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Next Issue:

**Dealing with Minorities: Integration, Tolerance and the Risks
of Segregation**

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EDITORIAL

Dear Reader,

For Central Europe, 2010 is the year of the election. As this article goes to press, the results of the Hungarian parliamentary elections are known. For the liberal-conservative Fidesz party these represented the strongest support that the Hungarian electorate has provided to any political entity since 1989. A constitutional majority may be an important instrument for the necessary economic revitalisation of the country, but may of course also be tempting for the party to strengthen the position of the election winner in the longer term. Aside from the success of the Fidesz party, and its first steps, which outraged the Slovak government, also notable is the significant electoral gains of the extreme right-wing Jobbik party and the first excesses that its representatives introduced into parliament. It will certainly be interesting to observe the extent to which the animosity in Slovak-Hungarian relations will be transposed to the Slovak election campaign. Here, long term pre-election surveys indicated a decrease in support for radical nationalist rhetoric, or perhaps the ability of the populist social democrat party Smer to also attract radical voters. The election victory of Smer, under the leadership of Prime Minister Fico, appeared in spring 2010 to be practically unshakeable; the main question thus remained whether Smer would imitate Fidesz and form a single-party government, or whether it would have to find coalition partners.

After the tragedy at Smolensk, preparations were underway for early presidential elections in Poland as this editorial was being written. The main rivals were the chairman of Sejm and deputy president Komorowski, and the twin brother of the deceased president Lech Kaczyński, Jaroslaw. Polls in the second half of May showed that Kaczyński was significantly reducing the apparently unbeatable advantage of his opponent. The electoral campaign, taking place against the background of a nation-wide tragedy and with a candidate that is related to the deceased president, will surely be the subject of much political analysis.

One week after this editorial goes to press, parliamentary elections will be held in the Czech Republic. Pre-election polls have shown that both incumbent large parties are losing their positions and after elections will either negotiate over a grand coalition, or perform complex manoeuvre in a multifarious parliament, which will include representatives of at least two new political parties. Also apparent is that, after over 90 years, the Czech Christian Democrats (Czechoslovak People's Party) will lose their relevance on a state level.

Considering the above facts, the reader will perhaps not be surprised that a significant part of this issue will comprise of adapted contributions to a conference on the political party system in Central-Eastern Europe, which took place on 14th



Editorial

May 2010 in Pilsen. The main organiser of the conference was the Metropolitan University Prague, which also supported the publication of this issue, for which it deserves our thanks. Aside from conference contributions, readers can also find two original articles; one dedicated to the issue of the hegemony of the USA in the current international system, the other dealing with the European Neighbourhood Policy presented against a background of constructivist and rationalist paradigms, as well as several reviews of recently released social science books.

24 May 2010, Ladislav Cabada

ESSAYS

Controversies over the US Hegemony in the Multipolar World

Adam Gwiazda

Abstract: *Since the end of the Cold War, American hegemony continues to characterize the international system. This hegemony has met with a considerably higher acceptance by other states and other actors of the international system than a world of competing superpowers and political blocs. The main argument developed in this paper is that American primacy may not last forever, but as there is no effective global security mechanism for coping with the growing threat of extremist religious and political movements, the United States will continue to play the unique role of a sole superpower in the international system for a few decades to come.*

Keywords: *US hegemony, multipolar world, NATO, US power, military expenditures*

Introduction

Since the end of the second World War the United States remains the most economically, politically and military competitive nation in the world. The economic crisis of 2008, especially the recent problems in the US housing market, characterized with the flood of defaults on so-called subprime mortgages, and dramatic fall in the in the savings rate and the rise in the trade deficit, raised warning flags among the world's analysts on the overall health of the US economy, as well as its impacts globally (Friedman 2009: 20–21). However the United States is still one of the most competitive economies in the world due to the efficiency of the country's markets, the sophistication of its business community, the impressive capacity for technological innovation that exists within a first-rate system of universities and research centers all contribute to making the United States a highly competitive economy (Wagner 2008: 8).

The American competitiveness and power is even more visible in the political and military sphere. The second half of the XX century and the first decade of the XXI century can be described as the “American century” which, in the opinions of some experts, is ending. Such prediction of the America's decline as the strongest world's superpower has been common every ten years. For example in the late 1950s and at the beginning of the 1960s there was the so called Sputnik Shocks “missile gap” and in the 1970s both Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger predicted a world of five, rather

than two, global powers (i.e. the USA and the Soviet Union). On the other hand in the late 1980s Paul Kennedy predicted the ruin of the United States, driven by overextension abroad and profligacy at home. The United States was at that time at risk of “imperial overstretch”, because of “the sum total of the United States’ global interests and obligations is nowadays far larger than the country’s power to defend them all simultaneously” (Joffe 2009: 21, see also Kennedy 1987: 34–35). Such forecasts have not proved true, at least till the end of the first decade of the XXI century, i.e. the period of the longest economic and political expansion of the US in history, which, apart from eight down months in 2001, continued until 2009. Already in the 1990s, after the fall of the Soviet Union, declinism in America took a break and the United States has become a sole global hegemon being able to provide public goods such as peace and security also to other countries and regions of the contemporary world (Hunt 2009: 12–14).

The main arguments developed in this paper is that American hegemony continues to characterize the international system in the few next decades of this century despite the competition from the side of regional powers, such as China, India, Russia, Brazil and other nations. Those emerging superpowers will rise in the next 20–30 years to challenge US status as a sole superpower, but not to such extent to be able to change the existing world order.

Aspects of the US hegemony

The influence and power of the United States may decline in the next decades but this will not be a decline in economic, political, or military strength. Rather than the United States enjoying the role of the world’s lone superpower, the influence of other countries such as China and India will increase in relative terms. It seems rather improbable that China will dominate and reshape the global system (Jacques 2009)¹. To become a global hegemon China’s has to increase not only its economic and military power vis-a-vis United States but first of all to build a system of institutions that other countries would be willing to join and to create such alliance like NATO as well as to liberalize its political system. As Zbigniew Brzezinski has observed “NATO,s real power derives from the fact that it combines the United States military capabilities and economic power with Europe, s collective political and economic weight (and occasionally some limited European military forces)” (Brzezinski 2009: 10). The fact is that the United States’ liberal orientation has facilitated its leadership and has enabled that country to become a global “pole” in the present still “unipolar” world. And the United States currently possesses the economic and military might, which enable that superpower to exert the decisive influence on the world’s affairs and maintain its primary by default that is for the

¹ Jacques claims that China’s impact on the world will be at least as great as than of the United States over the best century, if not far greater, see Jacques 2009: 18–21.

lack of serious competitors. The basic issue is the question when the balance of global power is bound to shift and whether the gradual decline in the US superpower status in the world financial system will change significantly the gap between the US and its rivals. That gap in economic, technological or military fields is still so large that American's global hegemony will still last for the few, next decades.

Under the present still centralized world system in which the United States is the biggest and the most influence pole, there seems to be no much room for the creation of the multipolar world system. If we take as a measure of economic power the value of GDP (in nominal terms) and as a measure of military power the spending for defence (military expenditures) both in absolute terms, i.e. dollars and as a % of GDP so it becomes evident that there is no such a country in the world which has at least the economic and military capabilities of the United States (see table 1). It should be pointed out that it is very difficult to present a precise calculation of military spending both for the United States and China. In the United States for instance the Pentagon budget does not include most of the spending on nuclear weapons, which falls under the Department of Energy budget. There are also the supplemental spending bills for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. On the other hand interpreting China's military expenditure has been a complicated issue. Although China publishes its official defence budget and provides justifications for increases in its military spending, most observers remain skeptical of the accuracy of the official figures (Chen – Feffer 2009: 47–67).

Table 1: GDP and military expenditures in 2007

Ranking	Country	GDP trillion US dollars
1	USA	13,8
2	Japan	4,3
3	Germany	3,3
4	China	3,
5	United Kingdom	2,8
Ranking	Country	Military expenditures in billion US dollars
1	USA	547*
2	United Kingdom	59,7
3	China	58,3
4	France	53,6
5	Japan	43,6

**Excluding about 130 billion dollars spent in that year for the military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan*

Source: SIPRI Yearbook 2008, Stockholm 2008.

The comparison of the figures presented in table 1 confirms the American primacy both in the economic and military spheres. As regards the value of GDP, so in 2007 only Japan was the biggest competitors to the United States and the total

GDP of all four countries included in that table was at the level of 13,6 trillion of dollars as compared to the US 13,8 trillion. For comparison the combined GDP of all 27 member-countries of the European Union was in 2007 at the level of 16,9 trillion dollars. However it is not relevant comparison vis-a-vis the United States as the European Union does not act on the international arena as a unit and the member-countries have conducted till the December 2009 their own, independent foreign policies on most issues (Smith 2004: 8–9).

The US primacy in the military sphere continues to grow. The fact is that the US spends almost ten times as much on its military as its closest spending competitor, the United Kingdom. Moreover, the second through fifth ranked spenders combined do not reach half the US figure. It should be interesting to compare the US annual defence spending during the Korean war, when it was 126,6 billion dollars (in 2009 dollars) and in the fiscal year 1955 annual spending was 221,7 billion dollars. And in fiscal year 1960, at the administration's end, spending stood at \$ 265 billion (Krepinevich 2009: 150). Since that time the US has increased its military spending very significantly to the present level of roughly 700 billion dollars (only in the first decade of XXI century defence spending has increased more than 45 per cent). It was the price for being the guarantor of the international system in which the United States cannot afford to cut its defence spending. The United States has also to act in such ways in order to preserve its power position and interests all over world. This involves the using of both "soft" and "hard" power as well as engagement in multilateralism.² As regards the soft power, so during the financial crash and already under George Bush administration that kind of power has eroded greatly. It doesn't mean however that since that time the world has been becoming multipolar. The United States still conducts its mostly unilateral foreign policy using both soft and hard power and resolving certain international problem through "coalitions" with some NATO member countries. On the other hand the United States is enough powerful economically, technologically and militarily to be able not only to defend itself and its national interests but also to maintain peace in other regions of the world. It not only spends on defence much more than other regional 4 superpowers but expands its military potential. For comparison, in 2008 China had 2,2 million soldiers versus 1,6 million soldiers in the US but that last country possesses much more tanks, fighter planes, aircraft carriers, submarines with nuclear power and destroyers) than China and other regional powers.

² Soft Power is the ability to obtain what a given state wants through cooperation and attraction. On the other hand „hard power” is the use of coercion (military Power) and payment. The term of soft Power was coined by Joseph Nye in a book: *Bound to lead: The Changing nature of American Power*, Harvard 1990 and elaborated in detail in his 2004 book: *Soft power. The means to success in world politics*, New York 2004. See also T.L. Ilgen ed., *Hard Power, soft power and the future of transatlantic relations*, Aldershot 2006: 7–8.

Table 2: Comparison of military force of China and the United States

China		USA
2,2 million	Soldiers	1,6 million
6700	Tanks	8000
1630	Fighter planes	3900
9	Submarines with nuclear power	75
0	Aircraft carriers	11
29	Destroyers	52

Source: CIA The World Factbook, Langley 2009, <http://www.cia.gov/library/publication/the-world-factbook/index.html>.

The military power of the US is therefore unquestionable as well as its economic power. The weakest, third type of the US power is ideological cultural “soft power” which has been eroding since the last several years and led to rise of anti-Americanism in many countries. Such anti-American attitudes are often identified with antiglobalization movements. However in recent times anti-Americanism is also viewed as the most visible form of expression of disapproval of the US hegemony and its unilateral foreign policy. In other words if one can disapprove of the United States for what it is or for what it does, so the former is anti-Americanism but the later is not. As Jeffrey S.Kopstein pointed out in practice the line is not so easy to draw. Some people find fault with the United States no matter what it does. It is bad for intervening militarily to stop genocide in Kosovo but equally bad for failing to intervene to stop genocide in Rwanda. It was wrong to promote free trade and globalization in the 1990s but equally wrong for raising tariffs to protect its industries, as it did in the first years of the Bush administration (Kopstein 2009: 368; see also Markovits 2007; Katzenstein – Keohane eds. 2007). Anti-Americanism has been on rise especially in Europe, where – as A.S.Markovits remarks – “is unifying West Europeans more than any other political emotion – with the exception of hostility to Israel. In today’s Western Europe, these two closely related antipathies and resentments are now considered proper etiquette. They are present in polite company and acceptable in the discourse of the political classes” (Markovits 2007: 1). It should be added that American support for Israel has also made the United States a target for the hatred of Muslim extremists and brought about an increase in anti-Americanism in the majority of Arab countries. There is also well known fact, that George W.Bush unilateral foreign policy and the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan fueled anti-Americanism not only among European and Arab political elites but also among Europe’s masses and among citizens of many Arab countries. The question remains open whether and to what extent anti-Americanism diminishes America’s soft power. It seems however, that anti-Americanism will lead to important foreign policy changes not only of the present administration of Barack Obama, but also of other, both democratic and republican administrations. It is also almost certain that

the United States's military power will face few direct challenges in the near future mostly from the side of terrorists and other nonstate actors. Such challenges will not, however, change profoundly the existing unipolar world and will not transform it into a multipolar world. The sole erosion of the American soft power will not make the world multipolar, especially that the November 2008 election of Barack Obama as American's 44th president has to some extent provided an antidote to the erosion of the American image that took place during the Bush presidency³. Despite the fact that the perception of US power has suffered from George W. Bush policy failures in Iraq and Afganistan, and the global financial crisis, American primacy in the contemporary world is still undisputable. However many politicians believe that we are in a multipolar world today, where there are at least three, centres of power, though not equal ones, i.e. the United States, China and the European Union. Some authors recently argued that the current international system is nonpower, in which American unipolarity has been replaced by the diffusion of power to a variety of actors: regional powers, international organizations, non-governmental organizations, and multinational corporations. Richard Haass argues that the US' large lead in defence spending is not the best way to make sense of the international system because expenditure is not the same as influence (Haass 2008: 7–8). However all regional powers, international organization non-governmental organizations and multinational corporations are not able to solve any serious global problem without the help of the US. It doesn't refer only to military conflicts, but also to many other global problems. As the recent financial crisis confirms, many multinational corporations were not able to survive it without the massive state support. And no regional power such as China, India or Russia could be able – like the United States – to use military force on a global scale now and in the near future. As some authors rightly point out that “While Russia and China may use force regionally, they are not capable of global reach at present. This means that while Russia, China, and others will have to ask themselves whether the US will intervene when they use force, the US is unlikely to have the same concern when acting outside of potential rivals' spheres (e.g., Iran). Second, if the United States does not act to solve a challenging global problem, it is unlikely that the problem will be solved. Conversely, if the US is committed to solving a global problem, its resources will make a solution more likely. For example, most agree that a solution to the global climate crisis will be much more likely if the US becomes actively engaged in seeking a solution” (Davidson – Menotti 2009: 19).

There is also the problem of changing balance of power due to the globalization which cannot be identified only with economic and political interdependence

³ After one year many decisions of President Barack Obama have been sharply criticized and the image of Democratic Party in the US and the image of America abroad is to fade again. Cf. B. Niedziski 2009: 10; see also J. Klein 2009: 20–22.

but rather with the set of various phenomena that derive from market forces and which create pressures that are felt by all states, although not to the same extent and with the same “final effects” (Bonanno – Constance 2009: 7–8; see also Gwiazda 2006: 11–18). Thus the consequences of globalization are much weaker in the case of such superpower like the United States in comparison with medium-size and smaller countries. Globalization affects individual states in various ways and tends to reduce the autonomy and capacity of states. It also affects the balance of power between states and transnational corporations (Gwiazda 2003: 115–128; see also Drahekoupil 2008: 4–7). However the nation-states not mention such a superpower like the United States or such regional bloc like the European Union may use in the era of globalization their powers in order to limit their exposure to globalization through, for example, restricting the flow of goods money, data, and people across their borders. Also all other countries can pursue the similar policies aimed at the reduction of some negative effects of globalization. They have, however, much smaller choice of the foreign policy options and instruments, as regards the effects of unipolarity. The effects of unipolarity-contrary to the effects of globalization – that are felt by other states “are not so much a direct function of the distribution of power, as with (arguably) bipolarity, but rather the doctrinal foreign policy choices of the United States” (Kirshner 2008: 365). Due to the extensive engagement of the United States both in the world economy and in world politics it may be assumed that the United States remains not only more powerful than any other state has ever been but will also be confronted with greater political opposition from the side of the emerging regional superpowers. The United States has to face also an increasing competition in the field of economy, in which such countries like China are successfully competing with other countries on the global scale.

Challenges to the US hegemony

It has been clear for years, since the beginning of the 1990s when the United States has become the world’s preeminent power that it has to defend its dominant position and face challenges from the side of emerging powers, various terrorist groups and even from its allies in Europe. According to some experts it is just the European Union which is the only actor capable of challenging American primacy in the near future. For example Charles Kupchan maintained in 2002 that the European Union possessed the economic capability to be considered a great power. Kupchan acknowledged that the EU member countries had to act as one unit in international relations in order to serve as a rival to American power, but he noted that the EU member countries had increasingly been coming together politically and suggested that the then proposed EU constitution would cap the trend (Kupchan 2002: 21). However the rejection of the EU constitution by France and the Netherlands has

hindered the EU road to political unity, but the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty in December 2009 has created the new chances for the EU to become the serious rival to the US. The similar view has recently been expressed by Parag Khanna, who had argued that China and the European Union are joining the United States to form a world with three “relatively equal centers of influence”. Each power center has its own “diplomatic style”: the United States works through “coalitions”, China operates through “consultations” and Europe seeks “consensus”. The fate of world order, however, will hinge on how the next tier of states – the so-called Second World, or “tipping-point states” – choose to ally with or resist these three competing poles (Khanna 2008: 61–62).

On the other hand Fareed Zakaria argues in his recent book that American’s downscaling is the natural consequence of a transition towards an increasingly multi-centric world. The planet is characterized by the political, economic and social ascent of new stakeholders. He predicts that, “in the next few decades, three of the world’s four biggest economies will be non-Western (Japan, China and India)” (Zakaria 2008: 74). Thus the United States and Europe will necessarily have to re-think their roles. Zakaria tries to foresee not the decline of America, “but rather the rise of everyone else” (Zakaria 2008: 1). He roots his analysis in the forces of capitalism and modernization and predicts the end of the monopoly of Western and particular European culture on global models of development. The coming decades will be marked by the challenge of building a new post-Western modernity (Zakaria 2008: 36–38).

This however doesn’t mean that the US hegemony decline in favour of new Asian superpowers. Zakaria points first of all at China, which he describes as “the most successful development story in history” (Zakaria 2008: 89) and at India being the “world’s fastest growing free market democracy” (Zakaria 2008: 131). At the same time he believes that the United States is well-equipped to continue to be the dominating superpower on the international scene and will maintain its dominance in many strategic sectors such as defence, new technologies and research. In his opinion the United States should to accommodate, rather than resist, these modernizing states, allowing them to become “stakeholders in the new order” in exchange for their strategic cooperation. The fact is that the United States itself built and maintained its global leadership and now in order to preserve it will need to give up its unipolar policy, engage other great powers, and champion rules and institutions that are forged out of compromise and mutual adjustment.

The question still open is whether other regional superpowers will be willing to cooperate with the United States to create the new international order within the “old” structure marked by the America hegemony? It is also hard, to predict all effects of the extraordinary rise of China (Bergsten et al 2008: 7–12) which in 2009

become the largest exporter in the world surpassing Germany and its share of world exports jumped to almost 10% up from 3% in 1999. It should be pointed out that China takes an even bigger slice of American's market. In the first ten months of 2009 American imported 15% less from China than in the same period of 2008, but its imports from the rest of the world fell by 33%, lifting China's market share to a record 19%. So although America's trade deficit with China narrowed, China now accounts for almost half of America's total deficit, up from less than one-third on 2008 (Fear of the dragon 2010: 65). China's exports are likely to grow more slowly over the next decade, as demand in rich economies remains subdued but its market share will probably continue to creep up. Projections in the IMF's World Economic Outlook imply that China's exports will account for 12% of world trade by 2014 (IMF World Economic Outlook 2010: 4–5).

The most striking feature of China's exports dominance is the rapid rise of the surpluses in the Chinese foreign trade balance. Those surpluses brought about China's official foreign-exchange reserve assets soaring to more than \$2.5 trillion (including funds transferred to the recently created sovereign wealth fund) as of this writing from a humble \$ 150 billion at the beginning of XXI century. What is more important for the United States is that some two-thirds of it was channeled directly into the US economy, and particularly into Treasury and quasi-official bonds-making China the single largest foreign creditor to the US government. This, in turn, allowed American households to borrow and spend unflinchingly for a full half-decade without having to worry about the impact of sharply rising external deficits on dollar interest rates. China also effectively financed the US consumption and housing boom and eventually the subprime finance bubble (Anderson 2009: 25). In practice China has become one of the largest US creditors and this makes the US – China relations very vulnerable. The growing China's exports dominance increases also hostility both in the US and Europe. Some experts argue that by holding down its currency (undervalued yuan compared to the US dollar) to support exports, China "drains much-needed demand away from a depressed world economy". Therefore countries that are victims of Chinese mercantilism may be right to take protectionist action⁴. However "from Beijing, things look rather different. China's merchandise exports have collapsed from 36% of GDP in 2007 to around 24% last year. China's current-account surplus has fallen from 11% to an estimated 6% of GDP. In 2007 net exports accounted for almost three percentage points of China's CDP growth; last year they were a drag on its growth to the tune of three percentage points. In other words, rather than being a drain on global demand, China helped pull the world economy along during the course of last year"

⁴ Such opinion was recently expressed by Paul Krugman, in the New York Times, quoted according to: Fear of the dragon 2010: 66.

(Fear of the dragon, 2010: 66–67). Whatever interpretation of China's global trade expansion will be adopted it seems that China's rising share in world exports and in the US Treasury and quasi-official bonds cannot be viewed as too serious challenge to the United States as well as to European countries and the world financial system (Gwiazda 2008: 31; see also Roach 2009: 47–48).

The rapid economic growth and global expansion of China cannot also undermine the dominance of the US both in the field of economy. The United States comes out ahead among major powers in terms of per capita income, with 47,000 dollars per inhabitant. It is followed by France and Germany (both in the 44,000 dol. range), Japan (38,000 dol.), Russia (11,000 dol.), China (2,900 dol.) and India (1,300 dol.) (CIA The World Factbook 2009)⁵. It is not clear how China could soon beat the United States in this regards, which has a per capita income that is 5–7 times as large as China's. Also in absolute terms the US GDP was in 2008 worth 14,3 trillion dollars, i.e. three times as much as the world's second-biggest economy, Japan's and only slightly less than the economies of its four nearest competitors combined – Japan, China, Germany and France. It should be noted that the rate growth of China's economy dropped in 2009 by half from a historical high of almost 12 percent in 2007. Moreover China is so export dependent and it devotes only 35 percent of GDP to private consumption, compared with 60 percent in many Western Countries. Therefore China has to rebalance its economy away from the investment and export-led growth model that worked in the last years and toward domestic consumption. Such shift will bring about further decline in the rate of growth of the GDP. But even if we assume that China's economy grows at 7% in, co China's GDP will increase from 3,3 trillion dollars in 2007 to 6,6 trillion dollars in 2015 and to 13,2 trillion in 2025. At the same time, assuming 3,5% annual growth for the United States, US GDP will grow in 2025 to the level of 28 trillion dollars. Thus by that time China will have more than two times lower GDP than the United States (Santoro 2008: 19–20; see also Schmid ed. 2009: 20). In the contemporary world the only challenge to the dominance of the US economy is the European Union with its GDP of 18 trillion dollars. However the not fully integrated 27 states cannot be viewed as a serious strategic unit which may challenge the American hegemony in the next 1 or even 2 decades. As was said earlier that hegemony rests not only on economic but also on military power where the US is the undisputable leader. In 2008, it spent 607 billion dollars on its military, representing almost half of the world's total military spending. The next nine states spent a total of 476 billion dollars and the presumptive challengers to US military supremacy – China, India, Japan and Russia – together devoted only 219 billion to their militaries. The

⁵ There are other estimates of Chinese GPP per capita of 6,0 thousand dollars, which include the undervahred yuan and other factors, see also Bergsten, 2008: 19; Goldstein – Lardy 2008: 23–24.

military budget of China, the country most often “named” as the world’s next superpower, is less than one-seventh of the US defense budget. Even if one includes among potential US adversaries the 27 states of the UE, which together spend 288 billion dollars on defense, the United States still outweighs them all – 607 billion compared to 507 billion dollars (Joffe 2009: 26).

The power of a given state is not just a matter of the value of GDP or growth rates. All prognoses that show China surpassing the United States in 20 or 30 years do not include such sources of power as education and R&D as well as the set of ideas and values shared by all democratic states. Thus the struggle between the US and China in this century will be as much about belief as it is about power. The similar struggle has occurred between the United States and the Soviet Union when the Cold War was at its root a battle of ideas. At that time it has become visible that U.S. ideology was less in need of outside validation than Soviet ideology. The fact is that Chinese leaders have been not able to settle the looming dilemma of growth versus democracy and have emerged as defenders of the “old Westphalian system”, preferring to restore an international order in which national sovereignty is inviolable, whereas the Americans hope to transform political systems through their brand of “liberalization” and “democratization”. The biggest concern for the Chinese, therefore, is not invasion, but that an “American-led world will try to stop them from fulfilling their ambitions and their destiny and that the denial of Chinese ambitions abroad could ultimately their ability to rule at home” (Bergsten 2008: 102). On the other hand China’s rise, both militarily and economically, relies on the maintenance of a favourable international environment. However the lack of transparency regarding its spending and the direction of its military planning in the long run erodes confidence that China has only peaceful intentions.

China’s recent global economic expansion, especially in such regions as Asia, Latin America and Africa can be viewed as a desire to shape the geopolitical environment conducive to the Chinese interest both economic (to secure raw materials and markets) and political. As some experts argue “China wants more than it has”, while “Russia wants back what it lost. Both countries want more, but for themselves, not for all. Driven by selfish purposes, powers such as Russia and China cannot be what the United States was at its best in the twentieth century a state that pursued its own interests by also serving those of others and thus created global demand for the benefits it provided” (Joffe 2009: 31; see also Gwiazda 2009: 117–138). Contrary to Russia and China as well as to other states the United States has a mission in the world. Thus it would be very difficult to imagine Russia, India, China or even the European Union as guarantors of the world order in which all those superpowers could be accountable for action affecting global security and prosperity like the United States was in the last 60 years. The fact is that the United

States remains and will remain for some time yet the “operating system” of the global order, the “Windows” of international politics. It is not certain, however how long that operating system will work or when it will be replaced by another, more effective systems. What seems to be clear is the fact that outright rejection of the existing operating system international community and mass acceptance of a new one may occur at some point, but it would be a costly rejection and would most likely happened only after a long-term process of delegitimation and the arrival on the scene of an attractive alternative.

Longer path to multipolarity

The problem is that for the time being there is no such attractive alternative and the United States still will remain for some time “the default power” which does what other, regional superpower and international organizations cannot or will not do. Some experts doubt whether in today’s world there is “someone” who “would actually live in a world dominated by China, India, Japan, Russia or even Europe, which for all its a enormons appeal cannot take care of its own backyard” (Joffe 2009: 35). Some others experts project the emergence in two decades bipolar international system consisting either of the US and China or the US and the European Union. Much depends, however, on the future more or less unilateral or multilateral US foreign policy and yielding power and influence to other superpowers and international organizations. In order to maintain a leading role in the world the United States should share its military, technological and economic dominance with other states. Instead of being the lonely superpower the United States should take up the role of “honest broker” in the contemporary world (Zakaria 2008: 233). That new role implies, however, that the United States has to define its foreign policy priorities, restablish a belief in multilateralism, adapt a wider range of flexible solutions to many global problems including “the long war” with terrorism and restore its reputation it has lost during the George W. Bush presidency. Perhaps the future developments in the international system as well as president Barack Obama multilateral approach in his foreign policy will promote a new paradigm of the US foreign policy. This doesn’t mean the withdrawal of the United States from the role of the only superpower being able to shape a one-world system that serves its interests and the interests of its allies. As in 2007 Barack Obama said there is need to re-define America’s role in the world rather than escape from it. Referring to the failure of the Iraq war, he recognized that “after thousands of lives lost and billions spent, many Americans may be tempted to turn inward and cede our leadership in world affairs. But this is a mistake we must not make. America cannot meet the threats of this century alone, and the world cannot meet them without America. We can neither retreat from the world nor try to bully it into submission. We must lead

the world, by deed and by example...” In other words “the American moment is not over, but it must be seized anew” (Obama 2007: 3–4; see also Farer 2009: 5–12). Even if there are signs that American primacy will not last forever, so there still is the chance of maintain one-world system under fading US hegemony that will be much more acceptable by other states and international community than a world of competing superpower and political blocs. That last world will certainly be not conducive to “relative” stability and peaceful “competition” of all states and other actors as today world, where American hegemony has been strikingly more benign than the dominance of other states and political blocs in the past. As long as there is no effective global security mechanism for coping with growing threat of extremist religious and political movement and some rouge states, the United States will be destined to play a unique role in the international system for a few decades to come.

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Constructivism and Rationalism as Analytical Lenses: The Case of the European Neighbourhood Policy

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Abstract: *The paper proposes a novel way in which social constructivism and rationalism might be combined in the study of the EU's external relations. It proceeds in four steps: First, a basic model for the study of EU external policies is introduced, with its four basic elements being based on different combinations of constructivism and rationalism. Second, existing theories are categorised in accordance with the model. Third, a case study exploring the relations of three countries in the EU's Eastern neighbourhood (Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia) with the Union is introduced, through which the practical applicability of the model is demonstrated. Fourth, the paper concludes with some theoretical remarks.*

Keywords: *European Neighbourhood Policy, EU external policies, social constructivism, social rationalism*

Introduction¹

The debate between rationalists and constructivists remains one of the defining theoretical axes in the field of international relations as well as that of European studies. A number of scholars have explored the key points of discord between the two approaches (for instance, Katzenstein 1999; Pollack 2000; Finnemore 2001; Lezaun 2002). But the first phase of constructivist theorizing, which focussed primarily on metatheoretical issues, made a deeper engagement between constructivism and rationalism difficult to achieve. Only slowly, with the “descension” of the constructivist research to the systematic analysis of empirical questions, a more fruitful dialogue between the two approaches became possible (one of the first attempts at this was made already in 1999 in the special issue of the *Journal of European Public Policy* dedicated to constructivism in European studies). Those trying to bring the two approaches closer together have so far employed two strategies: The first is that of (1) the “bridge-builders”, who aim at a comprehensive synthesis of the two approaches, typically (a) by proposing a *via media* that encompasses elements of both rationalism and constructivism (Adler 1997; Wendt 1999) or (b) by using one of the approaches to attempt a hostile takeover of the other approach, which usually means interpreting one of

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the approaches as part of the other (e.g. Müller 2004; for the original discussion about the (im)possibility of a synthesis, see Keohane 1988; for a critical assessment, see Wiener 2003).² The second is that of “opticians”, who believe that the two approaches should be seen rather as “analytical lenses” that help us to see particular aspects of the world of international politics without necessarily proclaiming that the other lenses are just blindfolds (for the clearest formulation of this, see Fearon – Wendt 2005).

Both of these strategies suffer from serious shortcomings. For the bridge-builders, the most serious of these difficulties lies in the fact that they usually treat the two approaches as grand theories that include not only empirically grounded claims about international politics but also a number of philosophical assumptions that pertain to philosophy of social science, which go far beyond the traditional study of IR. This means that the theoretical synthesis at which they aim would have to include a synthesis of their ontologies (and possibly also epistemologies), which is obviously hardly conceivable. This explains why bridge-builders are so interested in metatheory: it is metatheoretical concerns that are the biggest stumbling blocks on the way to a theoretical synthesis of the two positions.

Another, perhaps more promising line of enquiry is to take rationalism and constructivism as analytical lenses that can be applied or taken off by the analyst as the differing empirical contexts require. The decision about their usefulness and compatibility is thus dependent only on the empirical analysis and not on their metatheoretical presuppositions. Even though this position is less widespread in the study of international relations, some scholars have convincingly argued in favour of this approach (Checkel 1998; Jupille et al. 2003; Fearon – Wendt 2005) and tried to specify conditions for the types of cases in which one or the other approach is more suitable (Checkel 1997; Zürn – Checkel 2005).³

Yet the weakness of these accounts – as innovative as they may be – is that by delimiting the scope conditions for each of the two theories they keep them separate. While bringing the two approaches closer together as two alternative research instruments, they nevertheless insist that when exploring a particular case we have to choose one or the other, or at least break the case study down into two or more sub-studies, each of them with their own rationalist *or* constructivist framework. So, even though these scholars may not be interested in the metatheoretical questions and allegedly aim at a synthesis at the level of methodology, they do not

² We are aware that the metaphor of bridge-building may be seen as imprecise since the “bridge-builders” often aim at a take-over of the alternative position rather than at creating a forum for discussion with the other positions. In spite of these difficulties, we would like to stick to this label since it is widely used in the literature (see the references above).

³ Cf. also Checkel’s comment that “at present, constructivism is, like rational choice, nothing more than a method.” (Checkel 1998: 342)

merge the two approaches as one would expect, but rather focus on the “questions of scope and domains-of-application”, as Checkel argues (Checkel 2005: 805).

This cardinal problem can be demonstrated by referring to the above-mentioned text by Fearon and Wendt (2005). The authors distinguish between three types of choices of rationalism and constructivism: metatheoretical, methodological, and empirical. Their preferred option being methodology, they are convinced that “rationalism and constructivism are most fruitfully viewed *pragmatically* as analytical tools, rather than as metaphysical positions or empirical descriptions of the world” (the emphasis in the original). On the one hand, the rejection of the choice based on philosophical considerations is a clear rejection of the bridge building approach, which in itself is puzzling given the previous position of Alexander Wendt on the issue. However, the rejection of the empirically-grounded choice is even more troubling. If we choose the methodology first and only then approach the empirical world in order to conduct our analysis, we will not be able to be really pragmatic, choosing the method applied as the empirical analysis requires. In addition, by the preference for the methodological choice over the empirical one, Fearon and Wendt reject the very possibility of combining the two methods in one study since this would imply the dependence of the choice(s) on the empirical research.

We argue that these scholars are inconsistent here and that is why our approach is somewhat different. Like Fearon and Wendt, we believe in the possibility, or even the desirability, of pragmatism in the choice between the two approaches. Unlike Fearon and Wendt, however, we are convinced that this pragmatic choice must be ultimately based on the empirical situation to which our analytical tools are applied. Once we deny the necessary connection between the empirical and our methodological choice, we can no longer talk about pragmatism. Our rejection of the necessity to opt for one or the other alternative methodology in advance also opens up the possibility of combining the two approaches in each of the cases. Indeed the strategy of the bridge-builders is not a fruitful one – and we should give up the illusion of a grand theoretical synthesis encompassing a unified ontology of international relations. While the strategy of the opticians is better equipped for a pragmatic synthesis of rationalism and constructivism, it nevertheless also suffers from a major flaw since it often severs the vital link between the methodological choice and the empirical field.

Our approach stresses the pragmatic, empirically grounded choice of rationalism and constructivism, or even a combination (or several different combinations) of the two. Hence, we believe that in many case studies, the “division of labour” among the two approaches needn’t be defined in advance, but that it will rather follow from the empirical research. This opens a new, so far rarely trodden path of research which can show not only when a particular actor employs the more

utilitarian or normative mode of reasoning and acting, but also how and under what conditions this actor moves from one mode to the other or how it is possible that some actors may behave in both modes simultaneously, depending on their social roles in different international settings.

It is important to stress here that the method discussed here does not mean a concrete methodology (such as structured elite interviews or content analysis). In this sense, our position is again similar to that of Fearon and Wendt, who claim that, for instance, the assumption of exogenous preferences is a methodological convenience (2005: 53), even though the assumption clearly does not translate into any concrete methodology. What we mean by analytical lenses is that after our careful empirical study, we declare an actor rationalist or constructivist based on its concrete actions, which we study, even though we are fully aware that no actor is purely rationalist or purely normative. That is why we call our ideal-typical generalisation and the simultaneous neglect of other features of the actor “analytical lenses” instead of claiming that our labels fully exhaust and capture the “real” characteristics of the actor.

In our study, we will proceed in four steps: First, focusing on EU foreign policy, we will introduce our model, which offers four different combinations of rationalism and constructivism. Second, we will show that most existing theories explaining the EU’s relations with its neighbours that would be difficult to define as purely rationalist or constructivist fit nicely into our model. Third, we will introduce our empirical study, which explores the relations of three countries in the EU neighbourhood (Ukraine, Georgia, and Moldova) towards the Union. In this way, we will shed more light on the dynamic dimension of our model. Fourth, we will draw some theoretical conclusions from the case study.

Constructivism and rationalism: Four models of EU external relations

Before presenting our model, we should define the two “isms” that we are trying to combine. Indeed, the number of definitions of the two is very high and still growing. Alexander Wendt defines the two basic tenets of constructivism as “(1) that the structures of human associations are determined primarily by shared ideas rather than material forces, and (2) that the identities and interests of purposive actors are constructed by these shared ideas rather than given by nature.” (Wendt 1999: 1) Other scholars agree; some of them come up with strikingly similar definitions. Jeffrey Checkel, for instance, defines constructivism as “an approach to social inquiry based on two assumptions: (1) the environment in which agents/states take action is social rather as well as material and (2) this setting can provide agents/states with understanding of their interests.” (Checkel 1998: 325)

Other theorists are very critical of the mainstream interpretation of constructivism, which is summed up in the two definitions above. Stefano Guzzini, for instance, is adamant in insisting that “constructivism... is epistemologically about the *social construction of knowledge*, and ontologically about the *construction of social reality*” (the emphasis in the original), thus implying that the marriage of US mainstream constructivism with positivism is a mistake that overlooks a large part of what constructivism really is – a position that relativizes many of the positivist knowledge claims. Another critical point often raised by opponents of mainstream constructivism pertains to the role of language in social constructivism, which plays no role whatsoever in the works of Alexander Wendt. Yet it is exactly language (and the related linguistic turn), as they argue, that lay at the roots of social constructivism in international relations. For Nicholas Onuf, one of the founding fathers of constructivism in IR, language plays a central role in the approach: “On ontological grounds, constructivism challenges the positivist view that language serves *only* to represent the world as it is. Language also serves a constitutive function. By speaking, we make the world what it is.” (Onuf 2002: 126)

The problem with the definition of rationalism may seem easier since unlike constructivists, rationalists usually do not label themselves as such (except when engaging in metatheoretical debates) and instead identify themselves with particular substantive theories such as neorealism and neoliberal institutionalism. But in fact the problem of definition is even more complex here – rationalism is a very broad category that includes (1) theories stressing the rationality of actors as their main defining feature (contrasted to theories that defend irrational or normative motivations for action), (2) approaches that prefer material over ideational factors, and also (3) a host of theories which start from the assumption of methodological (or, in some cases, ontological) individualism (contrary to approaches that stress the role of structures in social life). It is obvious that theories that are rationalist in the first sense do not have to be rationalist in the second, etc. As a result, we are confronted with a large number of widely different approaches, all of which can be classified as rationalist in some sense. This is the reason why Fearon and Wendt claim that “as used in IR context, ‘rationalism’ seems to refer variously to formal and informal applications of rational choice theory to IR questions, to any work drawing on the tradition of microeconomic theory from Alfred Marshall to recent developments in evolutionary game theory, or most broadly to any ‘positivist’ exercise in explaining foreign policy by reference to goal-seeking behavior.” (Fearon – Wendt 2005: 54)

Given the problems related to the multiplicity of definitions of both constructivism and rationalism, we tried to define both of them in a way (1) that would be clearly identifiable as connected with one of the two approaches, (2) that would not endanger our strategy, dragging us into metatheoretical issues that are not our

concern here, and (3) that would be, at the same time, sufficiently specific so as to allow an empirical analysis contrasting one of the approaches to the other. Hence, constructivism as we will discuss it here is rather narrowly defined as the conviction that ideas matter and that the basic behavioural mode of social actors is rule-following. To rephrase the definition somewhat differently, actors' (intersubjectively constructed) identities require compliance with internalised norms irrespective of whether these norms bring these actors additional benefits or not.

Rationalism, on the other hand, is defined as the conviction that social actors try to maximise their self-interest (which may be both material and ideational) and that they rationally manipulate their environment (which may be both material and ideational) to reach their ends. This implies that while rationalism is based on the actors' ability of self-reflection, leaving more space for agency, constructivism is more sceptical regarding this ability, and tends to take on more structural features. However, we should be quick to add that this in no way means that rationalism and constructivism constitute direct opposites in the agency-structure debate (Wendt 1987; Hopf 1998) since constructivism can (and in our case, it indeed does) focus on actors as well, particularly if their normative environment is changing. For instance, the still thriving research on the Europeanization of national bureaucracies and policies in EU member states is a clear case in point since notwithstanding the importance of the normative structure represented by the European Union, the major focus is clearly on the attributes of the actors (member states, sub-state bureaucracies and institutions, etc.)

The distinction between constructivism and rationalism that we introduced here comes very close to (but is not entirely identical with) the Weberian notions of goal-instrumental (*zweckrationales Handeln*) and traditional actions (*traditionelles Handeln*). While the first kind of action is reflective and purely instrumental, and its aim is the maximization of the actor's own utility, the traditional action is rule-oriented, either in the form of unconscious compliance with customs and traditions or in the form of an explicit yet still irrational acceptance of a (social, cultural, or religious) norm (or norms) as the guiding principle of one's behaviour. Since the former is reflective and the latter is not, Weber sometimes differentiates between "action" (*Handeln*) as the appropriate label for the first and "behaviour" (*Verhalten*) for the second.

Although we believe that this definition of rationalism and constructivism is widely acceptable to the adherents of both streams, it nevertheless brings to the fore some problematic features of the representation of all social action in this simplified dichotomy. Weber himself operates with two more types of social action: value-rational action (*wertrationales Handeln*) and emotional action (*emotionales Handeln*). A value-rational action is an action that has a fixed goal which is rationally followed. However, the goal itself (which may be transcendental/religious,

broadly ideological, or purely material) is not questioned. The means applied to reach the goal can be rationally chosen but their negative side-effects or inappropriateness (or immorality) can never outweigh the positive value that is attached to the desired goal.

It is tempting to assume that if the European Union as an actor in international relations behaves in the “constructivist” manner we have just described, the same is automatically true for its external partners. Yet there are numerous examples of studies which show that the external partners often do not respond in the same way but rather try to promote their own very differently defined interests. This pertains to the ties between the EU and the US (Kagan 2002), EU-Russia relations (Kratochvíl 2008) and many other relations. In other words, it is often the case that we are not presented with a unified world – be it purely constructivist or purely rationalist, but a world in which different actors employ different behavioural modes.

The four combinations of rationalism and constructivism in the study of the relations between the EU and its external partners can be shown in a simple table (Table 1).

Table 1: The four combinations of rationalism and constructivism in the study of the relations between the EU and its external partners

European Union \ External country	Normative actor	Rational actor
Normative actor	Strong constructivism	Weak constructivism
Rational actor	Weak rationalism	Strong rationalism

The first position is that of “strong constructivism”. Here, both the EU and the external actor are essentially rule-followers and their behaviour is directly linked to their (potential or actual) identities. Cooperation and conflict between the two are interpreted as a parameter of the proximity and compatibility of their identities. A number of theories of EU actorness operate within this framework. The most conspicuous example is “normative power Europe” (Manners 2002). Manners purges any signs of instrumentality from his approach and sees the relations between the EU and its partners in purely normative terms.⁴ Neither the EU nor the partner countries calculate whether the “transference” of norms brings them some further benefits (op. cit.: 2045). In other situations, the EU sets a “virtuous example” that is followed by others for normative reasons (Coombes 1998). Another group of theories that belong to this category are those which present the difference between EU’s policies and those of the other actors in terms of norms and identity.

⁴ For the time being, let us leave aside the fact that Manners in fact focuses on just one side of the equation, i.e. the EU’s influence on the partners, hence sidelining the opposite effect of the partners upon the Union.

For instance, there are multiple studies which cast the misunderstandings between the EU and its partners (United States, Turkey, Russia and others) in normative terms (Kratochvíl 2008).

The second position is labelled “weak constructivism”. The European Union as the principal focus of these kinds of studies remains a normative actor whose actions are based on its norms and values. The partner country accepts the normative nature of the EU but tries to manipulate EU norms to its own advantage. In these accounts, the EU is sometimes presented not as an actor but rather as the normative context in which rational actors are situated, using EU norms to increase their own benefits. As a result, in “weak constructivism”, the interpretation of the EU as an overarching structure and of states as rational agents comes closest to the agency-structure debate (see above).

One of the many examples of such an approach is the concept of rhetorical action, which is defined as “the strategic use of norm-based arguments” (Schimmelfennig 2001: 48). In other words, the external partners (in this particular case the EU membership candidates) understand that the EU is a community of norms and values, but they themselves are external rational actors who can convince the EU to agree with the enlargement by reference to the EU’s own principles and past commitments. In other words, while the EU is forced to comply with its norms, the external partners are seen as normatively unconstrained egoists. A different approach, but still within the bounds of weak constructivism, is the one that marks the debate on EU-US relations (e.g. Cooper 2002; Kagan 2002). Although the accents among the scholars who partake in the debate differ, they all depict the EU as a norm-ruled community that seldom uses physical force, whereas the United States is described as the typical modern state that devises rational strategies to maintain international order and its own stance on the top of the global hierarchy.

The third type, weak rationalism, is the symmetrical opposite of weak constructivism. The situation which it describes is seemingly less common – the EU is the rational actor that uses its influence to change the behaviour of its external partners. However, the apparent scarcity of theories based on this approach is quite misleading. In fact, a substantial part of the literature on Europeanization in candidate and/or neighbour countries of the EU is based exactly on this model. The European Union carefully chooses those norms and principles to whose adoption priority should be given, in particular during the accession negotiation processes (cf. for example, Ágh 1999), while the candidate states often comply due to their eagerness to belong to the community as soon as possible. Others argue that the same principle applies to the European Neighbourhood Policy, which is seen as the EU’s rational strategy of coping with those who long for EU membership but are unlikely to reach their objective any time in the near future (cf. Smith 2005).

The final position is that of strong rationalism, where institutions are seen as rather irrelevant and all actors pursue their own interests. Constraints stemming from the normative environment are easy to overcome, and sometimes their impact is denied altogether. Hence, a better relationship with the EU or even an EU entry is not seen as beneficial *per se*, but only if it brings additional benefits such as free trade, greater investment, higher security, influence over strategic decisions of larger states, etc. Strong rationalism can adopt the form of a host of liberal theories or, in more extreme cases, realist accounts of EU external relations. Examples of the former would be the civilian power concept (Duchêne 1973; for a critique, see Bull 1982) or the liberal intergovernmentalist interpretation of the enlargement process (Moravcsik – Vachudova 2003). Here, both the EU and the partner countries are rational utility-maximisers, and both believe that their relations are based on shared interests and mutually beneficial interdependence. Realist accounts of the EU's relations with its partners are also embodiments of strong rationalism. For instance, Grieco's voice opportunity thesis tries to explain the small states' reasons for desiring EU membership without relying too heavily on normative factors (even though Grieco acknowledges some role for the integration institutions) (Grieco 1995).

The main aim of our attempt to bring together the four combinations of constructivism and rationalism in a single model is twofold. First, we want to show that our model is comprehensive enough to accommodate most existing theories of EU external relations. In other words, these theories could be seen as particular instances of the four clusters of theoretical approaches. This allows us to see the implicit yet essential connection between different theories, say Schimmelfennig's concept of rhetorical action (as an example of weak constructivism) and the study of Europeanization (as an instance of weak rationalism). Second, and perhaps more importantly, our aim is to show that our theoretical analysis does not have to be confined to a single quadrant but that a theoretically informed empirical study can show how a bilateral relationship between the EU and an external partner moves from one position to another. This is something none of the above-described theories are able to explain since each of them is built on a single logic of action.

We are aware of the fact that our model has its limitations as well. First of all, it depicts four different situations, but their interconnections are not further developed in our model. As a result the transition from the position of, say, strong constructivism to weak constructivism is not explicitly defined, and the decision about when the shift from the former to the latter takes place must be decided on a case-by-case basis. Secondly, weak constructivism and weak rationalism are identical on the theoretical level. In both cases, one actor prefers a normatively-driven behaviour while the other is rationalist. Our distinction, however, is relevant in the study of EU external relations. There are substantial differences between the

situation of a normative EU and a rationalist external actor (weak constructivism) and that of a rationalist EU and a normative external actor (weak rationalism). The difference is important not in the least due to the fact that in weak constructivism, norms are usually much more important than in weak rationalism since the EU provides a general normative setting, in which the other, rationalist actor (Ukraine, for instance) operates.

Case study: The European Neighbourhood Policy

Research design

To demonstrate the usefulness of our model, we have explored the relations of three countries of Eastern Europe towards the EU in the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP). We focus on the ENP for three reasons: First, the academic study of the ENP has been marked by the all-pervading dichotomy of values vs. interests (Haukkala, 2005), which precisely reflects the theoretical distinction of constructivism vs. rationalism that we introduced and modified above. Second, the unified approach of the EU towards all the partner countries participating in the ENP (or at least its Eastern dimension) can be contrasted with the potentially very different interpretations of the policy by the partner countries. As a result, we may get a more varied picture than if we just focussed on one particular bilateral relation. Third, the Policy has been evolving very quickly and it is possible that the changes of the Policy will correspond with the shifts of the relations from one of the four theoretical quadrants to another.

Three countries were chosen from among the ENP partner countries in Eastern Europe - Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia. Our motivation for this choice was twofold: First, these countries represent both countries enthusiastic about the ENP (Georgia) and the strongest critics thereof (Ukraine), both the originally proposed partners (Ukraine and Moldova) and the latecomers (Georgia), and both big partners (Ukraine with more than 46 million inhabitants) and small ones (Georgia and Moldova have slightly more than four million inhabitants each). Second, while some countries indicate that the only objective for them is full EU membership (in particular Ukraine), the others do not stress the accession as the only option, which might indicate a different approach to the EU (possibly a more utilitarian one).

We used two complementary methods. The first was a series of semi-structured one-on-one elite interviews with 16 officials of the three countries (cf. Creswell 1997; Burnham et al. 2008, particularly the chapter on elite interviewing). In seven cases, these officials headed EU departments at the national ministries dealing with European integration (the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of European Integration and the Ministry of Justice). In five cases, they were members or advisors

of parliamentary committees dealing with the EU. The interviews did not focus on the substance of the countries' relations with the EU, but rather on the procedural aspects. Altogether, our standardized questionnaire covered nine broad themes. For instance, one important question pertained to the ways through which agreements were reached (unilateral imposition, arguing, negotiations with concessions from both sides, etc.). Also, questions about motivations for pursuing deeper integration with the EU were asked. The answers ranged from those related to identity and normative concerns to those related to material benefits for the country. The interviews were followed by e-mail communication, clarifying some topics that were not sufficiently discussed during the interviews.

While the first method, interviews, focussed on the partner countries, the secondary method briefly explored the EU side of the equation. We carried out a content analysis of the key documents published by the European Commission concerning these countries and the ENP as a whole. The time span these documents cover is 2003–2007. We used Atlas.ti software for the qualitative analysis, which enabled us to code and cross-analyse a huge amount of data that we would not be able to process using the traditional method of manual coding. In particular, we explored the allusions to values, interests and the related logics of consequences and logics of appropriateness (March – Olsen 1998).

Research findings

The most important information, which was repeatedly stressed in almost every interview, was the shift in the partner countries' approach to the European Union from the politics of identity (the wish to "join Europe") to the politics of pragmatism (the wish to gain benefits). When the ENP was first drafted (at that time, it was titled "the Wider Europe Initiative"), the countries included in it took a wary stance towards it. Their main concern was that the objective of the policy might be an avoidance of further enlargement. This perception was particularly strong in Ukraine. As one interviewee insisted, "the policy was created to keep Ukraine out" (interview 1), and the ENP was largely perceived as "an alternative arrangement to enlargement" (ibid.). Even though the policy offered some substantial economic benefits (the most visible of which was the proposed creation of the so-called deep free trade area), Ukraine was very critical of the policy and insisted on its right to become an EU member. To express this seeming paradox in theoretical terms, Ukraine rejected the offer of economic benefits since it felt that its European identity and aspirations were being denied and that these material benefits were offered to deprive Ukraine of its rightful place in the fold of the EU.

The position of Georgia substantially differed from that of Ukraine. Georgian officials did not complain about the policy as loudly as the Ukrainians did since

Georgia was happy that it was invited to join the policy, even if only after the Rose Revolution of 2003. Yet even Georgia did not escape problems with “the common reading” of the policy (interview 2). Georgia also expected the policy to pave the way towards its EU membership and cared a lot about catching up with the other countries, for instance, by demanding a three-year Action Plan instead of the originally proposed five-year one. To sum up, both those who were unhappy about the policy (Ukraine) and those who welcomed it (Georgia and Moldova) were virtually obsessed with the EU membership in the first phase. Ukraine rejected the policy because it feared that it would decrease its chances of an early EU entry, and Georgia and Moldova accepted it since they, on the contrary, believed that it would speed up their progress towards the full membership. All of them clearly saw the membership as primarily related to their European identity and shared values, i.e. in the constructivist terms.

As indicated above, the stress on shared values and a common identity was gradually replaced by the more pragmatic stress on common interests. But what were the reasons for this unexpected “pragmatic turn”? Most importantly, the European Commission, in spite of its original value-laden rhetoric, indicated from the very beginning that the partner countries’ influence on its decisions was very limited. When the interviewees described the discussions about the bilateral Action Plans, the most common phrase was “take it, or leave it” (interview 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6). Several interviewees confirmed that the European Commission insisted that the discussions about the Action Plans should not be called negotiations, but consultations (interviews 2 and 6), thus further decreasing the influence of the partner countries over the final shape of the documents.

Surprisingly, the frequent meetings between the officials from the European Commission and the interviewees led *simultaneously* to the interviewees’ Europeanization *and* their diminished attention to EU membership. The mutual “psychological adjustment” (interview 7) meant that both the partner countries and the EC “learned their lessons” (interview 2), and the partner countries realized that they had to “listen more carefully to Brussels” (interview 7). The resulting tendency in all three analysed countries was that shared values retreated to the background, and technical and administrative cooperation started to occupy a prominent place. As one interviewee from Moldova put it, “we want higher standards, like those in the EU, but the European perspective is not attainable now, and so we focus on pragmatic small steps leading there” (interview 5).

If we rephrase our findings in terms of different logics of action (March and Olsen, 1998), the logic of appropriateness that was so greatly stressed by the partner countries at the beginning slowly gave way to the logic of consequences. When the interviewees were asked about the difference between the original motivation for

participation in the policy and the current objectives, the membership retreated to a position of a hardly attainable vision, or at best a long-term goal. Instead, nearly all of the attention of the countries is focussed on creating a free trade area, facilitating visa procedures, energy cooperation, administrative and judiciary reforms, phytosanitary standards, etc. (interview 8). To put it simply, instead of membership, the relations of these countries with the EU are “all about bringing regulation” (interview 7).

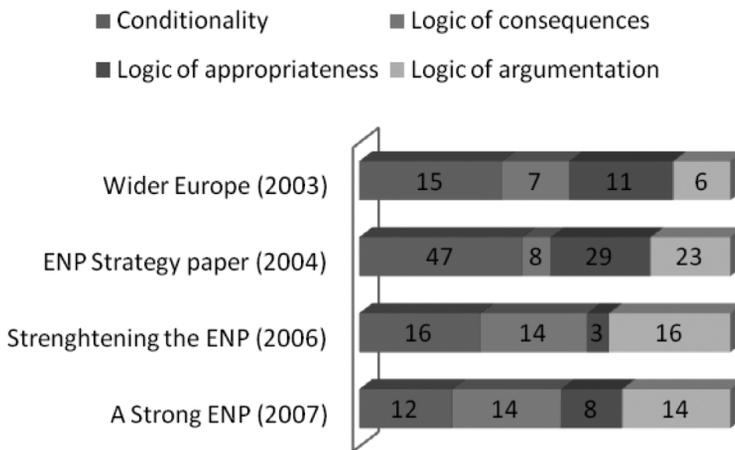
Next to the logic of consequences embodied in the focus on “common interests”, the logic of arguing also appears (cf. Risse 2000). However, unlike in the Habermasian concept of communicative rationality, the logic of arguing as described by the interviewees only pretends to create an environment of equality in which all arguments are rationally weighed and the following action is based on the consensual conclusion. Here, the European Commission does indeed allow for open discussion about all issues but these discussions have no visible effect on the Commission’s proposals. As one interviewee bluntly put it, the official “bilateral documents are purely EU internal documents” (interview 3). According to the majority of the interviewees, the Commission’s open approach aims only at placating “the public and the diplomacy” (interview 5) but it does not have anything to do with the way the Commission prepares its documents.

Despite this negative assessment of the Commission, the same institution is surprisingly seen as the best ally of the partner countries. The interviewees claimed that notwithstanding its unilateral approach, it is “doing more for us than our best friends among the member states” (interview 6) or that the Commission is “on our side against the member states”. Obviously, the Commission succeeded in convincing the partner countries that the red lines regarding enlargement or visa facilitation are imposed upon the Commission by the member states, whose interests it has to balance out. In other words, again the main thrust of arguments about why the Commission behaves in this rather restrictive way is not related to the asymmetry in symbolic power between the Commission and the countries, but to the internal balance of interest in the EU.

Although our case study focuses primarily on the position of the partner countries, we also made some research into the position of the European Commission. The additional method we used here was content analysis. We focused mainly on the four strategic papers released by the European Commission (see below). We analysed four types of action here: (1) conditionality as a strategy transferred to the ENP from the enlargement process; (2) the logic of consequences related to rationalism; (3) the logic of appropriateness related to constructivism; and (4) the logic of

argumentation.⁵ In terms of coding, the four logics were related to different phrases used in the documents: conditionality was tied to those kinds of expressions that boil down to “if country A fulfils obligation B, then it will receive reward C from the EU”; the logic of consequences was related to expressions containing references to “interests”, “advantages” or “utility” and the like; the logic of appropriateness pertained to allusions to values, norms, and principles; and the logic of argumentation pertained to calls for discussions on an equal footing, deliberation, the efforts to find a consensual solution, etc.

Figure 1: The graphical result of our analysis



The graphical result of our analysis (Figure 1)⁶ reveals three main findings: First, it is clear that the logic of appropriateness and the logic of conditionality have steadily disappeared. While in the first analysed document, these two types of action constituted two thirds of all the cases, their presence decreased to approximately 42 percent in the 2007 paper. Conditionality is a typical instrument used in the enlargement process, and references to the concept abound in enlargement-related documents. The gradual vanishing of conditionality is, on the one hand, certainly related to the dislike of the term by the partner countries and the subsequent attempts of the European Commission to replace it with the less controversial term “benchmarking”. Yet on the other hand, it also shows that the relations have been moving towards the more pragmatic focus on trade cooperation.

⁵ Although it could be argued that conditionality is not an autonomous logic on par with the other three, we are convinced that due to its importance in both the enlargement process and the EU’s relations with its neighbourhood, it deserves to be treated separately.

⁶ The graph used here is also a part of Petr Kratochvíl and Ondřej Horký (2009) (unpublished manuscript) Nothing is Imposed in this Policy, Institute of International Relations, Prague.

Second, the importance of the other two logics, that of argumentation and that of consequences, has been continuously growing. This supports our findings from the interviews. The argumentation and consultations were identified as the key elements of the relations between the European Commission and the partner countries. At the same time, the argumentation served either to inform EU officials about the complaints of the partners or to convince the partner countries to accept the Commission's proposal. It almost never happened that the argumentation would lead to a substantial shift in the position of the EC. One possible explanation was the dependence of the EC on the stances of the EU member states when each of them draws several red lines (for instance, concerning the visa-free travel, trade in sensitive goods and services, agricultural products, etc.). Another explanation, complementary to the first, lies in the clearly perceived asymmetry between the EC and the partner countries which were forced to comply with the Commission's views irrespective of its tendency to ignore the partners' critique.

The gradual replacement of the constructivist, normatively-oriented rhetoric with the rationalist argumentation based on self-interest and egoistic utility maximisation is also reflected in the increase in the reliance on argumentation based on consequences. This also pertains to the last change, which started to take place only after 2004. From the first to the second document, the share of the logic of appropriateness remained more or less the same, and the frequency with which conditionality was invoked even increased. This means that in the first two documents, the European Commission also stressed the role of common values and identity. In the first, it even discussed the matter of enlargement (not ruling out these countries' accession in the long term). Yet, in the following years the Commission's position moved towards a more utilitarian orientation on common interests. Given the Commission's institutional power and its influence on the policy-makers in the partner countries, in the end it succeeded in persuading the partner countries that they should adopt a more pragmatic stance too.

Conclusion

Although some traces of the constructivist mode of behaviour remain (such as using the term "European perspective" as a synonym for EU accession – interview 3), the change of the countries' behaviour towards the EU is hard to miss. The talk about pragmatic cooperation focussing on common interests carries the day. The mutual relations have thus evolved in three phases: First, in the phase of strong constructivism from around the time the ENP was born, both the EU and the partner countries stressed the cultural similarities and the ideational factors that drew them together. In the second phase, weak rationalism, the European Commission changed its approach, stressing cooperation rather than integration and interests

rather than values. The partner countries, however, resisted this change for some time and tried to convince the EU that the original stance, which was more favourable for accession, should be preferred. This was reflected in the critical attitude towards the ENP (particularly on the part of Ukraine) and the persistent conviction that all the material benefits the policy can bring to the partners cannot offset the symbolic and normative importance of membership. Nevertheless, in the end the European Commission convinced the partner countries that due to the existence of “red lines” imposed by the member states, the membership goal should not be pursued or that the pursuit should be put off for an unspecified future moment. Instead, both sides dedicated all their attention to gaining material benefits from their partnership – be they stability, security, trade and limited migration as the main benefits for the EU, or incentives for domestic reforms, regulations and trade opportunities for the partner countries. In other words, the final phase was that of a strong rationalism, with both sides aiming at a maximization of their benefits.

Our case study also shows that within the relatively short period of time of the policy’s evolution, multiple changes in the relationship between the EU and its external partners were possible. Interestingly, the stronger actor (in our case, the European Commission) has been able not only to influence the normative orientation of the weaker partners, but also to induce a shift from the normatively-grounded policy to the interest-driven approach. This finding has three corollaries: First, while some strategies of the external actors like the rhetorical action (Schimmelfennig 2001) might have worked in the past, it is highly improbable that such a strategy would work again, as the case of Ukraine amply demonstrates. It is no longer possible to shame those Union members who oppose further enlargement since the shift to the “common interests” approach debilitates any normatively based argumentation. In terms of membership perspective, the situation of the current partner countries today and the Central European post-Communist countries at the beginning of the 1990s are similar at first glance. Both groups of countries fought vigorously for the full membership in the EU, which was, in both cases, resisted by an influential group of EU member states. However, while the rhetorical action was instrumental in gradually overcoming the negative stance of some EU member states to the enlargement in the 1990s, this strategy is doomed to fail today as our study shows.

Second, our case study suggests that the commonly held view of the arena of international relations as being either of the constructivist or the rationalist type is misleading. Instead, it is useful to explore the motivations of particular actors individually since their approaches may be very diverse. While the general orientation of an international actor is quite stable and hence switches between the rationalist and the constructivist modes of operation will be rare, particular bilateral relationships may be changing pretty frequently, possibly with every change of government.

Finally, we believe that this study opens up space for more research on various combinations of the rationalist and constructivist types of action. For instance, it would be interesting to explore to what extent individual countries (such as France, Germany, the United Kingdom and Poland, to name just a few interesting cases) in the EU tend to one or more of these ideal types.

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The Origin of the Czech and Slovak Pluralist Party Systems

Jan Bureš and Petr Just

Abstract: *The article analyzes the process of pluralistic party system renewal in Czechoslovakia after the fall of communism in 1989. It shows the initial conditions and major actors, as well as factors that influenced party system structure and behaviour in the environment of a post-communist society without a recent democratic tradition. Special attention is devoted to the differences between Czech and Slovak party systems, as both parts of the former united Czechoslovakia demonstrated differences in their respective party systems both before and after 1989. After the introduction of key political parties, the results of 1990 general parliamentary election and its impact on the party system are analyzed.*

Keywords: *Czech political parties, Slovak political parties, pluralist party systems, elections*

The Czech and Slovak political party system immediately began to take shape in the first days after the November 1989 revolution, and was concentrated into three fundamental political entities:

- 1) entities already existing before November 1989, which continued in the new regime (KSČ – Komunistická strana Československa, Communist Party of Czechoslovakia; ČSS – Československá strana socialistická, Czechoslovak Socialist Party; ČSL – Československá strana lidová, Czechoslovak People's Party, KSS – Komunistická strana Slovenska, Communist Party of Slovakia; SSO – Strana slovenskej obrody, Slovak Resurgence Party, and DS – Demokratická strana, Democratic Party)
- 2) entities that were revived after November 1989, and thus continued in the tradition of their pre-February 1948 or pre-WW2 activities (ČSSD – Československá sociální demokracie, Czechoslovak Social Democracy, and SNS – Slovenská národná strana, Slovak National Party), as well as entities that transformed themselves into political parties from originally dissident groups active during normalisation in Czechoslovakia (KAN – Klub angažovaných nestraníků, Club for Engaged Nonpartisans, ČSDI – Československá demokratická iniciativa, Czechoslovak Democratic Initiative, HOS – Hnutí za občanskou svobodu – Movement for Civic Freedom)
- 3) Newly established “greenfield” political entities (OF – Občanské fórum, Civic Forum; HSD-SMS – Hnutí za samosprávnou demokracii – Společnost pro Moravu a Slezsko, Movement for Autonomous Democracy – Party for

Moravia and Silesia; SPR-RSČ – Sdružení pro republiku – Republikánská strana Československa, Union for Republic – Republican Party of Czechoslovakia; HDŽJ – Hnutí důchodců za životní jistoty, Pensioners' Movement for Social Security; SZ – Strana zelených, Green Party; VPN – Verejnosť proti násiliu, Public against Violence; KDH – Kresťanskodemokratické hnutie, Christian-democratic Movement; MNI – Maďarská nezávislá iniciatíva, Hungarian Independent Initiative; MKDH – Maďarské kresťanskodemokratické hnutie, Hungarian Christian-democratic Movement; Spolužitie, the Coexistence movement and so on)

The number of political parties being established increased quickly. While the tumultuous development of political entities attested to citizens' awakening political activity, on the other hand it also made difficult the creation of any kind of stable, functional model of party competition, which only strengthened the dominant position of the OF (Fiala – Herbut 2003: 16). The situation in Slovakia, where an additional player, the KDH, began to threaten the dominant position of the VPN, was slightly different. This party's activities were the continuation of activity by the Christian dissent movement, which was much more active and significant in Slovakia in the 1980s than civic dissent.

The general atmosphere before the elections was marked not only by the efforts of individual political entities to gain exposure among voters, but also by key individual political events, which citizens could more or less follow on live telecasts: in particular the arguments by Federal Assembly MPs over the name of the state and the general raising of the question of constitutional organisation, including the first signs of the potential independence of Slovakia, the demonstrations by Slovak nationalists against V. Havel in Bratislava, disputes among the political elite over vetting (vented in the Federal Assembly and broadcast live to society at large thanks to direct television broadcasts), the fate of the StB (Státní bezpečnost, Secret police) and the federal ministry of the interior, the beginning disputes over economic reform, anti-communist speeches by parts of the new political elite (e.g. Sokol's suggestion in Prague to ban the activities of the KSČM /Komunistická strana Čech a Moravy, the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia/), disputes over the property of the Communist Party and the SSM (Socialistický svaz mládeže, Socialist Youth Union) and the opening of sore wounds from the modern history of Czechoslovakia by the media (crimes perpetrated by the communist regime in the 1950s, demands for the rehabilitation of victims and political prisoners and the Soviet occupation in 1968).

The Civic Forum and the Public against Violence parties, Občanské fórum (OF) and Verejnosť proti násiliu (VPN) respectively, both generally considered election favourites, perceived the political contest unambiguously as a plebiscite, choosing

between the old and a new regime, and presented themselves as a nationwide inclusive movement for national reconstruction. The result of this was a marked limitation of space for the function of other political entities, especially left-wing ones (Kunc 2000: 197).

June 1990 elections

Main candidate parties and movements, fundamental characteristics of election programmes

Five political parties and two democratic movements were functioning in Czechoslovakia immediately after November 1989; by the June 1990 elections there was a total of 66 registered political entities, of which 23 were running for the Federal Assembly or (Czech or Slovak) National Councils.

The majority of political entities entering the elections did not display the structure of classic parties as they are known in mature democracies. Generally these were conglomerations of parties and movements with similar orientation regarding the main social issues, and fundamentally targeting all voter groups.

Voters had only a minimal chance to assess the actual abilities of individual leaders and candidates. The Civic Forum gained very wide support, in comparison to other political parties, by virtue of its fundamental strategy - to make the first free elections a civic vote on democracy versus the old regime.

The programmes of the political parties were very similar, and in many basic questions relating to social development were identical. The programme goals of the majority of parties were more or less overlapping, which only made the situation less clear for voters. The highly generalised nature of the programmes of individual parties indicated the immaturity of civic society and party politics. The basic theses of the programmes were concentrated into several simple slogans. These revolved mainly around promises of the development of democracy, a socially and ecologically oriented market economy, the creation of a constitutional state, a vision of economic development, protection of the natural environment and the safeguarding of national security. The concept of Czechoslovakia rejoining Europe and the idea of privatisation of state property were also frequently repeated. References to restitution of property were absent altogether. Social politics was also in a prominent position for all parties, but was generally formulated only very vaguely. The issue of nationhood was a chapter in itself. It was a part of the programme for the majority of Slovak parties and the Moravian HSD-SMS. The Civic Forum ignored it altogether.

Despite this great similarity between political programmes, in public opinion polls during the campaign more than half of the voters claimed that their decision was based most on political parties' programmes (Krejčí 1994: 256) (influenced decision-making in the case of 90% of voters); in second place voters decided based on their trust in the representatives of the parties and movements (one fifth of voters) (Krejčí 1994: 209).

The above-mentioned form of referendum about the past was characterised by sentences from the OF pre-election campaign: "*Those who don't vote for the OF are voting for the communists*", as well as a slogan difficult to understand for a mature pluralist democracy: "*Parties are for partisans, the OF is for everyone.*" The first of these directly targeted a specific political entity. It deliberately simplified a political battle between 23 political entities to the main rivals, symbolically representing that discord between the past and the future. This understandably intensified the political conflict, deliberately boxing the voter in and giving them the feeling that they were making a simple decision. This shortcut would later be used regularly in Czech politics (e.g. the ODS /*Občanská demokratická strana*, Civic Democratic Party/ slogan from the 1998 elections: "*To the left or with Klaus*").

Civic Forum

The Civic Forum (*Občanské fórum*, OF) was led to the elections by Jan Urban, of whom it was generally known that he wanted to leave politics immediately after the elections. The real representatives of the OF however were primarily ministers of the federal and Czech government, or Federal Assembly and Czech National Council MPs, who found themselves on the candidate forms in individual electoral localities.

The OF electoral programme for the first free elections, titled "*Accepting responsibility for our own future*", was based on a programme thesis which had already been approved by the OF assembly on 31st March, 1990. The programme was introduced by something of an accusation of the communist regime, and was oriented towards the OF's fundamental goals: to reintegrate Czechoslovakia to Europe (which was not understood primarily via the European Community and NATO but rather institutions originating from the Helsinki peace process) and to reform all components of public life. In the economic field, the programme occupied a space that was delineated on one side by support of basic economic reforms (including privatisation, though by the method of selling company shares to its employees) and on the other by the necessity of maintaining social cohesion. While the programme included discussion of the renewal of the principles of private property, passages can also be found ascribing a significant role within the market economy to property ownership by towns, municipalities and co-operative organisations. Overall,

however, the electoral campaign was distinguished by a considerable intangibility, and, in the spirit of the revolutionary slogan “*Parties are for partisans, the OF is for everyone*”, was oriented at all strata of voters that did not want to continue on the path of the old regime. In terms of the main ideological groupings it is possible to find two fundamental focal points: liberal and national (Krejčí 1994: 211)

Social democrats

The development of the relationship between the Civic Forum and social democracy, as an entity that after November 1989 tried to renew left-wing politics on a democratic foundation, was most interesting. The Social Democrats revived their activity immediately after the November revolution in 1989 and attempted to gain recognition as a historical party, which they supported partly by the fact that the ČSSD was the oldest classic Czech political party, and also with the argument that the party had operated uninterrupted, including during the period of management in exile from 1948 to 1989. During the revival of this party there were great conflicts between domestic and exile factions, and further between supporters of close co-operation with the KSC and supporters of a radical anti-communist line. Before the elections the name of Social Democracy (*Sociální demokracie*) thus covered the Czechoslovak Social-democratic Party (*Čs. sociálně-demokratická strana*), Czechoslovak Social Democracy (*Čs. sociální demokracie*) and the Social-democrat Party (*Sociálně-demokratická strana*) in Slovakia. Rudolf Battěk and his followers in the Czechoslovak Social-democratic Party did not implement their right-wing positions, and so switched to the OF ticket.

The Civic Forum refused to recognise the ČSSD as a historic party, as they were afraid of the swift growth in its popularity as a party that could appeal to an already socially sensitive Czech society with a programme focused on a socially equitable society. In addition to this the leaders of the Civic Forum expressed concerns that many previously discredited communists could switch to social democracy for career reasons, and with the help of this party quickly gain practical political experience. As on several other occasions in its history, the ČSSD this time went through the well worn dance regarding the ownership of its headquarters, *Lidový dům* (*People's House*).

The representatives of the KSC decided to return the social democratic party's traditional headquarters, together with other property confiscated after February 1948, to the party. The leaders of the OF Co-ordination Centre cast doubt upon the historical continuity of Horák's post-revolution ČSSD with the pre-February social democrat party, and positioned themselves against the handing over of *Lidový dům*. It is of course necessary to add that Horák's leadership did not itself act particularly strategically, as it succumbed to social pressure which the leadership of the Civic

Forum managed to evoke, and attempted to present social democracy as a centre-right party.¹ This in the atmosphere of a general disgust at the left, made it impossible for the social democrats to utilise the potential of supporting the ideals of social equity, which were always strongly present in Czech society.

Incidentally, the socialist and civic parties acted similarly in the electoral campaign, vying to verbally reject everything associated with the left-wing foundations of the old regime. While the national socialists, in an attempt to deal with the dominant position of the OF, tried to appeal to the Czech public with a programme of democratic socialism, the means by which they chose to do this (references to the authority of Edvard Beneš and Milada Horáková) proved to be excessively archaic.

The persistent efforts by Horák's Social Democrats, the People's Party and the National Socialists to distance themselves as vocally as possible from the old regime culminated several days before the election in a joint *appeal for the prohibition of the activities of the Communist Party*. The Civic Forum, aware of the legal, political (members of KSCĚ had until recently represented one tenth of the Czechoslovak population) and technical (it was not clear which institution had the right to adjudicate as to the banning of the activities of a political party) difficulties inherent in the realisation of this step, not only refused this appeal, made by Jan Urban and President Václav Havel, as undemocratic, but also utilised it to weaken the political position of those suggesting it, when it publicly pointed out their pre-revolution loyalty to the communist regime. The politicians of the OF argued that, in addition, in the case of the dissolution of the KSCĚ, the members of the abolished party would found another, which would thus lead only to a formal renaming, and in addition the members of a thus newly founded party would become victims of the new democratic regime, and could exploit the aura of martyrdom. Because KSCĚ was not banned, the space of the radical left remained clearly and distinctly legible.

The Communists

The main ideological opponent of the OF was the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (KSCĚ – *Komunistická strana Československa*). The party consolidated at its convention in Olomouc, 20th–21st December 1989. It released a statement apologising to citizens for all injustices committed, accepting the abolition of its own armed units and accepted a new action programme, something of directive for the further activity of the party. It respected the principles of pluralist democracy, and also recognised private ownership. The party effected a partial federalisation of its structures before the election when on 31st March 1990 it established the

¹ Jiří Kunc even believes that the ČSSD during 1989–1992 severely damaged itself by the acceptance of the political ideal of a large coalition, which they supported with the example of governments in pan-national coalitions in the first Czechoslovak Republic – cf.: Kunc 2000: 216.

Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia (KSČM – *Komunistická strana Čech a Moravy*) and the Communist party of Slovakia (KSS – *Komunistická strana Slovenska*). This act led to further progressive division of the party. In its electoral programme, the KSČ focused particularly on social issues, and presented itself as a barrier against unemployment and other maladies of capitalism. The Communist Party entered the elections as a unified political entity, with a new cherry logo, and with a new building in *Politických vězňů* (Political Prisoners – *sic!*) Street.

Moravian movement

In the period when constitutional disputes between Czechs and Slovaks began to take shape, the Moravian movement, emphasising the historical rights of Moravia and Silesia, utilised the resultant atmosphere. The Movement for Autonomous Democracy – Party for Moravia and Silesia (HSD-SMS – *Hnutí za samosprávnou demokracii – Společnost pro Moravu a Slezsko*) was established at a meeting of the Party for Moravia and Silesia in Kroměříž on 1st April 1990. This entity proclaimed itself to be a movement promoting the interests of the given region and uniting citizens on this regional principal.

In the so-called Moravia-Silesia Declaration (*Moravskoslezská deklarace*), the HSD-SMS called for the creation of a federal state of Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia, and Slovakia, and unequivocally rejected the bi-federal organisation of Czechoslovakia. Before the elections it even presented a proposal to the public on this matter, suggesting that the first free elections be held only for the Federal Assembly and that, instead of an election to the Czech National Council, elections to a Czech parliament and a Moravian-Silesian parliament should be held later, alongside municipal elections. HSD-SMS also called for, among other things, the establishment of an autonomous federal nation of Moravia-Silesia, within the framework of the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic, with a provisional delegation (until the election of a Moravian-Silesian parliament) of legislative authority at the Czech National Council (Springerová 2005: 43). This movement capitalised primarily on the newly awakened ideas of Moravian regionalism.

The high election results of HSD-SMS were, paradoxically, helped by an appeal by representatives of the OF (P. Pithart, V. Klaus), running for election in Moravia, to voters to not vote for small political parties (Springerová 2005: 43). HSD-SMS candidates responded to this with an appeal for voters in Moravia and Silesia to cast at least one vote in three (to the Chamber of the People of the Federal Assembly, Chamber of Nations of the Federal Assembly, and the Czech National Council) “for Moravia”. As a result of this targeted campaign, voters’ preference for HSD-SMS quickly grew, (from 3% on 15th May to 6% on 30th May) (Rak 1992: 209).

People's party

The Czechoslovak People's Party (ČSL – *Československá strana lidová*) joined with the Christian-democrat Party (KDS – *Křesťanskodemokratická strana*) before the elections, creating the Christian and Democratic Union (KDU – *Křesťanská a demokratická unie*). This coalition was the strongest centrist party, promoted the ideals of national understanding and built on the principles of solidarity and equality. The union of these two parties was, of course, not without problem, because the KDS, represented mainly by Václav Benda, was grounded firmly on anticommunist ideals, while ČSL was still only with difficulty coming to terms with its collaborative past from the times of the communist-dominated Národní fronta (National Front) (Měchýř 1999: 183).

Pre-election voter preference

In the newly nascent democratic society, public opinion polls became a welcome novelty for citizens, to whom they had been denied before November 1989. Despite the fact that the methods of the first poll agencies were still in their infancy, even these polls indicate much of interest about shifts in opinion within Czech society, and are really the only “hard” data from a period of general disorientation of socio-economic interests and the political orientation of citizens.²

In the first survey of 7th March 1990, the Civic Forum was preferred by 25% of voters. KSĈ was in second place with 13%. Other parties, with minor differences, were under the 10% threshold. In Slovakia the VPN led with 18%, just in front of the KDH (17%) and the Greens (16%). The KSS and DS also had over 10%.

A significant turning point came in April. In the Czech part of the republic and in Slovakia both main democratic groups – OF and VPN – lost approximately 4% of their supporters. Both Christian entities, KDU and KDH, grew in popularity. The Christian and democratic union (KDU) became the second most popular entity with the support of 15% of voters, and the KDH became the strongest party in Slovakia with 26%. A competition between these two groups was drawing near. The situation in the Czech part of the republic then changed again. While voter preference for OF grew, support for the KDU was unstable and decreasing. The apparent threat to the OF from the KDU at the beginning of the elections resulted in the attack by Jan Ruml on Josef Bartončik; he blamed him for co-operation with the Communist State Police. KSĈ maintained the same voter support throughout. A mistrust of public opinion polls predominated among its voters. In the end, in comparison to the final opinion poll, the KSĈ gained a higher percentage of votes than predicated

² All results from public opinion pools are from Krejčí 1994: 240–242.

by the final opinion poll. The HSD-SMS strengthened significantly in the last days of the campaign.

The greatest slump was experienced by the Green Party. In April it still had 13% of the vote in the Czech part of the republic. In the end it did not win seats in any representative body. It did not manage to clearly distinguish itself from the OF and in the sphere which was the party's specialty – ecology – did not manage to outline a concrete programme.

According to surveys only 30% of the population stated that anyone had tried to personally influence their vote, which indicates quite impersonally managed electioneering. The candidates of the OF tried most to run a campaign of personal contact, personally contacting 13% of people questioned, KSC candidates managed to contact 10%, KDU 7%, Green party 5% and CSS 2%.

The pre-election campaign took place primarily in the media, and in particular on television. Political entities did not have any experience in managing campaigns and did not know how to target a concrete voter group. A specific role was certainly also played by inadequate technical support. According to voting regulations the length of the official electoral campaign was set at 40 days, and ended 48 hours before the election.

Inexperience with managing electoral campaigns can also be observed in the statistics indicating the growing dissatisfaction of citizens with the development of the campaigns. At the start of May 1990, 25% of those questioned expressed dissatisfaction, immediately after the elections this had risen to 45%, of whom 14% expressed outright disgust.

The most misapprehension was directed at the OF and VPN campaigns. The number of reservations increased in proportion to education. After the election, 26% of those questioned believed that the type of campaign had played a decisive role in electoral preference, 36% thought that it likely had some effect, 26% thought that it probably had no effect and 12% thought that it definitely had no effect.

Also interesting is data about when citizens made their political choice. At the end of April 1990, 51% of those questioned had decided who they would vote for, a further 24% had decided in May, at the start of June another 19% and a final 6% immediately before the elections. Hence shortly before the end of the electoral campaign a battle was being waged for a quarter of the votes. Of these, 40% decided according to "the lesser evil".

Election results

The first free elections in Czechoslovakia after 44 years took place on Friday 8th and Saturday 9th June, 1990. Even the first data from the election can be considered

a triumph of the new regime: voter turnout in the Czech part of the republic reached 96.8% and in Slovakia 95.4%, which in both cases is almost double the participation for similar elections in mature democracies. In both republics, parties symbolising political change triumphed.

The elections represented a triumphal victory for the Civic Forum. A total of 127 OF candidates fought their way into the Czech National Council (49.5% of votes), 50 candidates to the Chamber of Nations of the Federal Assembly (49.96% votes) and 68 OF candidates were elected to Chamber of the People of the Federal Assembly (53.15% of votes). This significant victory was explained by sociologist Jan Herzmann in terms of several factors:

- 1) Many voters from both republics were influenced by the popularity of President Vaclav Havel, who while not being involved in the campaign officially was, by virtue of his actions, de facto a supporter of the OF and VPN.
- 2) The so-called “band-wagon effect” manifested itself in voter decisions: a tendency of the undecided part of the population to support the party that would likely win (favoured party).
- 3) The negative character of the campaign drew more citizens into the political battle and compelled them to take part in the elections,
- 4) The appeal by leaders of the OF to “not vote for small parties” had a noticeable effect on many voters (Herzmann 1992: 165–183; see also Šimíček 1995: 149).

Table 1: Results of elections to the Federal Assembly, 8–9 June, 1990 (only entities that won seats)

Czech Republic							
Party, movement, coalition	Chamber of the People (lower house)			Chamber of Nations (upper house)			FA MPs
	Votes won		Seats	Votes won		Seats	
	votes	%		votes	%		
OF	3,851,172	53.15	68	3,613,513	49.96	50	118
KSČ	979,996	13.48	15	997,919	13.80	12	27
KDU	629,359	8.69	9	633,053	8.75	6	15
HSD-SMS	572,015	7.89	9	658,477	9.10	7	16

Source: cf. Krejčí 2006: 269

**Table 2: Results of elections to the Czech National Council, 8–9 June, 1990
(only entities that won seats)**

Party, movement, coalition	Votes won		Seats
	votes	%	
OF	3,56,201	49.50	127
KSČ	954,690	13.24	32
HSD-SMS	723,609	10.03	22
KDU	607,134	8.42	19

Source: cf. Krejčí 2006: 270

The five-percent threshold meant that to win its first seat a party required 362,000 votes in the Czech part of the republic and 169,000 votes in Slovakia. A whole series of voters was thus without representation. In numbers this was 1,356,413 voters in the Czech National Council, 1,215,908 in the Chamber of the People and 1,328,557 voters in the Chamber of Nations (Krejčí 1994: 191). Voters utilised the opportunity to vote for various parties in each of the representative bodies.

In post-election surveys 70% of respondents stated that they had voted for one party, 21% for two, and 9% stated that they had voted for three parties (each of the Chambers and the Czech National Council were elected separately).

It is interesting to observe the geographical support base of some specific parties. Traditional Czechoslovak parties in particular were closely comparable to previous elections in the 1st and 3rd republics. The Social Democrats had the highest voter support in the 1990 election in the Prague area and particularly in northern and eastern Bohemia. The social democrats future stronghold – northern Moravia – did not have significant interest in the party at these elections.

The KSČ was, traditionally, most popular in northern Bohemia, partially in eastern Bohemia, in the areas of central Moravia and in Silesia.

The KDU (and ČSL) confirmed its strongest positions in southern Moravia and newly also in eastern Bohemia.

With newly established parties it is not possible to speak of traditional and non-traditional areas. The Civic Forum appealed most to residents of Prague, where it won 62.47% of votes in the elections to the Federal Assembly House of the People. In western Bohemia it also managed to win more than 60% of votes (61.67% to the Federal Assembly Chamber of the People).

The HSD-SMS won the most votes (25.2% of votes for the Federal Assembly Chamber of the People) in southern Moravia, and was also successful in northern Moravia (15.2% Federal Assembly Chamber of the People) (Krejčí 1994: 213–216; cf. also: Cigánek 1992: 85–86).

The elections in June 1990 signified a clear slump in left-wing power. The Communist Party maintained their position as the strongest left-wing formation, however its election results (13.5% of votes) did not allow it to significantly influence political events. The social democrats won 4.11% of votes to the Czech National Council, and the Czechoslovak Socialist Party finished even worse with 2.68% of votes. There was an understandable contempt for left-wing politics, stemming from efforts to deny the undemocratic nature of the old regime. Paradoxically, the only left-wing candidates who won seats in Parliament were those social democrats that ran on the OF ticket – these new MPs with Rudolf Battěk at the helm were however expelled from ČSSD after the elections.

Basic evaluation of the 1990 elections

With the dominant victory by the OF in the Czech part of the republic, the first democratic elections clearly demonstrated the will of citizens to reject the undemocratic foundation of the pre-November regime. Its original leaders, the KSČM, were allowed to further function as a legitimate part of the political spectrum. These elections can thus be labelled as “retrospective”, since the majority of voters cast their vote on the basis of their relationship with the past (Krejčí 1994: 298). The success of the People’s Party confirmed the definite relevance of Christian-democratic elements in Czech politics. A complete surprise in these elections was the success of the pro-Moravia movement. The election results demonstrated that voters were inclined towards more substantial support of nationally oriented parties and smaller parties primarily in elections to National Councils, perhaps because they ascribed less importance to them. The elections did by no means decide, and could not decide, the specific paths social, political and economic changes would take in the future.

The first free and democratic elections in June 1990 were also accompanied by the absolute instability of the party system. Political parties were essentially only just being formed and were finding their own topics and voters. They did not have their own stable social foundations. Many so-called historical parties (e.g. ČSSD) only barely revived their tradition, while others (socialists) did not manage to do this at all. Apart from newly originating entities, however, the political scene was dominated by two entities, embodying the periods before and immediately after the November revolution: the Communist Party and the Civic Forum, a conglomerate of various pro-democracy oriented political entities.

After November 1989, the Czech party system did not develop without the influence of previous party systems. Its emerging likeness was influenced both by elements of the party-political system of the first Czechoslovak Republic and developments during the period of the undemocratic regime (Kunc 2000: 166). The greatest

influence on the likeness of the new party system were of course the historical circumstances of the time, i.e. events, the nature of the political environment and systemic changes taking place in Czech society immediately after November 1989. As Petr Fiala and Maxmilián Strmiska have drawn attention to, transformation of a political party is always a complex process, which takes place on two levels. On the one hand the likeness of political parties in a system is significantly determined by regulation *from above* – so-called parameters of the first order, which create the framework and conditions for the activities of political parties. On the other hand, however, a substantial part of the structuring of the internal organisation of political parties is driven *from below* by the members of these parties. Precisely for this reason, some elements of continuity with pre-November development can be preserved in the case of political parties (in contrast to other political – e.g. constitutional – institutions). In addition, the party system is constantly developing, and this flux does not diminish – even in stabilised democratic systems the development of party systems can be very tumultuous (e.g. Italy and France). The most important factors for the development of the party system are precisely those social phenomena that have the most difficulty maintaining their permanence, and which have a tendency towards constant movement – the social stratification of a society, the social-moral environment, relevant cleavages and so on (Fiala – Strmiska 2001).

The determining factor in the creation of a party spectrum in the immediate post-communist period was the absence of classic (Rokkan) historical cleavages in the disoriented Czech society. These cleavages only grew in significance very slowly and gradually, as the first results of the social and economic reforms expressed themselves in the first years of transformation. This understandably affected the likeness of Czech political parties and movements in the first phase of transformation, at least in that these entities were only just gradually forming their ideological foundations and finding firmer grounding among individual groups of voters.

While in this period there is an opening of space for the foundation and function of political parties, nevertheless some basic systematic insufficiencies, which have their origins in the deep political change which the entire society underwent, express themselves here. Tens of political parties and other entities were established before the elections in June 1990; however these parties did not have a firm anchoring in the electoral structure and did not manage to assert themselves as generally accepted instruments of the political competition. The first period of the creation of the Czech party system is thus characterised by a constant precipitancy (creation and regrouping of political entities took place almost continuously right until the first free elections), ambiguity of the positions of individual players (not just party entities) within the system and a lack of grounded models of behaviour among players of the political game. As S. Mainwaring points out, it is precisely

institutionalisation and the anchoring of the party system that are the key factors for nascent developing democracies (Mainwaring 1998: 71). Miroslav Novák, for example, for this reason infers that a critical analysis, on the basis of established methods, of the party system can in the Czech case only be seriously used only for development after the parliamentary elections in 1992 (Novák – Lebeda et al. 2004: 254).

Political power in the first period, that is until the elections in June 1990, was to a significant extent distributed by other means, particularly on the basis of personal relationships between members of the new political elite, and political parties were not yet perceived as representatives and mediators of the interests of individual social groups, as even the social stratification of Czech society was undergoing a tumultuous process of transformation.

The rapid and spontaneous process of the creation of the first political entities which, thanks to its striking dynamics, made a speedy stabilisation of models of functioning of the competition between Czech political parties impossible also corresponded to this. This in fact allowed the Civic Forum to maintain itself in the position of dominant player in political events at least until the 1990 elections. The public perceived political parties with a certain contempt, as a consequence of the many years of the assertion of the power monopoly of the KSČ. The new political elite, represented in this phase chiefly by dissidents from the OF, also had a reserved approach to political partisanship, and preferred the utilisation of mutual bonds and communicational means used during the period of dissent. The new elite also expressed an equally ambivalent relationship to the classic mechanisms of representation and mediation of political interests in general.³ Political scientist Pavel Pšeja projects this (formerly dissident) defence of the idea of non-partisanship, even in the sense of the preference of the principle of civic society to classic structures of political parties, not only into political discussions, but also into political science approaches to the study of political parties, and demonstrates how this phenomenon co-created the positions of several of the leading Czech political scientists, such as Jiří Kunc and Michal Klíma (Pšeja 2005: 12). In this first period, even giving precedence to the above-mentioned elements of “revolutionary direct democracy” did not benefit political parties.

³ Václav Havel, for example, moderated his originally negative view of political parties somewhat with the passage of time, as can be seen, for example in an interview with *Respekt* magazine, where he defended political parties as the political space in which ideas and political leaders are born – cf.: *Respekt* 1998 (15): 10.

Cleavages in the first phase of the creation of the Czech party system (up to the 1990 elections)

Defining the main Rokkan cleavages (Lipset – Rokkan eds. 1967) for the initial period of transition of Czech society to democracy is very complex, as it is necessary to realise that the whole of Czech society was undergoing a period of fundamental political change, which above all represented the blurring of interests and position of individual social strata. Some political scientists, such as Ladislav Mrklas, point specifically to the significant destruction of the social structure of Czech society during the communist regime, which made it almost impossible to apply Cleavage theory to the analysis of the first transition period (Mrklas 2003: 249). On the other hand, other authors such as Miroslav Novák do not entirely agree that the impact of the communist regime upon the social structure of the Czech society was so destructive that the cleavages, similar to Western society, could not be quickly restored (Novák 1999: 135–136). Novák thus actually builds partly on the theory of Raymond Aron (Aron 1993) arguing that the communist regime was a form of industrial society, in which – similarly to the world of democracy and market economy - similar social processes exist (urbanisation, secularisation, and consumerism); with the exception that in communist regimes the real social interests of citizens were suppressed. Nevertheless, the real existence of diverse social interests, and therefore also the social stratification of society in Communist regimes, provides M. Novák arguments for the conclusion that in Czechoslovakia after November 1989, for example, there were suitable conditions for the classical cleavages of Western European societies to resume relatively quickly (Novák – Lebeda et al. 2004: 258).

The possibility of applying cleavage theory to the countries of Central and Eastern Europe in the first period of post-communist transition was quite categorically refuted by M. G. Roskin, according to whom the process of transition to democracy in the region took place so quickly that during it there was no time for deep ties between political parties and voter groups to be created (Roskin 1994).

Despite the difficulties mentioned above, however, let us try to ascertain whether during the first period of the structuring of the Czech party system after 1989 we can find at least some indications of traditional cleavages. The fundamental and first cleavage, which accompanied the post-November transformation of Czech society, can perhaps be identified as the cleavage of *KSČ – its opposition*, or the cleavage of the *old regime – new regime*. In the first phase (up to the elections in June 1990), however, it is not possible to observe any other significant issues beyond this basic division that could polarize society in the period of the nascent party system (Fiala – Herbut 2003: 16). The striking electoral success of the OF in fact also led to the ending of the relevance of this division.

The results of the June elections also indicated the definite, albeit significantly weaker, relevance of cleavages in the sense of their fundamental definition by Stein Rokkan:

- 1) The cleavage of *church – state*, which expressed itself in the relative success of the Christian-democratic formation KDU.
- 2) The cleavage of *centre – periphery*, which found its expression in the surprising success of the pro-Moravian HSD-SMS. Perhaps the main reason for the massive voter support of this entity was, in the framework of a democratising society, the open-ended question of the strengthening of the role of the Moravia-Silesia region in the framework of constitutional organisation. This cleavage also expressed itself in the constitutional disputes among representatives of the Czech and Slovak political elite in 1990–1992.
- 3) The cleavage of *urban – rural*, which expressed itself in different voter positions between urban and rural populations (e.g. the relative success of the Communist Party in rural areas).

Jiří Kunc also noted that while the influence of classic historical cleavages was only marginal during the first period of post-communist transformation of Czech society, in the subsequent period the classic characteristics of these social cleavages developed significantly (Kunc 2000: 167). After the achievement of the basic objectives of a broad democratic movement (i.e. removing the old regime) there is a differentiation of this broad movement, particularly on the basis of the restoration of socio-economic cleavages. These, in the form of cleavages founded on the relationship of citizens to the radically changing structure of property ownership within the society (which can be interpreted as the embodiment of the classic division into right and left⁴) had in 1990 not yet expressed itself markedly, though in later years (especially in 1991–1992 and later up to 1996) clearly became the most important cleavage in Czech society.

The low level of relevance of this cleavage in the first year of transformation related to the fact that in Czech society, undergoing a radically discontinuous development after November 1989, no firmly anchored positions existed that were measurable in terms of opinion polls, nor any clearly interest-based social strata within society. In the following years (from 1992 onwards) it is possible to observe a further *strengthening of socio-economic cleavages*, expressed by the growing significance of the class dimension of electoral voting. This cleavage is reflected in

⁴ Herbert Kitschelt however offers another comparison when pointing out that the cleavage of transformation is comparable to the cleavage of pro-market liberals – anti-market authoritarians – cf.: Kitschelt 1992: 7–51. Brno political scientist Pavel Pšeja discusses in this regard the cleavage of social – liberal cf.: Pšeja 2005: 18.

the sharp division of Czech society into supporters of the left and right, and in the first years of the existence of an independent Czech Republic was a positive sign that events were gradually leading to the projection of the interests and values of voters – members of individual social strata – upon their voting preferences. This development confirms István Széleányi's conclusion that in the transition countries of Central and Eastern Europe the concepts of left and right are assuming their full meaning depending on the institutionalisation of party systems, which reflects the victory of "*politics of interests*" over "*politics of symbols*" (Széleányi – Széleányi – Poster 1996: 466–477). This then results in the strengthening of the relationship between social class and choice of political parties

In the Czech Republic, this process gradually led to the strengthening of the camp of left-wing voters in particular (and was involved in the gradual growth of support for ČSSD from 1993), especially since this camp was in the immediately post-revolution period politically fragmented and considerably weakened (Mrklas 2003: 249). Sociological surveys in 1990 found high levels of discordance between voting preference and the value orientation of voters (Novák – Lebeda et al. 2004: 261). This was due primarily to a very one-sided bias of Czech society towards the right (opposition to the left, associated with the old regime, pro-market euphoria, rediscovering the values of Euro-Atlantic civilisation, etc.), which only started to balance during the subsequent several years.

The following common features apply to Czech society in the post-communist period, as they do to all other transitional societies of Central and Eastern Europe:

- A) In the first phases of transformation the individual national societies are not strongly socially stratified;
- B) Individual groups of people (social classes) are inconsistent in opinion, fluid in their interests and unstable in their political preferences;
- C) More significantly formed cleavages are not a reflection of the natural social stratification of society but rather of an artificial ideological and political conflict provoked by political parties within the ongoing electoral competition, and only later artificially introduced among voters (Hloušek 2000: 373–395).

The basic characteristics of the first political movements also corresponded to the basic signs that accompanied social transformation in Central and Eastern Europe after 1989:

- 1) Transitions from communism to democracy were initially carried out by very broad and unstructured social movements, which always appealed to the non-communist majority;

- 2) Supporters of these movements were people from all professions and lifestyles, with a number of different political views and opinions. This meant that these movements did not speak on behalf of specific groups within society, but rather in the name of “everyone”;
- 3) These “social movements” were coalitions of a large number of small groups, be they potential political parties or small interest groups. The OF included 14 different entities, including the Social Democrats, Christian Democrats, neo-liberals, reform communists, former dissidents and ecologists. The Bulgarian Union of Democratic Forces (SDS) was composed of 17 separate groups, which included both political parties and interest groups (including the revived social democracy), Ekoglasnost’ environmental groups and the Green Party. The Slovenian Democratic Union (DEMOS) was composed of 7 different parties, including the Christian Democrats, Liberals, Agrarians and Greens. Poland’s Solidarity was composed of blue-collar and agricultural groups, trade unionists, intellectuals, the Christian Democrats and other political streams. Other organized movements such as the Hungarian Democratic Forum, Slovakia’s Public against Violence and the Romanian National Salvation Front were organised similarly.
- 1) With the possible exception of Solidarity, these new movements did not focus their activities upon acquiring and retaining power, but rather on obtaining adequate representation which would be able to face the communists;
- 2) In reality these new movements can be understood more as organised collective campaigns against the previous regime. This is because they united citizens *against* the former communist regime rather than *for* a certain model of society.

Compared with classic political parties these social movements had the following characteristics:

- a) Very vague, unspecified ideologies (the programmes of these movements in 1989 encompassed, in particular, the requirement for the restoration of pluralist democracy and the market economy. The programmes also had a very strong moralistic nature;
- b) Broad electoral support and an extensive spectrum of viewpoints on the solution to basic social problems;
- c) Universal appeal in an effort to prevent attempt to create religious and political divisions (e.g. left-right spectrum);
- d) Vague organisational structure;
- e) More characteristics of pressure groups rather than political parties;

- f) The tendency to mobilise the public on the basis of a simple topic (in the case of the first “*founding*” elections this was an effort to prevent the Communists retaining power);
- g) Their objective was simply representation, not power;
- h) Newly elected Members of these movements lacked interest in the organisational aspects of the party, and in Parliament had very weak party discipline;
- i) These political groups specifically abstained from using the word “party” to escape from the context (connotation) of the past, and called themselves a “front”, “forum”, “Union”, “Movement”, “Association”, etc.;
- j) Often designated themselves as a “*social movement*”

These specific characteristics of the democratising movements emerging in Central and Eastern Europe in 1989 later also influenced the likeness of the newly forming party systems in these countries. These were from the start of their inception accompanied by certain specific features, such as the lack of mass parties, the prevalence of cadre parties, the personalisation of politics, an effort by the largest political parties to present themselves as “catch-all parties” and appealing to all voter groups in an effort to rid them of a general and common enemy. For this reason such parties are very similar to cadre parties, based strongly on ideology or membership of the social-political elite.

As demonstrated by sociological analyses of political orientation and electoral preference of Czech society after 1989, these results concretely manifest themselves in the Czech political system in that Czech politics is dominated by two main axes: the left-right axis, which is supplemented by the authoritarianism-liberalism axis (Večerník – Matějů 1998: 218). Unlike the mature societies of Western Europe however, in Czech society the level of significance of left-right perception of politics is much higher, and the role of the second axis is substantially weaker.

This is also reflected in the political self-identification of members of social groups in Czech society. While individuals who rank themselves at the top of the social hierarchy are more likely to vote for the right and have strongly liberal attitudes, members of social groups of lower standing are more likely to sympathise with the left and have a greater tendency to authoritarian attitudes. Members of the slowly emerging middle class are then generally classed as moderate right voters with a slight inclination towards liberalism (Večerník – Matějů 1998: 219).

The results of opinion polls relating to the attitudes of the Czech middle class become interesting when we include such status symbols as education or profession in the values observed. While members of the so-called *old middle class* (people characterised solely by having completed tertiary education, under the old regime)

exhibit more of an inclination to support the moderate liberal right, members of the so-called *new middle class* (created after November 1989 and characterised mainly by their profession as traders or entrepreneurs) often show an inclination for more radical political attitudes.

Also interesting in the observation of electoral behaviour of Czech voters is the fact that according to the above-mentioned sociological analysis, membership of the middle class is considered a more substantial factor than level of education attained (Večerník – Matějů 1998: 222). For these members of the middle class, whose subjective self-identification with this class corresponds also to their objective classification, a more substantial clarity of political attitudes can be observed. These typical representatives of the middle class have deeper-rooted anti-egalitarian attitudes, more clearly defined attitudes against the ideas of socialism and strong support of the principles of fair play in society, including an emphasis on the principle of equal opportunity (Večerník – Matějů 1998: 223).

If we try to summarise the characteristics of the first democratic elections in Czechoslovakia since 1946, it is possible to observe that the elections took place according to clearly defined democratic rules and allowed voters a real pluralistic choice of candidate entities, by which they fulfilled their main and most important role – the foundation of a new democratic regime and the provision of democratic legitimacy to the elected representatives of the public.

Public against Violence

The Public against Violence (VPN – *Verejnost' proti násiliu*) was established as a broad movement on 20th November 1989 and entered the election in the position of a party that had participated in the discussions about the transition to democracy in November and December 1989, and subsequently in the composition of a “government of national understanding”. In the party system it did not have as dominant a position as the Civic Forum had in the Czech part of the republic. This was also evident in the election result. Although the VPN won, their victory was not as clear-cut as the OF’s victory in the Czech part of Czechoslovakia. The KDH represented significant competition, and managed to attract part of the opposition-minded vote because of its connections to Christian dissent from the period of normalisation, and also utilised the high level of religiosity of Slovak society (Kopeček 2007: 304–305).

The VPN’s position in the party system was also complicated by an illegible ideological orientation, a problem that was faced by all similar entities in post-communist Europe. As in the case of the OF in the Czech Republic, *Solidarity* in Poland and the *Sajudis* movement in Lithuania, the Slovak VPN movement was ideologically very pluralistic and embodied diverse currents of opinion, whose link was an opposition to the communists. According to Vladimír Leška, the VPN was

“organisationally and ideologically ambivalent and amorphous” (Leška 2006: 24), while Ladislav Cabada, again in relation to the VPN, speaks of a “conglomerate uniting a wide range of personalities” (Cabada 2000: 85) Slovak political scientists Ján Lidák, Viera Koganová and Dušan Leška identified six key groups within the VPN (Lidák – Koganová – Leška 1999: 23):

1. Reform communists from the period of the Prague Spring, who were later persecuted during normalisation and who joined together to form the Resurgence club (e.g. Alexander Dubček, Hvězdón Kočtúch and Augustín Marián Húška);
2. Christian dissenters (e.g. brothers Jan and Ivan Čarnogurský and Jozef and František Mikloško);⁵
3. Representatives of the Green and Environmental movements (e.g. Ján Budaj and Peter Tatár);
4. Civil dissenters, so-called “islands of positive deviation” (e.g. Jozef Kučerák, Ivan Mikloš, Vladimír Ondruš and Peter Zajac);⁶
5. Pragmatics and ‘uncompromised’ communists (e.g. Milan Čič and Marián Čalfa);⁷
6. Artists (e.g. Milan Kňažko and Ladislav Chudík) (Lidák – Koganová – Leška 1999: 23)

The above characteristics of the VPN correspond to the definition of an entity that was not a classic political party. The terms “*parties of the movement type*” (Ágh 1998: 203) “*parties of the forum type*” (Ister – Offe – Preuss 1998: 132) and “*umbrella organisations*” (Gill 2002: 37) became common for labelling these entities, emerging in essentially all of post-communist Europe. These were characterised by a loose organisational structure, lower level of hierarchism, broader ideological boundaries and a related lower level of discipline among the member base. In the VPN the main link of the individual streams of thought was the notion of the rejection of communism, which held the entire entity relatively together at this time, however the first cracks began to appear shortly after the election.

⁵ Representatives of the Christian wing of the VPN sooner or later ended up in the ranks of the KDH.

⁶ The representatives of civic dissent on the other hand generally ended up in the DS, later the OKS.

⁷ Membership of the VPN and candidacy for the movement in the 1990 election was also offered to the post-revolution chairman of the Slovak National Council (KSS). He, however, refused it with the words that he “*would only be an instrument for the gaining of votes for VPN*”. Schuster himself claims that while he would probably have been elected to parliament, “*that is where my political career would have ended; the post-election parliament and governmental positions had already been allocated beforehand, and not to former members of the KSČ, without regard to their expertise and experience or moral profile and attitudes in the past*” See: Leško 2000: 28; Schuster 1997: 332.

Christian-democratic movement

The Christian-democratic Movement (KDH – *Kresťanskodemokratické hnutie*), originating in February 1990, continued the tradition of Christian dissent from the period of normalisation (Kopeček 2007: 304–305). Christian dissent was, generally, much more active and significant in Slovakia than civil dissent, which generally also reflects the influence of the church upon political and social events in Slovakia, in comparison with the Czech part of the then common state. Christian democrats also drew upon the “*massive post-revolution authority of the Catholic Church and from the initial popularity of its leader (Ján Čarnogurský, author’s comment)*” (Kopeček 2000; Kopeček 2007: 304–305). Despite the fact that within the conflict over the likeness of the political regime the VPN and KDH stood on the same side of the fence, in the second conflict of church – state they de facto stood on opposite sides of the conflict (Rybář 2003: 278–279). Although the church – state cleavage played a certain role, it was not dominant enough during the period to prevent the emergence of a coalition alliance between the VPN and KDH.

Democratic Party

After November 1989, the Democratic Party (DS – *Demokratická strana*) followed in the tradition of its predecessor of 1944–1948. From 1948 to 1989 it existed under the name of the Slovak Resurgence Party (SSO – *Strana slovenskej obrody*). In December 1989 it returned to the DS name and began distancing itself from its National-front past. This change was completed in January 1990, when pre-February party functionary Martin Kvetko, returning from exile, became leader of the party. The party ran alone in the first free elections.

Hungarian political parties

The renewal of a pluralist party system was also reflected in the political re-activation of ethnic minorities. Considering the presence of a sizeable Hungarian minority in Slovakia, it was not surprising that this particularly involved parties representing this community. Immediately after November 1989, several entities representing ethnic minorities emerged. Immediately, on the 18th November 1989, the Hungarian Independent Initiative (MNI – *Maďarská nezávislá iniciatíva*), a liberally oriented movement of mainly Hungarian intellectuals, was established. In the first elections the MNI went into the elections in a pre-election coalition with the VPN, thanks to which it gained a share of power after the elections. In 1992, the MNI transformed into the Hungarian Civic Party (MOS – *Maďarská občianska strana*).

The Hungarian Christian Democratic Movement (MKDH – *Maďarské kresťanskodemokratické hnutie*), formed on 17th March 1990, capitalised on the

religious character of Slovak society. It co-operated with the Coexistence movement (EGY – *Együttélés-Spolužitie-Wspólnota-Soužití*), which was founded by former dissident Miklós Duray on 1st March 1990, and which originally intended to represent various ethnic minorities living in Slovakia. Considering the marginal representation of other ethnic minorities, however, it in reality functioned as a Hungarian entity, in addition to which its rhetoric was highly radical, and together with its representatives it is most commonly associated with allegations of activities leading to the secession of territories in southern Slovakia and their integration into Hungary. MKDH and EGY went to the elections in coalition in 1990, were successful, but remained in opposition.

Hungarian parties did not primarily focus on defining their position on the left-right scale; the key identifier of their activities and programme was the representation of minority interests. This party can be classified in terms of the Centre – Periphery cleavage line. It is interesting that the Hungarian parties did not support the emancipatory tendencies of Slovakia and preferred the preservation of the Czechoslovak state.

Slovak National Party

The Slovak National Party (SNS – *Slovenská národná strana*), like the DS, built on the history of its predecessor. In the case of SNS this was an entity that existed from 1871 to 1938 (after this it was merged with the HSLŠ (Hlinka's Slovak People's Party, *Hlinkova Slovenská Ľudová strana*), and after the war its restoration was not authorised). The revival of the party hence did not take place until 7th March 1990. The profile of the party reflected, to a certain extent, the activation of ethnic minority parties and also the effort to underpin the “*growing demand for a solution to the national agenda*” (Kopeček 2007: 418) in relation to the standing of Slovakia within Czechoslovakia. In time the SNS became the main supporter of the division of the united state.

Communist Party of Slovakia

The Communist Party of Slovakia (KSS – *Komunistická strana Slovenska*) entered the first elections to the Slovak National Council as a part of the KSČ, the former state-wide party which was, as a result of the November events, removed from monopoly power. In the period from 1989 to 1990 it and the VPN together participated in the Slovak government of national understanding. Though it was still a part of the state-wide KSČ (in fact its territorial organization), it was evident that its internal processes and changes were directed elsewhere than the official national politics of the Communists. In February 1990 a group with Peter Weiss and Milan Ftáčnik at its centre took over the leadership of KSS and began a social-democratic transformation. While they finished the elections in 4th place, the share of votes won was similar to Communists in the Czech part of the republic.

Elections in 1990

Elections, called by a resolution of the presidium of the Slovak National Council⁸ for 8–9 June 1990, were intended to be a significant milestone in the process of democratising society that had been started in November 1989. In these first “post-November” elections on Slovak territory a total of 16 entities stood for election and seven won seats in the Slovak National Council. A total of 95.4% of Slovaks exercised their right to vote in June 1990 (Novotný 2000). Thanks to the low threshold for entry of a party into parliament, only 7.6% of votes in the election were ineffectual. Taking into account the high voter turnout, low number of ineffectual votes and the use of Hare quotas, it can be concluded that the result of the election was likely the most faithful to date, and reflected the political preferences of the Slovak population.

Table 3: Results of elections to the Federal Assembly, 8–9 June, 1990 (only entities that won seats)

Slovak Republic							
Party, movement, coalition	Chamber of the People (lower house)			Chamber of Nations (upper house)			FA MPs
	Votes won		Seats	Votes won		Seats	
	votes	%			votes		%
VPN	1 104 125	32.54	19	1 262 278	37.28	33	52
KDH	644 008	18.98	11	564 172	16.66	14	25
KSČ	468 411	13.81	8	454 740	13.43	12	20
SNS	372 025	10.96	6	387 387	11.44	9	15
MKDH-EGY	291 287	8.58	5	287 426	8.49	7	12

Source: cf. Krejčí 2006: 270

Table 4: Results of elections to the Slovak National Council, 8–9 June, 1990 (only entities that won seats)

Party, movement, coalition	Votes won		Seats
	votes	%	
VPN-MNI	991 285	29.35	48
KDH	648 782	19.21	31
SNS	470 984	13.94	22
KSČ	450 855	13.35	22
MKDH-EGY	292 636	8.66	14
DS	148 567	4.40	7
SZ	117 871	3.49	6

Source: Štatistický úrad SR (Slovak Statistical Office) (<http://www.statistics.sk>)

⁸ Uznesenie P SNR 16. 3. 1990 (Resolution of the Presidium of the Slovak National Council of 13th March, 1990).

The VPN dominated, particularly in large cities. It achieved the best result in Košice (43.71%) and in Bratislava region number 1 (42.23%), and its weakest results were in areas with a strong Hungarian minority, where citizens voted along ethnic lines. The VPN fared worst in the Komárno region (13%).⁹

The KDH gained a significantly higher than average share of votes in the Dolný Kubín (44.19%) and in Stará Ľubovňa (39.53%) districts, faring worst in the Dunajská Streda (1.35%) and Komárno (1.89%) districts, which are home to a considerable Hungarian minority.¹⁰

SNS strongholds in the 1990 elections were the Považská Bystrica (31.18%) and Žilina (30.20%) districts. Like other Slovak parties it fared badly particularly in Dunajská Streda (1.11%) and Komárno (1.52%).¹¹

The communists had the best results in the districts of Rožňava (24.69%) and Svidník (22.86%). Apart from Dunajská Streda (7.26%) their worst result was in the Dolný Kubín district (7.15%).¹²

The coalition of two Hungarian parties naturally crushed its rivals in Dunajská Streda (68.40%) and Komárno (64.69%) It had weak results in several places, particularly the Čadca district (0.03%).¹³

The DS had above-average success in the Martin district (10.22%) and did worse in, again, Dunajská Streda (0.6%). The Greens succeeded mainly in Košice (5.96%) and Senica (5.09%), faring badly in Dunajská Streda (1.53%) and Komárno (1.86%).¹⁴

The subsequent post-election coalition bargaining was foreshadowed by several factors which significantly influenced its course and the role of different entities in the party system. Perhaps the most important factor was the almost automatic exclusion of the KSCĽ, or KSS, from any consideration of participation in government. Given the atmosphere in society and the socio-political context of the 1990 elections it was practically unrealistic to form a government with the participation of the Communist Party. The main conflict of these elections was a conflict over the form of the regime, which was generally perceived as a conflict between the Communist Party on the one hand and newcomers of the type of the VPN or KDH, on the other (Rybář 2003: 278).

Coalition negotiations eventually resulted in the creation of an unnecessary majority coalition, which included the DS, as well as the VPN-MNI and KDH, which

⁹ Štatistický úrad SR (Slovak Statistical Office) (<http://www.statistics.sk>).

¹⁰ Štatistický úrad SR (Slovak Statistical Office) (<http://www.statistics.sk>).

¹¹ Štatistický úrad SR (Slovak Statistical Office) (<http://www.statistics.sk>).

¹² Štatistický úrad SR (Slovak Statistical Office) (<http://www.statistics.sk>).

¹³ Štatistický úrad SR (Slovak Statistical Office) (<http://www.statistics.sk>).

¹⁴ Štatistický úrad SR (Slovak Statistical Office) (<http://www.statistics.sk>).

in themselves held an absolute majority of seats in Parliament. In the 150 seat Slovak parliament the coalition held 86 seats. The reason for this unnecessary enlargement of the coalition with the addition of DS could however have been a purely symbolic response to the significance of this party in post-war Slovak history. The fate of DS after February 1948 was, more than any other even in Slovakia, associated with the communist rise to power, and perhaps this is one of the reasons why the revived DS was invited to the first coalition government established after the free elections in June 1990. At the head of the government stood the leader of the VPN in the election, Vladimír Mečiar. There was a series of reasons why the VPN chose Mečiar for the post of prime minister. The reason relevant to the topic of coalition government relates to the utilisation of the charismatic and penetrating Mečiar to “highlight the VPN in competition with its government partner, the KDH” (Kopeček 2007: 130). The VPN did not after all have as dominant a position in Slovakia as, for example, the OF did in the Czech part of the federation, which was confirmed by the results of the elections. The KDH was a very serious competitor to the VPN. The leader of the KDH, Ján Čarnogurský, became the first deputy prime minister of the Slovak government. The coalition also divided all posts at the highest levels of the Slovak National Council: the chairman (VPN) and five vice-chairmen (2 x KDH, VPN, DS, and MNI). Only four places in the wider presidium (of 21) and the chairmanship of one of a total of 11 parliamentary committees remained for the opposition.¹⁵

The debate over the programme statement took two days, and apart from the chairman and members of the government 47 MPs made presentations. On 4th July 1990, 93 legislators voted in favour of the programme announcement, even though the coalition government itself only had 86 seats. Because detailed documentation about how individual MPs voted is not yet available for this period, it is only possible to guess about which of the opposition MPs supported the government. Most frequently mentioned in this context is support from the SZ (the Green Party) and from Hungarian MPs. On the other hand the possibility that the government was

¹⁵ The entire discussion about the filling of positions in the newly elected Slovak National Council at the first meeting on 16th July 1990 were relatively stormy. The opposition, formed by the communists and nationalists as well as two Hungarian entities and the Greens claimed that it was cut off from positions in the SNR. The subsequent conversation was about the clash of two conceptions of filling positions: proportionately, which the opposition supported, and coalitional, which was supported by the newly formed coalition government majority. In the final vote the coalition's principals won out. The overall structure of the presidium of the Slovak National Council was: Coalition (17) – VPN-MNI – 9, KDH – 6, DS – 2; Opposition (4): SZ – 1, SNS – 1, Hungarian parties – 1, KSC-KSS – 1. See: minutes and resolution from the meeting available in The Joint Czech and Slovak Digital Parliamentary Library (In: <http://www.psp.cz/eknih/1990snr/stenprot/001schuz/s001001.htm>).

supported by legislators from the KSCĽ or SNS can be practically excluded. Eight legislators voted against and 31 abstained.¹⁶

Shortly after being established, the government formed after the June elections in 1990 had to face its first serious crisis, which threatened the cohesion of the coalition government. This was the dispute between Prime Minister Vladimír Mečiar and KDH Minister of the Interior Anton Andráš, where the conflict was more on the level of power and politics rather than material, relating to Mečiar's function as interior minister in the government before the elections in 1990. "*Mečiar did not want to release his ministry of the interior, and the information to which it had given him access before the election, out of his control, and he did not miss a single opportunity to criticise Minister Andráš*" (Kopeček 2007: 131). A large question mark still hangs over the role of Vladimír Mečiar as minister of the interior in the first half of 1990. On the one hand he was considered to be a capable and penetrating politician; on the other hand he remains accused of misusing information to which he had access as minister, including, for example, the files of the former StB, to pressure his political antagonists. He faced the specific accusation that in January 1990, on his orders, materials of the former StB, which contained files about certain future, post-November politicians, were stolen from the StB building in Trenčín. Mečiar's defence was that he "*supposedly one day found these documents on the table in his office*" (Žitný 1994: 34; for more see Lesná 2001). This is why the ministry of the interior was so close to his heart, and why by controlling its activities he wanted to also protect himself. The prime minister accused Minister Andráš of incompetence and called for his resignation. Mečiar brought the conflict onto coalition ground, and under the threat of "*either Andráš resigns or I do*" (Kopeček 2007: 131) compelled Andráš to resign.

Another crisis affecting the coalition as a whole came in connection with a development within the strongest government party, the VPN. After assuming governmental responsibilities, it became more and more clear that the VPN programme and the spectrum of opinions of its representatives (including ministers and MPs) was so broad and encompassing of various approaches to transformation, the future of the federation and to socio-economic issues that the movement could only barely ostensibly remain a unified entity. The programme and ideological breadth made an unambiguous identification of the VPN and its classification among classic party groups impossible (Kopeček 2007: 140). The "*organisational and ideological ambivalence and amorphousness*" of the VPN thus began to fully show (Leška 2006: 24). On one side stood a group of more right-wing oriented politicians, promoting "shock therapy", more radical forms of economic reform similar to those

¹⁶ See stenographic minutes of the meeting of the Slovak National Council of 4th July 1990 (In: <http://www.psp.cz/eknih/1990snr/stenprot/002schuz/s002019.htm>).

being initiated and implemented on the federal level by finance minister Václav Klaus – price liberalisation, voucher privatisation, restrictive economic politics and opening up to foreign capital. This group found support from another two coalition partners, as both the KDH and DS identified themselves as right-wing parties and mostly supported Klaus' reforms, even if their leaders did not agree with the rapid pace with which they were implemented. In contrast, the left-wing movement within the VPN was trying to promote a so-called gradualist approach - opposed to rapid change, highlighting the need for the social acceptability of reforms and their gradual application (Lid'ák – Koganová – Leška 1999: 31). From an overall view of the coalition it can be said that in the government this left-wing movement of the VPN was in the minority.

The dispute within the VPN, however, also had another dimension. Apart from the above-mentioned plurality of opinion within the movement, the political and power ambitions of certain VPN leaders and the rivalry between Chairman Fedor Gál and the Slovak Prime Minister Vladimír Mečiar played a very significant role in the dissolution of the coalition. Peter Učeň identifies two groups within this conflict: bearers of a vision and power pragmatists (Učeň 1999: 86). He associates the first with the function of the official party leadership, with Fedor Gál at its helm, and identifies them as liberal democrats; the power pragmatics are described as the people around Vladimír Mečiar, who found government appointments after the elections. The power-seeking pragmatics *“more and more inclined towards an aggressive and non-consensus political style, the use of illegal means of pressure (extortion, manipulation of StB files and disinformation for the purposes of influencing public opinion)”* (Učeň 1999: 87).

The contrasts between the two groups also predominated in the question of position on future constitutional organisation. This topic generally found its way into the forefront of the political agenda and the second coalition party, the KDH, also played a part in this (Kopeček 2007: 307). The views of parts of the VPN on issues of constitutional organisation and the position of Slovakia however introduced national populism into the debate, and the power pragmatics utilised this in their appearances by inciting the desire for a higher level of autonomy for Slovakia within the Czechoslovak federation. While the group around Gál was more aligned with Czechoslovakia, Mečiar and his supporters increasingly and to varying degrees openly oriented themselves towards a sovereign Slovakia (Cabada 2000: 85).

The atmosphere within the VPN (and thanks to the position of the VPN as the strongest government party also within the coalition) was hence very tense. Events in the VPN and dealing with intra-party problems to a certain extent paralysed the coalition government. This was because Mečiar continued in his efforts to strengthen his influence in the VPN and there were increasingly frequent attacks on Fedor

Gál, for which Mečiar often even used Gál's Jewish background, and so the attacks were often of an anti-Semitic character. The rivalry between Gál's and Mečiar's factions of the VPN subsequently outgrew the VPN in a series of reciprocal public attacks, accusations and the like. The revelation of the above-mentioned suspicions that Mečiar had as Slovak minister of the interior in the government of national understanding of Milan Čič from 1989 to 1990 illegally gained and accumulated materials from the former communist secret police and misused them to intimidate and extort certain members of the government and his opponents also played a role (Lesná 2001: 35).¹⁷ An accusation also surfaced against Mečiar that he had secretly dealt with Soviet generals in the sale of arms (Stein 2000: 83). The divisions peaked in March 1991 with the accusation on the part of Mečiar's supporters that the leadership of the VPN was censoring his speeches. Mečiar and his supporters founded the Platform for a Democratic Slovakia (ZDS) within the VPN, with which he later left the VPN and founded the Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (HZDS – *Hnutie za demokratické Slovensko*).

This division within the strongest governing party understandably weakened the coalition as a whole. In April 1991, the presidium of the Slovak National Council removed Vladimír Mečiar from the office of Prime Minister of Slovakia on the suggestion of the chairman of the Slovak Council of the VPN, Fedor Gál (which it had the right to do under then Constitution and applicable legal provisions; see Constitutional law No.143/1968: article 122, paragraph 1, section a), and a similar fate struck several other ministers close to Vladimír Mečiar. Several others tendered their resignation. The remainder of the VPN, after the departure of the ZDS platform and creation of the HZDS, transformed itself into an entity with the title of ODÚ-VPN (Civic Democratic Union – Public against Violence, *Občianská demokratická únia – Verejnosť proti násiliu*) and began to closely work with the ODS, which at this time emerged in the Czech part of Czechoslovakia as a result of the disintegration of the OF. The disintegration of the VPN also meant that the MNI, formerly part of the VPN, was again independent.

Another result of the breakup of the VPN was a change in the position of strongest party in the Slovak party system, which the KDĽ, with 31 MPs in the Slovak National Council, became; the VPN shrunk to less than half its original size with a mere 23 of the original 48 MPs (Kopeček 2007: 136). It was for this reason that the chairman of KDĽ and deputy prime minister, Ján Čarnogurský, was named the new Slovak Prime Minister on 23rd April 1991, on the basis of an agreement between coalition parties. The party structure of the government thus remained unchanged; the substitutions affected only those government positions vacated by the removals from office and resignations of VPN members representing the ZDS

¹⁷ One of the best known causes is "Tisova vila". For more see: Lesná 2001: 35.

platform. Due to the disintegration of the VPN and the departure of the ZDS into opposition, the coalition government could no longer rely on its majority within the plenary, however it had a majority in a key body – the chair of the Slovak National Assembly. No voting within the plenary on an expression of confidence took place; considering the distribution of power it was clear that this government would fail without the support of, for example, the Hungarian parties. The entire changeover basically took place only as a “reconstruction” of the existing government (Kopeček 2007: 308) and the chair of the Slovak National Council, František Mikloško (then still under the VPN, a year later he was a member KDH) simply informed MPs that the presidium of the parliament had replaced the prime minister and certain members of the government.¹⁸

The first speech by the newly appointed prime minister, Jan Čarnogurský, on the floor of parliament was, however, interesting. During his speech he gave his opinion on the circumstances which had led to the government crisis and the subsequent replacement of the prime minister and several other ministers. “*The cause of governmental crisis was a division in the Public against Violence movement, which won the parliamentary elections*” was how the new prime minister characterised the main problem.¹⁹ At first glance he saw nothing strange about it. He drew attention to the fact that divisions within formerly cohesive anti-communist opposition movements were also taking place in other Central and South-Eastern European countries. He specifically named the Czech Republic, Poland, Romania and Bulgaria. “*The common enemy – totalitarian power – is gone, and thus the bond of cohesiveness of formerly unified anti-totalitarian movements disappeared*”, Čarnogurský continued.²⁰ In contrast to the above-mentioned countries, however, the new prime minister saw in the case of the division of the VPN a certain difference. “*Nowhere has a victorious movement broken up with such internal contrariety and with such a bang as in Slovakia. Nowhere have criminal allegations been made against former members of the same movement. The roots of the crisis oscillate between individual uncertainty and the accusation of others,*” said Čarnogurský, adding that after this experience he was beginning to understand “*why Slovakia during the course of its history was not able to establish its own independent state*”.²¹

The open battle between competing platforms within the VPN and disagreements between members of the government formerly delegated by a unified VPN

¹⁸ SNR 1991, Stenographic minutes of the 13th meeting of the Slovak National Council on 24th April 1991. In: <http://www.psp.cz/eknih/1990snr/stenprot/013schuz/s013001.htm>.

¹⁹ SNR 1991, Stenographic minutes of the 13th meeting of the Slovak National Council on 24th April 1991. In: <http://www.psp.cz/eknih/1990snr/stenprot/013schuz/s013001.htm>.

²⁰ SNR 1991, Stenographic minutes of the 13th meeting of the Slovak National Council on 24th April 1991. In: <http://www.psp.cz/eknih/1990snr/stenprot/013schuz/s013001.htm>.

²¹ SNR 1991, Stenographic minutes of the 13th meeting of the Slovak National Council on 24th April 1991. In: <http://www.psp.cz/eknih/1990snr/stenprot/013schuz/s013001.htm>.

movement were according to Čarnogurský erupting with increasing frequency. “It was clear that a government so composed was not able to work with adequate effectiveness,” said the new prime minister, adding that all members of the government gradually acknowledged this, “including Prime Minister Mečiar”.²² The presidium of the Slovak National Council, which appoints and removes the Slovak government according to law, wanted to restore the cabinet’s capacity of action. After a series of negotiations with coalition and opposition parties it eventually reached the conclusion that it would intervene by reconstructing the government rather than calling an early election. No debates were held about the decision of the presidium or the first speech given by the new prime minister. There was no vote of confidence, and the reconstructed cabinet did not present any programme announcement. Although a change of prime minister is in political science generally regarded as the formation of a new coalition (Říchová 2000: 119), in practice it was almost as if there had merely been an insignificant change in personnel and continuation of the existing government.

The change of government affected the representation of individual existing parties in the cabinet. Since there was no longer an unnecessarily large or even a minimal majority coalition, but instead a de facto minority government, the tiny DS profited most from the change. It became a necessary entity for its coalition partners for the stability of the government as a whole. In the new government, which again had 23 seats, there were nine representatives of the KDH, nine representatives of the ODÚ-VPN/MNI²³ and nine members nominated by the DS. The representation of the DS in the government therefore almost doubled in comparison to the previous cabinet. Čarnogurský’s government gained the tacit support of the coalition of two Hungarian parties, which at this time held 14 seats in the Slovak National Council (Kopeček 2007: 449).

The problems inside the coalition did not however end with the divisions within the VPN. At the start of 1992 a nationalistically oriented platform emphasising the positive significance of Slovak statehood from 1939 to 1945 emerged within the KDH (Lid’ák – Koganová – Leška 1999: 56), also appealing for a “more radical solution” to the future organisation of Czechoslovakia than had been envisioned by KDH chairman Ján Čarnogurský, and which was oriented towards a confederative organisation (Kopeček 2000). This platform on 28th March 1992, at the convention in Zvolen, transformed into an independent party with the title of SKDH (Slovak Christian-democratic Movement, *Slovenské kresťanskodemokratické hnutie*).

²² SNR 1991, Stenographic minutes of the 13th meeting of the Slovak National Council on 24th April 1991. In: <http://www.psp.cz/eknih/1990snr/stenprot/013schuz/s013001.htm>.

²³ In 1991 the remaining part of the VPN transformed into the ODÚ-VPN, on 28th March 1992 it then decided to omit the ‘VPN’ and continued as the ODÚ party. Martin Porubjak became the chairman of the party.

Its ranks were filled by four of the nine Christian-democratic ministers and 11 of a total of 31 MPs of the Slovak National Council originally elected on the KDH ticket, including the vice-chairman of parliament and unsuccessful candidate for the leadership of the KDH in 1991 Ján Klepáč²⁴ and roughly a third of the member base (Kopeček 2002: 365; Kopeček 2007: 309). Because an election was less than three months away, changes to the composition of the government as a result of the breakup of KDH were not made. SKDH thus became a coalition party, without this relationship being formalised in coalition documents in any way. The KDH however considered the actions of its deserters as both coalitional and oppositional. A publication released on the occasion of the ten year anniversary of the KDH states that on 1st April 1992 Minister Viliam Oberhauser (SKDH) suggested in Slovak parliament to accept the Declaration of the sovereignty of the Slovak Republic, “*which was in contradiction of coalitional agreements*” (Bobula 2001: 45). A KDH MP and one of the future members of the SKDH, Anton Hykisch, also presented a similar idea in November 1991 (Kopeček 2007: 308–309).

The KDH was weakened by the departure of the SKDH, however Lubomír Kopeček saw a certain positive aspect, as the “*cohesiveness of the movement was strengthened*” (Kopeček 2000). A partial rectification of the standing of KDH within the government took place a month before the elections, when Minister of Control Marián Hvozdič, who was formerly nominated to the government under the VPN, joined the movement. Another key figure of the former VPN, who joined the KDH in the period before the 1992 elections, was chairman of the Slovak National Council František Mikloško (10th March 1992), who until that time had represented the minority Christian stream within the VPN and later the ODÚ-VPN.

There were also changes of varying levels of intensity among opposition parties in the period of 1991–1992. One particular change is worthy of note, because it was to play a significant role in the future, including from the point of view of the coalitional potential of this entity. The transformation of the KSS into the modern left-wing Democratic Left Party (SDL – *Strana demokratickej ľavice*) was undoubtedly one of the key events of the development of the party system during this period. After the fall of communism, the Czech Communist Party (KSČ) faced, among other things, pressure to allow the Slovak part of the party a more autonomous

²⁴ Vice-chairman of the Slovak National Council Ján Klepáč was one of the initiators of the formation of the SKDH platform, and later new party, and became its first leader. The departure of Ján Klepáč’s group did not paralyse the party organs of the KDH, which was still quorate. Of the 113 members of the KDH council, 79 remained, of the 11 members of the presidium of the KDH only three left. In the parliamentary election in 1992 the SKDH was not successful (3.1%) and on 10th October 1992 it merged with the Freedom Party (*Strana Slobody*) and changed its name to the Christian-social Union (KSÚ – *Kresťanská sociálna únia*). It supported the politics of the HZDS, and after a defeat in the 1994 election (2.1%) the KSÚ merged with the SNS. Under the SNS some returned to politics in the future. For more see: Bobula 2001: 41–45; Kopeček 2000.

position. For this reason in November 1990 it acceded to a change in acronym to KSČS, the addition of the “S” intending to better reflect the Slovak element in the party, and it further accepted a new organisational structure, under whose umbrella the new Czech (KSČM) and Slovak (KSS) entities would be established.

A dispute between KSČM and KSS over the subsequent direction to take continued, however. The KSS, under the leadership of “reformists” surrounding Peter Weiss and Milan Ftáčnik started a process of transformation at the end of 1990, which involved the renaming to KSS-SDĽ (the addition of the *Strana demokratickej ľavice* – Left Democratic Party suffix), a programmatic and ideological redefinition, orientation towards Western European socialist and social-democrat structures, joining the Socialist International and a total break in continuity with the pre-November Communist Party. This movement did not gain great support within the KSČM, and both sides thus began to move away from each other, thereby initiating the gradual disintegration of the umbrella structure of the KSČS. An indication of this was the establishment of two independent parliamentary groups in the then Federal Assembly, from which state of affairs there was merely a small step to the complete independence of the KSS-SDĽ. In the meantime the party changed its name again, removing the “KSS” part and retaining only the SDĽ (February 1991). During 1991 there was a gradual distancing from Czech communists, which culminated at a party conference in December 1991, which confirmed the previous reformational development under the leadership of Peter Weiss (Kopeček 2007: 184 and 187; Kopeček 2002: 361). All these steps were in the direction of the post-communists rising out of political isolation which they found themselves in after the elections in 1990. The impact of the transformation of KSS to the SDĽ in terms of coalitional potential only expressed itself after the subsequent elections. With this step the party rid itself of the label of an entity opposed to the system (Kopeček 2002: 362).

The federal KSČS officially ceased to exist on 23rd April 1992 (Fiala – Mareš – Pšeja 2005: 1414–1415), though the SDĽ had not actually been a part of it since December 1991. The more “conservative” part of the KSS, which did not agree with the transformation and supported the maintenance of the original values, split away from SDĽ in 1991 and founded an entity with the name of KSS 91. In August 1992 KSS 91 joined with the Communist Union (*Zväz komunistov*) to form today’s KSS. Until 2002, however, the KSS was disassociated with political events in Slovakia. In 2002 it became a parliamentary party; however in the next elections in 2006 it was again not elected to Parliament. Today’s KSS, according to Grigorij Mesežnikov, “*propagates theses that attest to its anti-system character*” (Mesežnikov 2006).

The parliamentary (opposition) SZ (Green Party, *Strana zelených*) split on 15th February 1992 into the pro-federalist Green Party and the nationalistically oriented Green Party of Slovakia (SZS – *Stranu zelených na Slovensku*), which in

socio-economic issues had shifted to the left of the original SZ (Liďák – Koganová – Leška 1999: 60). The first internal conflicts within the Slovak National Party were also experienced during this period, in relation to the formation of a position on the constitutional organisation and future of Czechoslovakia. There were also disputes around the person of the then chairman Viťazoslav Moric (Kopeček 2007: 417–420).

Cleavages

The main cleavages of Slovak political parties do not correspond to prevailing cleavage theories. The classical theory outlined by Seymour Lipset and Stein Rokkan defined four cleavages that influence the likeness of the party system: centre – periphery, urban – rural, church – state, and owner – worker (Lipset – Rokkan 1967; for more see also Tusičišny 2003). Though almost all of the above classical cleavages have appeared in Slovak political development to a greater or lesser extent (Rybář 2003: 278–279), specific conflicts, for which Slovak and foreign political scientists have been finding various designations, have had much more influence on the party system in Slovakia: liberal democracy and non-liberal conception of the regime (Hloušek – Kopeček 2005: 17), possibly between nationalistic-populist entities on the one hand and liberal-democratic on the other (Szomolányi 1999: 14), authoritarian-power bloc and the consensual-democratic bloc (Szomolányi 1999: 62), or the more general and simplified division of parties into standard and non-standard (Lang 1995: 33; Mesežnikov 2002).

The specificity of this conflict has developed from the fact that there is no eternal programme or ideological issue, dispute or conflict at its centre, but rather the personality of one person, chairman of the HZDS Vladimír Mečiar, towards whom other players in political events (be they individual politicians or parties as such) defined themselves either positively or negatively. “*This is why in the revitalised dispute over the form of the regime in Slovak political science terminology the formerly journalistic labelling as the conflict of mečiarism vs. antimečiarism quickly became common*” (Hloušek – Kopeček 2005: 17). Party politics in Slovakia was hence significantly personalised under the influence of this dispute, caused by the long term function of the charismatic Vladimír Mečiar in Slovak politics (Marušiak 2006). According to Lubomír Kopeček, Mečiar became an “*important dividing line that determined the positions of other political entities*” (Kopeček 2007: 143), influenced the form of the Slovak party system and “*all Slovak political formations in the 1990s faced the question of whether they were prepared to work with this entity (the HZDS)*” (Kopeček 2007: 143).

At the start of 1998, still during the controversial government of Vladimír Mečiar, Grigorij Mesežnikov characterised this cleavage thus: “*The differences between government and opposition parties are particularly visible on the level of their*

distinct understanding of democracy (authoritarianism vs. liberalism, conflict politics vs. consensus politics and preference of the values of the individual vs. elevating the interests of a collective entity)” (Mesežnikov 1998: 93).

This dispute however begins to appear in Slovak politics much earlier than 1998. It significantly influenced the development of individual political parties and the party system itself, essentially from its formation at the start of the 1990s. In the first phase in the period from 1989 to 1990, when the party system was taking place, this conflict was not particularly noticeable. In this period political parties were only just emerging. Political scientists have identified three types of political parties that existed within the party system during this period. The first are those that are completely new, without tradition (the KDĽ, VPN and later their successor parties, the HZDS and ODÚ). The second type is parties that after 1989 renewed their activities, which had been interrupted during the communist regime (SDSS /Slovak Social-democratic Party, *Sociálnodemokratická strana Slovenska*/, and SNS). The final type is those parties that existed in a certain form under the previous regime (KSS, DS²⁵) and which continued in their activities (Lid'ák – Koganová – Leška, 1999: 30–31). The dominant entity during this period in Slovakia was the VPN, a broad-spectrum entity composed of various ideological programme streams, whose single connecting idea was opposition to KSČ (and later KSS) and to the previous regime (Krivý – Feglová – Balko 1996: 42).

The second phase of the development of the party system is its crystallisation. This period is bound by the elections in 1990 and 1992. This was a period in which the VPN was divided into two successive entities, part of the KDĽ was subdivided and the KSS was transformed into the SDL. It was precisely the division of the VPN that was the main sign of the commencement of a new specific cleavage of mečiarism – antimečiarism. It began with the disintegration of the VPN in spring 1991 and the subsequent establishment of the HZDS under the leadership of Vladimír Mečiar and – as Hloušek and Kopeček assert – ended at the beginning of 1994. “*During this period Mečiar’s newly created the HZDS managed to develop an extensive electoral base and seize power after the 1992 elections*” (Hloušek – Kopeček 2005: 17). For the party system itself the period from 1992 to 1994 is characteristic of the so-called first dominance of the HZDS. Both then governing parties, the HZDS and SNS, however underwent tumultuous intra-party development during this period, which resulted in the gradual departure of segments dissatisfied with Mečiar’s style of governing. With their departure to join the opposition the governing coalition lost its majority and in March 1994 also lost a vote of no confidence in parliament. Hloušek

²⁵ The DS existed before 1989 under the title of the Slovak Resurgence Party (SSO – *Strana slovenskej obrody*). It originated in 1948 with the transformation of the existing DS to a satellite party of the KSS.

and Kopeček consider the emergence of a broad coalition led by Mečiar's former foreign affairs minister, Jozef Moravčík, to be a significant shift in the development of the cleavage of mečiarism and antimečiarism. This is because Moravčík's coalition was a highly heterogeneous grouping including on the one hand the strongly anti-communist, conservative and right-wing KDH and on the other the post-communist and left-wing SDL. *"The bond of the coalition at the given time was a joint rejection of the methods of Vladimír Mečiar"* (Hloušek – Kopeček 2005: 17–18).

This cleavage then appeared in full force from 1994 to 1998, which is called the period of the second dominance of the HZDS. After the early election in autumn 1994 it became clear that the HZDS had zero potential to form a coalition with the parties of Moravčík's government, which Mečiar solved by the *"creation of an exceptionally ideologically heterogeneous government"* (Hloušek – Kopeček 2005: 18). Apart from his HZDS this government also contained the extremely nationalistic SNS and the radical left-wing Slovak Workers' Association (ZRS, *Združenie robotníkov Slovenska*). *"This ideological heterogeneity confirmed the commenced trend of the functioning of party competition, which was founded on the revitalised dispute over the form of the regime. Both the SNS and the ZRS were prepared to accept and participate in a number of controversial steps which characterised Mečiar's government"* (Hloušek – Kopeček 2005: 18). The style of politics of the HZDS, ZRS and SNS government and its steps to eliminate opponents led a large part of the opposition to a temporary consolidation of their power for the purpose of defeating the then governing coalition. During this period we can observe the seed of future political parties - functioning in the short or long term. The entire period is again marked by a polarisation of the political and party system into two opposed blocs of "non-standard" and "standard" parties (Lang 1995: 33). The opposition was, by the essence of the dispute alone, characterised by a strong antimečiarism. Co-operation on the basis of being parties in opposition hence in many regards again transcended the classic (traditional) cleavage of political parties. The bond uniting opposition activities, including integrational tendencies, was the relationship to Vladimír Mečiar. On this principle, for example, the Slovak Democratic Coalition (SDK) was established in 1997. The composition of the government after the elections in 1998 confirmed the presence of this specific cleavage. The government was put together across the left-right spectrum by parties considered to be antimečiarist. *"Their main bond became a fear of the return of the HZDS to power and the main uniting goal was the removal of the non-liberal results of the previous era, the consolidation of the democratic regime and the entry of Slovakia to the EU and NATO"* (Hloušek – Kopeček 2005: 18–19). This is what held the coalition parties together and was among the significantly stabilising elements.

In the period from 1994 to 1998 the role of the nationalistic-ethnic cleavage, which had been partially present from the start of the 1990s, also played a key

role. The politics of the government composed of the HZDS, ZRS and SNS was directed at the Hungarian minority and at in least several cases led to the violation of international commitments relating to the protection of minorities. After 1998, partially thanks to the engagement of parties representing the Hungarian minority in the coalition government alongside Slovak parties, this cleavage ceased to play a significant role. It reappears again after 2006, however, when the SNS again becomes a part of the coalition government.

Instead of the conflict between left and right, during the decade after the first free elections a conflict between democracy and authoritarianism prevailed in Slovak politics. This influenced, for example, the main competitive relationships on the Slovak political scene. Unlike other countries in Central and Eastern Europe, for example, the centre-right parties in Slovakia “*were defined not by their position towards the post-communist left but towards authoritarian and nationalistic tendencies*” (Mesežnikov 2005). According to Hloušek and Kopeček, however, after 2000 this cleavage begins to lose significance and vigour. This was caused predominantly by new parties which during this period penetrated the party system and which begin to present themselves otherwise than by their positive or negative relationship to Vladimír Mečiar. This particularly applies to the SMER party, which “*refused the existing division according to the mečiarism – antimečiarism cleavage and founded its success on criticism of the steps of Dzurinda’s coalition government, primarily in the socio-economic sphere*” (Hloušek – Kopeček 2005: 19), and also to the New Citizen’s Alliance (ANO, *Aliancia nového občana*) of media magnate Pavol Rusko. As Hloušek and Kopeček mention, the HZDS also played its own part in this by changing its political strategy, replacing “*an effort to remove Dzurinda’s coalition government at any price*” with a focus on “*demonstrating its political transformation and (partially) distancing itself from the past*” (Hloušek – Kopeček, 2005: 19).

The party system thus developed into a more standard situation, which was confirmed by the elections in 2002 and by subsequent development. This is because the results of the 2002 elections allowed, for the first time in Slovak post-revolutionary history, the creation of a government identifiable on the left – right scale, catering for the approaches of parties to economic and social issues. Although the government was in the end composed of parties with relatively similar programmes, this did not guarantee stability. Internal fragmentation within individual parties, orientations on specific themes, personal disagreements and the ambitions of individual leaders of coalition parties, as well as individual groups within the parties themselves, all led to a very unstable government. The government was gradually abandoned by factions of two of the four coalition parties, after which two entire parties and the prime minister were in the end forced by circumstance to call early elections.

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Traditional, Third Way or a Different Path? The Czech Social Democrat Party in 2010¹

Ladislav Cabada

Abstract: *This text is not intended to be an expert analysis but rather a reflection upon the state of ideological debate within the Czech Social Democracy Party, and the position of the Democratic Socialist left within the party and political systems of the Czech Republic and the European Union. This text primarily reflects the writer's opinions on the events and an idea examined, and is in this sense primarily an essay.*

Keywords: *Czech Social Democrat Party, ideology, political system of the Czech Republic*

The Czech Social Democrat Party (ČSSD – *Česká strana sociálně demokratická*) is one of the oldest party-political entities in Central Europe to still be operating. Its history dates back to the formation of the Bohemian-Moravian and wider Austro-Hungarian socialist movements after 1848, and the actual founding of the party is placed at 1878. After the electoral reforms in Austria at the turn of the 20th century, the Social Democrats established themselves as a strong parliamentary party, and were involved on a fundamental level in the process of the deconstruction of the Hapsburg monarchy and the formation of the Czechoslovak state. Social democrat Vlastimil Tusar stood at the head of the party in 1919–1920, and the social democrats were the clear winners of the first parliamentary elections in the independent Czechoslovak Republic in 1920. During this period, however, the party was fundamentally weakened by the internal ideological dispute between supporters of the evolutionary approach and revolutionaries, who after the splitting of the party in 1920 formed the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (KSČ – *Komunistická strana Československa*). Despite this weakening, social democracy participated as a strong state-forming party in the creation of a democratic republic in the majority of inter-war governments and after the defeat of Nazism as a part of the post-war National Front (NF – *Národní fronta*, 1945–1948). After the communist takeover in February 1948, social democracy in Czechoslovakia was eliminated by forced incorporation into the communist party, however it managed to go into exile and remain there

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until the 1980s as a dependable partner of socialist and socially-democratic parties and their national structures (Vodička – Cabada 2007: 225).

After the beginning of the democratic transition in Czechoslovakia in November 1989 the then social democrats were not a formation that was – like the majority of other political parties forming within the democratising political system with a view of competing in the 1990 election – beginning its existence anew, neither organisationally, nor, particularly, ideologically. The social-democratic movement could build on both notable intellectual debates, particularly of the first two decades of the 20th century (let us remember in this regard, for example, the group associated with theoretical journal *Akademie* – J. Hudec, A. Meissner, F. Modráček, L. Winter and others – or the evident inclination of the first Czechoslovak president, sociologist and philosopher Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk towards social-democracy and humanistic progressivism /Tomeš ed. 2004/) as well as the uninterrupted debate by renascent post-war socialist and social-democrat parties, who in the majority of Western European countries became one of the two strongest political movements of the developing affluent states founded on social-market approaches, that is a combination and balance of solidarity and individual freedom.

The basic difference between the ČSSD and other social-democrat and socialist parties, which after 1989 established themselves in Central-Eastern Europe, is grounded upon this organisational and ideological continuity that stems from the fact that the party did not emerge from the platform of a former totalitarian party of the communist type, as was/is the case in Poland, Hungary and Romania. The distance from communism was observable in the case of exiled Czech social democrats, who attempted to temper the acceptance by the Socialist International of Eastern European communists during the period of detente, and this became one of the basic ideological foundations for establishment on the Czechoslovak/Czech political scene. In a similar spirit the party then reformed within Czechoslovakia, despite the fact that many members and structures from the Communist Party had integrated themselves into it (Cabada – Šanc 2005: 171–172). The creation and preservation of a *cordon sanitaire* around the insufficiently reformed Communist Party became a fundamental position and was fully respected until 2005. In practical politics this position meant that the ČSSD repeatedly refused the opportunity to form a left-wing government with the co-operation of the communists – after the elections in 1996 and 2002, and during the formation of a government after the fall of Prime Minister Gross in 2005. With the appointment of new party chairman Jiří Paroubek, however, this fundamental stance has begun to be significantly limited. Paroubek, as government chairman in 2005–2006, relied in parliament on a voting coalition between his party and the communists (Černý 2006) and during the course of the election campaign leading up to the parliamentary elections in

2006 repeatedly made it clear that the support of the communists would also be convenient in the coming term (his declaration that in the interests of implementing the ČSSD programme he would be prepared to come to an agreement with Martians became an instant classic). The weakening and perforation of this cordon between the ČSSD and the Communist Party became more pronounced after the regional elections in 2008, when the ČSSD won in all 13 regions (in the 14th of these, Prague, elections were held at a different time, to coincide with municipal elections), and formed a coalition with the communists in three regions and governed with their support in two. Similarly to before the 2006 elections, in 2010 (this text was written a week before the parliamentary election in the Czech Republic) the chairman of the ČSSD, Paroubek, did not hide the fact that the support by the communists of a social-democrat minority government was, for him, an acceptable and welcome solution. This position is of course in sharp contradiction of the distance maintained from the communists which was incorporated into the foundations of the reformed party after November 1989.

With regard to the above-mentioned continuity of Czech social democracy in exile from 1948 to 1989, the foundation of ideological debate inside the party should be viewed in the context of the influence of several socialist and social-democratic parties and figures from Western Europe upon the first programme documents of the ČSSD. In this regard we see the most striking influences coming from Germany and Austria – e.g. the general secretary of the exiled party Jiří Loewy (Germany) or the eminent representative of the Austrian exile organisation, Přemysl Janýr. These were figures that became identified with the concept of democratic, evolutionary minded social democracy, promoting the concept of a social-market economy and a balance between solidarity and responsibility. These were exponents of the “classical” socialist concepts as they took shape after the Second World War.

This clearly expressed itself in the programmes of the party – the programme for the elections in 1992 clearly borrows from programme documents of the main socialist formations of Western Europe, when it emphasises the solidarity particularly with young people, seniors and families, propagates good education as the foundation of successful professional fulfilment and supports the idea of safeguarding health and social security without individual contributions. In these the ČSSD programme commits to the support of free education (including university), free health care and a pension system without the responsibility of individual pension contributions (the programme does, however, call for the separation of pension funds from the state budget, which even during the governments managed by ČSSD did not occur). The arrival of a series of (left-wing) figures from the ranks of the disintegrated Civic Forum in the 1990s – e.g. Miloš Zeman and Pavel Dostál – strengthened the more liberal side of the party; after the departure of M. Zeman from the leadership,

the ČSSD nevertheless returned to the above-mentioned foundations all the more intensively and in election campaigns and in the rhetoric of its representatives made key programme points of them. It then associated several fiscal and wider economic assumptions with their implementation, specifically a tax system founded on the progressive taxation of individual wages in several income brackets. According to the ČSSD the state should also regulate the prices of significant commodities, particularly energy, and also ensure the construction of flats with regulated rent (starting flats for young families, flats for seniors etc). Other repeatedly referred to positions, e.g. the support of the plurality of property ownership and the support of rural areas, form more or less proclamatory slogans.

In relation to the European Union, the ČSSD has from the very beginning positioned itself very positively, seeing it as, among other things, an instrument for the establishment and protection of the concept of the social-market economy – in general terms the EU is for the party a project arising from the model of social-market economics, which is an example of economic (neo)liberalism – and the party inclines strongly towards the federalist visions of the further development of the EU. The party however does not play any fundamental powerful or ideological role within the European Socialist Party (PES); in the recent period it has profiled itself as the strongest supporter of the Slovak social democrats (*Smer*) after their membership of PES was revoked (*Smer* had created a government coalition with radical nationalists in Slovakia).

The ČSSD is very liberal on issues with an ethical subtext – it supports, for example, same-sex marriage and the right of a mother to choose a termination. Conversely, on the issue of immigration it promotes more restrictive politics and repeatedly discusses the necessity of maintaining jobs for Czech citizens and their preference above foreigners in the labour market. The ČSSD, in rhetoric, places great emphasis on the politics of unemployment, and has for a long time been promoting its system of incentives (e.g. tax breaks etc.) for foreign investors. In reality, however, it supports the growth of budget spending destined for economically inactive citizens, including the unemployed, rather than the creation of new jobs.

In the area of foreign affairs, the ČSSD is conflicted. Its programme documents unambiguously incline towards the promotion of conflict resolution using peaceful methods; however before chairman Paroubek the party nevertheless accepted that some situations require the use of appropriate force (humanitarian interventions and the like). In the recent period the party has defined itself particularly in terms of saying no to the possibility of the American radar base in the Czech Republic (which is understandable), and also voted for the end of engagement of Czech soldiers in Afghanistan. A basic theme of internal party discussion is the position towards non-democratic states, particularly with regard to economic diplomacy. While

Czech diplomacy has for a long time supported coercive measures – e.g. sanctions – against countries such as Cuba and Belarus, ČSSD chairman Paroubek in February 2008 was in Syria negotiating co-operation with the representatives of the totalitarian Ba’ath party (compare this step, for example, with the open support of the democratic Israel, as often proclaimed by Miloš Zeman, party chairman from 1993–2001). In this sense Paroubek – similar to the Czech President, Klaus – declares a much more marked pragmatism and willingness to concessions and the so-called “balanced approach”, particularly with regard to China and Russia.

The ČSSD has in the long term been declaring its support for the principle of ecological responsibility; programme documents contain a series of the party’s numerical goals in terms of recycling, reducing energy use and so on. In the 1990s the party was even the incubator of the Greens. Nevertheless in the last five years we can observe a deviation from consistent ecological politics in terms of concessions, particularly to the energy lobby (breaching the limit for the mining of coal, the support of traditional energy sources and so on). The ČSSD also significantly contributed to the splitting of the Green Party and the emergence of the “left-wing” Democratic Green Party, which worsened its relationship with the postmodern liberal Green Party leadership even more (not so with the relatively left-wing radical part of the Greens member base).

If we look at the ČSSD through the prism of the issue described in the title of this article, then in the programme documents of the party we clearly see a preference for traditional approaches founded on high taxation and statism, that is a preference of solidarity and direct equalisation, resulting in the creation of a classic affluent state, like those established in Western Europe after the Second World War. This position was disrupted most notably at the turn of the century in association with the debate about the so-called third way, the approach of Tony Blair, Lionel Jospin and Gerhard Schroeder, then heads of governments of the three dominant countries of the EU. Blair’s project of the dismantling of the nanny state, similar to Schroeder’s rhetoric concentrating on innovation and high added value (the Lisbon Strategy), found its supporters in the ČSSD (the media referred especially to adviser Otto Novotný) including chairman Zeman. He however was a markedly unorthodox figure, labelled a liberal by many (his government, for example, privatised banks and certain other sectors and enterprises under the condition of the state retaining a share), who pragmatically positioned himself at the head of the ČSSD because with a liberal programme he would not have had a chance of success (in 2010 Zeman is attempting a return with a new formation called the Party for Civic Rights, whose programme can be labelled as liberal-centrist, founded on the rhetoric of individual responsibility, restraint in state spending and investing in the future). The appointment of Vladimír Špidla as head of the ČSSD (2001) and the government (2002)

nevertheless led the debate in the ČSSD again in the direction of classic approaches (Špidla is an admirer of the Swedish social model). The result of the transposition of these changes to practical politics was a marked increase in mandatory state spending resulting in a state budget deficit.

Even Paroubek's appointment as leader of the social democrats did not signify a revitalisation of the concept of the third path, which had in the meantime had led to fundamental problems and defeats for its above-mentioned propagators in Western Europe. Paroubek decided on a combination of three approaches: 1) supporting a strong and socially classed state founded on statism and levelling, with rhetoric based on the promise of maintaining "free" education, health and social services, valorisation of pensions and so on; 2) considering the co-operation of left wing entities – ČSSD and the communists – as beneficial and possible, by which he deviates from the anti-communist position of the party; 3) turning to political marketing, by which he is very similar particularly to Gerhard Schroeder and even more to Slovak Prime Minister Fico. The programme of social democracy, which is in reality elaborated and extensive material, was hence transformed into merely a collection of advertising slogans during the election campaign, which in addition misrepresents the real contents of the programme documents (the party, for example, talks about a "13th pension"; in reality this relates to a special contribution for seniors to the amount of approximately a quarter of the average pension).

A basic phenomenon, which can also be observed in some other socialist parties in Europe, is the personalisation of politics – the identification of a party with its leader. As early on as during the leadership of Miloš Zeman it appeared that the party often spoke with the same voice, however in hindsight we see many other – often non conformist – figures alongside Zeman (e.g. the willingness of Petra Buzková to resign from her post of vice-chairman of the party in protest against the project of electoral reform supported by party chairman Zeman, or the minister of culture Pavel Dostál). The ČSSD under Paroubek is a party of "external uniformity" and absolute party discipline, a rich factionality has been significantly muted to the outside and an ideological debate has practically not taken place. Alongside the prime minister, his wife became a key figure in the election campaign, rather than other prominent politicians from the ranks of the ČSSD (where they appeared on billboards, they repeated the slogans connected to the chairman of the party).

In the middle of 2010 the ČSSD seemed, in terms of its programme, to be quite a traditional socialist formation that was not fundamentally influenced by postmodernity or the concept of the third way. Its electoral campaign for the parliamentary elections in 2010 was founded on trivial slogans advocating selected parts of the programme (free education and healthcare, regulation of the price of energy) and had a strong negative element (attacks on all other parties). In the recent period it

has turned away from its programme and towards political marketing. With this strategy it is relatively successful, appealing to approximately one third of the Czech population.

If an ideological debate is taking place within the party then it is well hidden even from the academic public. Since 2001 – after the appointment of Vladimír Špidla – the party has gambled on the revitalisation of the idea of a socially generous state, and altogether stepped away from the promotion of at least some of the ideas of the concept of the so-called third way. The ČSSD is thus pursuing a strategy founded particularly on the “relative impoverishment of the educated middle class” and it is thus similar to the ODS from the first half of the 1990s (Rupnik 1998: 13). While the ODS then gambled on bank capitalism managed often by old cadres, the ČSSD is now betting on comfortable statism, in which Czechs were used to living before 1989, or – as expressed by Jacques Rupnik (1998: 12) – on the combination of old positions and new opportunities.

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Seeking a Type: the Czech Party System after 1989¹

Vít Hloušek

Abstract: *This article studies the issue of a typological categorization for the Czech party system. The author works from Sartori's concepts of moderate and polarized pluralism; the reasons for using this concept are laid out in the theoretical part of the text. An analysis of individual phases of development of the Czech party system shows that until the middle part of the last decade the Czech party system could not be fit into a single type. However, analysis of the current form of the Czech party system at the electoral and parliamentary levels shows that the today's Czech multi-party system displays the characteristics of a moderate pluralism.*

Keywords: *Czech party system, moderate pluralism, polarized pluralism*

The pluralistic Czech party system recently celebrated twenty years of existence. During that time there have been seventeen elections in Czechoslovakia and later the Czech Republic, to various chambers of various parliaments, four local elections, three regional elections, and two elections to the European Parliament. Twelve cabinets have come and gone, and the country has seen radical changes in its political, economic, and social systems, which have led to the establishment of a relatively stable parliamentary democracy.

Likewise the composition of the Czech party system from the standpoint of the relevant political parties is very stable compared to many of the other countries that have gone through a post-Communist transition. Of the six most important parties present in the Chamber of Deputies just prior to the 2010 election², two have continuity dating back to the 1920s (KDU-ČSL, KSČM), one party was re-founded after 1989 with its continuity having survived at least symbolically in exile (ČSSD), and two were founded at the turn of the 1990s (ODS, SZ). Only TOP 09 appeared as a new political formation during the Chamber of Deputies' last electoral term. It was registered in June 2009; however, a number of its founders come out of the KDU-ČSL or other previously-existing political parties.

Compared to the beginning of the 1990s, when the actual transition took place, there are far fewer political parties that can be labeled as relevant; that is, possessing

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² Not counting the representatives of the DSZ.

sufficient coalition or blackmail potential (Sartori 1976: 121–125). Even so, it is not as simple as it was ten or fifteen years ago to answer the question of what type of party system we have in the Czech Republic. Experts who have studied the Czech domestic transition and consolidation express certain reservations towards the Czech democratic transition and consolidation. They allow that the Czech Republic has succeeded in building a viable institutional framework for democracy relatively quickly and well, but at the same time note that Czech democracy still exhibits clear deficiencies in areas such as citizens' trust in democratic institutions and processes (Pridham 2009) or the ability of political parties to fully anchor themselves in society (Kopecký 2006: 132–135), which is most evident in the very low membership numbers of the Czech parties, or a general unwillingness by citizens to participate in politics through the parties. By way of illustration: an opinion poll from February 2009 revealed that only 7 % of citizens took part in activities by a political party in the community where they live; two years later that number had fallen to 4 % (CVVM 2009a: 5).

In one sense the fault lies with the Czech party system itself. Despite the relatively rapid consolidation in the number of parties, one of the fundamental systemic traits of the Czech system is an inherent instability, evident in the form of weak government coalitions with insufficient backing in parliament. This negative systemic trait has persisted throughout the 1990s and since. A second disputed element is the ideological distance dividing the relevant political parties, which is related to the presence of anti-systemic parties and the overall degree of polarization in the party system. Both of these elements make it more difficult to classify the Czech system.

The aim of this article is not to argue over how much of the blame is due to the institutional setup of the Czech political system, an electoral system that seems to generate results ending in stalemate (see Havlík – Kopeček 2008). Instead the purpose of this article is to consider various typologies for party systems and to show, within a given typology based on Sartori's idea of polarized and moderate pluralisms that the Czech party system has been moving towards a type of moderate pluralism in the context of the upcoming 2010 parliamentary elections.

Finding a typology for the Czech party system

Czech political scientists, and others, very often work with Sartori's classification and typology for party systems, even though there are a number of other party system typologies. A group of authors led by Gabriel Almond (Almond et al. 2001: 113–116) for example combined the "Lijphartian" dimension of conflictual or consensual party competition and a "Sartorian" dimension of the number of parties, which results in a matrix of nine ideal types of party systems. On the axis of polarization the authors defined conflictual, accommodative, and consensual models of

party behavior; while on the axis of numbers of party there are two-party, majority coalitions and multiparty systems. At first glance this combination seems interesting, but an automatic link between political culture, model of political system, and the number of relevant parties as an applicable but theoretically supportable typology, would require a broader explanation. Moreover in the case of a country like the Czech Republic, where the political system underwent a phase of democratic transition and is gradually consolidating, but the political culture itself oscillates between two poles, the application of this principle seems less than promising.

One recent textbook on comparative politics by Italian political scientist Daniele Caramani (2008: 327–332) works with categories of format, such as number of relevant parties, but drawing on Sartori it also defines types of political party: dominant-party systems, two-party systems, multi-party systems with two variants (moderate and polarized). Caramani introduces the term bipolar systems, which combines the characteristics of two-party and multi-party systems, because in a system with many parties two competing coalitions emerge – the poles of a party system. This modification is interesting; however from the perspective of Sartori's original emphasis on party competition it may be somewhat disputable. In any case this is not important for evaluating the Czech party system because except for short-lived exceptions (LSU, Quadcoalition) the main and minor poles of the Czech party system have developed as independent political parties, not as blocs or coalitions of parties.

Luciano Bardi and Peter Mair (2008: 148) point out that

„despite numerous studies focused mainly on party system change, theoretical interest in party systems has proved limited, with almost no substantial innovation since the publication of Sartori's classic work of 1976“.

The reason Sartori's typology of party systems has kept its place in so many textbooks on comparative politics (among them Axford 2002: 367–373) is not only Sartori's effort to find congruence between format and type of party system, it is also the perspective that Sartori offers. While keeping in mind the institutional and social context of a party system's evolution, Sartori sees the key parameters for the functioning of a party system as its actual structure, relationships between the political party, and form of party competition. At the same time he creates a relatively clear if not always easily applicable set of basic types, covering the entire range of empirical cases, which even 40 years later continues to display its heuristic potential. And so we, too, are unable to resist applying Sartori's classification and typology to the Czech party system.

However, in order to apply Sartori's typology and classification, we must examine one important prerequisite, and that is the structure of party competition. Sartori assumes what we might call a one-dimensional simplification. Although there may exist many various cleavages or points of tension between parties, there is one dimension of party competition that we can regard as most important for the voter as well as for the political parties themselves, which are able to define their positions in the framework of this dimension. In the West European countries this dimension is socio-economic cleavage, which defines the political right and left. In many Central and East European countries, however, it has not been possible to "fit" party competition into a single dimension, and thus Sartori's model has not been applicable. However this is not the case for the Czech Republic, with its political legacy of Communism and its previous path dependency (see Kitschelt 2001: 311–317) that limited the significance of other cleavages. Thus the dominant socio-economic cleavage (Hloušek – Kopeček 2008: 531–533; Kopecký 2006: 128–129; Mansfeldová 2004: 237–239) allows for this reduction of party competition to its most significant dimension.

The later history of party systems from the 1980s onward show up some of the problematic spots in Sartori's typology. These concern not only some characteristics of certain selected model types of party system, which we will discuss below (the concept of an anti-systemic party or the term "polarization"), but also some of the unspoken assumptions behind Sartori's approach. Sartori implicitly worked with a concept under which a single political system contained a single party system. The decentralization of (not only) European polities which has taken place in the meantime, has led some political scientists to reevaluate the dimension within which current party systems must be examined. Luciano Bardi and Peter Mair (2008: 154 and subsequent) in their article recommend working with three dimensions within polities: vertical, horizontal, and functional. The vertical dimension does not concern the Czech party system much, for it applies to a segmented society in which the reduction of party competition to left-right competition might not be applied; but this is not the Czech case. Bardi and Mair apply the horizontal division to countries in which there has been a federalization or major decentralization, and thus present an example of multi-level governance and therefore of multi-level party competition. The Czech Republic is not a strongly decentralized polity in which regional elections are an independent electoral contest of a major kind; instead the party system is structured primarily on the nation-wide level.

From the standpoint of research on the Czech party system, the greatest attention must be focused on a third potential division of the party system or party systems within a single polity – the functional division. This is because there is more than one separate arena of party competition. Basically, political parties must always work on

at least two different levels of competition – the electoral level, and in parliament. Bardi and Mair point out that while in some polities the influence of this division is negligible, elsewhere different rules of the game may apply for different arenas:

“These differences may be defined as those between the electoral party system, on the one hand, and the legislative or parliamentary party system, on the other... In the former, issue salience and party strategies will be determined by electoral goals, that is, by the pursuit of available votes... In the latter, considerations of coalition formation and maintenance will prevail. In the one, enmities may be at a premium; in the other, it may be friendship.” (Bardi – Mair 2008: 158)

Bardi and Mair add that in some political systems, government politics can be seen as a separate arena as well. Later we will take a look at current Czech politics in this regard. These observations add an interesting element to Sartori’s basic typology. In my opinion they do not necessarily undermine his typology as a whole, but point to aspects that for various reasons Sartori did not focus on. The biggest challenge, I think, is the vertical division of the party systems, the existence of which casts doubt on Sartori’s basic one-dimensional simplification of party competition. Fortunately in the Czech case neither the vertical or horizontal divisions apply, while any differences we find under the functional division of the Czech party system can basically be interpreted within Sartori’s concept.

It is clear from the outset, however, that we need not work with all of the elements of Sartori’s typology. From the beginning the Czech system developed as a multi-party system, but with a limited number of represented parties. That takes away the two-party system as well as atomized pluralism. At the same time, no political party has gained the dominant position. This leaves the categories of moderate and polarized pluralism between which the Czech system can be said to move. Let us briefly go over the basic characteristics of these two types of party system. Moderate pluralism is related to the term limited pluralism, and in a segmented political system to extreme pluralism as well. The rough dividing line separating limited and extreme pluralism according to Sartori is the number of six relevant political parties (Sartori 1976: 131). The basic characteristics of moderate pluralism are defined by Sartori (1976: 178–179) as follows: In this system there are more or less durable coalition governments, while none of the parties has the power to form a single-color majority government. In the government it is not single parties that alternate but coalitions of parties; however (1) the structure of party competition is basically bipolar. On the left and the right there are relevant political parties, all of which have coalition potential and are able to attract centrist voters; thus we can consider the structure of party competition to be (2) centripetal and (3) with a low degree of

polarization. This means that the relevant political parties are not so ideologically distant as to present permanent and growing barriers to cooperation, as is the case with polarized pluralism.

Polarized pluralism is usually associated with the format of extreme pluralism. Sartori (1976: 132–140) defines its basic traits as well: First, such a party system must contain relevant anti-systemic parties. It is clear that the definition of an anti-systemic party may present a problem, and Sartori himself admits that there are broader and narrower definitions of anti-systemic. Generally however he defines it as “*being anti-system whenever it undermines the legitimacy of the regime it opposes*” (emphasis by Sartori), as an “*opposition on principle*” (Sartori 1976: 133).³ Even this narrower concept of an anti-system opposition has shown itself to be problematic, though (Kubát 2010: chapter 4.2). Czech political scientist Michal Kubát, building on the ideas of Giovanni Sartori and also Italian Giovanni Capocchia, has tried to clarify the concept of anti-systemic. Kubát takes up Capocchia’s ideological definition of an anti-system party, and derives a definition of an anti-systemic party in terms of either its isolation or its distance from other political parties, which may not always mean the same thing. He recommends using the term anti-systemic party only for parties that truly work to de-legitimize the democratic political system, and at the same time are isolated within the framework of the political system. A party that is isolated but does not ideologically reject democracy should, according to Kubát, be categorized as an extreme party. A formation that ideologically calls for regime change, but is not isolated from the other parties, he labels as a masked anti-systemic party (Kubát 2010: chapter 4.5).

I fully agree with Michal Kubát that the term anti-system party without modification should be used only for those that fulfill the criteria of isolation within the political system, along with ideological subversion of the democratic system. It is a question, however, how to classify the masked anti-systemic party that promotes an anti-systemic ideology, but does not behave according to that ideology, and thus gradually improves its coalition potential. This question is more than just academic, as we will see, because just such a case is presented by the position of the KSČM within the Czech party system. If we maintain Sartori’s emphasis on party competition and internal systemic characteristics, by this logic ideology is actually a secondary parameter, while isolation of the party or ideological distance from other parties is more important. Therefore, we cannot automatically take the existence of an anti-systemic party as an indicator of polarized pluralism.

³ Theoretically an anti-system party could be the bearer of *any* ideology that undermines the existing regime. Theoretically such a party can be an illegal or semi-legal opposition in a non-democratic regime. Given our topic, Sartori’s ideas about polarized pluralism, and the clear “democracy-centered” nature of comparative politics, we explicitly assume for purposes of this text that by the regime we mean liberal democracy.

But back to Sartori's definition of polarized pluralism. In a polarized pluralism there is a bilateral opposition; the pro-system parties are attacked by anti-systemic parties from both the right and the left ends of the political spectrum. This leads us to a third characteristic, the filling of the space at the political center (in a functional, not ideological sense) by one or more political parties, which creates a multi-polar structure of party competition in which centrist parties must compete with the anti-systemic opposition on both the right and the left, while at the same time the anti-systemic parties are competing among themselves. This competition between the political center and the anti-system parties leads to polarization of the entire party system, the shape of party competition, and the competition for voters, as it tends to increase the ideological distance between the parties. This polarization in turn leads to a fifth characteristic trait, which is the predominance of centrifugal tendencies over the centripetal, shown especially in the weakening of electoral support for the parties of the center, and the strengthening of the extreme formations.⁴ A sixth characteristic is that polarized pluralisms function in an atmosphere of the growing ideologization of politics, of the role of ideology as a means of mobilizing voters by political parties grows, and a growing conception of politics as ideology by the public along with it. A seventh characteristic is irresponsible behavior by the opposition, the result of which is to limit the possibilities for alternation in government. Parties at the center of the system are "condemned" to govern, while an acceptable alternative to them is lacking. Both pro-system and anti-system opposition formations behave as though they will not be the ones bearing responsibility for actually governing in the future. And this strategy, determined by the systemic character of polarized pluralism leads to political competition becoming a kind of competition between exaggerated promises and outright political bribery.

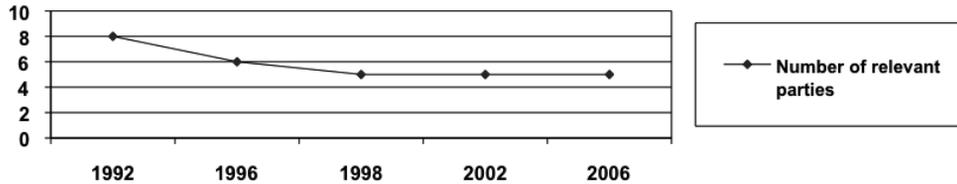
The format of the Czech party system: a trend towards reduction in the number of relevant parties

During the Czech democracy's consolidation phase, which for working purposes we can say began with the parliamentary elections in 1996 (see Ágh 1998: 160–162), the number of relevant parties in the Czech party system practically never moved beyond the format of limited pluralism. Not counting the period 1990–1992

⁴ Sartori understood polarization mainly as a property flowing from the structure of the party system as such. Meanwhile, however, especially in his six characteristics of a polarized pluralism, he acknowledged at least implicitly that there are other factors contributing to polarization having to do with the ideologization of politics. Riccardo Pelizzo and Salvatore Barbones (2007) in their text analysis of Sartori's examples of polarized pluralism (inter-war Spain, the Weimar Republic, France's 4th Republic, and Italy's 1st Republic) show that polarization also has a macro-economic context. This factor is important for analysis of pluralism in the post-Communist countries, especially during the democratic transition, for the worsening social situation suffered by many citizens as an inevitable part of economic transformation has been one of the factors in the polarization of politics there.

when there was much breaking up and reassembling of party clubs in both houses of the Federal Assembly and in the Czech National Council, this has remained the case for almost the entire era of the Czech party system since the “Velvet Revolution”, as illustrated by the following graph:

Figure 1: Number of parties represented in parliament during 1992–2009 (immediately after elections)



Source: www.volby.cz

During the period 1992–1996 the number of relevant parties corresponded to the format of extreme pluralism, though we must keep in mind that between eight electoral actors there existed three coalitions (always with a single stronger party – ČSS along with the LSU, ODS with the KDS, which merged with the ODS in 1995, and the KSČM in coalition with LB). After 1996 the Czech party system consistently maintained the characteristics of a limited pluralism. Theoretically this would have corresponded to a type of polarized pluralism until the mid-1990s and afterward a type of moderate pluralism. So how was it in reality?

Polarized pluralism: the trend of the 1990s?

The establishment and evolution of the Czech party system during the 1990s has already been sufficiently described (esp. by Pšeja 2005), so at this point we can focus on trying to classify the type of the Czech party system that was prevalent during the period from the transition itself to the phase of consolidation. We can leave aside the system’s formative period (December 1989 to June 1990): the character of the first phase of democratic transition and the fact that party competition was just beginning to form, and could only really be evaluated in the context of the elections in the summer of 1990, make it impossible to speak of a party system in any strict sense of the word (that is, not just a bunch of individual units, but a system for which some analyzable model of interaction exists). Instead we might term it a “set of parties” (Bardi – Mair 2008: 152–154), indicating an unevolved and very weakly structured arena of party pluralism in the new democracies. For further argumentation over the type of party system that evolved in the Czech Republic, what is important is that already during this initial period, two “sets of parties” – Czech and Slovak – had

begun to develop somewhat separately. Both sets moved towards forming a system in the strict sense of the word, but the system was not a Czechoslovak system. For the less than three years remaining of Czechoslovakia's existence, separate Czech (and separate Slovak) party systems formed which provided direct continuity despite the breakup of the federation (see Mansfeldová 2004: 228–231).

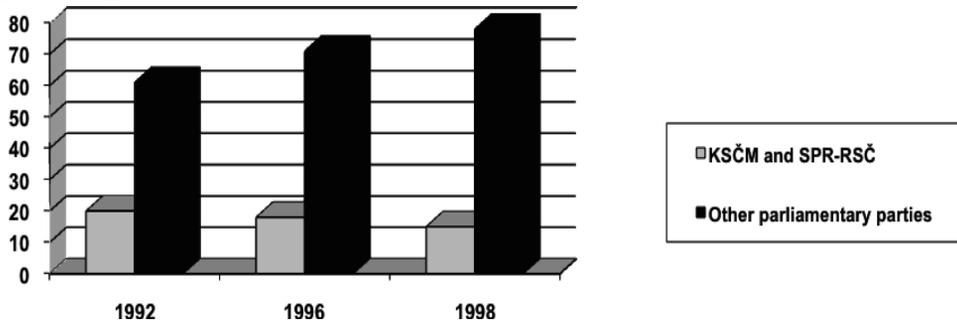
The period 1990–1992 was characterized by the fragmentation of some relevant actors (particularly the Civic Forum) and the crystallization of the model of party competition. Czech political scientist Miroslav Novák is undoubtedly correct when he rejects using for this period the criteria for determining the type of party system, such as polarization or fragmentation (Novák 1999: 133). The transformation process of the Czech party system was still in its intensive phase and happening too fast for a set of parties to become a party system.

Even so, some trends began to appear that showed the way to the next period. First there was the breakup of the Civic Forum. Among the parties that emerged, those declaring a right-wing orientation (the ODA and particularly the ODS) dominated in terms of voter preference (though not in the number of mandates). A process of crystallization also took place on the Czech left. Although the KSČM's abortive transformation process towards social democracy lasted until late 1992/early 1993, by the end of that electoral term it was obvious that the KSČM would remain a formation that was clearly on the left side of the Czech party spectrum, but because of its lack of ideological transformation and its already clearly anti-systemic character, its status was that of an anti-systemic formation the other parties would be unwilling to work with. The weak political position and poor electoral returns of the regional, agrarian, and to an extent also the Christian democratic parties KDS and KDU-ČSL, showed that a model of party competition was emerging oriented towards the right-left scale, with other cleavages being of lesser importance (see Novák 1999: 136–137). The KSČM's anti-systemic position and its isolation on the left created space for the establishment of a second strong pro-systemic formation on the left. During the interim period 1990–1992 this space was left unoccupied, though there were possible pretenders (particularly the ČSSD and ČSS). Finally the political space was successfully occupied by the ČSSD after Miloš Zeman became head of the party in 1993. Some other features emerged during 1990–1992 which would continue to characterize the Czech system in later years. There was a high degree of ideological polarization, related to crystallization of the terms “left” and “right”, not only in the area of content definition, which gradually approached that of the West European mainstream understanding (though the concept of the “right” was set by the ODS even earlier). This right-left polarization complicated the position of formations presenting themselves as centrist (OH). At the same time in parliament and in the Czech electorate, two parties established themselves that were clearly anti-systemic in both

Sartori's and Kubát's conception – the KSČM on the left and the SPR-RSČ on the right. The Czech party system was now well on the way to a polarized pluralism.

But was the period after the 1992 elections really a true polarized pluralism? Some characteristic features were fulfilled. A relevant anti-systemic opposition in the form of the KSČM and SPR-RSČ, which attacked the political regime as such, had a truly bilateral character. But centrifugal tendencies did not fully emerge. When we compare the aggregate electoral results of the two anti-systemic parties in 1992 and 1996, we find that they failed to “steal” the electorate away from the pro-systemic parties.

Figure 2: Combined electoral results for the KSČM and SPR-RSČ and other political parties in 1992–1998⁵



Source: www.volby.cz

On the contrary, the pro-system formations gained, the KSČM lost votes and the SPR-RSČ gained slightly. The crystallization of two strong alternatives – the ODS and ČSSD – occurred also because the pro-system part of the spectrum was unsuccessful in filling the space in the center. These two parties battled over centrist voters, and the left-right aspect of party competition was more significant than their competition against the two extreme parties. On the other hand the level of antagonism between ODS and ČSSD in the 1996 election campaign, and especially the sharp-elbowed tactics of the ČSSD, kept the ideological flames in Czech politics well-fanned (see Kunc 2000: 216–219). The ideological distance between the parties continued to be great, but not radically greater than prior to 1992. In favor of a diagnosis of polarized pluralism might be that there was no alternation in power before 1996, and the government of Václav Klaus, a coalition of right-wing parties, remained in office. However, immediately after the elections the ČSSD

⁵ For 1992 the results of elections to the Czech National Council are counted, in 1996 and 1998 elections to the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic. The SPR-RSČ is still counted in 1998, but afterward loses its relevance as it did not meet the electoral threshold.

did not behave like the typical irresponsible opposition that never thought it would find itself governing. Instead, their decision to abstain from the parliamentary vote allowed the seating of Klaus's minority cabinet. This would indicate that there was no insurmountable polarity between the two strongest parties. Thus we must conclude that developments in 1992–1996 do not allow for a clear categorization of the Czech party system according to Sartori, though if we disregard the existence of an anti-systemic opposition on both sides, most of the structural elements seem to indicate gradual movement towards a moderate pluralism.

It did not happen all at once. On the contrary, on first glance it might seem that the functioning of the Czech party system moved more towards a polarized pluralism.

The position of Klaus's minority governing coalition may seem similar to that of parties located in the center under the polarized pluralism model. To the right there was only the SPR-RSČ, and on the left the KSČM and ČSSD, the latter of which allowed the government to win a vote of confidence, but without giving it explicit support. During that period the degree of polarization and ideological distance between Czech political parties increased. As Maxmilián Strmiska pointed out, the ČSSD was able to get votes from pro-system and from protest voters, which prevented a potential rise in support for the anti-system KSČM. Neither the KSČM nor the SPR-RSČ were strong enough to establish themselves as a long-term and stable dual opposition with blackmail potential (Strmiska 1999: 164). At the same time the ČSSD remained the main competitor of the ODS over the status of strongest party. At least potentially there was now the nucleus of an alternative coalition between the ČSSD and ODS.

The crisis in the ODS in 1997 and 1998, together with the emergence of the US as Klaus's cabinet broke up, the seating of Tošovský's caretaker government, and early elections in 1998 opened up new possibilities for transforming the Czech party system. The 1998 elections eliminated the SPR-RSČ from parliament, and the KSČM remained as the only anti-systemic formation, ostracized by agreement of the other parties. It gained enough seats in parliament to complicate the formation of government coalitions. The main axis of party competition, between the ČSSD and ODS, was pushed against by two smaller parties, the US and KDU-ČSL, which tried to compete against the ODS for right-wing voters (US) or occupy the political center (KDU-ČSL). The surprise outcome of complicated negotiations to form a new government was an agreement between the ODS and ČSSD, the so-called opposition agreement, under which the ODS agreed to tolerate a minority government by the ČSSD.⁶ This alliance, which bore no formal

⁶ The official name was the "Contract for Creating a Stable Political Environment in the Czech Republic". In January 2000 the so-called "tolerance patent" was added to the contract; this was

or real resemblance to a coalition, and represented an attempt by the two main poles of the Czech party system to overcome a stalemated political situation by strengthening the majority or majority-forming elements in the electoral system. To oppose it the Quad-coalition was formed, of which the KDU-ČSL, US, and ODA were the main members (Roberts 2003). Interpreting the nature of party competition during the 1998 to 2002 period is difficult. Obviously it cannot be said to have had a bi-polar structure. Rather it was more of a multi-polar party competition, but the main issue was not to supplant the main pole of competition with competition against the anti-systemic parties. Despite the opposition agreement, competition between the ČSSD and ODS continued, with the Quadcoalition attempting to break in on both the parties.

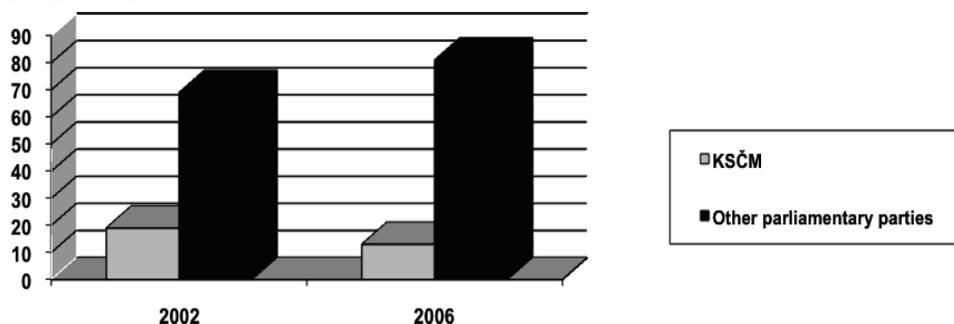
These developments, so characteristic of the second half of the 1990s, indicate how difficult it has been to classify the Czech system as a type. James Toole (2000: 445–446) labeled the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland as moderate pluralisms because support for extremist parties was not higher than in Western Europe and the ideological distance between the parties was small; but we must disagree with this as too simplified. As indicated above, certain tendencies towards moderate pluralism were present here, but elements also appeared such as the high degree of polarization in the party system and the existence of relevant anti-system parties, though by the end of the decade there was only one; this would tend to indicate a polarized pluralism. Perhaps more accurate is the opinion of Maxmilián Strmiska, who speaks of “*an incomplete and somewhat ‘defective’ pluralism*” (Strmiska 2000: 1) characterized by the fluctuating alternative models for assembling coalition governments, and a certain systemic instability, which makes it impossible for us to place Czech pluralism in the 1990s in either of Sartori’s above-described types.

The Czech party system’s second decade: towards a moderate pluralism?

The 2002 elections produced a number of interesting trends. The attempt by the Quadcoalition to break into the dominant axis of party competition between the ODS and ČSSD ended in failure (Hanley 2005: 45–46). The government coalition led by Vladimír Špidla included the ČSSD and both smaller pro-system formations, the US and KDU-ČSL. A very interesting result in terms of the debate over typology of the Czech party system were the gains by KSČM, which were something of an exception to the long-term declining trend of this party (see Pšeja 2009: 144–153).

a set of agreements on specific topics that the ODS and ČSSD were supposed to work together on (the Czech Republic’s entrance into the EU, reform of the Czech electoral system, etc.).

Figure 3: Electoral results for the KSČM and other parliamentary parties in 2002 and 2006



Source: www.volby.cz

The strengthening of the KSČM might tend to support the argument for a polarized pluralism in the Czech party system, but as I try to show below, it was during the 2002–2006 electoral term that there was a shift in the status of the KSČM within the Czech party system, or at least in the parliamentary arena. During this term there was also a personnel crisis in the ČSSD leadership, but with the accession of Jiří Paroubek to the head of the party in 2005 this crisis was resolved well in advance of parliamentary elections. The US was marginalized as a party, and its role as a secondary pole in the Czech party system was taken over by the SZ in 2006.

The 2006 election campaign signaled the bipolarization of Czech politics, linked to a strengthening trend towards bipolarization of Czech party competition. The campaign amounted to a duel between the two strongest parties, the ČSSD on the left and the ODS on the right, and the results reflected this. In terms of the right-left division of the Czech party system, the elections ended once more in stalemate, and a long period after the elections until a coalition government led by Mirek Topolánek was finally formed under somewhat dramatic circumstances between the ODS, KDU-ČSL, and SZ (see Hloušek – Kaniok 2009: 2–3). The circumstances of its fall were likewise dramatic; Topolánek's government lost a no-confidence vote in March 2009 halfway through the Czech presidency of the EU (Hloušek – Kaniok 2009: 5–6). Early parliamentary elections were rejected in a somewhat idiosyncratic decision by the Czech Constitutional Court, so another caretaker government was formed, this time under Jan Fischer, and was given support in parliament by the ODS, ČSSD, and SZ.

The situation before the 2010 elections shows the following trends. The position of the ČSSD and ODS as the two strongest poles in the Czech party system seems to be stable, even though the ODS has lost much ground since the 2006 elections. Besides these parties, the KSČM also has seats in parliament, as does the new conservative formation TOP09, which in effect split away from the KDU-ČSL and has tried to

take a position to the right of the ODS. In addition there are up to four small parties that have a chance: the VV, KDU-ČSL, SZ, and SPO. The likelihood that all will succeed is small. With the exception of the left-oriented SPO, all of these small groups aim at the political center. In any case, all of them have experience in parliament (the SZ and KDU-ČSL and actually TOP09 as well) and the possible new parties (VV a SPO) possess coalition potential, though not strong in relation to the main poles.

Halfway through the last decade doubts still prevailed about whether the party system would fit within any of Sartori's types (for example Čaloud et al. 2006: 7–10). Maxmilián Strmiska came up with an original conceptual framework, recommending the term “semi-polarized pluralism” for the Czech party system (Strmiska 2007). In relation to Sartori's terminology, Strmiska cites the impossibility of classifying the Czech party system as either moderate or polarized pluralism. We can agree with Strmiska that this new concept has significant heuristic potential for analysis of the Czech party system at the end of the 1990s and first half of the last decade, and reflects the fact that (1) a relevant KSČM was still present and (2) the problem of limited coalition alternatives continued. Nevertheless I will try to show that at present there is an interesting shift under way and that Strmiska's semi-polarized pluralism has been replaced by a classic Sartorian type of moderate pluralism.

What has changed since the beginning of the last decade? What leads us to say that the characteristics of polarized pluralism are steadily declining? As has been said, Czech party competition is not fully multi-polar as Sartori talks about when he describes a polarized pluralism. The main pole of competition is the competition between right and left over the political center. Specifically this means competition between the two main poles of the Czech party system, the ODS and ČSSD. It does not rule out the existence of minor poles of competition, but the dynamics of party competition and electoral competition are basically driven in this direction. As subsidiary poles of party competition we can see competition between the KSČM and ČSSD over left-wing voters, and now between ODS and TOP09 on the right, and of course the efforts of the smaller parties to “bite off” a bit of the political center. But the fundamental bipolar and centripetal character of Czech party competition remains the same. It has also been shown that parties which are trying to aim for the political center (ideologically or functionally) have no chance to gain the status of a large party or main pole of the party system. One problem in fully classifying it as a moderate pluralism remains the relatively high degree of polarization, along with a growing shrillness in electoral campaigns, and elements of political bribery. This element, closer to the polarized pluralism model, is most detectable in the electoral arena; it is a question to what degree it appears after the elections in the arena of parliamentary politics. Moreover, this polarization cannot be labeled as ideological in the strictest sense. It is more a product of the personalization of Czech politics along with the professional management of

election campaigns that resorts to populist rhetoric, and makes elections about the personalities of party leaders. The Paroubek-Topolánek duel in 2006 and the issue of Mirek Topolánek before the 2010 election is typical of this personalization.

A look at the quality of the parliamentary system in this country brings us to another very important statement. All indications are that the constant of the Czech party system, the taboo on coalition-building with the KSČM, is on its way to falling. Especially after Jiří Paroubek became head of the ČSSD in 2005, the KSČM has played a more important role than previously as a voting partner of the Social Democrats in parliament. This is not to say that there have been in effect two ruling coalitions, one official (ČSSD, KDU-ČSL and US for example) and one de facto in parliament (ČSSD+KSČM), but the isolation of the KSČM has been broken, and the two parties have grown closer ideologically on topics such as social policy, health care, etc. (see Kopeček – Pšejja 2008: 332–334).⁷ This trend continued after the 2006 elections, when both the left-wing was in opposition. Again the right-left delineation of the Czech political spectrum can be seen.⁸

In debating about the current and potential role of the KSČM, two distinctions must be taken into account. First, the distinction between Kubát's full-blooded anti-systemic party and a masked anti-systemic party. A second distinction is between Bardi's and Mair's party system in the electoral arena, and the party system in the parliamentary arena. In the case of the second distinction we note that in the electoral arena the KSČM remains an ostracized entity attacked by the right (although compared to the 1990s the intensity of attacks has declined as the issue of de-communization fades). Not even the ČSSD has revoked the Bohumín resolution adopted in 1995 when it vowed not to work with the KSČM. However, in the parliamentary arena the KSČM has been much more successful in breaking the isolation. It is entirely possible that after the 2010 election the KSČM will support the formation of a minority ČSSD government, with which it would cooperate in parliament. ČSSD leaders reject the formation of an open coalition, but tolerance of a minority government would be good for both sides given a left-wing majority. The KSČM would not risk so much of its reputation as a party of protest as it would if it were part of a ČSSD government, and the ČSSD could continue to keep the Communists at arm's length. Thus in parliament we are witnessing the growing coalition potential of the KSČM in relation to the ČSSD. In that case the KSČM would shift from being classified as an anti-system party towards being a masked anti-system party.

⁷ A detailed analysis of elections during this period is given by Černý (2006).

⁸ After the 2010 elections it will be very important which of the smaller centrist parties get into parliament, and what strategy they adopt in parliament or in government. Not even the prospect of a grand coalition between the ČSSD and ODS would tend to cause a deepening of the left-right division. From a long-term perspective it is clear, however, that the space in the political center is not a place where a new big political party can take shape; the left-right dynamic is fundamental.

This statement requires some commentary however. Here I return to Capoccia's and Kubát's distinction between ideological and relational anti-systemic parties. From an ideological anti-system standpoint the description stands of the KSČM as having two faces. It presents itself outwardly as a party fully accepting the democratic rules of the game, but internally it speaks differently of the period of Communism, and its official goal remains socialism, though wrapped in rhetorical phrases about democratic society (Balík 2005; Hanley 2002: 150–154; Kubát 2010, chapter 6.1.1). Likewise from the standpoint of public opinion it is still not accepted as a fully-qualified actor in the Czech party system. A CVVM survey shows that like a decade ago, Czech society remains divided almost equally on the question of whether they would be against participation by the KSČM in a government coalition. Significant for the growing relative coalition potential of the KSČM in relation to the ČSSD is the fact that among ČSSD supporters 60 % would not mind participation by the KSČM in a government, while 32 % would be against it (CVVM 2009b: 4). Ideologically the KSČM remains estranged from the democratic political system, and this is reflected in the electoral arena among others. However, its coalition potential is growing (though on the parliamentary, not the governmental level for now), and its isolation as an ostracized party is crumbling.⁹

Conclusion

We can conclude with the statement that the Czech party system at present can be said to fit the model of a moderate pluralism. This is especially true on the parliamentary level, and after the 2010 elections the number of political parties will probably correspond to the format of a limited pluralism. Each of these parties in this arena possesses coalition potential, though of differing proportions. Of course the KSČM will not be a partner in the governing coalition, but in the Czech parliament the KSČM can no longer be considered to be ostracized.

The party system on the electoral level now corresponds more to the type characteristics of moderate pluralism. The fundamental structure of party competition is bipolar, and basically centripetal. Even if some of today's parliamentary parties were to drop from relevance (KDU-ČSL, SZ) and/or new relevant formations become established (VV, SPO, TOP09), they will not change the main right-left dividing line, and it is likely that the structure of the two main poles will remain and be supplemented by the configuration of minor poles of which all will have coalition potential. The nucleuses of alternating coalitions are established – the ČSSD on the

⁹ In the long term the isolation of the KSČM outside of government could be weakened as well. ČSSD leaders reject an open coalition with the Communists for *these* elections, but after that it's an open question. I must say that although I approach these developments analytically, normatively in view of the persistent dogmatism of the KSČM I do not regard this as unproblematic for the quality of Czech democracy.

left and the ODS on the right. Strmiska's observation about the absence of coalition models is not completely passé, but it applies mostly to the tactics and strategies of the small parties. Although the ideological profile of the KSČM is unfortunate, its possible post-election cooperation with the ČSSD might more or less solve the problem of classification. A left-coalition model (ČSSD and KSČM) would then establish itself, alongside a right coalition model (ODS and TOP09), while the role of small parties after 2010 and how many would remain in parliament would be an open question. If they were to enjoy a limited success, the Czech Republic would actually become less of a pure moderate pluralism because of the increased polarity of the party system, which would manifest itself more on the electoral than parliamentary level. In the event of a grand coalition or relevance being achieved by more centrist parties, the role of these parties in parliament and in government while forming a coalition will be key to whether the trend towards moderate pluralism continues, and the degree of willingness on the part of the ČSSD and ODS to cooperate with one another. But not even these developments need hinder the gradual shift of the Czech party system towards moderate pluralism.

Future confirmation of the trends analyzed above may have a stabilizing effect on the Czech party system. Along with format, the mechanics of the party system might also consolidate; in particular some innovative forms of coalition cooperation might begin to function, which would make more likely the future alternation of government coalitions enjoying stronger parliamentary support. However there is no reason to think that this type of moderate pluralism will solve all the problems of the Czech party system. The issue remains of the modification of the electoral system to the Chamber of Deputies remains an issue, along with the question of whether and how political parties will be able to better integrate themselves into Czech society. The case of Czech Republic and others show that in an age of cartel parties a minimum degree of social rooting is very important for the vitality of political parties.

List of abbreviations

ČSS – Czechoslovak Socialist Party

ČSSD – Czechoslovak Social Democracy/Czech Social Democratic Party

CVVM – Public Opinion Research Centre

DSZ – Democratic Party of Greens

KDS – Christian Democratic Party

KDU-ČSL – Christian and Democratic Union – Czechoslovak People's Party

KSČM – Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia

LSU – Liberal Social Union

ODA – Civic Democratic Alliance

ODS – Civic Democratic Party
 OH – Civic Movement
 SPO – Party of Citizens' Rights
 SPR-RSČ – Association for the Republic – Republican Party of Czechoslovakia
 SZ – Green Party
 TOP 09 – Tradition, Responsibility, Prosperity
 VV – Public Issues

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The Institutionalization of Party Systems – Bulgaria, Romania, Croatia and Slovenia in a Comparative Perspective¹

Petr Jurek

Abstract: *This article focuses on the analysis of the institutionalization of party systems. The objects of the analysis are four party systems of post-communist countries – Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania and Slovenia. To assess the degree of institutionalization, three quantitative criteria are used: electoral volatility, the effective number of parties and the parliamentary age of parties. The main aims of the analysis are to compare aforementioned party systems' degree of institutionalization and simultaneously confirm the assumption that post-communist party systems are in a far more heterogeneous category than is often suggested. At first, the article defines and explains the institutionalization of party systems and uncovers the possibilities of its quantitative assessment. Then, the level of institutionalization of Bulgarian, Croatian, Romanian and Slovenian party systems is evaluated. There are two main conclusions. First, the institutionalization of a party system in the case of Slovenia and Croatia is on a considerably higher level than in the cases of Bulgaria and Romania, although there is some positive progress in the case of Romania in the last five years. Second, common trends, connected with institutionalization and often mentioned as overall, don't have a strong reliance on empirical measures.*

Keywords: *institutionalization, party system, Bulgaria, Romania, Croatia, Slovenia, electoral volatility, effective number of parties, age of parliamentary parties*

Introduction

The party systems of post-communist countries are a common subject of political analysis. The formation of these party systems has brought about an occasion for revisiting theories and concepts developed pursuant to the experiences of Western advanced democracies. Such theories and concepts weren't able to deal with the specific operation of party systems in Central and Eastern Europe, so it was necessary to adapt them to this new reality.

The specifics of post-communist party systems could be largely associated with the overall exceptionality of the transition to democracy in the case of Central and Eastern Europe, which created a specific set of conditions for the development of

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party systems. P. Mair (1998:178) points at the absence of civic society (with the certain exception of Poland). The communistic power monopoly didn't allow the independent compounding of citizens by virtue of their common interest, which could eventually become a base of dissent. After the fall of communistic regimes, new polities to deal with two, in some cases actually three, transitions simultaneously. The transformation of economical systems proceeded at the same time as the transformation of political systems, and, in some cases (e.g. the dissolution of Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia), nation building occurred as well. In advanced democracies, such fundamental changes took place in the long term, but post-communist countries had to carry them out during quite a short period of time. Moreover, the party systems of post-communist countries didn't emerge during a long-term process of democratization, instead they begun to develop after the democratization of the political system had been achieved.

By aforesaid differences, a number of deviations in the shape and operation of party systems in post-communist political systems has emerged. Many attempts at describing and explaining these differences have appeared in the past two decades. Examining the level of institutionalization of party systems is one the most frequent. Institutionalization has a crucial impact on the operation of party systems, since it concerns the stability of the mechanism operating within the system and thus influences the predictability of the future direction and function of that system.

The main aim of this study is to analyze the level of institutionalization in four cases of post-communist party systems. Party systems taken under analysis are those of Bulgaria, Romania, Croatia and Slovenia. All analyzed cases fall into the category of post-communist states. Three of them are members of the European Union; Croatia is an applicant for full membership. Croatia and Slovenia have a common past within Yugoslavia, after its disintegration both polities had to pass through the nation-building process. By a mainly quantitative analysis of the institutionalization of party systems, we can argue that post-communist party systems are in a far more heterogeneous category than is often suggested.

The study is subdivided into three sections. First, we analyze the possibilities of measuring the level of institutionalization and thus develop an analytical framework. Then, we use three indicators for rendering the analysis of institutionalization of party systems in Croatia, Slovenia, Bulgaria and Romania. In conclusion, we summarize our observations and discuss some contentious issues.

Party system institutionalization

„Institutionalization refers to a process by which a practice or organization becomes well established and widely known, if not universally accepted. In politics, institutionalization means that political actors have clear and stable expectations

about the behaviour of other actors. [...] An institutionalized party system, then, is one in which actors develop expectations and behaviour based on the premise that the fundamental contours and rules of party competition and behaviour will prevail into the foreseeable future“ (Mainwaring – Torcal 2006: 206). Shortly taken, institutionalization means stability in the patterns of political parties’ behaviour and in the basic framework of party systems.

J. Bielasiak has used two quantitative indicators for the determination of the rate of institutionalization – the index of electoral volatility and the index of effective number of parties. A high range of electoral volatility and fragmentation of a party system signify a fluid political environment and thus signalize a lower rate of party system institutionalization (Bielasiak 2002: 198–206). Besides, Bielasiak sees the stability of electoral rules as an inseparable part of the problem, because the frequent changing of the rules of the game could negatively affect the level of institutionalization (Bielasiak 2002: 191).

S. Mainwaring and M. Torcal (2006: 206–207) identify four main dimensions of party system institutionalization. The first, institutionalized party systems embody stabilized patterns of party competition. This dimension is obviously the most important of all, because stability is the fundamental aspect of institutionalization. It could be measured by an evaluation of electoral volatility.

The second dimension includes the mutual connections of political parties and society. In an institutionalized party system, parties are deeply rooted in society and vice versa. It means that there exist strong linkages between parties and voters. As a result, party competition embodies a high degree of stability and regularity. Shifts of electoral support don’t occur as wholesale as in less institutionalized party systems. This dimension could also be (at least partly) evaluated by the observation of electoral volatility. A low level of electoral volatility signifies tight linkages between parties and society.

The perception of political parties by society is the important component of institutionalization. Political parties should be taken as a fundamental component of democracy. Although voters can express negative attitudes towards the individual parties, they should respect parties and party systems as political institutions.

The fourth dimension of institutionalization by Mainwaring and Torcal affects linkages between parties and their leaders. Parties shouldn’t be existentially dependent on one leader; parties shouldn’t be an instrument for promoting the interests of such a leader. If it is, it can seriously affect the level of party system institutionalization.

P. Webb and S. White point out that institutionalization is usually related to party systems; nevertheless we can’t leave out individual parties. The stability of patterns of party competition is strongly influenced by the autonomy of party organization, development of their organizational structure, their rooting in society and so

on (Webb – White 2007: 4–5). Only party systems insisting on the existence of consolidated political parties can be treated as institutionalized. The persistence of political parties in a party system could be applied as an indicator of parties' stability. Of course, we can't deduce causality between the age of a political party and its internal institutionalization; nevertheless this indicator could be taken as additional.

The institutionalization shouldn't be envisaged as a dichotomous category, where all systems can be categorized as institutionalized or not institutionalized. The experience of post-communist party systems has showed that such an approach is misleading, since there can't be found clear division between both categories.² A better way is to reflect on the institutionalization as a continuum and evaluate institutionalization in terms of its rate (Mainwaring – Torcal 2006: 205). Thus, the level of institutionalization in several cases of party systems can be compared and, as a result of the comparison, party systems can be placed on the axis labelled "fully institutionalized – not institutionalized".

If we try to synthesize the aforementioned possibilities of a quantitative evaluation of the level of institutionalization, we come to the three available indicators: electoral volatility, the effective number of parties and the average age of parties.

Electoral volatility

Electoral volatility is the indicator of the stability of party system. The classical approach to the measurement of electoral volatility was developed by Morgens Pedersen (1983). Electoral volatility describes shifts of electoral support within the party system between two subsequent elections. In calculating, all percentage shifts of electoral support are summarized and then divided by two. In the case of the creation, downfall, merger or division of political parties, fictitious parties with zero electoral gains are added to the calculation.³

Pedersen's index of electoral volatility has been widely used for analyzing the stability of party systems since its creation, without being significantly revised. Notwithstanding, it contains one problem in itself – it measures all kinds of shifts of party preferences no matter their nature. So, the main limitation of Pedersen's classical index is that it is not able to grasp separately the issues of the creation, downfall, merger and division of political parties, which is typical for post-communist politics (Birch 2001: 1). E. N. Powell and J. A. Tucker came up with a modification of the index of volatility, which is able to take into account character of shifts of electoral support. They have divided volatility into two types: type A which reflects the shifts of election

² Good example of disputableness of this approach is attempt of G. Sartori to set off certain party systems as fluid systems or non-systems (Sartori 2005/1976: 217–242). According to Mainwaring and Torcal (2006: 205–206), he didn't eschew some excessive simplifications and inadequacies.

³ For equation see Pedersen 1983.

results caused by the emergence or disappearance of political parties, while the volatility of type B is calculated from the shifts in electoral gains among existing parties. The calculation procedure is based on Pedersen's equation, the only difference is that type A and type B volatility are counted separately⁴ (Powell – Tucker 2009b: 5–7).

For evaluating the electoral volatility of concerned countries, we use the index of volatility modified by Powell and Tucker, because their approach allows us to distinguish the spillover of voters' support between existing parties, which is to a certain extent normal and for the proper alternation of power in democracy also useful, from volatility caused by the emergence and disappearance of new political parties, which indicates the instability party systems. Using this modified calculation of volatility thus enables us to capture maybe the most important difference of post-communist party systems. Results of such a measurement can also highly demonstrate the extent to which parties are rooted in society.

Effective number of parties

When evaluating the number of parties in party systems, we don't make do with merely the sum of relevant parties in the party system. Such an approach does not take account of the variable size of political parties or, rather, size of their electoral support. The most frequently used instrument for assessing the number of parties, which also takes account of their size, is the index of the effective number of parties.

The concept of the effective number of parties was created by M. Laakso and R. Taagepera on the basis of D. Rae's index of fractionalization. The effective number of parties can be calculated either from a share of the votes cast in the election (named the effective number of electoral parties), or the share of mandates received (named the effective number of parliamentary parties). The procedure is similar in both cases: after the calculation and squaring the shares of individual parties, shares are added together and the result is divided by the number 1 (Laakso – Taagepera 1979: 3–27). The question is how to deal with votes included in the "others" category of election results. Given that in the cases examined by us the residual category does not exceed 10 % of the total votes cast, in accordance with the recommendation of M. Gallagher and P. Mitchell we do not include the residual category in our calculations. This will affect the overall result no more than a few tenths of a percent (Gallagher – Mitchell 2005: 600).

The evaluation of the effective number of political parties makes it possible to answer the question how much observed party systems are fragmented. The fragmentation of a party system is an important indicator of a low rate of institutionalization, though causality cannot be inferred among these phenomena. Even

⁴ For equations see Powell and Tucker 2009b: 5–6.

fragmented systems may have a high degree of institutionalization and conversely systems with a low degree of fragmentation may not always be highly institutionalized. It is therefore necessary to assess this criterion in the context of others, and also to take account of its changes over time.

Average age of political parties in parliament

It should make no sense to average the lifespan of all existing political parties. It is better to focus only on – in a certain way – relevant political parties. In this case, we involve in our analysis only political parties represented in parliament. We do not pursue their whole life cycle, but only the duration of their presence in parliament (f. e. Tavits 2005: 289 proceeds similarly). The indicator of the average age of parties in parliament is related to the present, because we analyze only political parties which obtained at least one mandate in parliament according to the last election held. As a starting point we consider elections in 1990, from which the presence of political parties in parliament is beginning to count. Thus the maximal possible score is 20 (years).

There is of course a difference, whether the party which emerges or disappears is a bigger or smaller one. The establishment or termination of the political party acquiring the minimal number of seats and standing “on the edge” of parliament has less impact on the party system than the emergence or disappearance of political parties being able to win elections. Given this constraint, it is necessary to take this criterion as supplementary and auxiliary.

Institutionalization of the party systems of Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania and Slovenia

The party systems of post-communist Europe are often considered as unstable and fluid compared to those in Western Europe. Do the analyzed cases fit into this classic template some 20 years since the transition to democracy? Can we trace a common trend towards greater stability and institutionalization? Now we are going to try answering these questions using three indicators: electoral volatility, the effective number of parties and the average age of parliamentary parties.

Electoral volatility in Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania and Slovenia⁵

One of the features of post-communist party systems is a high level of electoral volatility (f. e. Bielasiak 2002: 198; Mair 1997: 182; Ágh 1998: 202). The analyzed cases confirm this assumption, the average electoral volatility in all cases is well above the average of advanced democracies, which extended to 12,6 % in the 1990s

⁵ If not stated otherwise, this section is based on the calculations of volatility in Powell and Tucker 2009a, Powel and Tucker 2009b and on the author’s own calculations.

(Dalton – McAllister – Wattenberg 2002: 31). The average scores of examined cases are three times higher (see Table 1).

Table 1: Average electoral volatility during period 1990–2007

Country	Type A volatility (%)	Type B volatility (%)	Total volatility (%)
Bulgaria	21	16	37
Croatia	19	11	30
Romania	35	9	44
Slovenia	17	18	35

Source: Powell – Tucker 2009b: 31

If we consider two different types of volatility, i.e. volatility caused by the emergence or disappearance of political parties (type A) and volatility due to shifts in electoral support among existing parties (type B), we come to the conclusion that between the post-communist countries and advanced democracies there exists a significant difference. From the calculation carried out by Powell and Tucker (2009a: 13–14) it is clear that type B volatility prevails over type A in Western democracies. On the contrary, total electoral volatility in post-communist countries is largely made up of type A volatility. Most notably, it is true in the cases of Romania and Croatia; it is also evident in the case of Bulgaria, where in addition after the last elections in 2009, which is not included in the calculation, type A volatility further increased. The only exception is Slovenia, where the proportion of both types of volatility is roughly the same. However, even in the case of Slovenia, type A volatility is significantly higher than the West European average.

Comparing the development of both types of volatility in Western Europe with the post-communist countries, the difference is apparent. Type B volatility has a slightly increasing curve in Western Europe as well as in the post-communist states, whereas the average value in the post-communist countries is about half again as high (8 % to 14 %). Type A volatility creates a significant difference between the two regions. While in Western Europe type A volatility shows a similar trend as the type B volatility, whereas it amounts about one third compared to type B, in post-communist countries it gradually decreases and is now compared with type B volatility by about half again as high. Type A volatility, in this respect, constitutes the main difference between the post-communist party systems and those of Western Europe.

In terms of the average volatility in post-communist countries, the analyzed cases fall into two categories. Bulgaria and Romania show above average values, Croatia and Slovenia embody below average values. In Bulgaria, volatility shows an increasing trend. Type B volatility as well as total volatility has been increasing, but not as much as type A. A Low degree of volatility in the 1990s can probably be

attributed to clearly defined cleavage⁶, the subsequent rise may be linked to the country's economic problems and related voter dissatisfaction with the existing political elite. The case of Bulgaria is in contradiction with the overall slight downward curve of electoral volatility in post-communist countries.

In Croatia, the total volatility is continuously decreasing, while it never reached even the average of post-communist countries. Type A volatility more or less follows the curve of the total volatility; it never reached even the average value in post-communist states, with the exception of volatility between the first and second elections in the early 1990s. Type B volatility faithfully reflects the political situation at the turn of the millennium – an increasing rate of type B volatility indicated the shift in voter preferences from the *till then* dominant party to the opposition⁷ (Dolenec 2008: 28).

In the Romanian case, the overall volatility in most of the time exceeds the average of the post-communist countries. The instability of the party system is confirmed by the continuously high level of type A volatility, of around 35–40 %. In contrast, type B volatility has mostly below average values, suggesting that voters changing their preferences often choose new parties. Developments since 2004, however, indicate a certain tendency towards stabilization.

In Slovenia, the total volatility has been below the average of post-communist countries all the time from 1990 until now. The fact that type A volatility ever since 1990 has not significantly exceeded 20 % clearly demonstrates the relative stability of the party system. In contrast, type B volatility has been generally above the average of type B volatility in post-communist states. It means that the bindings between voters and parties are not so tight in comparison with advanced democracies, nevertheless voters usually chose within the existing number of political parties and do not often vote for the new political parties.

Effective number of political parties in Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania and Slovenia⁸

As a point of reference, we can use the value of effective number of parties calculated for 27 party systems by Arend Lijphart in his seminal work – the average number of electoral parties in the period 1945–1990 was 3,94 and the average number of parliamentary parties in the same period was 3,34 (Lijphart 1995: 99). Compared with these values, the observed cases mostly show a higher effective number of parties, still it is not so significant, with the exception of Slovenia (see Table 2 and 3). Therefore they do not convincingly confirm a general tendency

⁶ communism/anticommunism

⁷ specifically, from the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) to the Social Democratic Party of Croatia

⁸ If not stated otherwise, this section is based on the author's own calculations according to election results available at *PARLINE* and *Elections in Europe*.

which is often mentioned in connection with the post-communist countries, sc. the high degree of fragmentation of their party systems.

Table 2: Effective number of electoral parties

Country	Average since 1990 until last elections	Last elections
Bulgaria	3,99	4,42 (2009)
Croatia	4,65 (since 2000 5,22)	4,23 (2007)
Romania	4,73	3,91 (2008)
Slovenia	6.63	4,93 (2008)

Source: Author's own calculations, based on Gallagher 2010 and election results available at PARLINE and Parties and Elections in Europe.

Table 3: Effective number of legislative parties

Country	Average since 1990 until last elections	Last elections
Bulgaria	3,02	3,34 (2009)
Croatia	2,89 (since 2000 3,54)	3,07 (2007)
Romania	3,64	3,60 (2008)
Slovenia	5,72	4,23 (2008)

Source: Author's own calculations, based on Gallagher 2010 and election results available at PARLINE and Parties and Elections in Europe.

In Western Europe since the Second World War, the continuous growth of the effective number of political parties can be seen, which has significantly accelerated in the last twenty years.⁹ However, changes were gradual¹⁰ and can be recorded only in the long run (Dalton – McAllister – Wattenberg 2002: 32). Now we can compare this trend with the dynamics of the observed cases.

In the case of Bulgaria, the effective number of electoral parties has relatively strong fluctuations, oscillating between 2,82 and 5,80. From the values of the effective number of parties we cannot infer a downward or an upward trend in the parties' number. However, the last two elections have suggested a shift to greater fragmentation of the party system.

The Croatian case is specific, since it has had very low number of effective parties in 1990s, determined by the existence of a dominant party (HDZ). After the landmark elections of 2000, the effective number of parties has grown twice. Then, it was followed by a decrease to the current value of 3,07 (parliamentary parties).

⁹ This increase can be observed in almost all Western European party systems, the only exception is the Netherlands. (Dalton – McAllister – Wattenberg 2002: 32).

¹⁰ with the exception of Belgium and Italy

In the Romanian case, the significant fragmentation of the party system could be observed during the 1990s, the effective number of parliamentary parties was almost 5. In the last two election periods there was a reduction of the effective number of parliamentary parties, which today stands at 3,6.

The Slovenian party system shows a tendency to a progressive concentration of party competition. The effective number of parties has been continually declining,¹¹ from the value of 9,0 in 1990 to the present value of 4,94. Nevertheless, Slovenia is still the most fragmented party system among the analyzed cases.

We can conclude that the analyzed cases do not unambiguously confirm that the post-communist party systems embody a much higher degree of fragmentation of the party system. Due to the contradictory dynamics, i.e. that in the old democracies fragmentation is slightly increasing, while in the post-communist cases it is mostly slowly declining, a further blurring of the differences in the average values of the fragmentation of party systems can be expected in the future.

Average age of current parliamentary parties in Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania and Slovenia¹²

Table 4 shows the average age of parliamentary parties. Only parties obtaining at least one mandate in the last election are included in the calculation. With the exception of Romania, the calculation in principle confirms the trend documented by the other two criteria.

Table 4: Average age of current parliamentary parties in the period 1990–2010

Country	Average age of parties
Bulgaria	10,29
Croatia	13,56
Romania	17,20
Slovenia	16,29

Source: Author's own calculations, based on *PARLINE* and *Parties and Elections in Europe*

Romania embodies a high degree of volatility, especially type A, which would indicate a significantly fluid political environment. A relatively high and frequently changing effective number of parties contribute to this finding. What does a high average age of parliamentary parties mean in this context? It can be seen as a symptom of a certain tendency towards greater consolidation. All political parties

¹¹ The only exception was the elections in 2004, when the value of the effective number of parties stagnated in comparison with prior elections.

¹² If not stated otherwise, this section is based on the author's own calculations according to election results available at *PARLINE* and *Elections in Europe*.

represented at present in the Romanian Chamber of Deputies exhibit significant parliamentary history, the main political parties have been working in parliament since the beginning of the democratic transition. Conclusions about the low level of institutionalization resulting from the previous two criteria can be slightly corrected referring to the high age of parliamentary parties.

In Bulgaria, the average age of parliamentary parties is the lowest among the analyzed cases. It confirms the low level of institutionalization, which results mainly from the high level of electoral volatility. That is also very well illustrated by the fact that today's ruling political party¹³ participated in the election for the first time in 2009. In the terms of party's parliamentary age, this party has existed for only one year. Unlike Romania, in the case of Bulgaria we cannot talk about the formation of a stable core of the party system formed by political parties existing in the long term.

The high average age of parliamentary parties in Slovenia's National Assembly confirms that, despite the high fragmentation of the party system, it embodies a higher degree of stability in comparison with Romania and Bulgaria. The largest political parties have been presented in parliament since 1990 and thus have created the basis of the party system, from which its increasing stabilization may be arise from in the future.

In the case of Croatia, it also recorded a relatively high average age of parliamentary parties, which confirms the previous criteria. Like in the case of Slovenia, we can talk of a "hard core" of the party system, since the two currently strongest political parties have been present in parliament since 1990. Of course it is necessary to take into account the qualitative side of the issue – The Croatian Democratic Movement has undergone a major internal transformation and today it is a party with significantly different characteristics than in the 1990s (Dolenec 2008: 39). Still, its long-term presence may act as a counterweight against the destabilizing forces in the party system.

Conclusion

Direction toward a higher degree of stability reported as a symptomatic sign of party systems in post-communist countries can be, after examining the cases of Bulgaria, Romania, Croatia and Slovenia, confirmed only in the latter two. The lowest rate of institutionalization according to the three observed criteria is exhibited by the Bulgarian party system, which especially embodies the particularly high degree of volatility of both types. A relatively low level of institutionalization is shown also in the case of Romania, mainly due to a very high level of volatility caused by the emergence and disappearance of party system actors. However, there can be observed a positive trend in the direction toward stabilization and consolidation of

¹³ Citizens for European Development of Bulgaria (GERB).

the party system in the last two election periods. Slovenia can be evaluated, despite the high degree of fragmentation of the party system, as relatively the most institutionalized party system of the examined cases. It is mainly due to a particularly low level of type A volatility. A considerable high average age of parliamentary parties support aforesaid conclusion and to some extent compensates for the high level of fragmentation of the party system. Croatia is a similar case, but it embodies, in comparison with Slovenia, a higher degree of type A volatility, nevertheless we can monitor the downward trend of this indicator.

The purpose of this text is not to examine the causes and consequences of the observed phenomena, but let us make a brief note on this topic. The traditional explanation of a high level of volatility and fragmentation of the post-communist party systems expects that the basic cause is low voter loyalty, which causes a high degree of electoral volatility, leading to uncertainties in the election results, which eventuates in the emergence and disappearance of political parties, whose parliamentary existence is at risk. However this explanation ignores the role and influence of political elites in the whole process. Margit Tavits offers another explanation, in a sense opposite: the primary reason is an impatient political elite that often cause the emergence of new political parties and the disappearance of parties at risk of electoral defeat – as the result of these changes on the supply side, there is consequently a decline in voter loyalty, which ultimately causes a high degree of electoral volatility (Tavits 2008: 6). This view in effect denies the inevitability of moving towards a higher degree of institutionalization of a party system, with which most scholars examining this issue operate. Likewise, it may undermine the perception of the institutionalization of party systems as a long-term process. In any case, research should pay more attention to the role of elites in the process of institutionalization in the future. Research could thus gain a new dimension, which until now has not been sufficiently taken into account.

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The Party System in Central Europe after 20 Years (Standard or Exceptional?)¹

Michal Kubát

Abstract: *This article is a brief consideration of the state of the party system in Central Europe, in the sense of its position in wider theoretical and comparative contexts of democracy as such and within Western European models. Does Central Europe differ from Western Europe? Is Central European democracy, including the political party system, qualitatively different from Western European democracy? This text first examines the issue of the consolidation of democracy in Central Europe, then explores the relationships between the consolidation of democracy and the political party system in the region and finally tries to find an answer to the question of the standard or exceptional nature of Central European democracy and the Central European political party system in relation to Western Europe. The result of this examination is the finding of an absence of qualitative difference between Central and Western Europe in terms of the aspects referred to above.*

Keywords: *parties and party systems, democratic consolidation, Central Europe*

Introduction

There is doubtless no need to convince the follower of expert conference contributions and reader of academic political science texts of the significance of the party system in current politics. Many political scientists, starting with Maurice Duverger, have for a long time been referring to and demonstrating the fact that the party system forms the basis of political regimes, that it is the main factor of differentiation between them. The type of party system determines the type of political regime. The significance of the party system has been demonstrated universally, i.e. to a certain extent it relates to any political regime – democratic or undemocratic. In terms of democracies, this can include parliamentary, presidential or semi-presidential and so on.²

The importance of the political party system is understandably also reflected in the investigation of politics in Central European countries, which roughly 20

¹ This text is the written version of a presentation given at *Czech Political Parties in International Comparison* conference on 14th May 2010 at the Pilsen Centre of the Metropolitan University, Prague.

² Most recently pointed out by Czech political scientist Miroslav Novák (2009: 154) in his analysis of the Czech party system.

years ago toppled their undemocratic regimes and set out on the path of first of establishing, later consolidating and finally maintaining democracy. The question of the role of the political party system in these processes evoked great interest among involved researchers, and became the subject of much debate. One of the frequently posed questions is the assessment of party systems in the sense of their comparison to certain models. These models can be diverse, from somewhat abstract ideals (democracy) to concrete political systems. In Central Europe we most often come into contact with models in the form of west European political and party systems.

The following text is a concise consideration of this specific issue. We are interested in the level to which party systems in Central Europe³ are “standard” or exceptional, and in what sense. In order for us to answer this question, we need to place democracies as such into a broader context. Does Central Europe differ from Western Europe? Is Central European democracy, including its political party system, qualitatively different from Western European democracy?

The consolidation of democracy in Central Europe

It is undoubtable that, with very few and at the same time extremely specific exceptions, democracy cannot function without a political party system. The principle of political pluralism and free choice – the foundation stones of democracy, at least in its minimalist Shumpeter conception – are fundamentally connected to political parties and party systems. It would appear, then, that the establishment and consolidation of democracy is conditional upon the development of political parties. On a general level such a statement has veracity, however upon a closer look at the issue we discover that it contains a whole series of problematic questions. The main question is what do we actually mean by the notion of consolidation of democracy and how does it relate to the political party system.

After the fall of communism, the question of the consolidation of democracy very quickly replaced the problem of democratic transition, from approximately the middle of the 1990s it dominated the relevant field of political science, and to a certain extent became the dominant theoretical starting point for the study of politics in our region; it became “consolidology”. While transition literature focused primarily on political institutions (Wiarda 2002: 493), “consolidological” literature interpreted the issue much more complexly. This is best illustrated by Linz and Stepan’s (1996: 5) comparison of consolidated democracy to “the only play in town”, which implies that a condition of a consolidated democracy is not only institutional but

³ Central Europe is “traditionally” understood to be the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia.

also behavioural and value factors.⁴ An accompanying phenomenon to the greater complexity in the understanding of democratic consolidation is then naturally the marked diversity of research approaches, which can be variously classified. We can thus come across the maximalist and minimalist conception (Gruszczak 1995: 13–15; Kopeček 2003: 142–143) or the “narrower” and “broader” conception (Wiatr 1999b: 333–334) of consolidation, and so on.

It appears that as time goes on theories of consolidation become more and more complicated, or their authors become more demanding in relation to the countries of Central Europe. The longer consolidation takes the more that, according to various writers, types and sub-types, processes and sub-processes are discovered within it. The result is then very detailed and complex conceptions, such as for example Schedler’s (1998: 91–92) with its fourteen-item list of conditions for democratic consolidation. German political scientist Klaus von Beyme (2005: 219) presents and comments on Merkel’s four-phase definition of democratic consolidation and up to six indicators of the acceptance of the rules of a parliamentary regime, which relate exclusively to Merkel’s second scale of democratic consolidation – consolidation of political parties and the party system.⁵

When looking at the theoretical legacy of consolidology it is impossible to escape the impression that the theory has overtaken practice. This is because if we were to be genuinely thorough in the application of democratic consolidation in all its theoretical aspects, we would have conclude that it is not only the countries of Eastern Europe that are not democratically consolidated, but also the majority of Western European states, which are for us the embodiment of democracy. The above-quoted Klaus von Beyme (2005: 218) characteristically pointed out that in the case of insistence upon the condition of acceptance of the change of the leading political camp, western West Germany was not democratically consolidated until 1969, the fifth French republic until 1981 and Italy until 1994. It should be noted that this is one condition of many.⁶

⁴ For example J.J. Wiatr (1999a: 8–9) discusses “procedural” and “substantial” criteria of consolidation.

⁵ These are: 1) establishment of reciprocal solidarity among ministers and setting of clear rules of responsibility, 2) acceptance of political responsibility instead of blaming ministers and bringing political conflict to the court-room (constitutional court), 3) limitation of the authority of the head of state in the legislative field (veto), in the constitution of a government, its removal from power and also in the dissolution of parliament, 4) if there is a symmetry in the relationship between the two chambers of parliament, the limitation of the role of the second chamber and the democratisation of the manner in which it is elected, 5) acceptance of the political party as an intermediary between the government and parliamentary majority, 6) acceptance of the reality that parliamentarians are professional politicians, whose remuneration must be sufficiently high in order for them to not be attracted by income outside of parliamentary sources (Beyme 2005:219).

⁶ These two paragraphs are taken from the author’s earlier text (Kubát 2006: 39–40).

The consolidation of democracy and the political party system in Central Europe

There are many more similar examples from this point of view and others, and we can also relate them to the present time. The approach of scholars to the problem of the health of the political party system in Central Europe by way of the conditions for successful consolidation of democracy in our region is a certain equivalent. In the same way that some “Western” political scientists are demanding in terms of the definition of a consolidated democracy, they are also strict in terms of “our” parties and party system. Prominent Polish political scientist Andrzej Antoszewski (2002: 11–13), in his analysis of the Polish party system, presented an illustrative (though not representative) overview of the position of various researcher on this matter. An interesting, and in my opinion characteristic “statistic” emerges from this, being that while “Western” scholars are more likely to emphasise the emergence and mainly the stabilisation of political parties and the party system as a necessary condition of the consolidation of democracy, researchers from Central Europe are more forgiving in this regard, and referring to historical, cultural and other specifics of our region do not insist as much on this condition.

A position emphasising the necessity of stabilisation of the political party system as a condition of the consolidation of democracy exists on two levels: generally theoretical and comparative. On the general level there is, put simply, an assumption that if democracy itself is to function well, it must in accord with its competitive and conflicting nature rest upon an alternation of power, mediated by political parties. If these parties are disrupted, then democracy, or its consolidation, is also disrupted. On the comparative level reference is made to the qualitative difference between the party systems of the “more successful” Western Europe and the “less successful” Central Europe on one side and also between the party systems of the “more successful” Central Europe (including the Baltic states) and the “less successful” Eastern Europe (e.g. Russia and Ukraine) on the other.

In comparison to this, less strict positions build on the assumption that the political and social processes which Western Europe underwent in the second half of the 20th century, and which created the likeness of the local political party system, could not have taken place in our region for historical reasons, and this is why the Central and Eastern European political party system is weaker, which is of course its natural characteristic. At the same time, however, Central European democracies have evidently consolidated (see below). This means that a stabilised political party system is not a necessary condition of this consolidation. Antoszewski (2002: 13) himself closes this discussion by saying that there “after all exists here a certain paradox: we assume that consolidation can be ensured only by such political development that for various reasons we consider absolutely impossible.”

Standard or exceptional democracy in Central Europe

How then to resolve this situation? I think that the most workable path is one of proven empirical comparative analysis. Many politicians, journalists, political commentators and the like in the Czech Republic have called for and still call for the use of Western models. This means that the establishment and maintenance of our (Central European) democracy should be based on the emulation of Western democracies, which are thus understood as politically “better” or more “advanced”. Is there really a qualitative difference between the politics of Central and Western Europe? In what sense?

A conference marking the 15th anniversary of the fall of communism in the countries of Central Europe was held in the Senate of the Parliament of the Czech Republic in 2005. The speakers included perhaps two of the most distinguished Czech political science professors, Petr Fiala (2005) and Miroslav Novák (2005). Both considered the question of the extent to which Czech (and also Central European) society and democracy are standard or exceptional “15 years on”. To simplify, the attribute of “standard” means consolidated in the sense of Western models, while the attribute of “exceptional” relates to post-communism, and whatever we may imagine this notion to mean, in any case we are dealing with a deformation in terms of Western democracies. Both scholars reached the conclusion that the Czech Republic (and the other countries of Central Europe) is democratically consolidated in terms of all key and most frequently quoted aspects of such consolidation, these being institutional, attitudinal and behavioural.⁷ It is democratically consolidated in the sense that its political system struggles with the same or similar problems as the political systems of other European countries. The problems which the Czech Republic is facing are not qualitatively different to the problems of the rest of democratic Europe. The past of course plays its political and other roles here, however this role is not determining: “Czech society is as post-communist as Spanish society is post-Franco and German society is post-Nazi. (...) Post-communism is not the determining and dominant characteristic of Central European society, even though it may be an important characteristic. Central European post-communist countries can, considering their characteristics and on the basis of comparison to other societies, be considered to be ‘standard’ in the European context, whatever this means” (Fiala 2005: 24). Understandably it does not mean that we cannot find various problems. Miroslav Novák (2005: 33) has stated that the Czech Republic “has for many years been a consolidated (though low quality) democracy.”⁸ It is possible to

⁷ No sociologically relevant indicators implicate a difference between Czech society and societies of other member countries of the European Union (Fiala 2005: 23).

⁸ M. Novák builds on Linz and Stepan’s (1996: 137) differentiation of various levels of quality of a consolidated democracy.

consider all Central European countries so; today including Slovakia, which several years ago was considered a “semi-consolidated” democracy (Kopeček 2006: 310; Kubát 2003: 22).

Standard or exceptional party systems in Central Europe

Both authors discuss society and democracy in general. Can their assumptions also be applied to Central European party systems? When considering this issue one is again struck by the above-mentioned difference between how “Western” scholars and those hailing from our region understand the health of the Central European party system. While “Western” scholars are stricter in their evaluation and point out the weak sides to the party system in Central Europe, local scholars are in much more optimistic in this matter and draw attention to the improvement of the state of the party system in the region and its general convergence (with the awareness of all concrete differences) with Western European models (Antoszewski 2009: 295–296).

The above-quoted Polish political scientist Andrzej Antoszewski (2009) is perhaps the only Central European writer who has performed an extensive and empirically supported analysis of the party systems of *all* member countries of the European Union, i.e. studied the party systems of Western European and Central European states together. His work is meaningful both methodologically and by virtue of its content - methodologically because he overcame the “traditional” strict division of the analysis of the political party system into “Western European” and “post-communist”, and with regard to content because the results of his investigation are noteworthy and significant conclusions. What conclusions did he then arrive at?

The Polish scholar analysed the party systems of European countries on the basis of on the whole “regular” verifiable theoretical foundations. He paid attention to three main factors: 1) the status of political parties in the electoral arena (*volatility*, the extent of the support of new and “old” parties, aggregation of support, the level of ineffectual votes and so on), 2) the status of political parties in parliament (the effective number of parties, stability of parliamentary membership and so on) and 3) the status of political parties in the government (longevity of governments, rotation of power and so on). The conclusions of this analysis are, roughly speaking, the following: It is understandable that the party systems of Western and Central Europe have many differences on a general level. This difference is a result of objective, predominantly historical circumstances.⁹ If however we compare them

⁹ A specific position among Western European states is of course occupied by Portugal, Greece and Spain, who similarly to countries in Central Europe had a different post-war development than the remainder of Europe.

on the level of the above-mentioned criteria, we see that they demonstrate many common characteristics. The party systems of both parts of Europe operate in a similar social and political environment (see discussion above of “standardisation” of society and political systems in Central Europe in comparison to Western Europe), which results in the political party systems in both regions facing similar problems and being subject to similar developmental trends. While it is true, for example, that the volatility in our region is higher than in Western Europe, on the other hand it is decreasing here while it is increasing in Western Europe, and this is a long-term trend.

At the same time the two are different if we take into account the internal diversity of party system *within* both regions that is within Western and within Central Europe. In this case, of course we even reach the conclusion that some Central European party systems are “better” than Western European. There, are for example, some Central European countries (Czech Republic) with a lower volatility than Western European countries (Italy and the Netherlands).¹⁰ There are also Central European countries with greater longevity of government (Hungary and Slovakia) than in Western Europe (Finland and Italy). It is true that there are not many of them, but they do exist. It is precisely this variety in which their similarity again expresses itself. This is because in all European party systems we can find indicators that attest to their stability as well as their instability (in the sense of the above criteria). In both Western and Central European party systems we can find stable and unstable governments, success and failure of new and old parties, centralisation and decentralisation of support for various types of political parties, high and low effective number of parties, smooth and problematic alternation of power and so on (cf. Antoszewski 2009: 246–330).

Conclusion

Party systems in Central Europe are different and concurrently the same as those in Western Europe. They are different in terms of political, historical, cultural, social and other specifics. At the same time they are identical in the sense that they face similar problems and challenges. We can also examine the Central European identity of party systems in our region. The answer will, however, be similar. The Central European party system as such both does and does not exist. It exists in the sense that within it are similar development trends relating in the first place to the transition to democracy, later to its consolidation and in the end its “normal” development within a typical, i.e. in the Western European comparison unexceptional, democratic political system. At the same time it does not exist because every party

¹⁰ It should however be pointed out that on average volatility in Western Europe is lower than in our region (Lane – Ersson 2007).

system is unique and reflects the specifics of its country and its politics. All these circumstances of course attest to one fact: party systems in Central Europe are comparatively standard, whatever we imagine this notion to mean.

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BOOK REVIEWS

*Helena Hricová*¹

Party Politics in the Western Balkans

There is still a lot of attention paid to the situation in Western Balkan countries and especially to the process of their integration into the EU. Certainly, these countries were monitored much more closely in the first half of the 1990s, as the fall of Yugoslavia, followed by the transformation process and ethnic wars, put this region into the spotlight, and it is natural that later, after the situation had calmed down, that general interest in this region decreased. Nonetheless, this general decrease in interest does not mean ‘Western Balkan politics’ became unimportant to political science. On the contrary.

The significance of this region is pointed out by a book entitled *Party Politics in the Western Balkans* in which a group of political scientists analyze, as the title suggests, the party systems in Western Balkan countries from many angles (comparison of nationalist parties, inter-ethnic cooperation or competition, the main party families etc.). Special attention is paid to an overview of political systems since 1990. When defining the ‘Western Balkan’ region, the authors refer to the definition as defined by Czech foreign policy. The book includes case studies of the political systems of Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, Kosovo, Macedonia and Albania.

The main question is: What do we expect from the book? Is it only a scientific study or is it a book which can interest the public at large? Answers to these questions are given by Věra Stojarová in the introduction: “This book tries to fulfil a space in political science research. At the same time, the book would like ... to serve as a starting point for further research” (Stojarová, 2010: 3).

The book can be divided in two main parts. In the first four chapters, the authors analyze some particular issues of party systems in Western Balkan countries such as the importance of election systems, the role of communist or nationalist parties and the position of minority parties. Jakub Šedo and Peter Emerson show the possible options for electoral systems that could have been used in the Western Balkans at the beginning of 1990. The authors demonstrate in chronological sequences how the electoral system influenced both a party and its political systems. The text of this chapter is divided into special parts that demonstrate the particularity of each

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state. The reader can see how many changes the electoral system underwent during the process of the adaptation. Despite the complicated character of the party system and the number of changes that took place in the region, the authors have given a rather small space to this description.

In the second chapter, Věra Stojarová uses the theoretical base of Ishiyama. She explains the transformation of the communist parties in the region (how they abandoned communist ideology and adapted to social-democratic or nationalistic rhetoric). In the following chapter, Stojarová uses party system programmes to analyze nationalism. To collect the relevant information, she used an investigative questionnaire. This method was impossible to implement in some case studies. However, she does not say where the research was successful and where it was not. The theoretical base is not large. Nationalism is defined rather narrowly. Both chapters of Stojarová are divided into several parts describing concrete case studies in the Western Balkans.

The last of the first group of chapters focuses on the position of national minorities in party systems. Florial Bieber is the first author, who does not study the issue from the case study perspective, but takes it comprehensively. First of all, he reminds the reader of the fact that, in the communist past, the 'minority issue' had a special position in the political system of former Yugoslavia. After that, he describes the way how, at present, some political systems handle the 'minority issue'. He also points out that some minorities have no access to central authorities.

The second part of the book analyzes several specific case studies which have a very similar structure. Firstly, each case study starts with a more or less detailed historical overview of the political system, whereas detailed attention is paid to the political development that took place during the 1990s. The study also describes the election results including the process that led to the creation of government coalitions. Some historical facts seem rather difficult to comprehend if the reader does not have some deeper historical knowledge. There is a special focus on electoral systems (both changes and consequences in all the political systems). The following subchapter shows how you can classify parties into party families. Each key study chapter is concluded with a summary recapitulating the main features of the party system in relation to political development. The conclusion also contains a 'quality of democracy' evaluation of each political system. The text rather summarises the systems of political parties than providing a detailed analysis. This criticism is irrelevant in case we take the publication as a summary of party politics in the Western Balkan region.

The chapter about the regional party system in Serbia differs from the others. We can find special regions in the Western Balkan not only in Serbia; however, there is no special chapter in the publication describing these regional particularities. We

can thus ask why the book omits the Breko District? Why there is not a chapter analysing the situation of the Albanians living outside Albania etc? Or, why the chapter describing Serbian regional parties is not situated directly after the chapter about Serbia?

Despite these few objections made above, the overall impression made by the book is quite positive; especially, because it provides a reader with information concerning smaller parties that, in spite of not having a position in legislature, are closely connected to minorities and process of division in parties. Moreover, each chapter gives us a large list of books, web sites and other useful sources which might be inspiring for further research.

At the same time, the work provokes many questions. The book is certainly useful for everyone who needs up-to-date information about party systems in Western Balkan countries. This is due to the shortage of space that does not allow the authors to analyze the political systems in greater details.

We may conclude that the book fills the purpose outlined in its introduction – it has plugged, quite satisfactorily, an empty gap in the scientific literature. However, each of the case studies would deserve more space in order to provide the reader with a deeper analysis. Both the public and specialists can find useful information here. At the same time, the book also encourages further research.

Stojarová, V. – Emerson, P. (2010): Party Politics in the Western Balkans. New York, Routledge. 228 pages.

Zuzana Krčálová¹

International Negotiation in a Complex World

In an era of everlasting change in international affairs, there are many different and yet significant examples of growing interdependence. We can observe this in the fields of the environment, economics, trade, politics and security. Linked to this is a growing number of various conflicts caused by nationalistic, ethnic and religious issues. These conflicts usually seek resolution through the mechanism of international negotiation and mediation. The present book is the third edition of the publication, originally titled *Negotiating a Complex World*. It examines negotiation from many perspectives, explores theoretical foundations and promotes its practical application. The authors were united by their almost three-decade association with the International Communication and Negotiation Simulations project (e.g. ICONS) which is a project of international negotiation simulations developed in the early 1980s.

Since the first edition (titled *Negotiating a Complex World*) was published, this relatively short period of time has been marked by events that have had an intense impact on the way nations and other international actors shape their interaction. The Authors thus decided to reflect on the accelerated spread of the AIDS epidemic, the September 11, 2001, attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, followed by wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, natural disasters in Indonesia or Thailand, ongoing problems in Lebanon and Israel, the spread of international terrorism, or the global financial crisis of 2008–2009. These events and many more contributed to the profound change of the international environment. So this new edition was published in an attempt to capture some element of change in international affairs, and to assess their impact on the practice of actual negotiation. These include an updated discussion of the Kyoto process on the global climate change, and the extended case study dealing with the negotiations surrounding efforts to deal with the North Korean nuclear program. In some details the Iraq case (both in 1990–1991 and the situation in 2002–2003) is discussed. There is also an update of treatment on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. “This book attempts to reach a broad audience of students and policy analysts who have a need for a more in-depth understanding of how nations and other international actors go about achieving their objectives through the give-and-take of negotiation process” (p. xii). This volume thus examines negotiation from many perspectives, to explore its theoretical foundations and to promote its practical application.

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The first chapter provides the reader with some basic theoretical foundations which are necessary for further reading. The process of international negotiation is thus presented in broader context, explaining the structure of negotiations, and providing also two case studies (Action in Kyoto – Global Climate Change Negotiations and North Korean Nuclear Crisis) to bring out some key features of negotiation itself. Subsequent chapters look in more detail at individual element of the negotiation process. While Chapter 2 describes the settings of the international system and its interference with a number of situation-specific characteristics to influence negotiation, Chapter 3 deals with various types of actors and their motivation(s) which lead them to behave as they do. Chapter 4 develops the notion of issue saliency and Chapter 5 examines the “game” itself. Chapter 6 brings a summary and sums up the role that negotiation played in the protracted Iraqi conflict.

The second chapter examines the international system setting because all negotiations take place there (It is important to stress that the authors of this volume decided to write a book about international negotiation, thus it has proved insightful into this topic). Nevertheless they did not forget to mention that negotiation process may also take place on an intrastate level and between individuals as well.) This chapter also offers a detailed checklist of characteristics that distinguish individual negotiation situations. “Taken together, the international system setting and the specific negotiation characteristics can be conceptualized as the board upon which the strategic game of negotiation is played” (p. 35). The chapter’s title “board” is thus explained. The negotiation board is further examined from both a macro and a micro perspective. This macro perspective is represented by international system in which we can find the system configuration, e.g. power relations among actors. The authors emphasize that the relative stability of that configuration is very important. Right after we know and understand the overall shape of the system we can possibly look in detail at individual negotiation episodes and so identify their key characteristics. These include such factors as the number of parties at the negotiation, the types of issue involved, and the level of commitment by the parties. Thus this chapter concentrates on the understanding of the way these factors influence decision making of the actors and why some negotiation strategies are more effective than others. The chapter itself is structured, so firstly historic power configurations are presented (international system continuum from unipolar to multipolar), indicating the way power is distributed among states (during time period). Presented are also the types of international mediation as well as negotiation characteristics. The actor characteristics follow along with issue characteristics. At the end of the chapter the authors provide the a summary which underlines that “the presence of a crisis, with the increased sense of threat and urgency it evokes, significantly impacts the receptivity of the parties to particular negotiation opportunities and the dynamics of any ensuing talks” (p. 60).

Chapters three and four further develop a number of aforementioned negotiation factors in relation to the actors and issues that are central to most international negotiations. While the third chapter concentrates on players the fourth chapter discusses the issue of the stakes more broadly. The third chapter delves deeper into the structure of the negotiation process by focusing on key players. Diplomatic representatives of states, coalitions of states, and international organizations continue to play important roles in the field of negotiations, as they have since the founding of Westphalian state system in 1648. But over the last several decades there opened new space for the many other non-governmental or other anomalous actors (for example the epistemic community and cross-frontier regional organizations). These new actors exert significant impact on diplomatic negotiation. The chapter also deals with the phenomenon of substitute states, as a number of entities serve as stand-ins for nation-states in the negotiation arena and they are acting as substitute states. “Although very different in legitimacy and scope, these entities perform similar negotiation functions, acting in the place of national governments” (p. 72). These substitute states are representing very important actor because there is a great need for articulation and representation of the economic, security, and political interests of such stateless groups. The chapter also takes notice of actor dynamics as the authors see that many factors determine how players will behave in negotiation situations. There should be some consideration of the fact that there exist the factors (culture, identity) that differentiate actors’ motivations. Worthy of remark is also the part discussing women in international negotiation (p. 81).

The fourth chapter examines another important dimension of the negotiation process. The chapter illustrates that the stakes, or in another word “the issue salience”, have high importance to the actors involved. We can observe this issue salience from two perspectives. While the crisis with North Korea and its nuclear proliferation represent the example of what has traditionally been termed a high-politics issue, the concern with climate change in the Kyoto negotiations presents what has traditionally been viewed as a low-politics issue. Thus this chapter illustrates how the issue involved in particular negotiations shape the negotiations themselves, focusing on what gets discussed and how the issue determines which actors get involved. Then the focus is moved towards examination of the impact of domestic politics and the involvement of domestic actors. It is also provides a basic insight into the problems of media attention and their involvement into the actual process of negotiation. “Issue salience can also be affected by the level of domestic and international attention afforded a negotiation issue” (p. 101). The authors decide not to leave out this subject because research shows that when visibility increases, negotiator became less flexible, which leads often to impasses. In the following summary it is shown that there are no simple classification guidelines for understanding how issues affect negotiations and negotiators. So it is the salience

of an issue, and also its resonance in the domestic arena, that determines the nature and number of actors that become involved.

The fifth chapter discusses one of the explanatory approaches, e.g. strategic decision making (moves), that is based, to some extent, on the assumption that negotiation actors react similarly in certain situations. This chapter is presented from the point of view that negotiation is a game of strategy. "As with the most games, making the right strategic choices is sometimes the result of luck, but more often it is the result of the expert movement of the game pieces around the board" (p. 113). The chapter examines the range of possible moves in the game of negotiation and strategies and tactics used in the international arena. Making moves involves first devising a plan and then choosing tactics to implement it. The authors explore strategic choices, first by representing them through a number of simple games and then by examining the layers of complexity associated with real-world decision making. The chapter also concludes with a comparative analysis of the primary strategic approaches to international negotiation and the tactics associated with each approach. Subdivisions of the chapter allow the authors to present concepts of simulation games (the prisoner's dilemma, chicken) and sequential games. Then they present the subject of weighting strategic choices by defining interests, factoring it in its complexity, and accounting for long-term relationships. Finally the issue of implementing strategy is discussed, while exploring the examples of competitive negotiation (positional bargaining, adversarial diplomacy, coercive diplomacy), and collaborative negotiation (interest-based bargaining, track-two diplomacy, mediation). The aim of this chapter was to demonstrate that "negotiators must account for a variety of factors when they choose their strategies and tactics for use in particular situations" (p. 140). It follows that in each setting, negotiators, decision makers, and other actors must make different calculations.

In the final chapter titled "Outcomes" their attention is aimed at the effort to show that, in some respect, the diplomatic arena is a far different place today than it was a generation ago and that many important catalysts for change have occurred at the international system level. In actual fact the chapter serves to examine one case study in which they apply some strategies and knowledge that the reader has obtained by reading this volume. By analysing a real world case, e.g. the U.S.-Iraq protracted conflict (both phases, the 1991 Gulf War and its aftermath, as well as Gulf War of 2003 are examined) the reader can produce his own picture of the actual process of negotiation and mediation.

There is also provided an appendix describing the structure of student simulations and the way the International Communication and Negotiation Simulations project (or ICONS) provides student with opportunities to understand better the dynamics of international negotiations and develop relevant negotiations skills. Nevertheless

this appendix is relevant probably only to those student of international relations who have actually participated in the ICONS projects.

The interconnectedness and coherence of the structure of the volume has its analytical value. An ability to explain context is at the very core of this book in order to show the complexity of the negotiating process. The authors during the deployment of theoretical and practical concepts thus presented case studies in which we can see how actors interact with specific situations and yet create desired outcomes. Chapter summaries, glossaries, web sites, and references further enhance the book's value and at the same time prove that the volume would be probably the most valuable for international relations students. While the authors desired this book to be a valuable tool for students, scholars, and policy makers, students should and probably will be the main target group (as well as policy makers) as the book provides the reader with the framework for understanding international negotiations. For international relations scholars and specialists there should be need for a more complex approach and deeper examination of the topic.

The aim of this book may also have been an attempt to show that skilful practise of negotiation can sometime mean difference between war and peace, which the authors definitely managed to do so, yet the book succeeded in many other ways. This book also proved that in this period of growing interdependence the strategies are based much more on the goal of achieving mutual benefit and consensus, rather than strictly independent and individual gain. This volume provides the reader with some of the tools necessary to achieve pre-desired objectives. The authors proved their ability to provide an appreciation of complexity inherent in determining and understanding international negotiation.

The first reservation comes relates the introduction. Although the authors tried to complement the theoretical foundations with case studies without proper understanding of the topic it seems virtually impossible to comprehend the complexity of international negotiations. Thus the case studies at the very beginning of this volume didn't provide appropriate service in explaining this complexity. The Second reservation relates to the ending of the book. Though the authors consider case studies as the very core of this volume which is, without a doubt an excellent intention, the placing of these studies is at least highly questionable. While the conclusion should provide extended summary it focuses particularly on these case studies which leaves not much space for a proper conclusion. The Creation of another chapter focused on case studies and on explaining how to utilize procedures and methods presented in the volume would be more appropriate. Also the Appendix which provides examples of student simulations gives the impression of being without a context. The only connection of this annex is suggested in the preface as the authors stated they cooperate on the same project of these simulations. Ergo this

Appendix seems to fulfil the function of some sort of advertisement because there is no clear explanation why this Appendix was included.

Despite these reservations this introductory text (rather than a book of significant insight) can be, without a doubt, recommended for international relations courses. That is because it can provide students with a clear understanding of the topic. The book also succeeds in presenting a new era of international relations of global diplomacy. It is written in a highly readable way which will surely be enjoyable for readers. The authors have produced a user friendly text which is also successful in getting across the key features of the negotiating process. It covers the major concepts, approaches, and theories in the field and the authors also brilliantly manage to show the connection between theory and practice. It is synthesis of case studies and theoretical foundations.

Starkey, Brigid, Boyer, Mark A. – Jonathan Wilkenfeld (2010): International Negotiation in a Complex World (Third Edition), New Millennium Books in International Studies, Plymouth, 183 pages.

Linda Piknerová¹

Fixing Failed States. A Framework for Rebuilding a Fractured World

The issue of weak states became known to the global public especially in association with the destructive attacks of 11 September 2001 which were immediately followed by a campaign against global terrorism.² For the first time, a threat to global safety was placed in direct connection with the existence of internally unstable states, which consequently became one of the best-loved topics amongst the media. In contrast to many similar books, the book by Ashrafa Ghani and Clare Lockhart reviewed here goes beyond the framework of a common description and opens a large space for a deeper understanding of the entire issue, due especially to the practical experience of both authors. Both Ghani and Lockhart have ample practical experience with post-Taliban Afghanistan (2001–2005), which enables them to point to factual mistakes that the international community (national governments, international government as well as non-governmental organisations) makes when trying to rebuild fractured states.

The book has three parts and nine chapters in which the authors reflect on hitherto (often unsuccessful) efforts to build stable state structures in fragile communities. Besides a list of comments and related literature for each chapter, the book contains at its end a separate detailed index.

Thanks to their personal experience, the authors can dare to doubt many established principles which are used in association with state building (especially humanitarian and development aid, humanitarian interventions, military engagement) and introduce a new (and novel) view of the transformation of the international system. A fundamental prerequisite is that a *functioning state* is the best possible option for political organisation of a territory even at the beginning of the 21st century (p. 4). The reason for the failure of the international community's previous attempts to build functioning states in all parts of the world was an inability to agree on the fundamental functions that a state should fulfil and on the means of achieving such objectives (p. 6). A new definition of state functions in the context of the present international (global) order is a fundamental prerequisite for further steps, which are the building of stable and fully sovereign states which are the only ones able to face the present threats to safety.

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² The issue of weak states has been dealt with already at the beginning of the 1990's but was mainly placed in connection with humanitarian problems. The existence of weak states became a safety issue as late as the aftermath of 11 September 2001.

The first part of the book (p. 17–114) offers a description of the present international system which is typical of the gap between *de iure* and *de facto* sovereignty (the so-called ‘sovereignty gap’).³ The engagement of the international community in the most risky areas together with systematic efforts to pass some state functions (e.g. administration) onto non-governmental participants is not seen in a purely positive light by Ghani and Lockhart and they warn of the considerable drawbacks of this approach. A long-term presence of foreign participants leads to the formation of parallel structures, which creates ideal conditions for a growth in bribery and the activity of illegal elements. Therefore, the foreign aid acts in a totally counter-productive fashion, for instead of strengthening the trust between an individual, the market and the state, it creates an additional space for illegal activities which cannot be simply controlled through one single legal and administrative regime. What results from this is a double standard especially beneficial to those who participate in the mediation of international aid to the local population.

The authors also argue against the thesis that weak and fractured states are mostly poor (the argument that is mainly used by representatives of these countries) and show that the poverty of these countries is not caused by a lack of natural or human resources, but by forcing trade out of a legally defined area.⁴ The eradication of the non-legal economy is therefore a key prerequisite for stabilizing a country.

A fundamental contribution to the discussion is pointing out the ineffectiveness of foreign aid mediated by governments and non-governmental agencies. The authors emphasize the need to align overlapping activities into one meaningful unit directed at complex development. They call for a review of existing development and humanitarian projects. As demonstrated, the problem is not a lack of financial means but the manner of their utilisation. The competition between aid providers leads to inefficient spending of funds and the subsequent unwillingness of rich countries to support further activities.

The second part of the book (p. 115–166) focuses on the idea of the unsubstitutable role of the state in the international system, a matter which was already foreshadowed at the beginning. A short historical summary of political views of the state describes the transformation of the concept and aims at emphasizing the change in opinions on *state functions*. The rest of the chapter is devoted specifically to the analysis of contemporary state functions and here the authors mention ten of the most important functions. Nearly the entire chapter consists of detailed

³ For details on the difference between *de iure* and *de facto* states see e.g. KOLSTØ, Pål (2006): *The Sustainability and Future of Unrecognized Quasi-States* or JACKSON, Robert, H. (1999): *Quasi-States: Sovereignty, International Relations and the Third World*.

⁴ More information about the importance of the legal environment and control of capital flow can be found in the book by the Peruvian economist Hernando de Soto *The Mystery of Capital: Why Capitalism Triumphs in the West and Fails Everywhere Else*, Basic Books, New York, 2000.

reflections mentioned in the first section and the individual arguments are supported by practical examples. Ghani and Lockhart emphasize the unsubstitutable role of direct, regular and fair elections whose purpose is to legitimize the existing system of law. Trust in the state increases only when a citizen can enunciate his or her interests freely through elections and therefore, people do not resort to means outside the legally defined framework. The restoration of trust between a citizen and an institution is a fundamental prerequisite for building a state, where the entire process of boosting trust should ideally proceed from the citizens towards the institutions (a bottom-up effect) (p. 7) and not vice versa. State building is a two-phase process taking place firstly between citizens and national political leaders and secondly between national politicians and international participants.

In the last section (p. 169–220), the authors propose their own process for achieving their defined objectives, which is a sovereignty strategy. The sovereignty strategy is based on the cooperation of all participants that are able to formulate a shared objective – i.e. building a sovereign state fulfilling the fundamental functions (see the second part of the book) and subsequently establishing rules for achieving the set objective.⁵ This elementary consensus is a prerequisite for the formulation of a national programme (or programmes) that shall represent a practical tool for achieving the set objective. Probably the most interesting and inspirational matter is the comparison of a national programme with four other strategies applied in relation to state building. These include long-term humanitarian programmes, short-term humanitarian aid, development projects and sectoral initiatives. The main criticism is directed against bribery accompanying these activities and the risk of insufficient interconnection of national policy with foreign projects.

The conclusive message of the book is unambiguous. Weak and fractured states will not threaten international safety if they are given help to build stable communities whose legislation is derived from the citizens' trust in state institutions. Ghani and Lockhart consider an efficient state completely unsubstitutable. On the other hand, they criticize international organisations (including the United Nations) and emphasize the adverse effects of their activities that often exceed an acceptable duration. The longer IGOs or INGOs are present in the territory of a state, the more likely there will be problems with the occurrence of parallel structures and wasting of money. International organisations shall play the role of an imaginary catalyst (p. 226), which starts the entire process and is present only during a necessary time period. Despite its criticism of the existing system, the overall impression of the

⁵ The rules of a game are often a set of standards whose adoption is economically favourable. An example might be the *acquis communautaire* (AC) valid in EU member countries (p. 35, and 183). A country that wishes to join the EU must implement the AC, which creates a predictable legal environment in the country.

book is positive, which the authors also state themselves at the beginning (p. 6). Their optimism is also apparent from the examples used to document that successful state building is possible even in an environment with minimum natural assets or a completely different character of communities within one state (p. 36 mentions Singapore, p. 40 the American South). The examples mentioned throughout the book are supposed to give hope for a transformation of the international system. In terms of the language used, the reviewed book is suitable for both specialists and non-specialists that are interested in this topic. The ease of language and the provocative nature of some theses indicate that the present book is an inspirational contribution to the global discussion held on this topic.

Ghani, Ashraf – Lockhart, Clare (2008): Fixing Failed States. A framework for Rebuilding a Fractured World, Oxford University Press, New York, 254 pages.

Other sources:

Kolstø, Pål (2006): The Sustainability and Future of Unrecognized Quasi-States. *Journal of Peace Research* 43 (6): 723–740.

Jackson, Robert, H. (1999): *Quasi-States: Sovereignty, International Relations and the Third World*, London: Cambridge University Press.

Hernando de Soto (2000): *The Mystery of Capital: Why Capitalism Triumphs in the West and Fails Everywhere Else*, Basic Books: New York.



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References to unauthorized data from periodicals may be given in brackets in the text together with the exact page(s). For example: ‘(quoted in *International Security* (Summer 1990): 5).’ If such a reference is included in the reference list, the title of the contribution referred to must be provided, and a short title without inverted commas and a year of publication is used for in-text-referencing (e.g. short title year). As a general rule, an exact web address of a particular article can be substituted for its exact page(s).

List of References

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

BOOKS:

Single author books:

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

Two or more authors:

Degnbol-Martinussen, John – Engberg-Pedersen, Poul (1999): *Aid*.

Understanding International Development Cooperation, Zed Books, Mellemfolkeligt Samvirke, Danish Association for International Cooperation, Copenhagen.

EDITED VOLUMES:

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

CHAPTERS FROM MONOGRAPHS:

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

JOURNAL ARTICLES:

Printed journals:

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

Online editions of journals:

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

NEWSPAPER ARTICLES:

Printed editions:

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

Online editions:

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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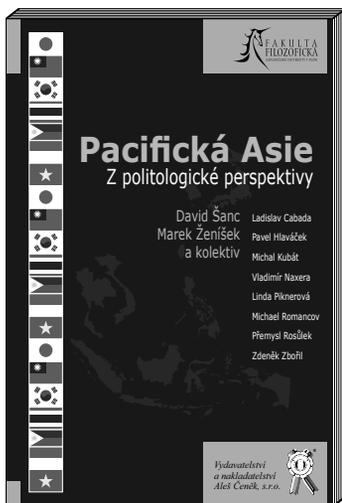




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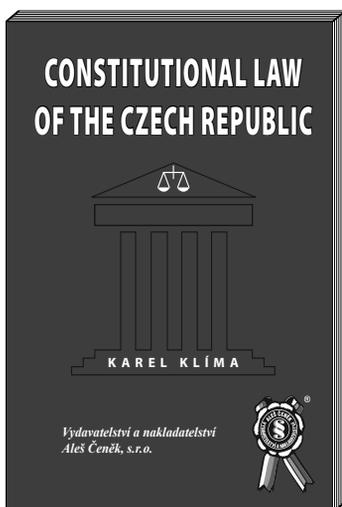


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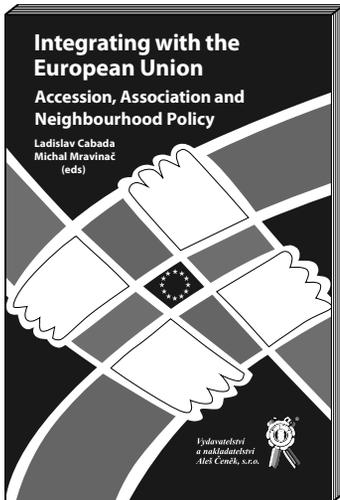
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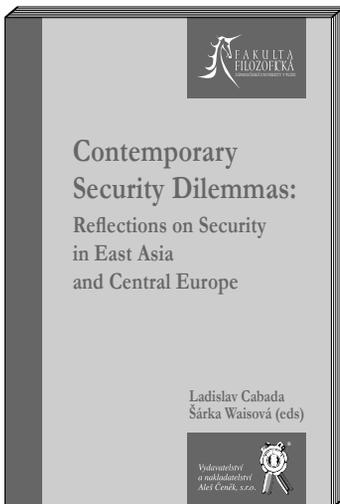
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