend of his vilification that nevertheless grants him enhanced support at home. Lastly, the author considers that the economy drives Putin's domestic and foreign policies, mainly due to the foreign-imposed sanctions.

Black achieves what was promised by providing an insightful study of Putin's policies, pinpointing specific facts that the West is withholding but also questioning Russia's denial of its involvement in some instances, such as possible interference in the 2016 US presidential election and the chemical attacks by the Assad regime in Syria. The book is made accessible in terms of its explicit language, guiding subheadings and a vibrant selection of topics to provide an insight into contemporary Russian politics under Putin without suffering from a Western-centrism focus. A few of the book's shortcomings though are occasional typos and limited references regarding the strengthening of the Sino-Russian strategic partnership as one of the main diplomatic successes of Putin's third term.

Black's book offers valuable insights into various aspects of Putin's third presidential term and a look into Russia's political system and practices, in order to understand Putin's motivations and actions. In addition, it contributes to evaluating a presidential campaign strategy and its derivatives but also what shapes the public opinion. In sum, the book is deserved to be read not only by an audience interested in Russian politics but also from those who have a keen interest in International Relations and the first unit of analysis, the man/individual.

Euro-Minorities in Generational Perspective

FATIH GOKSU[1]

Natalia Waechter, The Construction of European Identity among Ethnic Minorities: Euro-Minorities in Generational Perspective, London and New York: Routledge, 164 pp.

While many scholars have not even agreed on what European identity actually means, Natalia Waechter has made another challenging attempt, believing that investigating ethnic minority populations in Europe will give us fresh ideas regarding the emergence and the components of European identity. In this book, the writer primarily argues that international literature on European identity repeatedly focuses on ethnic majority societies and is not much concerned with ethnic minority groups. However, ethnic groups incorporate certain elements that may offer evidence of how European identification takes place. Subsequently, the author generated her work based on 12 ethnic minority groups living within the eight nation-states on the Eastern border of the European Union. Truly, the more you read, the more you realize that European ethnic identities are particularly relevant for studying different types of identities since many factors, such as the collapse of the Soviet Union, revealed diverse and competing identities in Europe.

Consequently, Karl-Franzens University Professor Natalia Wachter, who is well known by her studies on the European ethnic minorities, contributed to the literature by presenting the missing link on the emergence and components of the identifications by investigating the geographically, ethnically and politically defined identities of ethnic minorities in Europe. Furthermore, the author developed a new term to describe these identities (GEP identities), since there has yet been a general term for the group of identities that refers to a common

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culture, a political entity and a geographic region. Surely, GEP identities as a concept was not only beneficial for analysing the data but it will also be greatly helpful for the researchers working on identity concepts.

The book devoted the first three chapters extensively to identity theories, classification of identities and identity construction in order to explain the contradictions and confusions of the literature on European identity that reasonably implies the necessity of another study. While chapter 4, dedicated to methodology and empirical design, explains the outlines of collected data for a better understanding of ethnic minorities in Central and Eastern Europe, chapter 5 presents information on their historical, political and social background and provides convincing justifications to study ethnic groups in Europe. Namely, that these communities were either formed through early migration or that they are the result of shifting borders and have re-established many times in the aftermath of wars or adverse events. Chapters 6 and 7 offer the empirical results on identities among members of ethnic minorities with original and contributive outcomes, such as the revelation that youth population identifies themselves more than its resident country. Chapter 8 brings all the findings together and concludes that GEP identities influence the emergence and content of one another. This conclusion by Natalia Waechter is hugely valuable as it offers broad evidence not only on the emergence and component of European identity from a different perspective but it also presents great benefice to the theories on the interplay of the geographically, ethnically and politically defined identities.

To address theories on the interplay of GEP identities and on the emergence and content of European identities, the book analyses the data on ethnic minorities collected with quantitative and qualitative methods. As the quantitative data has limitations on the amount of information to gain on a population and most of the knowledge on ethnic studies relies on quantitative data, the writer wisely enriched the research by adding the results of qualitative data. As understood by the results, this choice provided a more appropriate approach and it helped the research go deeper into the research questions. For instance, discussions on the interplay of GEP identities and on the perception of Europe and the European Union, the qualitative data offered original and more notable results. However, while the survey implemented in the research delivered considerable numbers (6800), the qualitative method only provided 132 interviews from 12 countries. For example, while 17,700 Lithuanians live in Russia, the researcher conducted only eight interviews among them. However, as the book argues as well, the quantitative method would fall short on identity studies and therefore it needs to be supported by qualitative data. Also, whereas the book's argument on the acceptation that political and economic events hugely influence EU identification and attitudes against the EU, the research defends that gathering data from 2009–2010 was a good time as the two main events, the annexation of Crimea and the Syrian war, had not happened yet. Considering the studied

regions affected hugely by two events, one cannot help thinking about what the results of the recent research would be with more recently collected data. From my point of view, the book should include this as a limitation rather than an advantageous situation or at least as a suggestion for future research.

The book, on the other hand, deserves big praise as it is the first encompassing scholarly work on ethnic minority groups in Central and Eastern Europe in the field, and it provides a variety of new empirical findings. Furthermore, the book is highly informative as it provides a good and readable overview of the social, economic and political situations of the ethnic minorities in Europe. Additionally, all chapters will be helpful to the readers with a genuine interest in the European identity questions with a special benefit in minorities, and most readers will find contributions of the latter kind more enlightening since the book reveals why anyone interested in the dynamics of minority identity and cultural identity should be interested in European minorities.

In conclusion, I would recommend 'The Construction of European Identity among Minorities' for those already working on European identity literature and those who need a holistic approach for the theories developed until now, as Waechter's extensive work successfully fills this gap. Additionally, this book has a general and original insight on ethnic identity, which can be useful for teaching purposes, since the book engages with genuine concern the emergence and components of identities.

GUIDELINES FOR AUTHORS

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

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Presentation of the paper

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BOOKS:

Single author books:

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

Two or more authors:

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

EDITED VOLUMES:

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

CHAPTERS FROM MONOGRAPHS:

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

JOURNAL ARTICLES:

Printed journals:

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

Online editions of journals:

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

NEWSPAPER ARTICLES:

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

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

RESEARCH REPORTS AND PAPERS FROM CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS:

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

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