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ESSAYS

DISCUSSION

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Editorial

The European Union in deep crisis: Is this temporary or permanent?

As I start to write this editor's note, the "crisis" mentioned in my title should be connected basically with the long-term and exhausting negotiations taking place with the new Greek government about the reform programme (not) being applied in that country. During the first half of 2015, Prime Minister Tsipras and Finance Minister Varufakis have been playing a dangerous game with partners within the Eurozone and the Union as well as international financial institutions; this could surely be described as a typical game of "chicken." On the one hand, Greece's radical leftist government has been trying to stop or minimise the reforms of the previous national government, blaming "external" actors for all of Greece's problems. On the other, new European Commission President Jean Claude Juncker, and in particular, German Chancellor Angela Merkel and the less and less politically correct German Finance Minister Schäuble have been showing the "European" as well as the national public their determination not to back down again. The first side has hoped that too much has been invested over the last few years in keeping Greece within the Eurozone (if not the EU). The second has stressed that support for the Greek economy cannot be unlimited and rejected the clear main goal of their Greek counterpart – a full waiver of already repeatedly reduced debts. The frustration has been apparent in the faces and declarations of some European politicians, while more radical approaches have also called for Greece's expulsion from the Eurozone and stressed that the EU has already spent too much time solving this "small" issue (worth less than 2% of the EU's GDP). In the majority of cases, these critics and "radicals" have come from countries that have stayed out of the Eurozone or so-called new member states, which in this regard are generally less diplomatic and less bound by "conventions." They have stressed the fact that compared with Italy, Spain and Portugal with their half-way reforms – but reforms nonetheless – and even the harsh economic cuts in the Baltic countries, Greek society and the new government, having succeeded in the elections with promises to stop the reforms, have decided on a dangerous game. The EU and its main players should stop discussions with Mr. Tsipras and ask him to fulfil the obligations and promises made by the previous government. At the time of finalising this comment due to our pending deadline, Tsipras's government has come up with another evasive manoeuvre. It has left the negotiating table and chosen to organise – within one week – a national referendum on (non-)

support for the reforms. Mr. Tsipras has presented the creditors' proposals as an ultimatum and recommended that the Greek public vote "No" on 05 July. Although negotiations have continued, these steps also clearly show that a stable and "permanent" solution cannot be found.

Besides the "Grexit" issue, the main topic of discussion and the Union's agenda in recent times has been the complicated situation in the EU's neighbourhood. This general remit includes one pressing topic: Russia's actions towards Ukraine over the last year or more. Since the annexation of Crimea in 2014, Russian President Putin has continued with the so-called hybrid war in eastern Ukraine, supporting the "independent" development of these regions as a new quasi-state under Russian auspices – the "New Russia" (*Novorosija*) – next to the already existing Transnistria, South Ossetia and Abkhazia. The most important violation of international law in Europe since the Cold War has become a big challenge for the EU as an international actor as well as for European and Western democracies, especially those located close to – or even within – the "zone of Russia's near neighbourhood" such as the Baltic countries and Poland.

Russia's unilateral step has exposed how weak the European security architecture is and how difficult it is to find a common position within the EU. Nevertheless, the agreement within the EU on sanctions against Russia was not disrupted – not even by some "separate" activities and declarations originating in radical political streams (led by France's Front National in Western Europe) and also from several executive officers (the prime ministers of Hungary and Slovakia, Mr. Orbán and Mr. Fico, and above all, the shame-inducing case of Czech President Miloš Zeman). We should certainly not forget the attempt by Mr. Tsipras to win economic support for his country from Russia in exchange for the critical position of the new Greek government on the sanctions. The general geopolitical discussion, which suggests that the West/EU might lose not only Greece but also other countries at its south-eastern end such as Serbia, Macedonia and above all Turkey, has not seen the issue of Crimea/Ukraine as a separate question. Rather, it is one part of a renewed geopolitical clash between global political and cultural panregions and the search for new boundaries or borders between or among such (trans) continental political units.

Furthermore, the refugee crisis, which deepened dramatically in the first half of 2015, has made the geocultural impact of the ongoing discussion even stronger and more acute. The wave that overtook Europe's South, with Greece and Italy in first place, showed – once again – all the basic limits of contemporary European politics. There has not been a clear political position on this situation, including an answer to the fundamental question: Are we as Europeans prepared to accept hundreds of thousands or even millions of refugees from the Middle East and North Africa, many of whom clearly have the status of economic rather than political refugees? Instead, as we know, the response from the top

of the EU has been technical and administrative based on a "decision" about how many refugees each EU member state has to accept.

Such political incompetence has produced the logical results, namely the fall-back to and acceptance of "national solutions" to problems like the weakening and challenging of basic rules within the Schengen area, strengthened controls at internal Schengen/EU borders and debates about the (re)creation of walls and other physical barriers between and among European states. Not only radical political movements but also important segments of mainstream parties in the national and European political arenas have neglected the quota system and asked for *cum grano salis* steps including the selecting of accepted refugees by religious/cultural background, i.e. giving preference to refugees of Christian background. All this within an increasingly postmodern Europe where Christianity has become an "outdated" historical relic, as – among other issues – the debates on European construction and later the Lisbon Treaty clearly showed. Do we need a clearer sign of the loss of values and direction within the integration process?

All of these events and debates will surely continue over coming months and years so that basically we cannot expect fast decisions and solutions. This seems to me to be problematic, especially keeping in mind the many other important issues the EU has to discuss and – in an "ideal" situation – also decide, such as "finalisation" of the enlargement process (for the western Balkans), demographic problems and the related crisis of the welfare state, etc. The last year has shown that finding any "European" position on such topics is almost impossible. Should we expect a new wave of debates about *á la carte* Europe or even reduced integration at the "core"? Such steps would make the EU smaller in the hope of creating a more efficient unit. But would such a unit generate enough hard force to be included as an active player in geopolitical debates? At the moment, we do not have a clear answer, but we can see that to overcome "permanent" crisis, the EU needs more politics (and decision-making) and fewer "technical" solutions.

* * *

To close this editor's note, I would like to inform our readers that beginning with issue 1/2015, our review is launching cooperation with a new strategic partner, the de Gruyter publishing house. This cooperation will enhance the impact of articles and other material published in *Politics in Central Europe* using the latest electronic tools and bringing every article immediately – without long delays – to the reader. In cooperation with our new strategic partner, we will also be strengthening the review process and will soon use this tool to include our review in important databases and collections.

Ladislav Cabada
Editor in Chief *Politics in Central Europe*

ESSAYS

Newcomer, Normal Player or Regional Leader? Perceptions of Poland in the EU[1]

PETR KRATOCHVÍL AND MATÚŠ MIŠÍK

Abstract*: This study analyses the status of the new EU member states and, in particular, Poland as it is perceived by the representatives of the older EU members. On a theoretical level, it argues that the transformation of the newcomers into "normal players" or even "regional leaders" is dependent on five specific conditions that each of these countries must fulfil. These range from (1) simple compliance with the EU's basic norms and (2) a sufficient level of orientation in EU decision-making to (3) establishment of the country's unique policy expertise, (4) the ability to create winning coalitions and finally and above all (5) a willingness to defend the interests of the Union as a whole. On an empirical level, we draw on an extensive set of interviews with diplomats belonging to the permanent representation of the old member states in Brussels. Based on these data, we conclude that (1) Poland has already established itself as a normal EU player fully comparable with the older member states. In terms of the country's leadership status, (2) Poland has also moved to the position of frontrunner among the new member states. However, the country still fails in at least one criterion: (regional) leadership. This precludes it from becoming a fully respected and leading state in the EU.*

Keywords*: **European Union, Poland, new member states, perceptions, leader***

Although the so-called new member states[2] (NMS) have been part of the EU for some time now and the academic literature has explored their position from many perspectives (for example, Böhmelt – Freyburg 2013; Copeland 2012; Copsey – Haughton 2009; Haughton 2009; Pridham 2008; Tosun 2011), we still know much more about their pre-accession period than about their behaviour and activities within the Union since joining it in 2004 and 2007

1 Matúš Mišík gratefully acknowledges financial support from Slovak Research and Development Agency grant no. APVV-0484-10. We are grateful for the comments made by anonymous reviewers and would also like to thank all the interviewees for their willingness to take part in the research and for sharing their knowledge with us.

2 Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia. We exclude Cyprus and Malta from this group due to their different historical trajectories.

(see, for instance, Cameron 2003; Lasas 2008; Moravcsik – Vachudová 2003; Schimmelfennig 2001; Vaughan-Whitehead 2003; Zielonka 2003). Our knowledge is, for example, rather limited when it comes to the questions of how these new members are perceived, what their roles are in coalition-building in the enlarged Union, what roles they are assigned and what level of influence they enjoy on an informal level. All these issues are related to the broader question of perceptions of the NMS in the older EU countries and by their representatives.

It is this question of perceptions of the NMS (and particularly of Poland as the most influential new member) that our article aims to explore. We claim that these perceptions are essential in many ways. As one critic has said, 'It is often impossible to explain crucial decisions and policies without reference to the decision-makers' beliefs about the world and their images of others' (Jervis 1976: 28). Perceptions also play a major role in all phases of the process of European integration. The success of policy initiatives often depends on how the countries that came up with them are seen by the Community; the ability to create winning coalitions also clearly correlates with those countries' standing; and the negotiations themselves are linked to each country's past record of (un)successful negotiations within EU institutions. Perceptions have already been used as an analytical prism to study the stance of third countries towards the EU (Lucarelli 2014; Mišík 2013) as well as different EU policies (Aggestam 2012; McLean & Gray 2009), elite and public positions on the EU (Bruter 2004; Ilonszki 2009) and the preferences and influence of its members (Copsey – Pomorska 2010). However, intra-EU perceptions, the issue addressed by this contribution, have only been sufficiently analysed in a very limited number of works (Mišík 2014).

The main question that this article asks is how the old member states (OMS) perceive the newcomers and especially Poland as the most visible and largest of these new members. Is Poland seen as a positive example for the others to follow or rather as the embodiment of the difficulties related to Eastern enlargement and the transition to liberal democracy? Is Poland's position different from that of the other Eastern members? Is the country viewed as a troublemaker, an ordinary EU member state or perhaps a new leader? To answer these questions, the study (1) compares perceptions of Poland with views of the other new members and (2) proposes two sets of criteria for assessing whether a member state is perceived as "a normal player" (the first set) or "a leading country" (the second set). Methodologically, it builds on 24 semi-structured interviews with senior diplomats belonging to the permanent representation of the older member states in Brussels. This input is used to assess the extent to which these two sets of criteria are fulfilled in the Polish case (see Appendix).

This article proceeds as follows: after this introduction, the next part discusses perceptions as a theoretical notion used in international relations and European studies. The third section examines the academic literature on the

new member states and explores the question of whether approaches which look at these countries as a *sui generis* group are still relevant today. This section also introduces the two above-mentioned sets of criteria that a member state must meet in order to be perceived as a normal player or, as the case may be, a leading country. The fourth and fifth sections apply these two sets to the case of Poland, comparing it to the other new members in this respect. The conclusion then summarises the main findings of this study.

Perception within International Relations and European Studies

Since the late 1950 s, perception has been utilised as an analytical concept for examining inter-state relations. It has been included in frameworks for foreign policy analysis such as image theory and role theory (see Boulding 1959; Holsti 1970; Harnisch et al. 2011), but it has also been used outside these frameworks (for example, Jervis 1976). In both cases, such studies highlight the influence of subjective factors on states' foreign policies and warn about the impact of misperceptions on relations between states in the international arena. While image theory deals with "external" perceptions and analyses how a state is viewed by other international actors, role theory focuses on "internal" perceptions, examining perceptions of the state's attributes by its own decision makers.

Image theory was employed mainly during the Cold War to analyse the hostile attitudes of the two superpowers (for a review of this literature, see Silverstein 1989). Although the theory proved successful in shedding new light on the different factors influencing images of the enemy (Silverstein – Flamenbaum 1989), it lost popularity after the fall of the Iron Curtain. On the other hand, role theory survived the end of the Cold War and has been widely used to study issues connected to both international relations and European integration (for example, Aggestam 2012; Catalinac 2007; Chafetz 1997; Mišík 2015).

However, in the field of European studies, research on perceptions has developed largely independently of the above-mentioned classical theories of perception with role theory only later beginning to make inroads here as well. The two major directions of this research focus on a) external perceptions of the EU and b) internal dimensions of perceptions (in particular, the perception of the EU by the member states and their citizens).

Regarding the external dimension, the main question here asks how the European Union is perceived by other actors within the international system. The literature has so far come to the conclusion that on a bilateral level, the EU is perceived by third countries as an economically strong but politically weak actor. However, differences exist so far as bilateral and multilateral fora are concerned. On a multilateral level, the EU is seen as a potentially strong player which nevertheless often lacks sufficient skills and resources to become a political leader or agenda-setter (see the review article by Lucarelli 2014). Even

when it does succeed in taking this position, the EU's actions are hampered by internal discord and its inability to follow its own rules (Gupta – van der Grijp 2000; Keukeleire – Bruyninckx 2011). On a bilateral level, the perception of the EU's position is even worse. However, this critique of the EU is somewhat paradoxical. While some studies point to the EU's weak leadership and insufficient resources, others criticise its too strong and asymmetrical bilateral relations with countries in the European neighbourhood – in Eastern Europe and North Africa (cf. Mattlin 2012).

In terms of its substantive focus, the literature on perceptions within the EU can be divided into three groups of works: (1) those dealing with elite and public perceptions of European integration, (2) those analysing the impact of perceptions on member states' preferences and activities within the EU and (3) those studying the influence of perceptions on individual EU policies. All these types of research on perceptions of, and in, the EU are tied to other sub-fields of European studies, such as studies of EU legitimacy, the perceived democratic deficit and Euroscepticism (Kratochvíl et al. 2013). Perceptions play an essential role in all these areas, but the research is usually very fragmented since perceptions of the EU vary fundamentally both across time and different national settings. Thus, it has been argued that public and elite views of the EU may relate to perceived satisfaction with domestic developments (Ilonszki 2009a), the level of trust in other member states (Genna 2009; for a different view, see White 2010) or the perceived legitimacy of the European project (Jones 2009).

What is typical of these studies is the focus on perceptions of the EU, its institutions and its policies. But perceptions can also influence the preferences and goals that member states pursue at EU level. This pertains, in particular, to each country's perceptions of its own strengths and weaknesses and especially concerns states that have not yet been fully socialised within the EU (for research on EU newcomers, see, for example, Böhmelt – Freyburg 2013; Copeland 2012; Haughton 2009; Haughton 2010). Thus, for example, Polish preferences concerning a common EU energy policy are affected by Poland's 'sense of strategic vulnerability vis-à-vis Russia' (Roth 2011: 620) while for the EU's internal energy market, the perceived security of the energy supply plays a role (Pointvogl 2009). Similarly, Nguyen (2008) shows that decision makers who feel secure in their office opt for the long-term benefits stemming from integration despite the short-term costs while those who do not perceive their positions as stable pursue policies more tuned to shifts in public opinion.

Perceptions can also have an impact on member states' activities within the EU. Substantial differences exist among the member states in this area. For example, although EU governments are often seen 'as more or less consensus--minded' at this level (Wallace 2005: 41), Copsey and Pomorska (2010) found that Poland is a special case since there is a rather negative image of Poland in Brussels, which may considerably limit its potential to play a more prominent

role in the Union. The influence of perceptions has also been studied in relation to the EU's common security and foreign policy (Heller 2009), and such studies sometimes build on role theory (Aggestam 2012). Again, the academic literature shows that perceptions of political agents 'crucially co-determine the levels of realised security and insecurity in Europe' (Heller 2009:1) and that the roles which decision makers ascribe to their own states based on their perceived strengths and weaknesses influence their security and foreign policy choices. Other areas of EU studies which have been studied through the lens of perceptions include the common EU fisheries policy (McLean – Gray 2009), enlargement (Sedelmeier 2006) and relations with third countries (Barbé et al. 2009; Browing – Christou 2010).

The New Member States: Not a Bloc of Countries

The two outstanding features which have defined most research on the NMS are (1) a focus on these countries as a unified bloc and (2) an analysis of their junior position in the EU both prior to and after accession. In more general terms, this means that research on the NMS builds on implicit assumptions of their structural *similarity* to one another and their fundamental *difference* from the old EU members (see, for example, Epstein – Jacoby 2014). In many studies, the NMS are attributed a number of common features, which simultaneously set them apart from the old members. Scholars, thus, point to the weakness of post-Communist states (Dimitrova 2010); commonalities in the process of Europeanisation and the low level of compliance with EU legislation (Schmimmelfennig – Sedelmeier 2004; Sedelmeier 2006a; Falkner – Treib 2008); and similarities in their trade exchange with the EU-15 and in other socio-economic indicators (Boeri – Brücker 2000; Maliszewska 2004; Zaghini 2005), etc.

As useful as the early analyses of the NMS might have been a decade ago, almost 10 years after accession, the positions of these countries are substantially different. Some scholars have noted that even before their accession, the NMS were weakened by their 'diverse interests and weak intraregional co-ordination' (Goetz 2005: 254). The same argument is even more pertinent today: put bluntly, the perception of the NMS as one bloc of countries is outdated. While the NMS still share some interests (for instance, concerning structural and cohesion funds), in many areas their preferences are different and at times even contradictory. This pertains to their geographic priorities, which range from the Baltic Sea via Eastern neighbours, to the Balkans; their vastly different views of the future course of the integration process; and the EU policies that they prefer. (For more details on all of these points, see the overview of diverging NMS positions at www.eu-27watch.org/).

Moreover, the line between older and newer members has become increasingly blurred due to the fact that newer states have finally started to take up

the roles of ordinary member states. Both the formal and informal asymmetries between the old and new members are beginning to disappear (cf. e.g. Caddy 1997; Dimitrova 2002; for a more complex picture, see Hughes et al. 2004). At a formal level, the NMS have started to perform roles in which they both practically and symbolically represent the EU, thus increasing their official status (Copsey – Pomorska 2013; Roth 2011). A typical example is the rotating presidency: of the NMS, Slovenia, the Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary, Lithuania and Latvia have so far served as presidency countries (see, for example, Pomorska – Vanhoonacker 2012 or Vilpišauskas 2013).

At an informal level, the process is more complicated since it pertains to the complex skein of activities related to lobbying, coalition-building and negotiation processes within EU decision-making (Coperland 2013). Even more than the ties in formal interactions, informal ties are affected by how the NMS are perceived (Mišík 2013). As these perceptions start to evolve in different directions, the perceived unity of the NMS is further eroded. The resulting tendency is one of internal divergence: while some NMS seem to have succeeded in moving away from the position of junior partners to gradually become 'normal players' (Lippert – Umbach 2005) or even 'reliable partners' (Karolewski – Sus 2011), others retain lesser positions, which are open to the 'coercive routes of influence' exerted by old members (Grabbe 2002; cf. also Goetz 2005).

The main problem lies in the impossibility of replacing the model of the NMS as countries asymmetrically dependent on the old EU-15 with a new and equally simple model. What is instead needed at this point is a more differentiated analysis of the NMS and their roles in the EU. Instead of concentrating on the *similarity* among the NMS and the *difference* between them and the old members, it is high time now to reverse the strategy and look into the growing similarities between the old and the new members and the differences among the NMS. While a few studies have already taken this approach (Taggart – Szczerbiak 2002; Goetz 2005), they have explored the diverse interests of the NMS and their domestic politics, and none have linked this research to the study of perceptions as we do in our analysis.

In order to explore the perceived growing differences among the NMS and their increasing similarities with old members, we focus on the case of Poland. In fact, even prior to accession, Poland was the only NMS to receive sustained academic attention (Bielasiak 2002; Blazyca et al. 1999; Ferry 2003; Hughes – Bucknall 2000; Preston – Michonski 1999) and was probably the best analysed country among the newcomers (see, for example, Copsey – Haughton 2009; Copsey –Pomorska 2010, 2013; Lackowska-Madurowicz – Swianiewicz 2013; Roth 2011; Vandecasteele 2013). While this focus may be explained simply by pointing to Poland's size and strategic location, we argue that perceptions of the country are of at least equal importance. Though the country's size remains the same, its (perceived) status may change fundamentally – for example, it may

shift from that of an inexperienced newcomer to a "normal" member state or even a regional leader. In our study, we present five criteria which define this transition. The two criteria for the acceptance of a country as a normal player are:

1. its ability to comply with basic norms of behaviour both in domestic politics and in the EU; and
2. its ability to take part in EU decision-making in ways seen as acceptable by others.

The first of these two conditions concerns general compliance with the EU's fundamental democratic values and domestic constitutional principles. This is a basic prerequisite for even tentatively considering any state as a normal player. If a country or its politicians are judged to violate these principles (as was the case to some extent with Austria's Haider controversy), its acceptance as a normal player is ruled out. However, this condition is not sufficient. For the country to be fully accepted as a normal player, its representatives must also be able to comply with the informal rules on decision-making procedures at EU level. There are various soft rules which a "trouble-making" member may violate: it may, for example, try to block the Union's decision on a sensitive issue, refuse to accept a compromise solution or fail repeatedly to uphold commitments made in the past, etc. Hence, the country's compliance with the fundamental values and informal EU rules is an essential test of its "normality."

To become one of the leading countries, the country must be perceived as fulfilling three additional criteria:

a) the ability to find a specialised and important policy niche in the EU;
b) the ability to create winning coalitions for the purpose of EU decision-making; and
c) occasional willingness to participate in EU activities which may be seen as unprofitable in terms of narrowly defined national interests.

First, the country must be capable of becoming an expert in some policy area(s), and this expertise has to be accepted by other member states. For example, Sweden may be recognised as an expert on environmental issues and transparency and France is acknowledged as a leader in the Mediterranean region and in the cooperation with North Africa, etc. Secondly, a leading country must have major coalition potential and a track record of creating and sustaining sufficiently strong alliances in support of a common cause. What matters here is not so much the size of the country but rather its diplomatic resources and its ability to convince others to follow its lead. Finally, a leading country must be willing from time to time to sacrifice its narrowly defined national interests in favour of the whole Community. At very minimum, it must be capable of convincing others that the preferred strategy will primarily benefit the EU and the advantages for the country in question are of secondary importance.

The following analysis is based on the semi-structured expert interviews conducted with the respondents who were part of the permanent representation

of the old member states in Brussels. Altogether 24 face-to-face semi-structured interviews were carried out with senior officials and diplomats who were asked to describe their attitudes towards Poland (and also the NMS in general) based on their personal experience. These officials are in day-to-day contact with the representatives of the NMS at different levels (mostly within Working Groups of the EU Council, but also within COREPER), and thus, they are familiar with the new member states' activities and behaviour during decision-making at EU level. We tried to get a full picture about Poland and therefore interviewed OMS representatives from different levels of decision-making as well as from different countries. We expected that representatives from various member countries would perceive Poland in different ways and therefore our aim was to interview as many representatives as possible. In some cases, we managed to speak with multiple officials and diplomats from the permanent representation, while in one case (Spain) we did not succeed in interviewing anyone at all. Since the interviews were conducted in 2010, the research reflects the perceptions of the representatives of the OMS after Poland had been an EU member for six years. The interviews lasted between 30 and 75 minutes and were recorded. This study is based on their verbatim transcripts.

Poland as a Normal Player

Our model sets two conditions that a member state must meet in order to be perceived by other members as a normal player, i.e. as an ordinary member country that is able to fulfil its commitments at EU level and is a suitable candidate for cooperation within a coalition. A normal player must be able to comply with basic norms of behaviour both in domestic politics and in the EU, and it must be able to take part in EU decision-making in ways seen as acceptable by others. These conditions are also the prerequisites for any member state aspiring to the status of a leading country. This is why we first analyse perceptions of Poland vis-a-vis these basic conditions and only then proceed to the second set of requirements (i.e. those related to the leadership status).

None of the respondents identified any problems regarding Poland and the basic standards of liberal democracy; the rule of law in the country is generally seen as guaranteed. In fact, several respondents pointed to the fact that the NMS, including Poland, are 'very conscious about the values…of democracy and liberty' (Interview 17) and some went as far as to claim that no 'political wall' existed between the OMS and the NMS in this area (Interview 9).[3] The similarity of the old and newer members was also stressed when it came to domestic political crises: the respondents believed that these problems did not affect the

3 We would note that the interviews were conducted prior to the current problems with meeting democratic standards in Hungary.

general level of democracy and that in any case they were common among older members (Interview 1).

If a distinction was to be made, it was not so much between the old and the new member states, but rather between the two waves of Eastern enlargement. Problems with organised crime and corruption in Romania and Bulgaria were mentioned repeatedly (for example, in Interviews 17 and 24). The establishment of the Mechanism for Cooperation and Verification following Romania and Bulgaria's failure to implement their accession commitments in this area, was also cited as evidence of the fact that these two countries lagged behind the 2004 entrants (for example, in Interviews 17, 18, 21 and 22). As a French respondent noted critically, the 'political systems [of these countries] have great difficulty [in adapting] to EU standards' (Interview 1).

In spite of the palpable differences between the two groups of NMS, many respondents still described these countries as a bloc. Typically, the general conclusion was that the NMS's economic transition was relatively quick, but that the transition was 'even quicker from the political and institutional point of view' (Interview 7). As a result of this successful transformation, the NMS had been 'consolidated and they work quite well' (Interview 7). The consolidation, however, also translated into a growing similarity between these countries and the older members – as one respondent put it, 'there are very few traces of the political transition' (Interview 22). The only important difference indicated was the prioritising by the NMS of EU topics related to their past experience or geographical location – as seen, for example, in the stress on human rights and the interest in greater ties with the Union's Eastern neighbours (Interview 10).

To summarise our findings concerning the first criterion, Poland was perceived as a well-functioning democracy fully capable of complying with expected norms of behaviour.

The second criterion concerns Poland's ability to take part in the EU decision-making process in ways that are seen as acceptable by others. While our respondents did not perceive any problems in regard to the quality of Polish democracy, the picture was not so clear when it came to the second criterion. The most visible taint on Poland's image was its assertive approach to negotiations. Our interviews confirmed that Polish diplomats were perceived as substantially more assertive than the representatives of the other NMS (Interview 20). Although Poland was not seen as the only active newcomer, and it was noted that diplomats from the other NMS also tried to defend their 'specific national interests' (Interview 4), the other NMS were described as more constrained and sometimes even having problems in 'advancing their positions' (Interview 4).

In other words, regarding this issue, the respondents gave strikingly different answers when speaking about the NMS as a bloc than they did when talking about Poland. Commenting on the NMS as a group, one interviewed official claimed that 'it's still true for some new members that they don't feel they have

a say' (Interview 1) and that as a result most newcomers were silent during negotiations (see also, for example, Interviews 2, 4 and 16). Another respondent confirmed this view, arguing that 'the representatives of the new member states are less likely to play a prominent role in the general debate (where there isn't a very particular national interest involved) than older member states of comparable size' (Interview 2).

However, the skills of NMS diplomats were seen to be quickly improving. The NMS invest much effort in their administrative capacities. In the working groups, in particular, they were said to be represented by 'the best of the best' (Interview 3); diplomats had 'adapted very rapidly to the working methods in the European Union' (Interview 17) and their negotiation capacities were generally perceived as fast increasing. A persistent problem, however, was the rigid instructions being dispatched from national capitals, which meant that the newcomers had 'very little room for manoeuvre [in negotiations]' (Interview 13). But even in this respect, the NMS representatives were developing flexibility. In particular, the experience with the EU presidency was credited for its role in accelerating the learning process and facilitating an 'understanding of how business is really concluded' (Interview 16). Consequently, NMS like the Czech Republic and Slovenia which had already undertaken the presidency were 'clearly more confident' (Interview 16).

Poland's activities – and especially the impact of those activities – were seen as substantially different from the picture for the rest of the newcomers. However, this was not only explained by the simple fact that Poland was 'the biggest player among the new member states' (Interview 8). Instead, the country's special role was often attributed to the perceived special mission of Poland in Europe. Polish diplomats were seen as being 'very conscious about their historical position in Europe' (Interview 8), which translated into greater assertiveness among the country's representatives. Frankly put, Poland was 'making a lot of noise' (Interview 21) since it saw itself as 'the big exception' – as a country destined to play a special role in Europe – and as 'a big player' (Interview 8). Many of our respondents noted that Poland often failed to strive 'towards common goals' (Interview 4). In relation to Russia especially, Poland had proven to be rather stubborn and unwilling to find a compromise solution. Informed by grievances against Russia on issues ranging from Communist war crimes to meat exports to Russia, Poland's approach was characterised by one interviewee as 'quite heavy[-handed], hard-chasing' (Interview 4).

As a result, it is not so easy to answer the key question about compliance with informal EU rules in the Polish case. Whether or not Poland's behaviour was acceptable very much depended on the country's perceived importance. When Poland was seen as a big member state, the prevailing view was that its approach was to be expected. As our interviewees observed, Poland 'obviously, and rightly, sees itself as a large country' (Interview 2); it was 'the biggest player among the

new member states' (Interview 8) and thus, allowed to bend the common rules from time to time. Paradoxically, Poland's assertiveness and straightforward promotion of its own interests were actually perceived as proof of its preeminent position since such a strategy was also typical for large older member states (see, for instance, Interview 21). Perhaps not surprisingly, such behaviour seemed to be more acceptable to the respondents from big member states (Interview 1). Respondents from the smaller member states claimed, in contrast, that Poland should be 'more accommodating and more diplomatic' since the heavy-handed approach was not in line with 'the European way' (Interview 21).

To sum up the analysis, the assessment of Poland's activities was deeply ambivalent on this point. This was more evident here than in any other area since the country's actions provoked different reactions from different older member states. Nevertheless, it is certainly not the case that Poland is generally perceived today as a troublemaker. While it remains highly forceful in its negotiation style, the country has earned the trust of the other member states, and its views are increasingly respected. Poland may also have benefited from the fact that attention has shifted to other NMS – most notably Bulgaria and Romania – which are seen as problematic member states that fail to comply with both formal and informal EU rules (Interview 18).

Poland as a Leading Country

As we have shown above, three criteria must be fulfilled for a country to be considered one of the leading EU states. These are the establishment of 1) a policy niche where the country is acknowledged as an expert/leader, 2) its ability to create winning coalitions and 3) its willingness to prioritise the EU's interests over its own at crucial junctures.

Poland has been very successful as far as the policy-niche criterion is concerned. The country's focus on its Eastern neighbours (the Eastern dimension of the European Neighbourhood Policy, and Russia) is well-noted by the other member states. The Polish initiative leading to the establishment of the Eastern Partnership has only confirmed the special position of Poland regarding Eastern Europe. One of our respondents aptly summarised this argument – which was repeated by many others – by referring to Poland's 'very intense interest' in Russia and Eastern Europe in general (Interview 2). At the same time, however, Poland's activities in the East were sometimes seen as too driven by the bilateral issues between itself and Russia; some respondents labelled this situation 'a problem' (Interview 8 and see above), and others were even blunter and more critical of Poland's concentration on Russia (Interview 17). Still, the Polish focus on select issues and its stable position on these topics made the country highly predictable. Even if Poland was sometimes very assertive in promoting its interests in this region, such a role was perceived as better than

being 'a loosecannon,' i.e. a member state whose position is unclear and which changes its stance very quickly (Interview 13).

As far as Poland's coalition-building was concerned, the country was seen as the most influential new member state though it had not yet shown 'its full potential' (Interview 24). Although none of the new members had gained the respect that the large older member states enjoy, Poland was 'visibly more resourced than some of the others' (Interview 11); its potential was comparable to that of some less influential but still important older members (such as Spain). This was further corroborated by the fact that Poland was often mentioned, surprisingly together with Hungary (Interviews 10, 13 and 16), as a country which had become not just 'better able to define what it wants' but also '[able] to persuade the Community to reflect that' (Interview 10).

The main paradox here lies in the fact that while Polish diplomats may claim the country's role in the EU derives from its size and its historical role in Europe, in the eyes of our respondents, what mattered was neither Poland's size nor its historical merits. Instead, what counted were the newly-gained diplomatic skills and thorough preparations of Polish diplomats, who often informally consulted their colleagues from the more experienced member states (Interview 13); this allowed them to become more successful players in the EU political arena (cf. Interview 16). It was this diplomatic experience of Poland which translated into the country's greater coalition potential. Here, Poland emerged as not only the natural leader of the NMS, but a more attractive coalition partner for the old member states as well (Interview 10).

While the image of Poland as one of the main engines of the EU's Eastern Policy was, thus, firmly established and its coalition potential seen as quickly increasing, the picture was far more mixed when it came to the last criterion. Poland was still perceived as a country that focused on its own interests while remaining unwilling to look at those of the EU, not to mention those of the international community as a whole. As one interviewee put it euphemistically, Poland's behaviour – unlike that of other EU member states – was 'very direct' (Interview 17). In connection with the country's focus on its national interests, a frequently mentioned area was EU environmental policy. While the new member states were generally seen as less environmentally aware than the older EU members (Interview 10), Poland was often singled out as particularly indifferent to environmental issues; the fight against climate change was said to be outright ignored or even hampered by the country's diplomacy (Interviews 10, 17 and 20). While this does not mean that Poland was viewed as a major troublemaker in this area, the Polish stance certainly made it far more complicated to reach consensus within the EU on these issues (Interview 17). The problem here was that Poland's stance was not taken to be one of many diverse positions of the different EU member states, but seen as a unique deviation from the positions of the other members (Interview 20).

Conclusion

Our analysis has attempted to show the success of Poland in overcoming stereotypes about the unreliability of the NMS and establishing itself as a normal EU player, which is in most respects fully comparable with the older members. The results of this study indicate that Poland complies with fundamental democratic principles and constitutional rules, and none of our respondents noticed substantial shortcomings in this area. The difference between Poland, on the one hand, and Romania and Bulgaria, on the other, was seen to be greater than the one between Poland and the older members. Our analysis suggests that Poland has some deficiencies when it comes to the ability to comply with the informal rules of EU decision-making. Its self-asserting approach to negotiations was not always well-received among the other members although most respondents saw this assertiveness as normal for a big player. According to the respondents from smaller member states, however, Poland could be far more successful in pursuing its goals if it followed the unofficial "rules of the game" more closely and approached problems from a less narrow perspective. The results of Poland's behaviour were rather ambivalent: the country was seen to be investing a lot in its areas of interest, but at the same time its approach was quite heavy-handed. Nevertheless, our respondents noted that Poland's learning curve seemed to be steep and it was gradually adapting to the EU's preferred style of negotiations. All in all, this analysis indicates that Poland is perceived as a normal player within the EU by the representatives of the OMS.

We contend that Poland has moved to the position of frontrunner among the NMS, and it has the greatest potential to become the regional leader. For our interviewees, the country's leadership status was, however, not directly related to its size but to its diplomatic skills and increased familiarity with the informal workings of the EU. Poland has quickly succeeded in finding a specific policy niche where it is taken seriously by new and old EU member states alike: on all issues concerning the Eastern Partnership, related areas of the European Neighbourhood Policy and the EU's relations with Russia, the Polish position is of great importance for the EU's final decisions. Admittedly, Poland has seen slightly less success in terms of its coalition potential. But even here, the country is slowly becoming a more acceptable partner for the older member states; its ability to create coalitions is especially high when East European issues are at stake. Poland's greatest weakness is its strong focus on the straightforward promotion of its interests. According to our respondents, situations in which Poland credibly combined its interests with the promotion of EU interests were rather rare; Poland was seen as a country that was exceedingly blunt in its policies. Hence, to sum up this study's main finding: although Poland has been relatively successful in fulfilling the first two criteria, its failure on the third criterion has so far precluded it from becoming a full-fledged leading country in the EU.

Future research should focus on developing the proposed analytical framework and on analysing the period after 2010, i.e. the date when the current research was conducted. The perception of not only Poland but also other member states that joined the EU after 2004 may change rapidly due to changes in their behaviour and activities at EU level. The current study is limited by the empirical research conducted in 2010, and future analysis should build on its results while providing a comparative perspective with the following period.

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Apendix: List of the interviews

Interview 1: Diplomat, Permanent representation of France to the EU, Brussels, 11 May 2010

Interview 2: Diplomat, Permanent representation of Ireland to the EU, Brussels, 11 May 2010

Interview 3: Diplomat, Permanent representation of Belgium to the EU, Brussels, 11 May 2010

Interview 4: Diplomat, Permanent representation of Ireland to the EU, Brussels, 11 May 2010

Interview 5: Diplomat, Permanent representation of Italy to the EU, Brussels, 12 May 2010

Interview 6: Diplomat, Permanent representation of Italy to the EU, Brussels, 12 May 2010

Interview 7: Diplomat, Permanent representation of Italy to the EU, Brussels, 12 May 2010

Interview 8: Diplomat, Permanent representation of Ireland to the EU, Brussels, 12 May 2010

Interview 9: Diplomat, Permanent representation of Greece to the EU, Brussels, 22 June 2010

Interview 10: Diplomat, Permanent representation of the United Kingdom to the EU, Brussels, 22 June 2010

Interview 11: Diplomat, Permanent representation of the United Kingdom to the EU, Brussels, 22 June 2010

Interview 12: Diplomat, Permanent representation of France to the EU, Brussels, 22 June 2010

Interview 13: Diplomat, Permanent representation of Belgium to the EU, Brussels, 22 June 2010

Interview 14: Diplomat, Permanent representation of Portugal to the EU, Brussels, 23 June 2010

Interview 15: Diplomat, Permanent representation of Portugal to the EU, Brussels, 23 June 2010

Interview 16: Diplomat, Permanent representation of the United Kingdom to the EU, Brussels, 23 June 2010

Interview 17: Diplomat, Permanent representation of the Netherlands to the EU, Brussels, 12 May 2010

Interview 18: Diplomat, Permanent representation of Luxembourg to the EU, Brussels, 12 May 2010

Interview 19: Diplomat, Permanent representation of Luxembourg to the EU, Brussels, 12 May 2010

Interview 20: Diplomat, Permanent representation of Germany to the EU, Brussels, 22 June 2010
Interview 21: Diplomat, Permanent representation of Denmark to the EU, Brussels, 22 June 2010
Interview 22: Diplomat, Permanent representation of Austria to the EU, Brussels, 23 June 2010
Interview 23: Diplomat, Permanent representation of Finland to the EU, Brussels, 23 June 2010
Interview 24: Diplomat, Permanent representation of Sweden to the EU, Brussels, 22 June 2010

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Euroscepticism: A Mobilising Appeal? Not for Everyone![1]

OLGA GYÁRFÁŠOVÁ

Abstract: *This study examines the changing role of the EU agenda in Slovak politics. It identifies old and newly emerging faces of Euroscepticism and compares them with general theoretical concepts. Furthermore, it asks to what extent Eurosceptical appeals mobilised Slovak voters in the European Parliament (EP) elections of 2014 and whether Eurosceptical parties represent a meaningful electoral choice for voters. In the past, many analyses have provided evidence that the European agenda is not salient and the EU political arena is perceived as one where there is less at stake. Nevertheless, the economic crisis and so-called Greek bailout were followed by a rise in Euroscepticism and EU-criticism. In some EU countries, this enhanced voter mobilisation in the EP elections. In others – including Slovakia – we saw not only a significant decline in electoral turnout but relatively poor results for Eurosceptical parties as well. This study identifies the factors behind abstention and explores voting patterns in this specific second-order election in Slovakia. Moreover, it investigates how the parties are perceived in terms of their positions on EU integration and the potential impact on voter choices. I conclude that the EU agenda is still not the deciding factor for voters even in the case of EP elections. Eurosceptical appeals are less mobilising in this context, and the public sees no differences among parties' stances on the EU.*

Keywords: ***European Parliament elections, Euroscepticism, Eurosceptical appeals, electoral turnout, abstention factors, party and public positions on the EU agenda***

Introduction

'This time it's different!' announced a major mobilisation campaign by European Parliament for the 2014 elections. Under "different," we may understand the changes brought to the EP by the Lisbon Treaty: more competencies, and

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in particular, a closer connection between European voters' decision and the filling of the position of head of the European executive. The 2014 EP elections were, thus, expected to be more personalised, but also – due to the economic crisis and increased Euroscepticism across the EU – more politicised. The 'this time it's different' slogan seemed to foreshadow greater interest and a higher election turnout.

This was confirmed in several member states (Great Britain, Greece, Romania and Lithuania) albeit at the price of a rise in support for Eurosceptical and Euro-critical parties. In many Central and East European countries, however, the trend in voter participation moved in the opposite direction. With voter turnout at 13%, Slovakia again set a record for non-participation, surpassing its own lows in 2004 (17%) and 2009 (19.6%). This "abstention champion" was closely followed by the Czech Republic where participation reached only 18% (five years earlier, it had been 28%), Poland (23%) and the EU family's newest member, Croatia (25%). Ten years after entering this prestigious club and a quarter century after the fall of undemocratic regimes when a "return to Europe" was a yearned for goal, the majority of citizens in this part of the EU stayed away from the polls.

As we have noted, Euroscepticism presented a successful mobilising strategy in this election more than at any time before. The troublesome ratification of the Lisbon Treaty, the consequences of economic crises, the bailout and other incentives related to the urgent state of the euro – all these factors contributed to the eruption of Eurosceptical parties in 2014. In most cases, this was right--wing Euroscepticism closely connected to nationalism, xenophobia and anti--immigration slogans.[2] In journalistic jargon, the EP election results were even labelled a 'Eurosceptic "earthquake"' rocking EU elections.[3]

Yet in some countries including Slovakia, these Eurosceptical appeals did not mobilise voters. Various nationalist and Eurosceptical parties – both old and new – fell well below the 5% threshold and had only very marginal support. The Slovak National Party (SNS), in particular, failed to defend its one seat in the EP, receiving only 3.6% of valid votes. Similarly, the feared right-wing extremist

2 To name only the most relevant examples across the EU: the National Front in France won 25% of votes and electoral support for the UKIP grew by 12 percentage points, making it the strongest party in the UK, with almost 27% of votes. The Danish Eurosceptical People's Party also recorded one of the best election results for a party of this type; with 27% of votes, it doubled its MEP numbers and is now the biggest Danish party in the EP. Within the post-Communist countries, Hungary's extreme-right party Jobbik was most successful, receiving 15% of votes. For more details, see http://www.europarl.europa.eu/elections2014-results/en/election-results-2014.html (8 July 2015).
For the purpose of this study, whose focus is primarily Slovakia, we do not deal with radical left-wing Eurosceptical appeals. In the 2014 EP elections, however, it was above all the Greek far-left party Syriza which made a breakthrough with 26% of votes.

3 Eurosceptic 'earthquake' which rocks EU elections." BBC New Europe: available at: http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-27559714 (26 May 2014).

People's Party – Our Slovakia (ĽSNS), led by Marián Kotleba (Governor of the Banská Bystrica region), claimed only 1.7% of votes.[4]

This study examines the changing role of the EU agenda in Slovak politics: it identifies old and newly emerging faces of Euroscepticism and compares them drawing on general theoretical concepts. It also analyses these faces of Slovak Euroscepticism using party manifestos for the 2012 general election and the 2014 EP election. Based on these analyses of the election results and the findings of a post-election survey, this work asks to what extent Eurosceptical appeals mobilised Slovak voters in the 2014 EP election and whether Eurosceptical parties are a meaningful electoral choice for voters. This research also identifies the factors behind abstention and explores voting patterns in this particular second-order election in Slovakia. Moreover, it questions how the parties are perceived in terms of their positions on EU integration, the congruence between voter and party perceptions and how all these issues might affect voting choices.

How Should We Conceptualise Euroscepticism?

The term "Euroscepticism" is notoriously elusive, broad and difficult to conceptualise, let alone to measure. Euroscepticism was initially a distinctly British phenomenon; it expressed British distance and "otherness" in relation to Continental Europe and/or the project of EU integration. A more critical European discourse emerged during the debates over the ratification of the Maastricht Treaty in the early 1990 s, and since those years, a variety of forms of Euroscepticism have emerged and started to have increasing prominencein the EU member states. Among the first studies attempting to conceptualise this very complex and fuzzy concept were works by Paul Taggart (1998), Aleks Szczerbiak (Taggart and Szczerbiak 2002) and Kopecky and Mudde (2002). As Sofia Vasilopoulou rightly points out: 'As a result of this implicit exceptionality and novelty of the phenomenon, the literature has mostly treated it [Euroscepticism] as a "dependent" variable. In doing so, it has used the theoretical and analytical tools available in order to "understand" its nature' (2013: 153).

In their formative work (2002), Kopecky and Mudde set out two dimensions to allow for a more precise understanding of parties' positions vis-á-vis the EU and Europe: 1. diffuse support for European integration at the level of ideas and ideals; 2. specific support for the EU at the level of practice. By combining them, we can classify four theoretical types: Euro-enthusiasts; Euro-pragmatists; Euro-sceptics and Euro-rejects, where Euro-sceptics are a combination of EU-pessimists at the level of EU practice and Europhiles at that of ideas. Even a glance at this typology

4 Among the more marginal nationalistic and Eurosceptical parties, we can include Nation and Justice (which won 1.38% of votes in the election), Law and Justice (1.66%), the Slovak People's Party (0.46%) and the Christian Slovak National Party (0.64%). All in all, 29 parties and 333 candidates contested the EP election in Slovakia.

makes clear that there are many different empirical cases which would not fit into this scheme; still, this typology enables us to begin sorting them out.

Taggart and Szczerbiak have distinguished between hard and soft Euroscepticism (2002), while Chris Flood has identified a six-point continuum along which party positions towards the EU may be situated (Flood 2002). Its poles are rejectionist vs. maximalist, with revisionist, minimalist, gradualist and reformist positions situated in between.

Though the above classifications have focused primarily on party-based Euroscepticism, Eurosceptic views can also be analysed from a public opinion perspective. Sorensen (2008) identifies four broad ideal types of public Euroscepticism. According to her analyses, Euroscepticism can have an economic character or be sovereignty-based (reflecting the claim that EU cooperation should not challenge national sovereignty). The third type is labelled "democratic Euroscepticism" and has to do with the democratic deficit associated with EU-level governance. Finally, the fourth type is more political and evaluates the EU according to broadly the same cleavages that characterise national politics (Sorensen 2008: 8).

Sorensen tested these types of public Euroscepticism in three countries – Denmark, France and the UK – highlighting that Danish and British societies are characterised by a strong sovereignty-based Euroscepticism (combined also with an economic one in the UK's case) while the French share a strong social Euroscepticism (Sorensen 2008: 9).

Analogously, we can distinguish the sources of Euroscepticism in terms of whether they are based on party or public attitudes. McLaren, for instance, separates economic, cultural and institutional factors and points to two distinct paths: one rooted in cultural threats and the other in perceived economic losses. Further on, she notes that institutional distrust motivates Euroscepticism. According to her evidence, while the direct effect of institutional trust runs through EU institutions, EU and national institutions tend to be distrusted together (McLaren 2002: 513).

All these categories are based on EU-related developments in the older member states. They are also partially applicable in countries that joined the club in 2004 or later. We may recall the pre-accession expectations in regard to Eurosceptical positions in post-Communist countries. Cas Mudde, for example, conceptualised the potential conflict in terms of a centre-periphery cleavage. Shortly before the Big Bang enlargement in 2004, he expected that 'one possible way in which EU accession could influence party competition in the new member states is in transforming the already present regional divide into a full populist, anti-EU center-periphery cleavage' (Mudde 2004: 2). Furthermore, he pointed out that Euroscepticism would mix populism with frustration at the periphery. The centre-periphery divide and a national populist anti-EU position would also make for a perfect combination because it had links back to the clas-

sic populist discourse of the 1920 s and 1930 s in this region. That discourse had posited that the key struggle was between rural and "national" people, and the urban and cosmopolitan elite (Mudde 2004: 7).

However, the model of winners-losers of integration and a centre-periphery divide did not work very well, at least not in Slovakia: people in the poorer regions saw EU funds as a means to achieve balance with more developed regions, not to mention the capital. In addition, the Europhoria was general and widespread across very different social environments. Hardly any EU-sceptical feeling could be mobilised before the economic crises and the "Greek" bailout debate, which emerged in 2010. Although radical right-wing and nationalistic parties presented EU integration as a threat to national sovereignty and cultural identity, these appeals had very limited impact on the public mood.

Of course, there are variations in the salience of EU integration across the Union; factors like low-level EU politicisation and the significance of Euroscepticism strongly depend on individual national party systems and national contexts. In 2008, shortly before the outbreak of the economic crisis, Paul Taggart and Aleks Szczerbiak identified three categories of countries based on national surveys: these were states where EU integration was 1) of hardly any relevance; 2) the subject of an open, coherent and intense political debate (the Czech Republic, for example, was included in this category); 3) the subject of a highly incoherent and changing debate (Taggart – Szczerbiak 2008). Most Central and Eastern European countries, including Slovakia, belong in the third category (Hartleb 2011: 24).

We turn now to the forms of Euroscepticism active on the recent Slovakian political scene. We will focus on party-based Euroscepticism and analyse this using the concepts set out above.

Emerging Faces of Euroscepticism in Slovakia

When it comes to public perceptions of EU membership and participation in the EP elections, Slovakia presents an interesting case. Though it has one of the most EU-phile publics across the EU-28,[5] the country has historically recorded

5 For instance, in autumn 2011, 48% of Slovaks expressed their trust in the EU while the average in the EU-27 was just 34%. (http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb76/eb76_fact_sk_en.pdf, 8 July 2015). In another example, in the spring of 2010, 78% of Slovaks believed that their country was benefitting from EU membership whereas the EU-27 average figure was 53%. Moreover, 59% of the Slovak public thought that EU membership was a good thing but the same question was answered positively by only 49% of EU-27 citizens (http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb73/eb73_fact_sk_en.pdf, 8 July 2015).
We can also look at the more recent results of a Standard Eurobarometer survey conducted in autumn 2014. These findings indicate that after a brief downswing, the tide is turning: trust in the EU and its institutions has increased since the last survey in spring 2014; Slovak citizens feel that they are EU citizens to a greater extent than average EU citizens do (the figure was 73% in Slovakia compared to 63% across the EU28). The indicator "confidence in the EU" was also higher in Slovakia than the EU average, and

the lowest turnout in all EP elections. The country's integration trajectory drew attention in the late 1990 s when the country was labelled the "black hole" of Central Europe. After 1998, however, it was seen to be back on the "right track" and busily catching up with its initially more successful neighbours. Within a very short time, Slovakia, thus, turned from a "troubled candidate" into a "loyal member," meaning that it could be characterised by its "policy-taking" rather than "policy-setting" position. However, the image of the good pupil changed dramatically in October 2011 when Slovak parliament was the only parliament in the Eurozone to vote against measures to bolster the powers of the Eurozone bailout fund – a step seen as vital to combat the bloc's debt crisis. In fact, the impression created was rather misleading: only one of the governing coalition's four parties, the neoliberal Freedom and Solidarity (SaS), had opposed the bailout and abstained[6] while the other three had voted in favour. The largest opposition party, Smer-Social Democracy also supported the bailout but abstained when then Prime Minister Iveta Radičová made the vote one of confidence in the government in the hope of bringing SaS into line. Only the smaller nationalist SNS actually voted against the bailout. However, the failure of more than half the parliamentary deputies to support the measure led to its defeat and the fall of the government. Just a few days later, when early elections had been agreed on, the majority of government and opposition deputies united and approved the measure. The parliamentary elections of March 2012 returned a centre-left government to power, with Robert Fico leading a single-party government with a formal majority. Since then, Slovak government policies have resumed their clearly pro-EU attitude. The role of the EU agenda has changed to some extent as it becomes more prominent and emerges as a potential subject for political debate. Nevertheless, the added EU content has not led to more – or, at any rate, significantly more – political contest. In other words, political competition over the EU agenda remains low profile and EU matters have less salience than domestic issues.

The weak politicisation of the EU at the level of domestic politics is a general phenomenon. The EU agenda has often been depicted as a 'sleeping giant' (de Vries 2007) which does not interfere in domestic politics but rather represents dormant potential. For Slovakia, some country-specific conditions can be iden-

49% of the country's respondents had trust in the EU. Moreover, half of those surveyed agreed with the view that the EU contributes to the achievement of a better life in Europe; two-thirds of Slovak citizens also agreed that the EU contributes to the social protection of its citizens while 63% said that the EU has sufficient power and tools to protect the economic interests of Europe on the global stage. See Standard Eurobarometer 82. Fall 2014. http://ec.europa.eu/slovensko/news/eurobarometer82_sk.htm More empirical evidence about the Slovak public's pro-EU bias can be found in the Standard Eurobarometer regular surveys available at: http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/index_en.htm (8 July 2015).

6 SaS said it was opposed to Slovakia's taxpayers being asked to cover the debts of richer countries. This opinion reflected the widespread public mood: many felt that Slovakia should not have to bail out countries like Greece, which were better off.

tified. Unlike the Czech Republic, where this sentiment was largely exhibited in the person of ex-president Václav Klaus, Slovakia did not display any open, party-based Euroscepticism and relevant public actors did not criticise EU integration. As Karen Henderson has pointed out of countries like Slovakia with a difficult accession trajectory: 'the major EU debate was not about what Slovak parties wanted from the EU in policy terms, or what sort of EU they wanted, but rather about what the EU required from Slovakia and who could deliver it' (Henderson 2009: 535). She notes further that 'EU accession is a valence issue: it is generally accepted in the political discourse as a "good thing", but the ability to achieve it is the contested political issue' (Henderson 2009: 535).

After Slovakia's accession to the EU, the broad consensus about the strategic importance of EU membership turned into a comfortable but passive consensus about the European agenda and Slovakia's performance in the Union. This corresponds with the famous "permissive consensus" typical of established EU members in the earlier decades of their membership. Unsurprisingly, this situation stimulated no political or public discussion on EU matters; with only minor exceptions, these issues had no profile during those first years of EU membership either as part of the agenda of the political parties or in the public discourse.

Another consequence of the broad pre-accession consensus (and the very undeveloped and unstructured debate on the "pros" and "cons" of being part of the European Union) was that Slovakia's membership was viewed mostly instrumentally. This was very much true not only for the political elites, but also for the broader public.

For Slovaks, EU membership was a means to finally escape from the wrong side of the "Iron Curtain" and achieve modernisation and EU funding benefits. On the other hand, it was not so much a way to improve the country's international position or have a say in European matters. Slovaks were too inward-looking and had too limited an awareness of international affairs to claim those benefits.

The EU agenda proved more successful as a mass mobilisation tool for parties that managed to instrumentalise the EU as either a guarantee of economic improvements or a scapegoat for the misery. EU-critical or EU-sceptical positions were absent from the political mainstream. That situation changed in the 2012 national election. When the early general election took place because of the government's collapse on EFSF vote, the EU agenda emerged as a new phenomenon in the domestic political competition. In addition to enthusiastic and more or less indifferent stances on the EU, some new faces of Euroscepticism emerged.

In the 2012 general election campaign, two different types of Euroscepticism – one nationalistic and the other (neo)liberal – surfaced and they continued to be its most visible faces in the 2014 EP election.

The sections below describe the content – both current and historical – of each of these stances.

The Nationalistic Version: the EU as an Enemy of National Sovereignty

The textbook example of fringe nationalism being used against global institutions, the West and the EU can be found in the Slovak National Party (SNS)'s denunciation of EFSF as 'a mega-betrayal of the Slovak nation.' The nationalists' arguments went further to the loss of (national) sovereignty and the need to avoid being 'the servants of the West' (Vernosť Slovensku., 2012: 1). Their Euroscepticism, thus, followed the "pattern" of radical right-wing parties such as the True Finns and the Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ).

In the 2012 election campaign, the SNS took as its theme 'rich Greeks or Italians living beyond their means and causing trouble to the poor who maintain tight budgets'; this was, it claimed, an 'ineffective principle for lazy countries to which the SNS will respond by requiring the introduction of a minimum average European labour cost and increasing salaries' (Vernosť Slovensku., 2012: 3). Moreover, the SNS was the first parliamentary party to cross the Rubicon by considering the alternative of leaving the EU and Eurozone altogether. Its manifesto promised: '.in case of an urgent need to protect citizens' property and values and state sovereignty, we will consider leaving the EU and Eurozone' (Ibid.: 1).

As a party, the SNS fights for the rights of the nation state and labels others 'irresponsible' and unworthy of assistance. In 2012, it proclaimed: 'Various EU directives reduce the rights of individual countries in sovereign areas, such as the competencies and rights of parliament and the Slovak government guaranteed by the Constitution of the Slovak Republic. We disapprove of the false rescue of the European Monetary Union and of its change into a debt-ridden and unprofitable union. We say "no" to the endless increase in public debt resulting from "helping" irresponsible countries' (Ibid.: 2).

It is worth mentioning that these appeals against a solidarity contribution to the EFSF also enhanced the widespread Slovak self-image (self-stereotype) as a nation of poor people who had been tightening their belts for too long.[7]

As we have noted, the Eurosceptical appeals of nationalist parties were not rewarded with election votes – in either the 2012 early general election or the 2014 EP election. These outcomes also indicated a decline in the salience of the nationalist agenda, which was the key policy of the SNS as a typical single-issue party. Nationalism connected with anti-EU positions was no longer appealing enough. This was probably also because of the pro-EU bias that could be found among SNS voters as well (for more details see Gyárfášová – Krivý 2013).

According to the typology of Eurosceptical positions proposed by Kopecky and Mudde, the SNS and ĽSNS can be categorised as "Euro-rejects" (Kopecky – Mudde 2002). Their positions remain negative when it comes to both dimen-

7 For example, the Slovak National Party (SNS) used the slogan: 'A Greek pension is € 1,600, an Italian teacher earns € 2,000. And where are we Slovaks?'

sions of the typology: they are not in favour of the EU at the level of diffuse support for EU integration or specific support through the practice of EU policies. As for the sources of their Euroscepticism, nationalistic parties make appeals related to sovereignty and cultural divisions. Though they highlight some economic issues, this is more at the level of threats to the national interest and/or identity than rational cost-benefit calculations.

The Neoliberal Version: the EU as the Road to Socialism

For liberals, the EU, with its solidarity and bailout plan, is irrational and denies rational free market economic principles. The SaS also rejects deeper integration since this 'can lead to a reduction of the sovereignty of Member States' (Volebný program SaS., 2012: 56). The party, thus, supports applying 'stricter and enforceable sanctions to not only small or less important states but also the EU giants, Germany and France' (Ibid.).

SaS's neo-liberal attitude has met with a positive response from the younger generation, which is rich in social capital. On the other hand, the party is not supported by those marginalised by integration. This type of Euroscepticism is based on economic reductionism and "worship" for the invisible hand of the market. SaS's argument has two dimensions: the first is moral; it sees the bailout as a moral hazard because it punishes those who comply with the rules and 'the European Union has taken the path of supporting the irresponsible at the expense of those responsible' (Všetci za Brusel..., 2014: 4). The second is economic and holds that in any case these measures are not efficient and 'we need to (1) keep the internal market (2) repair the mistakes, in particular, in the context of the Monetary Union, (3) avoid the risks of unnecessary centralisation (banking, fiscal, political union)' (Ibid.: 9). These positions trap these liberals into national egoism and chauvinism. On this basis, one might be quite sceptical about the liberal nature of the party because Euroscepticism does not befit those liberals who have positioned themselves within the Group of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE). The decision of SaS's only MEP, Richard Sulik to move to the European Conservatives and Reformists Group (ECR) was, thus, a logical step.

Again applying the Kopecký – Mudde typology (2002), we may see SaS as genuine EU-sceptics since they support EU integration at the level of ideas and ideals, however, they are critical of specific EU practices such as the EFSF mechanism. They also oppose too much harmonisation and centralisation within the EU. The sources of this Euroscepticism are at least twofold: political and economic based on a clearly neo-liberal background that rejects the ideas of solidarity and political union.

SaS continued its consistent criticism of the EU in the 2014 European campaign while vehemently refuting the label of Euroscepticism. In addition to criti-

cising the bailout fund and other aspects of economic integration, liberals gave voice to a very extensive range of Euro-myths about quotas on flushing toilets and high-powered vacuums and a ban on sugar-enhanced juices and the like. Moreover, SaS titled its party manifesto 'Everyone's for Brussels; we're for you,' reinforcing the widespread stereotypes of "them in Brussels" and "us at home" and a "Brussels doesn't matter to us" attitude (SaS party manifesto, 2014).

In the 2014 EP election, SaS received 6.7% of votes, sending its leader Richard Sulík to EP. This was a slightly better result than the one recorded by the party in the 2012 general election, but much lower than its showing in the 2010 general election (12.1%). The nationalists, in contrast, did not reach the 5% threshold.

2014 EP Election Results

Although the governing party Smer-SD won the election with 24% of the vote, its performance fell well short of the one five years earlier (not to mention its success in the 2012 early parliamentary elections where it had achieved 44%). Smer-SD now has four MEPs, who strengthen the EU Socialist Group. The centre-right Christian Democratic Movement (KDH) and Slovak Democratic and Christian Union – Democratic Party (SDKÚ-DS) each successfully defended two seats. The Party of the Hungarian Community also remains in the EP although it only has one seat. These three parties are established members of the European People's Party (EPP). The newcomers to the EP with just one member each are Ordinary People and Independent Personalities (OĽaNO) and NOVA (both joining the ECR group) as well as Most-Híd (EPP) and SaS (initially an ALDE member, which changed to ECR a few months after the election). These results reflect the current situation on the Slovak political scene, with a strong party on the Left and a fragmented centre-right spectrum. We must, however, note the difficulty of drawing far-reaching conclusions about current levels of support for individual parties based on these results. This is not only because of the critically low voter turnout, but due to the fact that these elections were not contested by the newly established Sieť (Network) party, which is performing significantly better in public opinion polls than any of the centre-right parties.

Table 1: Election results for three EP elections in Slovakia

	% of valid votes			Number of seats in EP		
	2004	2009	2014	2004	2009	2014
Smer- SD	16.0	32.0	24.1	3	5	4
KDH	16.2	10.9	13.2	3	2	2
SDKÚ-DS	17.1	17.0	7.8	3	2	2
NOVA-KDS-OKS	X	X	6.8	X	X	1
SaS	X	4.6	6.7	X	0	1
SMK	13.2	11.3	6.5	2	2	1
Most-Híd	X	X	5.8	X	X	1
TIP	X	X	3.8	X	X	0
SNS	2.0	5.6	3.6	0	1	0
ĽS-NS	X	X	1.7	X	x	0
HZDS	17.0	9.0	x	3	1	0

Notes: X = Party did not exist or did not run.
Source: Statistical Office of the SR.

Why Didn't Euroscepticism Succeed in the EP Election?

Slovakia has attracted expert attention more for its critically low voter turnout than for the election results themselves. In 2004, that turnout reached 17%; five years later it had increased to 19.6% only to sink to an all-time low in 2014. What were the reasons for this non-participation? The Institute for Public Affairs (IVO) asked this question in a representative post-election survey.[8] Although such survey-based ex-post self-explanations and rationalisations have methodological limits, the responses point to some interesting findings and comparisons. The most frequently stated reasons for abstention related specifically to the EP elections and the EU: 39% of non-voters expressed those reasons in an open-ended survey question (Table 2). IVO conducted a similar survey after the 2009 EP elections when EU-related abstention factors were reported by only 16% of the then non-voters. Instead, the most common responses related to domestic politics or politics in general rather than the EP elections specifically (for example, political frustration, dissatisfaction, disenchantment and the like). As such, we can conclude that in recent years, the reasons for ignoring the EP elections have been "Europeanised"; they are anchored less in domestic politics and more in the meaning and implications of the specific election, EU institutions and last but not least, the work of MEPs. This also means

8 The Institute for Public Affairs (IVO) conducted a survey of a representative sample of 1,000 respondents – adult residents of Slovakia shortly after the EP election in early June 2014.

that there are now more pronounced complaints against the EU itself. On the other hand, compared to 2009, factors related to general distrust of politicians have weakened. At the same time, the 2014 survey repeatedly confirmed that abstention is not related to a lack of information. Rather, the issue was a lack of relevance, thus confirming the second-order election theory – the view that less is at stake – which was identified by K. Reif and H. Schmitt more than 30 years ago (Reif – Schmitt 1980).

Table 2: Self-declared reasons for abstention in the EP election 2014 (in %)

Objective reasons *(illness, needing to travel, work etc)*	28 (30)
Not interested in voting generally; abstention as a policy *('I never show up'; 'I'm not interested in politics.')*	23 (29)
Reservations about this particular election, the EU, EP and/or MEPs *('…because senior politicians get a good rest in EP for big money'; 'in all these years, no MEP has ever come to visit us and inform us about what they have done for our benefit and our community'; 'I don't even know their policies and how they work'; 'I have no confidence in parliament, and I'm disappointed by the way our representatives work in EP'; 'I don't understand why I should vote'; 'these elections are important for the politicians, not for voters.')*	39 (16)
Distrust of politicians in general *('Politicians have disappointed me - promises, promises … and still the same faces'; 'I'm not interested in politics'; 'I do know the politicians and I don't trust them, I have been disappointed so many times that I don't trust them'; 'It's just a waste of time; all of them are the same, and they mislead the public.')*	5 (11)
Lack of information, insufficient campaigning *('I don't understand how European institutions work'; 'there was no campaign.')*	1 (6)
I do not know, do not remember	4 (8)

Note: Open-ended question with a maximum of one response. The quotes in italics are taken from questionnaire responses. Figures in brackets are from 2009.
Source: Institute for Public Affairs, 2009 and 2014.

Interestingly, these people's critical attitudes were not reflected in Euro-critical voices and votes for Eurosceptical parties. Rather, people expressed their opinions and criticisms of the EU and EP through abstention. Furthermore, many of these citizens were not convinced about the relevance of European elections. In their view, therefore, the problem was not the "second-order-ness" of the European elections, but rather their uselessness and irrelevance. As such, they did not even endorse parties promising consistent criticism or rejection of the EU.

EU elections are usually understood as the most sophisticated level of elections where participation is primarily the result of cognitive mobilisation (cf. van der Eijk – Franklin 1996; Franklin 2007). This can also be confirmed by looking at the regional and socio-demographic distribution of electoral participation in Slovakia: participation was above average in the capital, Bratislava, which has the highest concentration of social capital. From a socio-demographic point of view, the differentiating features were education and age in particular.

The strongest constituencies were people aged over 55 years while the weakest bracket was 18–24-years old. People with a university education participated more often than those with only a primary education.

In terms of the stability vs. volatility of voting behaviour, we can distinguish three groups essentially: a) party-loyal voters; b) "swinging" voters; and c) abstaining voters (non-voters). Turning to the EP elections and specific voting trends related to second-order elections, we find that the phenomenon of transferred votes ("swinging voters") is prevalent in many countries. Electorates often use these elections to express dissatisfaction and "punish" their government and ruling parties, particularly if the European election is held in the middle of a national electoral cycle and the ruling parties are highly unpopular (due to the so-called mid-term slump). On the other hand, electoral gains are recorded by smaller parties (fringe Eurosceptical parties) which utilise the Eurosceptical, anti-EU mobilisation. As several studies have shown (cf. Reif – Schmitt 1980, Marsh 1998, Franklin 2007), the reason lies in sincere rather than strategic voting ("voting with the heart") because – again – less is at stake. Extremist and Eurosceptical parties mobilise voters by riding on a wave of dissatisfaction with the EU, but this may only be a "placeholder" for dissatisfaction with solutions at national level. The 2014 EP elections provide clear evidence of these phenomena in many countries. The electoral success of the parties would not have been possible without the mobilising of voters from mainstream camps.

Slovakia is a different case: a post-election survey did not confirm significant voter shifts between the political parties. In other words, there was considerable consistency between the election results at European and national levels. The outcomes for the political parties in the European elections were determined by their ability to mobilise their own followers rather than to gain the backing of "flighty" voters. A high percentage of voters in the EP elections recently noted that they would select the same party at national level (Table 3).[9] The proportion of party loyalists ranged from 100% in the case of the Party of the Hungarian Community (SMK) to 62% for both the Slovak Democratic and Christian Union-Democratic Party, which is declining in popularity, and the relatively new political entity – Ordinary People and Independent Personalities (OĽaNO). Voters who would not select the same party did not intend to switch to any particular party but were rather undecided or did not plan to vote in the general election.

9 This is based on a combination of voters' choices in the EP election and their voting intention in a potential upcoming general election.

Table 3: Consistency between EP election voting and party support at national level (voting intention in general elections)

Party supported in the EP election	Party loyalty (intention to support the same party in the general election, in %)
SMK	100
SaS	88
Smer- SD	86
KDH	85
NOVA-KDS-OKS	80
Most-Híd	78
SDKÚ-DS	62
OĽaNO	62

Note: Only includes parties which entered EP in 2014.
Source: EES 2014.

To summarise voting trends among Slovak voters in the 2014 EP election, we may say:

- In 2014, there was no major volatility (i.e. neither deep nor superficial variability) between the national and European levels = > the election results were mostly determined by different level of mobilisation, and not the ability of the parties to attract swinging voters;[10]
- Euroscepticism did not mobilise Slovak voters, and many of those who did not show up to the polls explained their abstention through their critical stances towards the EU and/or EP. In other words, they were critical of the EU but did not express their views by casting a vote for any of the EU-critical parties; and
- Voting decisions in the EP elections replicated voting choices at national level, however with a substantially lower turnout; Slovakia's Euro-gap[11] reached 46 percentage points.

The EU Agenda for Parties and Voters

The EP elections provide a unique laboratory test when it comes to the comparative analysis of voting behaviour and political communication in "older" and "newer" post-Communist member states. One general pattern has emerged

10 The same was true for the 2009 EP election. For more details, see Gyárfášová (2009).

11 The Euro-gap is the difference between the turnout in first-order and second-order elections. In the 2012 parliamentary election, the turnout equalled 59.1 % of eligible voters.

across all three elections so far: in spite of their years of yearning for EU membership, citizens of post-Communist countries have not been very enthusiastic about exercising their newly acquired rights as EU citizens. The average voter turnout has been significantly lower than in the older EU member states. New EU citizens from post-Communist countries have, thus, relegated the "second--order" elections to an even lower position.

The 2014 elections also showed that after a decade of EU membership, the profiles of political parties on the EU agenda are slowly emerging. In the current configuration, the centre-left party Smer-SD has a clearly pro-European profile while the fragmented centre-right party spectrum is closer to the Euro-critical pole. As has been mentioned, among the mainstream parties we can also identify two different modes of Euroscepticism. Around the time of Slovakia's EU accession, experts clearly ranked the centre-right SDKÚ-DS as the most pro-EU political party, but in 2010 it was replaced in this role by Smer-SD.[12] However, commentators have also pointed to a certain shallowness and largely instrumental character to Smer's Euro-optimism. Nevertheless, the debate on the EU is more present and visible than in 2009 (Gabrižová – Geist 2014: 24). The recent correlation between left- and right-wing orientations and pro-EU and anti-EU positions need not be fixed.

Another view of the political parties' positions on the substantive issues on the European agenda is offered by the EUvox project.[13] Within this project, domestic experts coded the positions of the 10 most relevant Slovak political parties on 30 European agenda issues that were divided across three axes: economic, social and cultural. It was found that across 30 different statements, the greatest consensus was reached about Slovakia's membership of the Economic and Monetary Union and the rejection of tax harmonisation and redistribution via Euro-funds. The most controversial issue was the bailout, that is, whether the member states should provide assistance to countries finding themselves in a budget crisis. EUvox also revealed some incoherence and inconsistencies in the positions of the political parties. Moreover, the parties did not have positions on many issues (e.g. environmental matters and common security policies). The project clearly identified extreme-right nationalistic party ĽS-NS as the most anti-EU party followed by the radical nationalistic SNS and neo-liberal SaS.[14]

12 Chapel Hill Expert Survey Series, 2006 and 2010. See http://www.unc.edu/~gwmarks/data_pp.php

13 EUVOX was a EU-wide voting advice application (VAA) for the 2014 European Parliament elections. Its purpose was to help citizens select the political party best matching their own policy preferences and enable them to quickly access information about the positions of all relevant parties contesting these crucial elections. For more details, visit: www.euvox.eu

14 This could be seen from several indicators, but it was most evident from party positions on the statement "Overall, EU membership has been a bad thing for Slovakia."

To what extent are voters able to decode parties' positions on EU issues? Based on an EES post-election survey,[15] we observed in 2009 that more than 30% of respondents could not indicate the position of the political parties on the anti-EU vs. pro-EU axis (Gyárfášová 2009). By 2014, this awareness had definitely increased: "do not know" responses were about 10% on average. However, there was relatively little differentiation among the parties' positions remained (Table 4). SaS was not seen as Eurosceptical at all; unfortunately we do not have results for SNS. Nevertheless, we can say that though there was more awareness of party positions on the EU agenda, the differences among the parties were not very significant to the public.

In addition, we may point to an interesting phenomenon that is evident when we compare two other levels of party evaluation: on the one hand, voters perceived their preferred parties to be far more pro-EU than the general public did. On the other hand, voters saw themselves as being far less pro-European than the parties which they voted for in the EP elections. This "mismatch" deserves more attention in future surveys.

Table 4: Positions of political parties on the EU issue as perceived by the public (measured on a 0–10 scale)[16]

Party	Party's position on EU integration - as seen by the public	Party's position - as seen by its supporters in the EP elections	Voters' self-placement
NOVA	4.6	7.5	4.5
Smer-SD	4.5	8.0	4.7
OĽaNO	4.2	6.9	4.1
KDH	3.8	7.5	4.6
SaS	3.6	7.4	4.9
Most-Híd	3.6	6.7	5.3
SDKÚ-DS	3.3	6.8	4.3
SMK	2.9	8.1	3.5

Note: Only includes parties which entered EP in 2014.
Source: EES 2014.

These findings show that there is very little congruence among the public and party supporters when it comes to perceptions of the parties. Further, the low level of differentiation in perceptions of the parties could be one factor influenc-

15 For more details, visit: http://eeshomepage.net/ees-2009-study.

16 The wording of the question was as follows: 'Some say that European unification should be pushed further. Others say it has already gone too far. What is your opinion? Please give your views on a scale from 0 to 10 where 0 means unification "has already gone too far" and 10 means it "should be pushed further." What number on this scale best describes the party's position?'

ing voting choices. Eurosceptical appeals are not visible to voters they do not follow them. Moreover, voters see their preferred parties as being more pro-EU than they would rate themselves.

Conclusions

Signs of the rising relevance of the EU agenda along with growing Euroscepticism in Slovak politics cannot be overlooked. Among the reasons for these shifts are crises related to the euro and/or debt as well as a quest for solidarity, which is not popular, especially when citizens feel obliged to show solidarity with those who are richer and better off. Yet, despite the fact that EU issues were more visible and two different types of Euroscepticism could be identified, Euro-critical appeals did not mobilise Slovak voters in the 2014 EP elections and Slovakia – for the third time – finished with the lowest voter turnout across all the member states. This study has been able to identify several explaining factors:

The EU arena is still perceived as a sphere where there is less at stake, and therefore the main political "battlefield" and source of power is politics at national level. Political parties behave accordingly: in spite of the greater visibility of EU content, the EU contest is very weak, and even Eurosceptical positions are separate monologues rather than part of a political debate or discourse. The positions of most political parties are fuzzy on many issues, and in some cases they simply do not exist.

So far, the politicisation of EU issues – in the case of ESFS, for example – seems to represent a temporary episode rather than a long-term shift, and the impact on voting behavior has been weak.

The relevance of the "EU factor" is increasing, but it has yet to be fully developed as an independent dividing issue in the political competition; it is stuck between its previous irrelevance and expected future salience.

Political parties' stances on the issue are still not very visible to the public. Moreover, the public does not see big differences among the parties. Voters perceive their chosen parties as being more pro-EU than they are themselves.

The EU agenda has been used more successfully as a mass mobilisation tool when parties have managed to invoke the EU as either a guarantee of improved economic conditions or a scapegoat for economic misery. This was the case for the governing Smer-SD party, which was the clear winner of the 2014 EP election. The pro-European stance of the Slovak Social Democrats instrumentalises the EU for several purposes: to strengthen the image of the party with a guarantee of social stability and security as well as a guarantee of political stability. As such, the party defines itself in opposition to those adopting anti-European attitudes in order to pursue their own political interests. The Social Democrats, thus, draw an image of the EU as a co-protector of the national interest. Though the EU-optimistic Smer-SD party was indeed the unambiguous winner of the

EP election, this landslide victory was not recorded thanks to its pro-EU stance. Rather, it was due to its offer of social security and better economic conditions. The EU served as an additional pragmatic instrument to appeal to an electorate yearning for more social and economic security. And voters rewarded this approach. This implies that when it comes to perceptions of the EU, a utilitarian model (still) has more explanatory force ("it's for the economy, stupid!") than any other approach. However, enjoying the benefits of the EU does not give people any motivation to participate in EU democracy.

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Corruption Perception in the Czech Republic

VLADIMÍR NAXERA

Abstract: *This paper is focused on the issue of corruption perception in the Czech Republic. After introducing the general framework for corruption perception in post-communist countries, this paper uses the Czech Republic as an example of the ways in which corruption is perceived, the areas Czech citizens feel are most plagued by corruption, and the ways in which corruption perception has transformed in terms of post-communist developments. This paper points out the differences in corruption perception among Czech citizens, the media and political parties and their representatives. The conclusion of the paper attempts to answer the question of how corruption perception has affected the overall perception of the democratic regime in the Czech Republic. It also asks questions regarding how this has influenced the evaluation of democracy and the relationship between Czech citizens and political institutions, including individual political parties.*

Keywords: ***corruption, corruption perception, CPI, Czech Republic, attitudes towards regime***

Introduction

One of the main questions regarding the research of the topic of corruption is the perception of corrupt behavior. This deals with both public and political representation. Many existing studies show that these two discourses are often fundamentally different (Karklins 2005; Uslaner 2008a; Uslaner 2008 b et al.). Corruption perception is the subject of various research projects, while the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) holds an exclusive place among published research results on the topic. The CPI is published annually by Amnesty International. Various other international studies are carried for example by Eurobarometer, which publishes several reports focused directly on corruption.

This paper will focus on corruption perception in the Czech context. The topic will first be discussed in the general framework of corruption perception in the post-communist environment in general, and will then shift its attention to the Czech Republic. Based on existing research and our own analysis, the goal of the

paper will be to present corruption perception and the various transformations it has undergone, all on various discourse levels (discourses of the public and the media; discourse created by political parties and their representatives). The final section of the paper will focus on a wholly fundamental topic – the way corruption perception affects the assessment of the Czech democratic regime and its operation. It will also focus on the transformation of voter support depending on the degree of emphasis on the topic of corruption. The paper has not been conceived chronologically but rather in a thematic order. A chronological approach will be applied only under individual thematic sections.

A note on corruption perception in post-communist countries

In communist countries, including Czechoslovakia, corruption was rampant. One of the reasons many researchers (compare Sandholtz – Taagepera 2005; Åslund 2007; Sajó 2003; Holmes 2003 et al.) have assumed the opinion that the fall of communism actually led to a greater degree of corruption may be that their perception of it has changed – some phenomena that were not previously viewed as corruption or clientelism began to be called so under new post-communist conditions. Moreover, the media, which freed itself from party surveillance and censorship, was allowed to report on phenomena that would otherwise have depended on the party's will. This is perhaps an explanation for the ostensible view that "corruption is all around us", despite the fact that the degree of corruption may not actually have risen since communist times. There has been a fundamental difference in the situations of the old and new regimes. Together with this, a difference has also arisen between old and new corruption discourse (compare e.g. Karklins 2005).

Research carried out in various post-communist countries with a differing degree of economic standards and differing political development has shown similar corruption perception (Uslaner 2008 b). Research in all cases has confirmed not only the different perception and evaluation of so-called "small" and "big" corruption, it has also shown differing corruption perception in terms of the political elite and the public. Research has also pointed out the connections between corruption perception, economic equality or inequality, and overall trust in institutions and society in general. In terms of this research, citizens of individual countries viewed the degree of corruption as higher than did high-ranking state officials and political leaders. In public discourse, corruption has resounded more emphatically than in the discourse of the elite. The public often points out high political corruption as one of the main problems. Even in Estonia, which long holds the best position among post-communist countries in the Corruption Perception Index (see Table 1), people believe that high political corruption is a common phenomenon (Uslaner 2008 b; Karklins 2005). Both the public and the elite believe there is a high level of small-scale

corruption (Uslaner 2008 b: 160). In certain cases, the public's belief that the elite are corrupt is sometimes used to justify their own involvement in small--scale corrupt transactions (Karklins 2005: 59).

Table 1: Corruption perception index in selected post-communist countries in the years 2008–2013[1]

	EST	PL	LT	H	LV	CZ	SK	RO	BG
2014	26/69	35/61	39/58	47/54	43/55	53/51	54/50	69/43	69/43
2013	28/68	38/60	43/57	47/54	49/53	57/48	61/47	69/43	77/41
2012	32/64	41/58	48/54	46/55	54/59	54/49	62/46	66/44	75/41
2011	29/6,4	41/5,5	50/4,8	54/4,6	61/4,2	57/4,4	66/4	75/3,6	86/3,3
2010	26/6,5	41/5,3	46/5	50/4,7	59/4,3	53/4,6	59/4,3	69/3,7	73/3,6
2009	27/6,6	49/5	52/4,9	46/5,1	56/4,5	52/4,9	56/4,5	71/3,8	71/3,8
2008	27/6,6	58/4,6	58/4,6	47/5,1	52/5	45/5,2	52/5	70/3,8	72/3,6

Source: Transparency International (n. d.)

Survey results from 1997–1998 show that a significant portion of citizens of post-communist countries have experienced a request for a bribe by a public official. One of the Index's conclusions shows that a public official asked for a bribe directly only rarely. Requests for providing a bribe were usually carried out in the form of hinting (Karklins 2005: 42; compare Miller – Grodeland – Koskechkina 2001: 85), which provides more proof of the wide-spread nature of "corrupt norms" [2] – if corruption has permeated society to such a degree, it is not necessary to ask for a bribe explicitly.

1 Information is listed by country in terms of total scores.

2 Corruption as an element of the social system has its own rules of the game; it has its own development mechanisms, etc. According to some authors (Frič 2001: 66), corruption can lead to the spread of a "corrupt climate". This refers to a set of collective concepts and cultural models that for citizens turns corruption into an obvious and customarily justifiable fact and form of legitimized behavior (Frič 1999). If citizens were to formally respect the valid system of laws and rules, it would significantly slow the spread of corruption. In countries with a functioning civil society and respect for norms, corruption is understandably less wide-spread (compare Putnam 1993). When we look for example at the development of Czech society, we see that for a long time, an opposite model of sorts has been in effect, based on which the giving or acceptance of bribes is viewed as common behavior (Frič 1999: 73–74). If we mention the question of respect for norms, in communist Czechoslovakia we would paradoxically find respect (or consent) for corrupt norms, which made up an unofficial set of cultural norms that were in contradiction to the norms officially espoused by the state and party institutions. The spread of a corruption climate in Czech and other environments is not the simple result of the drastic transformations that took place after the fall of the communist regime, but was created during the operation of the former regime. The repetition of corrupt behavior creates norms of corruption, which then guide corruption and spread it through society. Without taking the relevant context into account, it is impossible to exclude the individuals taking place in corruption from these rules, norms and relationships, just as it is impossible to study corruption without these factors.

In all of the countries analyzed, however, the view of the public and the elite are inconsistent in the evaluation of small-scale corruption – although both sides see this form of corruption as being wide-spread, the public often sees it as acceptable and does not link this to an overall mistrust of the system and its institutions (contrary to large-scale corruption). To the public, it is thus a common phenomenon that has been internalized and is easily justifiable when challenged (Karklins 2005: 67). This will be dealt with later in the paper in connection with corruption perception in the Czech Republic. In this context, Pavol Frič (1999; Frič – Kabele 1999) emphasizes the influence of the communist regime, which gave rise to a deeply-rooted corrupt climate in society.

Contrary to this, the elite views small-scale corruption as wholly unacceptable. In this issue, the elite show a higher level of trust in members of the police force than does the public, who view bribes given to police officers as being a relatively common occurrence (Uslaner 2008 b: 160; Frič 2001; European Commission 2013). Although the elite often condemn small-scale corruption, it is often not incorporated in official measures and, despite their verbal campaigns, they also end up tolerating this type of corruption as well. This leads to a state in which the elite, based on differentiation between what is "normal" and what is "deviant" in a certain society, define the boundaries of corruption. In some situations this can be linked to the realization that for some lowly-positioned officials, these forms of corruption can actually be a necessary condition for economic survival. In general, such a state shows that the norms accepted during transformation have not actually been internalized by the elite (Green – Ward 2004: 15; Holmes 2003; compare Berger – Luckmann 1999). Another finding shows a difference in opinion in terms of the growth or decline of corruption – while the elite often answer in surveys that they view the degree of corruption as being the same or lower than it was in the communist era, the public explicitly expresses the opinion that corruption has significantly grown since the fall of communism. This public view that political corruption has grown significantly since the end of the communist era has been confirmed by other research findings (e.g. Haukanes 2004).

Corruption perception in the Czech Republic

If we look in greater detail at the Czech Republic, we may claim that in the initial post-communist period, i.e. in the first years of the existence of Václav Klaus's government, corruption (despite the evident awareness of corruption issues during the period of transformation) was not a common topic of official government statements (Reed 1999a: 161). When it was discussed, its importance was often belittled.[3] A common argument in Czechoslovakia/Czech Republic has been the

3 This is evident in the example of corruption linked to privatization. Despite many indications and proof of corruption, many government leaders were long unwilling to admit the problem or simply made light of it. We can cite a famous quote here from Václav Klaus, who defended the method of privatization

claim that corruption is the price that must be paid for a quick transformation into a privatized state. Over the course of time, however, corruption became an integral part of political statements and documents on all various levels,[4] while political leaders began to express their willingness in declarations on dealing with corruption. The topic of corruption thus became an integral part of the public debate. Corruption perception has been changing, which is evident in both political statements and for example in the frequency of media coverage on the topic. In the example of the Czech Republic, we have seen a tendency since the 1990 s[5] to the present toward a qualitative transformation in terms of references to corruption. Since the middle of the 1990 s, in the press and on public television, the number of reports dealing with corruption has dominantly risen. In Czech Television broadcasts in 1996–1997 the topic was still almost non-existent; later, however, there began to be more and more programs covering the issue.

In terms of printed media and television, there was a period of growth for reports and articles on the topic of corruption, followed by a slight decline (in the press in 2007–2009, on Czech Television 2008–2009), replaced again by an increase that culminated in 2012, when the number of articles began to grow primarily due to the case of the arrest of former Central Bohemian regional governor David Rath. A case involving three members of parliament belonging to the former Civic Democratic Party (ODS) Peter Tluchoř, Ivan Fuks, and Marek Šnajdr also drew attention.[6] In addition, there were several other highly covered scandals involving military purchases accused of exaggerated prices and other controversies linked to commissions for public procurements. Data points to two interesting factors: Firstly, all four nation-wide newspapers (MF Dnes, Právo, Lidové Noviny and Hospodářské Noviny) show a very similar trend in the increase or decrease in the number of articles dealing with corruption (with the exception of MF Dnes, which has a higher number of articles on this topic but shows a similar trend). Secondly, although the years 1998–2002 are generally perceived to be periods that gave rise to corruption and clientelism

despite corruption scandals with the following: "*If over a certain interval of time hundreds of thousands of cars drive down a highway and several dozen of them crash, it is quite sad, but none of us would call it a complete failure of the roads system*" (Klaus cited in Reed 1999 b: 157).

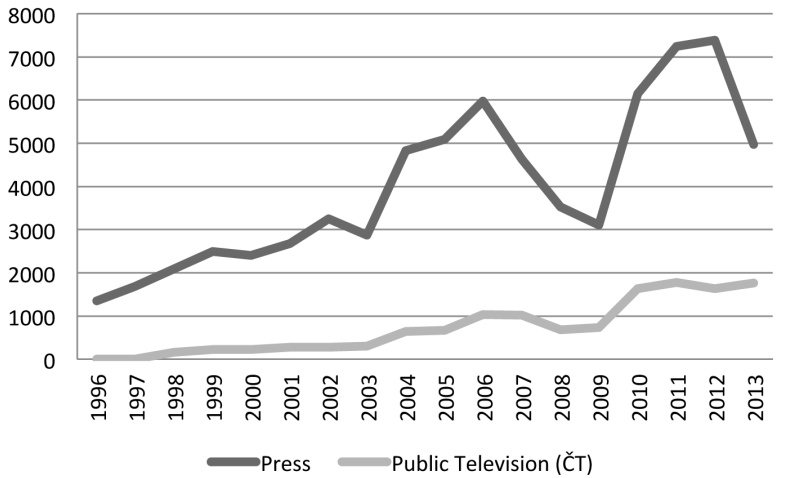
4 The necessity to combat corruption and remove old "corrupt elites" has appeared as one of the flagship issues in the programs of newly formed and (albeit perhaps only temporarily) politically successful parties (e.g. Věci Veřejné, ANO).

5 The archive of the Anopress IT database, from which the date below was taken, dates back only to 1996.

6 According to the Public Prosecutor's Office, these parliamentary deputies accepted a bribe in the form of lucrative posts in state-run companies as reward for giving up their mandate and thus not taking part in the negotiation of a law on which they had an opinion that differed from their party and the whole governing coalition. These "exchanges" for leaving their posts were supposedly offered to them by then Prime Minister Petr Nečas. Based on a decision of the Supreme Court of the Czech Republic, however, these three MPs were cleared of all accusations with the justification that they cannot be prosecuted for alleged criminal acts that took place before they gave up their mandate – the acts of these MPs were thus protected by immunity held by deputies (more in Naxera 2014; Kupka – Mochťak 2014).

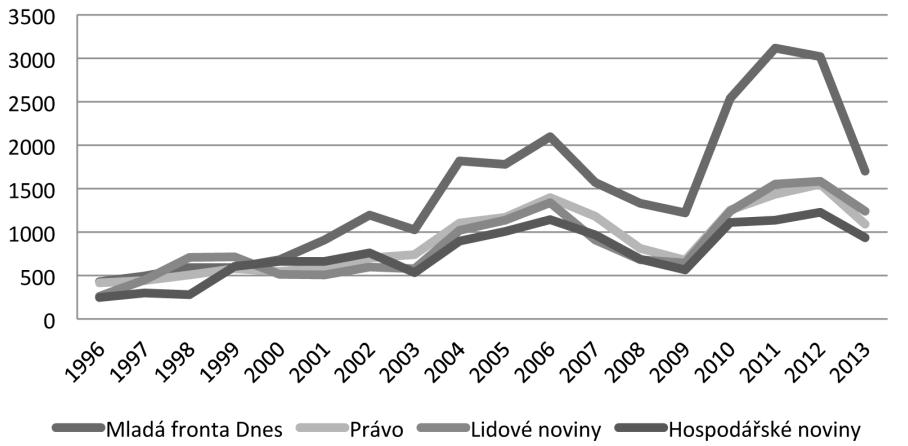
(Kopeček 2013: 295), we see no significant increase in reports in these years dealing with corruption as compared to other periods.

Graph 1: Development of references to corruption in national newspapers and public television (1996–2013)[7]



Source: Author

Graph 2: Development of references to corruption in national newspapers (1996–2013)[8]



Source: Author

7 The graph depicts the number of articles in newspapers (total numbers of MF Dnes, Práva, Lidové Noviny and Hospodářské Noviny) and reports on public television (the total number of all Czech Television channels combined) that contain the words "corruption", "corrupt", "bribe" or "clientelism".

8 The graph depicts the number of articles containing the words "corruption", "corrupt", "bribe" or "clientelism".

In public opinion polls that were carried out in the Czech Republic at the end of the 1990 s (see Frič 1999: 77), a large portion of the public failed to mention corruption as one of the three most serious problems of Czech society despite the high amount of corruption scandals that had taken place throughout the decade. This also corresponds to the less than thorough attention paid to corruption by the political elite of the time.[9] In addition to a weak civil society, for which passivity and indifference (e.g. Vráblíková 2009) are characteristic, the influence of a corrupt climate is also greatly responsible for such a situation. In surveys (compare Frič 1999), a large portion of respondents give answers that suggest that taking and giving bribes in the Czech Republic is something deeply rooted, the tradition of which reach far back into the past. The pressure of corrupt norms is so evident that many people give bribes "out of habit" without the bribed party even having to make the request for one. This deals mostly with small-scale bribes in the form of "presents" or "kickbacks". A large number of people thus think that although corruption is not evident superficially, corrupt norms exist in society and providing bribes is often considered to be a necessary condition for success (Frič 1999: 79). Many of these small-scale bribes (e.g. a bottle of alcohol or a box of sweets for the doctor) has been so encoded into society that the majority of its members do not even see it as corruption but rather as a gesture of politeness. In this sense, roughly three quarters of respondents in surveys conducted at the end of the 1990 s expressed their experience with giving "gifts" (Frič 1999: 79; Ondráčka in Česká televize 2011). This is also reflected in more recent surveys, which show that respondents are far more willing when requiring a service from authorities to provide a reciprocal service or "gift" rather than money. While 53% of respondents considered a reciprocal service to be acceptable, 47% considered a gift to be acceptable, while only 19% chose money. We should add here that in these categories, the statistics from the Czech Republic are far higher than the EU average, mainly in the case of reciprocal services and gifts (compare European Commission 2013: 2).[10]

9 Newer research now shows different results (compare below).

10 Some practices in terms of small-scale corruption have been ingrained so deeply into society that it does not actually link them to corruption at all. However, bringing a "small gift" to one's doctor or official in public services is a completely different act than bringing a present to friends while on a visit. The principle of gift giving in a liberal democratic society has its place exclusively in the private sphere (see Müller 2012a). Giving of gifts in the public sphere can lead to the feeling of creating obligations into the future, which violates the principles of the public sphere. Despite this fact, giving "gifts" has become routine and is very accurately illustrated in Fríč and Kabele's (1999: 22) writing, which we will quote here in full: "*In the Czech Republic, there is a tale about a general practitioner who, upon his well-earned retirement, gives his successor the keys to a cellar filled from top to bottom with bottles of alcohol of all various brands. When asked embarrassedly by his younger colleague why he would do such a thing, the doctor gives him the following explanation: 'Already in my youth, I was a sworn enemy of alcohol and I have been a teetotaler ever since. What's more, I was also an idealist and I viewed bribe-taking as a humiliating, loathsome activity. At first I tried to explain this to my patients. They refused to accept my arguments, and either quickly began to buy different brands of alcohol or forced money on me. Soon, however, I was to realize that in refusing their bribes, I was insulting them and arousing generally unpleas-*

The surveys that Frič (1999) cites show us one more additional and interesting fact – the presence of a double standard.[11] In the vast majority of cases, answers contained the belief that corruption is a negative and immoral phenomenon and one which the respondent would never take part in – personally accepting or giving a bribe was admitted by only 10% of respondents. Contrary to this, the vast majority of respondents state in polls that bribes are commonplace. The parallel validity of two contrasting social norms is often interpreted as one of the results of communist rule. In terms of the communist regime, using two sets of morals was an oft-used life strategy under the communist regime (compare e.g. Možný 2009; Klicperová-Baker – Feierabend – Hofstetter 1999; Holý 2010 et al.) – individuals' experience with two sets of morals (one for the public and one for the private sphere) has a history that stretches back decades.

In 2013, 15% of respondents admitted to having given a bribe while in contact with providers of public services (police, public authorities, education, health care, etc.). However, 95% of respondents view corruption as a problem (Transparency International Czech Republic 2013), while the belief that corruption covering the whole spectrum of state institutions and authorities dominates public opinion. The vast majority of respondents is also convinced that the degree of corruption has been growing in recent years (European Commission 2013: 1). If we move our attention from small-scale bribery and corruption and focus on the level of public authorities, the public debate often reflects the belief that "the elite are corrupt" and should be replaced.[12] Also, the debate on the necessity of combating large-scale political corruption can be noticed always after the revelation and media coverage of corruption among highly positioned political leaders – recently, this happened with the three previously mentioned former ODS deputies. "*A crucial problem* [in terms of corruption perception among the Czech population] *is not in the abuse of power by lower-level officials in providing public services, but the abuse of public funds through the manipulation of public procurement and other various grants. The link between business, political representation and high-ranking members of the state administration play a key role*"

ant feelings. This included their mistrust and the suspicion that I might not be such a good doctor if I did not request the same compensation as the others, who were also truly good doctors. In order to defend my good name, I had to adapt – the result of which is this cellar full of alcohol, which I personally want nothing to do with."

11 According to Jeanne Becquart-Leclercqové (1989), a dual normative structure is actually characteristic of every society or, more exactly, in every societal grouping. One set of morals corresponds to the world of ideals, while the other arises from confrontation with reality. If both structures begin normatively to overlap, a situation arises that is beneficial for society – reality thus is created according to what the majority of citizens expect. On the contrary, if the difference between these two structures is vast, it means that public proclamations and actual operations are completely different. A good example of this can be found in communist regimes.

12 Because of this, we often see the appeal to replace the corrupt elite voiced by new political parties striving to gain entrance into parliament (e.g. the case of the Věci Veřejné party or Adrej Babiš's ANO movement).

(Transparency International Czech Republic 2013). This belief is significantly reflected in the perception of the function of a democratic regime (compare Linek 2010). Author Vladimíra Dvořáková (2012: 12) embodies this form of "people's debate"[13] in a chapter of her book: "*I know (even from my own experience) that all of these clientelist networks fight to defend themselves tooth and nail from being defeated. Anyone who blows the whistle on corruption and clientelism or uncovers its abuses must be punished. That is their* [i.e. corruption politicians'] *form of prevention, which is aimed at prohibiting and intimidating.*"

A large portion of society is convinced of the previously mentioned link between business and politics – 69% of respondents in 2013 replied that clientelism and nepotism in the public sphere and its higher echelons was damaging to business. This corresponds to an older poll by the Association of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises and Crafts CZ from 2010, in which 60% of questioned businessmen stated that it was not possible to win a public tender with corruption or acquaintances in the proper places (Transparency International Czech Republic 2013; compare also Czech Television 2011). In addition to this link between business and politics, a large portion of respondents in the Czech Republic are convinced of the illegal financing of political parties – in this sense, 81% of respondents voiced this opinion (Transparency International Czech Republic 2013). This number was similar in polls done again in 2014 (CVVM 2014 b).

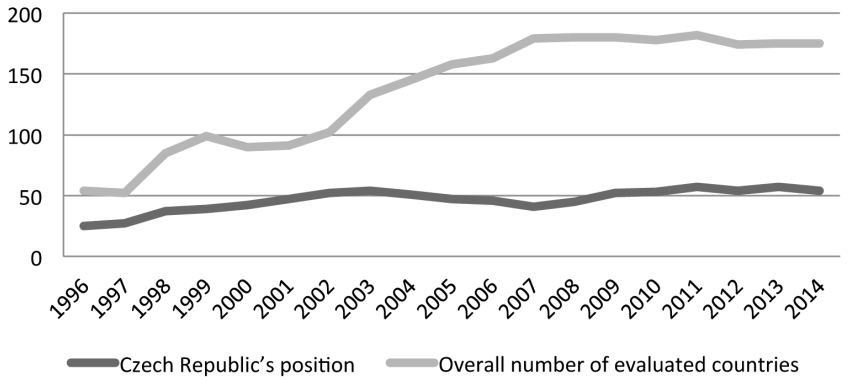
Perception of the spread of corruption in the Czech Republic has strengthened since 2009, when the Czech Republic dropped several notches in the CPI ladder. It has held roughly the same position until now (see Graph 3). Belief in the corruption of the elite and the necessity to deal with this corruption, however, is not often successfully transformed into successful social action.[14] This is partially due to the weakness of civil society (e.g. Vráblíková 2009; Sedláčková 2012; Müller 2012 b; Howard 2002 et al.), but is also for example caused by the widespread and often shared opinion that high political corruption must be dealt with by highly-ranking political officials and not by society (compare Karklins 2005). We should add, however, that in recent years there have been more and more civil society organizations focusing on monitoring and combating corruption (aside from Transparency International, we can name the Anticorruption Endowment, Reconstruction of the State and others) (Dvořáková 2014).

In general, corruption perception in the Czech environment corresponds to the previously mentioned general patterns that arise from surveys carried out e.g. by various post-communist countries (Uslaner 2008 b).

13 Various examples of these "people's debates" (as opposed to "elite debates") can also be found in Czech Television broadcasts (2011).

14 There are civil society organizations that have made significant efforts in the fight against corruption in previous years and which have proof of certain success in this matter (Transparency International or in the Czech context the Anticorruption Endowment).

Graph 3: CPI in the Czech Republic (1996–2013)[15]



Source: Transparency International

Depiction of corruption in Czech political party programs

Corruption as a fundamental social and political issue logically also holds a place in the discourse created by political parties and their leaders. Therefore, it is exceptionally interesting in this context to analyze the programs of political parties. The following section summarizes findings on references to corruption in the programs of four political parties (ODS – the Civic Democrat Party, KDU-ČSL – the Christian and Democratic Union, KSČM – the Communist Party, and ČSSD – the Czech Social Democrat Party) which have all held long-term seats in the Chamber of Deputies of the Czech Parliament. Results come from a study of party programs created for all parliamentary elections until the year 2013 (for more on this topic see Naxera 2015). Thus, this does not provide a complete view of the stance of political parties on the topic of corruption but provides only a contribution to analyzing these stances.

By focusing on the depiction of the topic of corruption in political party programs over the course of post-communist developments and also the frequency of this depiction (see graph 4), we may draw several conclusions. In the beginning of the 1990 s, corruption was not a topic often dealt with, although the programs mainly of left-wing opposition parties soon began to place an emphasis on linking the process of post-communist privatization of former state property to illegal financial activities including corruption, or an emphasis on linking private economic interests with public ones. Criticisms of privatization linked to corruption were still appearing in the programs of ČSSD and KSČM

15 The CPI has existed since 1995. The Czech Republic was not, however, a part of the survey in its first year.

as late as 1998. Privatization is presented as a process that, thanks to the way it was implemented, led to the illegally-gained fortunes of a select few individuals. On the contrary, ODS (and to a certain degree KDU-ČSL) have emphasized the positive impacts of privatization while failing to mention any of its negative aspects. This also touches on the issue of corruption. This is linked to the evident "playing-down" of corruption on the part of various politicians in the beginning of the 1990 s.

The second conclusion can be drawn in connection to the 2002 elections, which came after a four-year period of the so-called "opposition agreement", which is today commonly associated with the proliferation of corrupt behavior (e.g. Kopeček 2013). These were elections during which the emphasis on corruption first began to grow strongly. This happened mainly in the programs of parties that had been until then opposition parties, mainly the "Koalice" Party.[16] On the contrary, no growth in the emphasis on corruption in ODS and ČSSD programs was logically recorded.

Furthermore, we can add that corruption is conceived in different ways according to party – for example, ODS connects corruption predominantly with small-scale bureaucratic corruption, whereas a number of other political party programs show the conviction of the systematic growth of corruption not only in state bureaucracy, but also in upper political echelons.[17] At the same time, it is evident that the emphasis on corruption in higher spheres is placed by individual parties primarily in cases where they had functioned as members of the opposition in the period preceding the given election period, not as a member of the ruling government. In such cases, it is common for these parties to link the growth of corruption in the years prior to the operation of the previous government against which they had formed an opposition (these were e.g. ČSSD programs in 1998 and 2013, ODS in 2006 or Koalice in 2002). Evidently, the topic of corruption has become a tool used in the political struggle between individual parties.

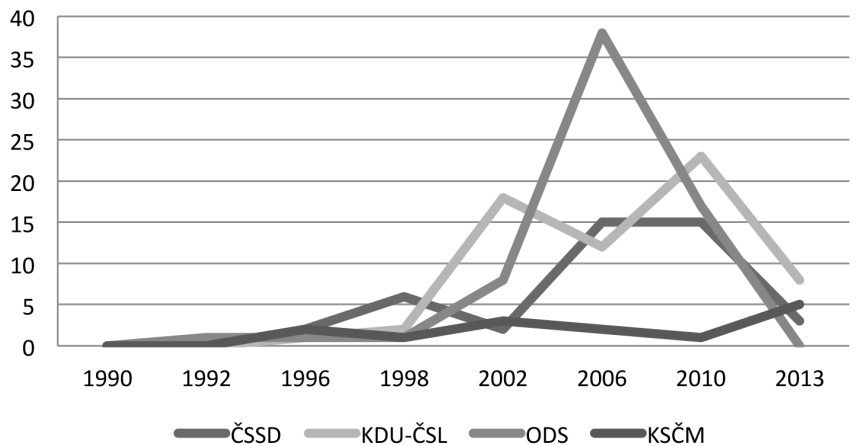
The next interesting finding is linked to parliamentary elections in 2013, during which the overall emphasis on corruption among individual parties rapidly decreased (the most significant drop can be seen with ODS, which wholly avoided the topic of corruption in its program). This may in turn be linked to a number of direct or indirect corruption scandals involving high political positions (especially ODS – see e.g. Kupka and Mochťak 2014) that were highly covered by the media in previous years. This contrasts with the growth in the number of articles and reports in the media (see Graph 1 and Graph 2), which

16 Koalice is the term designating the coalition formed by KDU-ČSL and the Freedom Union-Democratic Union, which ran on the same ticket for the 2002 elections.

17 We find this statement in an ODS program in only one case in 2006. This program was designed around elections, prior to which ODS had been in the opposition for eight years, and is an exception for ODS programs in general in terms of the concept of corruption.

culminated in 2012 (with a mild decrease until 2013), and also with public opinion polls in which 95% of respondents reported that corruption was a serious problem. In these polls, the greatest emphasis was placed on the corruption of highly-ranking politicians and other government officials; the financing of political parties; and the intertwining of business and politics (compare above, or Transparency International Czech Republic, 2013). In conclusion, we should mention that corruption as a topic was the most marginal in KSČM's programs. While mainly in 1992, 1996 and 1998 communist programs explicitly and implicitly linked corruption to the privatization process, in later periods corruption is mentioned only in brief through the use of general phrases on the harmful nature of corruption and the need to combat it. This is interesting considering that KSČM is not present in executive functions and its members are not as often linked to corruption cases in the media and therefore could strongly take advantage of the topic in terms of the political struggle.

Graph 4: Quantification of the frequency of references on corruption in the programs of selected political parties for the former Czech National Council and the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic



Source: Author

Consequences of corruption perception for the evaluation of the political regime

Extensive corrupt behavior brings many consequences that are commonly considered negative. Very often, the economic impacts are mentioned in reference to finances taken out of the public sector through corrupt transactions, which are then lacking in the budget for other areas where they are more needed. In terms

of corruption perception, it is interesting to follow the impacts of corruption on the functioning of democracy and society's perception of this. Widespread corruption harms the functioning of a liberal democratic state at its very core.

For a liberal democratic society, corruption has many consequences. One of the characteristics of such a model of government should be a fairness that is perceived in terms of equality toward the state (compare e.g. Rawls 1995). By giving unfair advantage to select players, corrupt and clientelist mechanisms strongly undermine this equality. This rampant corruption, which can be found in communist regimes and in societies founded after the fall of communism, leads to the spread of corruption norms and corrupt rules of the game. Although these rules are not spread on an official level, they distinctly form or deform the official rules of "gameplay". The certain normative vacuum that exists at the moment of the fall of a communist regime and the initial phase of transformation creates an environment in which corrupt norms may strongly take root. Thanks to this, corruption has the opportunity to influence and set the direction of the development of the formal image of the political system (Scott 1972), even though this transformation of the system and its official rules has not been "consecrated" by standard methods of approval. Rampant corruption and the corruption norms that are linked to it thus limit the actual principles of democracy. The spread of corrupt norms and climates also affects corruption perception, which does not necessarily have to be viewed by society as condemnable. It can be perceived as a common tool for an individual to function in public space. If we summarize the specific expressions of violating the democratic rules of the game, we can include (1) the violation of individuals' equality in their access to the state, which leads to a drop in the trust citizens have in the state and its institutions, and (2) making it impossible for citizens to influence any changes in the operation of the system.

The political consequences of corruption are thus manifold, and include those both short and long-term (Johnston 1989). One of the short-term effects is the increase in cost, slowness, and unpredictability of official procedures. There are other long-term consequences in addition to disrupting the equality of access to the state and its services. Corruption helps to weaken trust in various elements of the political structure and, in extreme cases, leads to complete loss of trust in the democratic system and a loss of faith in the norms of a liberal democratic nation. In this context, author Lukáš Linek (2010) refers to four dimensions of negative approaches toward a regime that can be linked to corruption. These approaches include illegitimacy of the regime, institutional estrangement, individual estrangement, and political dissatisfaction (Linek 2010: 14). The first of these dimensions relates to whether an individual considers a democratic regime to be the correct or incorrect system, while the latter three deal with lower levels of evaluation of regimes and some of their specific elements. Institutional estrangement is linked to the degree to which citizens

are convinced that political institutions react to their requests. Individual estrangement expresses the degree to which individuals feel politics affects them and how able and willing they are to take part in it. Political dissatisfaction is connected to evaluating the dissatisfaction with and mistrust of institutions, which is predominantly based on evaluating the performance of the economic and political spheres (Linek 2010: 14).

Considering all these dimensions, the question regarding the overall legitimacy or illegitimacy of a regime should be considered to be the most stable indicator from a long-term standpoint. This dimension is not so strongly subject to major short-term deviations as are the lower dimensions. This of course depends on the ability of citizens to differentiate between the legitimacy of a regime and its effectiveness. Despite some middle or long-term deviations, we can state that the support of the democratic regime in the Czech Republic has long dominated over the support of alternative models including the opportunity to return to the communist regime previous to the year 1989 (Linek 2010: 65). In terms of existing research, we can, however, see an evident shift in 1997–1998 (compare Table 2), which involved economic problems,[18] political party financing scandals (see also Linek – Outlý 2008; Císař – Petr 2007; Pšeja 2005) and issues connected to the "Opposition Agreement"[19] (compare Linek 2010: 85; data from research see Ibid.).

Table 2: Evaluation of the functioning of the political regime in the Czech Republic 1991–2006 (percentages of positive responses)

	1991	1992/3	1994	1995	1998	2004	2006
Communist regime	23	29	23	24	31	31	35
Current democratic regime	71	71	78	77	56	69	63

Source: Linek (2010: 65)

These three factors, i.e. the state of the economy, the problematic system of political party financing (often linked to privatization) and the signing of the Opposition Agreement, are according to author Linek (2010: 15) linked to the transformation of the lower dimensions of regime evaluation. In this context, he has elaborated on the former proclamation made by Václav Havel, who in one of his speeches deemed the yet unfinished process of privatization and the corruption of politicians and state officials as the main reasons for the dissatisfaction of the country's citizenry: "[T]*here is a dominant belief that in this*

18 It should be added that, after the fall of the communist regime, Czech citizens linked their expectations of democracy mainly to growth in the economic sector (compare Vráblíková 2009) – thus, economic declines can be dramatically reflected in the perception of democracy.

19 The "Opposition Agreement" was a pact formed between ČSSD and ODS on mutual cooperation after early elections in 1998.

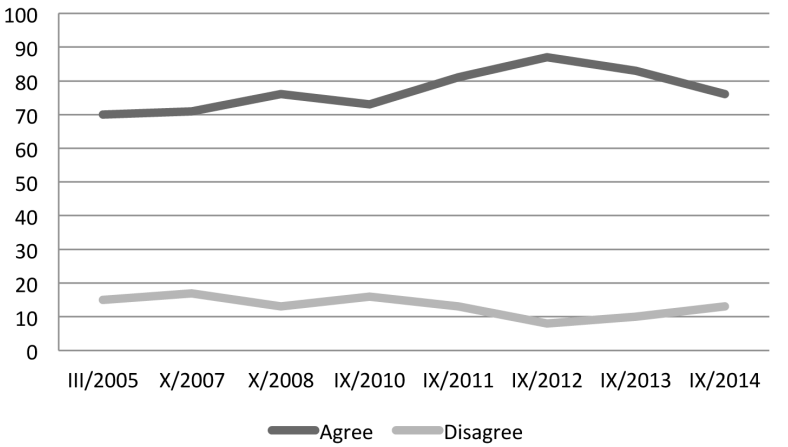
country it pays to lie and steal; that many politicians and state officials are bribable and that political parties – however eloquently they speak about their virtuous intentions – are secretly manipulated by suspect financial groups" (Havel 1997). The era of the opposition agreement is often linked to issues of corruption and the illegal financing of political parties (e.g. Kopeček 2013). Issues concerning such problematic methods of financing can be found even earlier – in 1997, problems mainly surrounding ODS party financing arose (compare e.g. Pšeja 2005; Linek – Outlý 2007; Císař – Petr 2007), but also included other political parties, e.g. the Civil Democratic Alliance and KDU-ČSL, who had issues with non-transparent gift-receiving and other bank loans (Linek 2010: 15).

Now we can shift our focus toward the lower dimensions named in relation to the regime and how corruption, clientelism and other similar practices affect them. Firstly, we will concentrate on the estrangement from politics, which we have divided into individual and institutional. Individual estrangement is expressed through a political passiveness that is typical for all post-communist countries (even in comparison with western societies) including the Czech Republic (for an interesting quantitative information and comparison see Vráblíková 2009). The long-term low degree of political participation immediately after the fall of communism in the first state of transformation is typical for all post-communist countries (Ingelhart – Catterberg 2002). This passiveness stems from the lack of knowledge on the function of the democratic process and also from the belief that a citizen has no ability to influence politics. In recent surveys, for example, 80% of Czech respondents voiced their opinion that Czech citizens have no realistic methods of influencing political activity or change any of the aspects they consider to be negative (Matějka 2014). "[.] *civil society has no means to combat corruption. It can only disagree with it and write petitions in protest, which is like writing a resolute petition against the activities of the mafia. By doing so, some will calm their consciences and others will have a laugh at its expense*" (Keller 2013: 7). Individual estrangement, the degree of which is relatively stable in the Czech environment (Linek 2010: 114), is important for corruption in that it decreases the participation of individuals in the political process, which in turn weakens the pressure from the public necessary to subdue corruption. However, we have already stated that this trend is possibly, slowly changing in some areas.

Let us then have a look at the institutional estrangement that is linked to the belief that political institutions do not react to the wishes of the citizenry and that elected political parties and politicians act as they please after being elected. According to long-term surveys in the Czech Republic, we can state that roughly 60% of Czech citizens are convinced that once politicians are elected, they follow their own interests and not the interests of the public. This is connected to the overall conviction that political parties are corrupt (CVVM 2014 b; also compare Graph 5 and Graph 6). This number (60%) is stable in the long-term context (with the exception of the end of the 1990 s) and in comparison

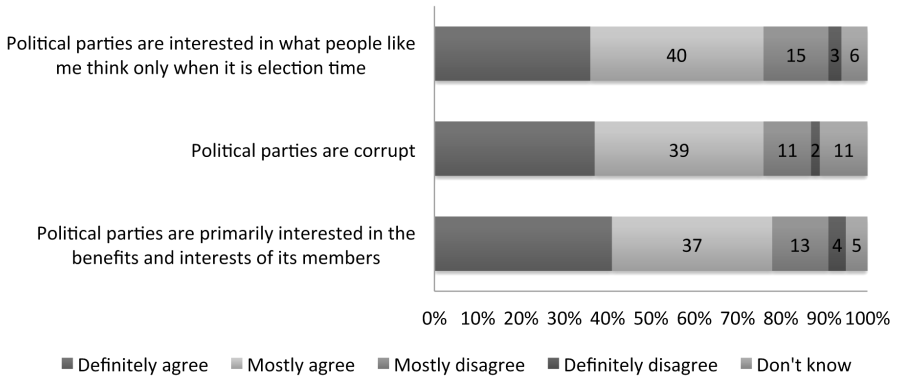
with western European countries is fairly high (Linek 2010: 113). An important element that is reflected in institutional estrangement is corruption perception (Linek 2010: 14). Therefore, it is probable that the decrease in corruption perception in the Czech Republic in recent years (compare Table 1 and Graph 3) is reflected in the degree of institutional estrangement.

Graph 5: Agreement and disagreement with the statement that political parties are corrupt – comparison over time (responses in %)[20]



Source: CVVM (2014 b: 6)

Graph 6: Attitudes toward political parties in the Czech Republic (September 2014; responses in %)

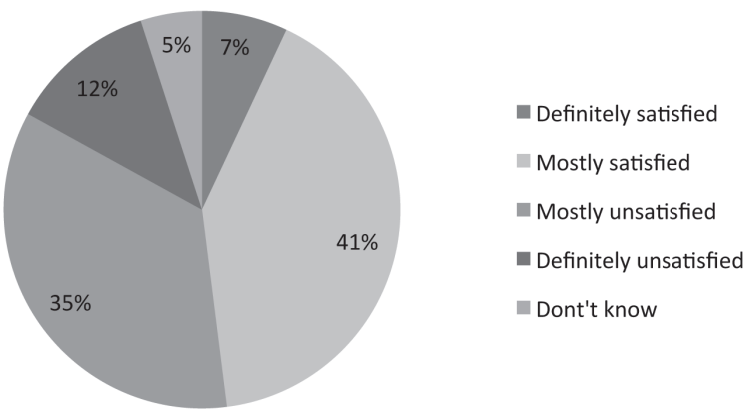


Source: modified from CVVM (2014 b: 2)

20 Numbers comprise a sum of responses of "definitely or mostly agree" and "definitely or mostly disagree". The missing % out of 100% is comprised of "don't know" answers.

The final dimension is the level of political dissatisfaction. The level of corruption perception is shown based on research results as one of the most important factors that influence not only overall dissatisfaction (compare with Graph 7) but specific dissatisfaction with certain institutions or political parties, mistrust in specific politicians and so forth (Linek 2010: 135). One of the consequences of political dissatisfaction in terms of voting preferences can be a change in preferences for a certain party (Linek 2010: 194–199). Therefore we can assume that the high degree of corruption perception, which is in turn a source of political dissatisfaction, in some cases leads to changes in party support. This was evident in elections in 2010 and 2013, when new political parties gained success outside the party spectrum of the time, as both these parties (Věci Veřejné in 2010 and the ANO movement in 2013) placed great emphasis on the fact that they are different from the other established political formations. They both strongly highlighted corruption in their programs and the general need to replace contemporary politicians. In the case of the ANO movement, this included the slogan "*We aren't like politicians – we're working hard*" (anobudelip.cz 2014), while Věci Veřejné used the analogy of the fight against the "dinosaurs" in politics and the battle against corruption. This could be seen also in Věci Veřejné's symbolic firing of a cannon in the direction of the Straka Academy[21] (Novinky.cz 2010; Věci Veřejné 2010). Primarily in the case of ANO, an important part of the movement's agenda was the public announcement of their "apolitical" and "non-partisan" character, which strongly corresponds to the general and widely-held belief that political parties are corrupt (Compare Graphs 5 and 6).

Graph 7: Satisfaction with the functioning of democracy in the Czech Republic (October 2014; responses in %)



Source: CVVM (2014a: 2)

21 The Straka Academy is the seat of the Government of the Czech Republic.

Corruption is thus significantly reflected in the approach of citizens toward the political regime at various levels. In general, corruption has extensive social consequences and leaves its mark on the state of civil society and citizens' expectations and attitudes toward it. Corruption is also connected with overall trust in society, or more exactly with the issue of social capital (compare Putnam 1993 or 2000; also Sedláčková 2012). Corruption also increases inequality (both in the economy and the accessibility of the state) and decreases the feeling of optimism and the possibility of controlling or influencing one's own life, which are two important building blocks of trust. The spread of corruption also decreases social solidarity – either directly through the influence of decreased trust or indirectly through linking social and economic inequality (Uslaner 2008a: 10). As we have already stated, the decrease of trust in the system and its institutions under any of the previously mentioned dimensions of the relationship between the individual and the system[22] is caused by society (although not necessarily by the elite – compare Uslaner 2008 b: 165 and 177). This happens mainly due to the influence of large-scale corruption and not e.g. by giving small bribes to one's doctor. Small-scale corruption, however, also has its serious social and political consequences – it is something that does not happen immediately, but represents rather a gradual loss in faith in the functionality and overall meaning of official norms, i.e. in the functionality of democracy, although this does not necessarily have to (but can) be in all cases linked to the loss of the legitimacy of the whole democratic system (Linek 2010).

We can list one more serious impact of corruption. This is the impact corruption actually has "on itself", or in other words the impact of corruption on the way it is perceived. In public discourse, widespread corruption can be reproduced in public discourse. As we have already pointed out, in many post-communist countries (including the Czech Republic), society to a large degree is convinced of the corrupt nature of the elite (proof of this can be found in the generally widespread conviction that motivation for entering politics is to gain riches; Transparency International Czech Republic 2013; also compare with CPI data in Table 1 and Graph 3). The media's coverage of even alleged corruption scandals among the political elite also does its part to raise the public's belief that politicians are corrupt. Put concisely, the spread of corruption or the public's persuasion that corruption is widespread can be reflected e.g. in indicators monitoring corruption perception. The actual volume of corruption does not necessarily have to change in reality – it is enough for the public opinion to change in the favor of the idea that corruption is taking place at a higher degree

22 Confidence is not only diminished by corruption itself, but also when citizens of a country are convinced that corruption among the elite goes unpunished. Systematic corruption, which institutionalizes and immunizes itself by e.g. placing favorited individuals in key posts that are meant to combat corruption, disrupts the fairness of police investigations and the judicial process. This wholly erodes one of the basic principles of a legal state – the fact that citizens accept the laws to which they are subject.

and thus its volume "grows". This need not apply only to corruption among high-ranking officials – similar principles help to reproduce these notions of corruption at the lowest levels of the spectrum. The belief that bribe-giving is commonplace and that "corruption is all around us", together with the help of corruption norms and the widespread opinion that giving bribes is commonly excusable and in comparison with high political corruption is negligible – all of this can impact actual existing corruption activities in the form of a self--fulfilling prophecy.

Conclusion

This paper is focused on the issue of corruption perception in the Czech Republic and the transformation of this perception over the course of the developments of the post-communist era. It also points out some of the notable tendencies linked to this issue. One of the primary factors discussed is the issue of corruption gradually permeating public debate, which applies to the discourse created among citizens, the media and the political elite. This paper also points out one of the specific segments of the political elite in greater detail based on the political party programs. During the first half of the 1990 s, the topic of corruption was not overly publicized, and (despite proof of e.g. corruption linked to privatization) was largely overlooked and sometimes made light of by certain political elites. In this period, anti-corruption appeals began to emerge more significantly in the programs of leftist opposition, which drew these connections between corruption and privatization.

After this initial period, the issue of corruption took root in public debate. At the same time, it is interesting to note that although the period of 2002–2006 is seen as a period linked to the prevalence of corrupt activities (compare e.g. Kopeček 2013), it did not greatly affect the manner in which it was publicized. However, the number of reports referring to corruption continued to grow, culminating in 2011 and 2012 with the coverage of several scandals linked to the high political echelons across the spectrum of political parties.

The topic of corruption has transformed in terms of public debate. Recent polls (e.g. European Commission 2013) clearly show that a large portion of the Czech public is convinced that corruption is on the rise in the country. In the vast majority of polls in recent years, a great portion of the public have expressed the opinion that not only small-scale corruption is widespread, but also the corruption of the political elite and political parties, which are viewed as organizations taking part in corrupt activities and consequently attempting to cover them up. Political parties are at the same time often perceived as actors that have no realistic will to combat corruption (CVVM 2014 b; European Commission 2013 and others). This approach to political parties, which has long been present in the Czech party system, may have gained strength after

the last parliamentary elections in 2013, during which the overall stress on the topic of corruption in election programs decreased, with even some parties like ODS leaving the issue wholly out of their program. This is also a factor that has helped new political formations (Věci Veřejné and ANO) enter the Czech Chamber of Deputies in the previous two elections, as they took a strong stance in their rhetoric against the contemporary political establishment on the issue of common corruption practices in the country.

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Employer Organisations and Business Groups in the Czech Republic[1]

ANETA PINKOVÁ

Abstract: *This article is a case study focusing on employer organisations and business organisations in the Czech Republic. In legal terms, employer organisations are a specific type of interest group with special regimes of registration and record keeping. Unlike business groups, they are endowed with certain privileges and, in particular, can participate in collective bargaining. This study analyses the relations between these two types of groups. The database originates from a questionnaire-based survey undertaken in 2010 among 91 groups representing businesses and employers. The analysis focuses on the relationship between a group's registration as an employer organisation and its orientation towards employer and business interests. It also investigates similarities between the two organisation types in terms of secondary organisation and strategies used. The analysis suggests that the differences between these two types are minimal and that the possibility of participating in collective bargaining and in tripartite counselling bodies remains the only relevant distinction. This holds true even when we take into account these groups' self-perceived primary role, i.e. defending their members as employer or as business organisations.*

Keywords: ***Business Groups; Czech Republic; Employer Organisations; Interest Groups; Tripartite; Membership Types***

Introduction

The status and character of social partners, i.e. organisations representing employers and trade unions, are among the key features determining the nature of industrial relations in any country. Compared with trade unions, employer organisations have been afforded rather marginal attention in the political sciences. Under Czech law (both before and after the new Civil Code came into force in 2014), employer organisations and trade unions – but not business

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groups – are considered to be a specific type of association (for more details, see Kunc, Hartoš 2005, Vácha 2013).

This article focuses on one particular aspect of the way that employer organisations operate in the Czech Republic, namely the issue of how they relate to business groups. Both types of organisation represent essentially the same social group (entrepreneurs), but unlike employer groups, business groups may also represent businesses which do not have employees (in the Czech Republic, this mostly refers to self-employed persons; for details of business types in the Czech context, see European Commission 2011). In theory, the distinction between these types of groups is simple enough: employer organisations represent the interests of their members qua employers, particularly vis-à-vis trade unions and the government, within a framework of collective bargaining and social dialogue. Business groups represent the interests of their members in all areas except collective bargaining. Act No. 2/1991 on Collective Bargaining allows only registered employer organisations and trade unions to participate in collective bargaining. Employer organisations are endowed with some other exclusive privileges chief among which is the possibility of participating in the activities of the tripartite Council for Economic and Social Agreement (RHSD) provided that they meet other criteria such as the required membership base size (see Státu RHSD ČR 2009).

But while the distinction between the two types of organisations is clear theoretically and legally, in the practice of Czech interest group politics, the boundary is less obvious and the activities of these organisations interpenetrate: almost all employer organisations in the Czech Republic (and in most other countries) are also regularly active outside collective bargaining and social dialogue, and most business organisations are also involved in social dialogue issues. (For example, business organisations led by the Czech Chamber of Commerce were substantially involved in the drafting and parliamentary adoption of the new Labour Code in 2005–2007, and they also comment habitually on social dialogue issues; for more information on this point, see, e.g. Valterová 2007.) This article seeks to evaluate how meaningful it is to distinguish in practice between these two types of organisations whose legal status is different. The analysis is based on data obtained in a questionnaire-based survey undertaken in 2010 among 25 employer and 66 business organisations. The text draws on data presented in the monograph Employer and Business Organisations in the Czech Republic: Promoting Organized Interests (Pinkova 2011). While the data and some of the conclusions presented in this text are the same as in the original publication, the overall focus of each work is different. The original monograph, which was published in Czech and in printed form only, studies the relationship between the choice of strategy and various characteristics of each group, including its status/registration as an employer group. This article offers a deeper discussion of the differences (or, as the case may be, lack of differences) between groups

registered as employer organisations and groups representing their members as businesspeople/businesses.

The literature available on Czech business and/or employer organisations focuses mainly on formal and legal aspects of their existence. Their positions on social dialogue and especially on issues related to collective bargaining are particularly well analysed (see, e.g. Brádel et al. 2010, Bělina 2012, Veverková 2013, Mansfeldová 2005, Hála et al. 2003). The history of the organisations is also fairly well documented (e.g. Kunc – Hartoš 2005). There is, however, surprisingly little literature on the role that these types of organisations each or both play in the political system as such, or the role they have as intermediaries between the state and society. This is probably because, unlike trade unions, business and employer groups are typically not included in studies focusing on political activism, participation and civil society (e.g. Císař – Navrátil – Vráblíková 2011), which form the bulk of the current research in the field of interest intermediation. These issues were explored in the academic literature in earlier years in connection with discussions about the level (or existence) of some form of corporatism in the Czech Republic and other post-Communist countries (e.g. Ost 2000, Padgett 1999, Padgett 2000, Reutter 1996). Here, the lack of functional employer organisations able to effectively represent their members was seen as one of the main obstacles to establishing tripartism in the new democracies (see especially Padgett 2000).

Background

For the period leading up to 1989 when the Communist regime ruled what is today the Czech Republic, no relevant predecessors of employer and business organisations can be found due to the state ownership of all enterprises. Whatever the role played by earlier organisations (i.e. before 1948), the continuity between them and contemporary interest groups representing entrepreneurs and employers is chiefly symbolic. For this reason, the modern development of Czech business and employer groups began after 1989. In 1990 and even more so in 1991, professional, manufacturing and trade associations began to appear both at the level of the Czechoslovak federation and in the two republics, and while many viewed their establishment purely in terms of the renewal of activities forcefully interrupted in 1948 (see, for example, Černohorská 2003: online), this symbolic succession did not have many practical consequences (see Kroupa et al. 2004). In the early 1990 s, dozens of associations appeared representing various sectors and branches of industry. The period also saw the creation of several organisations that were more or less successful in their aim of fulfilling the role of an umbrella organisation; these included the Confederation of Industry of the Czech Republic and the Confederation of Employer and Entrepreneurs' Associations of the Czech Republic (for more information about

their history, see, e.g. Kunc, Hartoš 2005). Whereas organisations associating emerging business interests were usually created from below, as is typical for this kind of interest group (with the obvious exception of those chambers created by law), the representation of employers' interests in the territory that is today the Czech Republic had its own somewhat specific course of development.

The tripartite Council for Social Agreement (today the RHSD) played an important role in creating organisations representing employers. At the time, its creation was mainly advocated for by new trade union elites. As there was no sufficiently representative employer organisation, the task of representing employers fell to various organisations, large companies and agricultural cooperatives (Myant – Slocock – Smith 2000: 727) which, since August 1990, had been associated through the Coordinating Council of Business Unions and Associations in the Czech Republic (KORP). Employers did not reject tripartism, but nor did they actively support it (Martin – Cristesco-Martin 1999: 394). In early 1990, they were weakly organised and lacked significant influence over economic policy (Myant – Slocock – Smith 2000: 731). One of the reasons for this was the heterogeneity of their umbrella organisation, 'combining large sectoral business unions (for example the Confederation of Industry of the Czech Republic (SP ČR) and the Association of Entrepreneurs in Building Industries), smaller businessmen associated in the Syndicate of Businesspeople of the Czech Republic, and various professional associations. The crystallisation and differentiation of interests following the economic and social transformation brought changes to the organisation. Withdrawal of the largest employers' and business' organisation SP ČR from KZPS in 1995 was a crucial step' (Kroupa et al. 2004: 21).

Whereas the 1990 s saw the fairly turbulent emergence, coalescence and structuring of a system of organisations representing business and employer interests (see Kroupa et al. 2004, Hála et al. 2002), since 2000, the changes in this area have only been piecemeal and the structure of these organisations can be considered fairly stable.

In the Czech Republic employerorganisations (and trade unions) are registered with the Department for Associations of the Ministry of the Interior, which maintains the relevant registry. Until 2014, the registration of social partners was regulated by Act No. 83/1990 on the Association of Citizens, and since then it has been governed by the new Civil Code and is undertaken under a special regime: employer organisations and trade unions have an advantage over other associations since their registration is not subject to the usual procedure as they are recorded in the registry simply on the basis of submitting an application. In formal and administrative terms, employer interest groups are established under Sec. 9a of Act No. 83/1990 on the Association of Citizens.

Four large employer confederations operate in the Czech Republic. "Confederation" here means an organisation which brings together collective members

(though not to the exclusion of individual members) and is not itself a member of any other countrywide umbrella organisation. In the Czech Republic, the following organisations fulfil these criteria: the Confederation of Industry of the Czech Republic (SP ČR), the Confederation of Employer and Entrepreneur Associations of the Czech Republic (KZPS ČR), the Czech Confederation of Commerce and Tourism (SOCR ČR) and the Union of Employer Associations of the Czech Republic (UZS ČR).

In total, 61 employer organisations (as opposed to 766 trade unions) are registered in the Czech Republic (Ministerstvo vnitra [Interior Ministry] 2008). More than half of the registered organisations (31) are not included on the membership list of any confederation, and attempts to find any information about their functioning came to no avail. Of the remaining 30 organisations, 27 are associated through one of the employerconfederations or are the confederations themselves. Active employer interest groups are therefore involved to a significant degree in secondary organisations.

Of the collective members of the employer confederations, only a minority are also registered as employer organisations. The ratio is greatest for KZPS ČR whose seven members include five that are also employer organisations. In contrast, only one union member of SOCR ČR, namely the Association of Manufacturers and Importers of Flooring, is also an employer organisation. The largest employer confederation, SP ČR has 28 members of which ten are registered employer organisations. Within UZS ČR, four members are on the list of registered employer organisations.

Whereas defining employers' organisations is fairly easy since they are registered as such by the Ministry, matters are not so easy when it comes to business interest groups, which are not defined by Czech law. On the face of it, one might define business interest groups as groups associating and representing entrepreneurs in order to promote their business interests. This definition requires several clarifications, however:

An entrepreneur is a natural or legal person who is a) recorded in the business register, b) carries out business on the basis of a trade licence, c) carries out business on some basis other than a trade licence according to special regulations, or d) runs an agricultural business and is recorded in the register according to special regulations (see Act No. 513/1991, the Commercial Code). We may therefore understand that entrepreneurs' interests are those directly related to their economic activities. This rather banal clarification is needed to avoid the inclusion among business interest groups of other organisations whose members happen to be entrepreneurs (for example, leisure organisations)

As we are dealing here with a specific political and legal system, it makes sense to define what we understand by an interest group, as we did with employer organisations. Generally speaking, at the time of this research, interest groups could be defined as civic associations created under Act No. 83/1990 on

the Association of Citizens, or as interest groups of legal persons established under Act No. 40/1964, the Civil Code. Since 2014, when the new Act No. 89/2012 Coll., the Civil Code, came into force, employerorganisations and trade unions have retained their special status while business groups formally changed have their status from "civic associations" to "associations." These definitions do not include all potential business interest groups:

The Czech Chamber of Commerce and Agricultural Chamber were established in 1992 and 1993 respectively under a special Act (No. 301/1992). According to this Act (Sec. 2 (3)), both chambers are associations of entrepreneurs (legal persons and natural persons) who have been accepted as members. As such, they are definitely organisations representing business interests, however unlike most other organisations mentioned here, they cannot be seen as voluntary and/or non-governmental associations since they are created by law and lack organisational autonomy.

Another question worth pursuing is whether professional associations ought to be considered business interest groups. Here one cannot generalise. Either each individual association has to be evaluated based on its concrete characteristics, or these associations must be seen as a specific type of organisation. Embracing the first option, we can distinguish three types of professional association. First of all, it is easy to classify those organisations which associate members according to their profession and are registered as employer organisations or trade unions. While there are about 30 registered trade unions of professionals in the Czech Republic (such as the Actors' Association and the Restorers' Trade Union), among the registered employer organisations, only the Association of Jewellers and Watchmakers of the Czech Republic can be described – with certain caveats – as professional associations (see Ministerstvo vnitra ČR [Czech Interior Ministry] 2008 for more details). Secondly, there are other organisations defined based on members' profession which defend the interests of businesses; they include some of the collective members of the Czech Chamber of Commerce, for example, the Tilers' Guild, the Drywall Installers' Guild, etc. Finally, there are professional chambers and unions associating individuals practising certain professions regardless of whether they are employees or employers.

Professional associations of the first type can be considered employer organisations since they fulfil the definition provided above. There are no objections to classifying associations of the second type as business groups since they also fulfil the relevant definition. Professional associations of the final type cannot be considered business groups as they bring together not only entrepreneurs but also employees.

The main business confederations in the Czech Republic are the Czech Chamber of Commerce (HK ČR) and the Czech Agricultural Chamber (AK ČR). Although the overwhelming majority of their members are not registered em-

ployer organisations, they cannot be considered to be purely business groups not representing employers. Of the 72 tradespeople's associations that are members of the Czech Chamber of Commerce, six are employer organisations (of these, two are members of SP ČR and one of KZPS ČR). In total, these employer confederations bring together four and three members of HK ČR respectively. In the case of the Czech Agricultural Chamber, only one of its members, the Czech-Moravian Association of Agricultural Entrepreneurs, is a registered employer organisation and only the Agricultural Association of the Czech Republic is a member of an employer confederation (KZPS ČR). It is not registered as an employer representative, however.

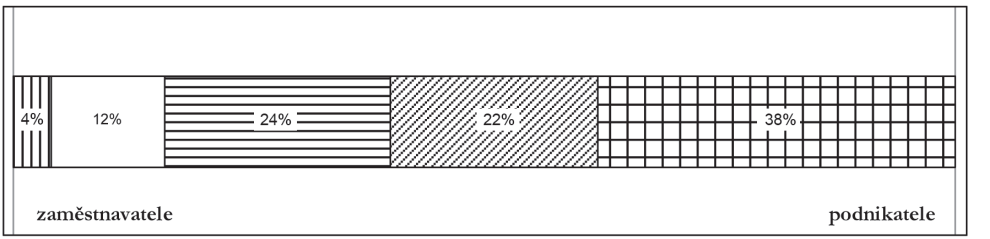
Results of the Research into Employers' Organisations and Business Groups

The database on which the following analysis relies consists of the results of a questionnaire-based survey carried out among the representatives of employer and business groups in the Czech Republic during 2010. The questionnaire contained 37 questions, of which ten concerned these organisations' characteristics and three related to the relationship between groups and their members or among the groups themselves; in the remaining 24 questions, the respondents evaluated the frequency and efficiency of various strategies used (see Pinková 2011 for the full survey as well as a more detailed description of the research methodology). The respondents were asked to evaluate the activities of their groups in 2008–09. In total, 239 organisations were approached, and 91 of them submitted a completed questionnaire; the response rate, thus, stood at 38%. Snowball sampling was used to identify the group or organisations approached. Because the resulting pool of respondents did not fulfil random selection criteria, the conclusions of the analysis cannot be generalised for the population at large. In statistical terms, the conclusions based on the results of the questionnaire survey are therefore only valid for the set of organisations examined. In fact, the latter constitute such a significant share of the identified population that one may assume the results' broader validity. Nonetheless, the correlation analysis, the main statistical instrument used in this work, remains at the level of descriptive statistics. Given the character of the data, which consists of categorical and ordinal variables, Spearman's correlation coefficient is used.

One of the questions posed to the respondents in the questionnaire was whether their group tends to represent its members as employers or as entrepreneurs. The answer to this question includes information extending beyond a simple distinction between organisations registered as employers and those not registered as such (though that point too was ascertained). Such registration is a one-off decision which does not necessarily indicate the present focus of the organisation: a registered organisation has the right to participate in collec-

tive bargaining, but that does not mean that it always genuinely represents its members in negotiations with trade unions. The respondents were, thus, asked to evaluate the real focus of their organisations. The distribution of answers to the first question is displayed in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Distribution of groups according to their representation of employers vs. businesses



N = 91. Own figures, data source: questionnaire survey "Organisations representing employers and businesses."

Of the 91 organisations examined, 25 (i.e. 27%) are registered with the Ministry of the Interior as employer organisations and the remaining 66 groups do not have the status of employer organisations under Act No. 83/1990 on the Association of Citizens. The results of the survey nevertheless suggest that registration itself is not the decisive factor in determining an organisation's self-perception about whether it represents employers or businesses. Of the 25 registered employer organisations the largest number (nine, 36%) said that they represent their members as employers and businesses to the same degree. Surprisingly, the second largest group of registered employers said that they represent their members primarily as businesses; only seven groups understood themselves as representing their members more as employers than as businesses (five, 20%) or exclusively as employers (two, 8%).

In contrast, groups not registered as employers had established fairly clear profiles as organisations representing businesses (45 groups, 68%). The largest share of these groups said that they represent their members purely (28 groups, 42%) or mostly (17 groups, 26%) as businesses. If we look at the organisations examined as a whole, we find that the majority (38%) represent their members primarily as businesses, while the second largest group (24%) represent them as employers and businesses to the same degree. Only around 4% of organisations indicated that they represent their members solely as employers. Table 1 summarises the distribution of answers between (registered) employer and business organisations.

Table 1: Distribution of answers between (registered) employer and business organisations

Members are represented	EMPLOYER	BUSINESS	Total
As employers	2	2	4
More as employers than as businesses	5	6	11
As employers and businesses to the same degree	9	13	22
More as businesses than as employers	3	17	20
As businesses	6	28	34
Total	25	66	91

N = 91. Own table, data source: questionnaire survey "Organisations representing employers and businesses." EMP – Groups registered as employer orgs., BUSINESS – Business groups not registered as employer orgs.

If we calculate the correlation between the two variables (i.e. formal registration as an employer organisation, and self-perception about representing businesses or employers), we find an almost moderate correlation (.261). Organisations registered as employers were therefore more likely to say that they represent their members more as employers than as businesses. That there was some correlation here is not surprising; what is surprising is that it was so weak. For most organisations, general business interests took precedence over the specific role of their members qua employers or as one of the parties in the social dialogue. It is also obvious that employers' interests and the representation of employers do not consist solely of collective bargaining, but involve a broader defence of employers' interests (for instance, consultations about labour legislation): otherwise, the defence of these interests would have to be linked exclusively to registration as an employer organisation. However, this wider understanding was confirmed.

The question of how the two variables that allow us to distinguish between employer and business organisations correlate with other characteristics of interest groups is answered in Table 2. Here, the variables "registration as an employer organisation" and "representation of employer vs. business interests"' are correlated with the variables "budget" and "type of membership" (where options include purely individual, collective and both collective and individual).

Table 2: Correlations between selected variables

	BT	REG	REP	IND	I/C	COL
BT	1	0.390	0.107	0.072	0.080	0.017
REG	0.390	1	0.269	0.077	0.051	0.052
REP	0.107	0.269	1	0.157	0.026	0.267
IND	0.072	0.077	0.157	1	0.879	0.249
I/C	0.080	0.51	0.026	0.879	1	0.242
COL	0.017	0.052	0.267	0.249	0.242	1

Spearman's rho, listwise N = 78. Own table, data source: questionnaire survey "Organisations representing employers and businesses." BT – budget; REG - Registration as an employer organisation; REP - Representation of employer vs. business interests; IND - Individual membership; I/C - Individual and collective membership; COL - Collective membership

Clearly, the (expected) type of membership does not play a role in the key decision that an emerging interest group has to make, namely whether or not to register as an employer organisation. A certain correlation does appear, however, which we might consider interesting in the social science context: this is the one between registration as an employer organisation and budget. As the budget increases, so too does the chance that the organisation is registered as an employer. In other words, organisations with larger budgets tend to register themselves as employer organisations, or interest groups registered as employer organisations tend to have a larger budget at their disposal.

Let us now look more closely at the differences between strategies chosen by employer and business groups. Table 3 summarises the correlations between the variable "registration as an employer organisation" and the frequency with which the various strategies were used.

Table 3: Overview of correlations between a group's registration as an employer organisation and the absolute frequency of its employment of the various strategies

	P-P	P-A	ON	UNO	FC	IC
REG	0.284	0.341	0.373	0.195	0.150	0.246
	PR	**PRM**	**INT**	**LEG**	**PRES**	**MED**
REG	0.352	0.154	0.123	0.165	0.064	0.388

Spearman's rho, listwise, N = 79. Own table, data source: questionnaire survey "Organisations representing employers and businesses." REG - Registration as an employer organisation; P-P - Participation in parliamentary sessions and committees; P-A - Participation in advisory bodies - government or ministries; ON - Official negotiations with politicians and senior civil servants; UNO - Unofficial negotiations with politicians and senior civil servants; FC - Formal commenting on draft bills; IC - Informal commenting on draft bills, PR - Press conferences; PRM - Promotion of the group offline; INT - Publication of information online; LEG - Legal strategies; PRES - Pressuring strategies; MED - Media appearances

In only one case (pressure strategies) was there no correlation between the frequency with which a strategy was employed and the organisation's registration. In five other cases, the correlation was weak; for half of the strategies, however, there was a moderate correlation. Stronger correlations appeared regardless of whether the focus was insider/outsider or formal/informal strategies: employer organisations tend to appear in the media and to organise press conferences more often, which may be related to their specific role as actors in collective bargaining. Their more frequent participation in meetings of parliamentary committees and advisory bodies as well as in official negotiations with politicians and senior civil servants and as informal commenters on draft bills might also be linked with the social dialogue, or with the higher degree of institutional incorporation of employer groups, which has been mentioned above. In no case was the correlation coefficient high enough to interpret the correlation as substantial.

Budget size, which was fairly strongly correlated with registration as an employer group (.407), might also play a role. In other words, groups with more substantial yearly budgets are more often registered as employer organisations. Groups with larger budgets then have the means to be more active, which might indirectly influence the correlation between registration as an employer group and the frequency with which strategies are employed. For this reason, the correlations were re-calculated, this time as partial correlations, excluding the influence of budget size. The results are summarised in Table 4.

Table 4: Overview of correlations between a group's registration as an employer organisation and the overall frequency of its use of various strategies

	P-P	P-A	ON	UNO	FC	IC
REG	0.255	0.155	0.273	0.073	0.160	0.201
	PR	**PRM**	**INT**	**LEG**	**PRES**	**MED**
REG	0.173	0.193	0.002	0.174	0.083	0.206

Partial correlation, listwise, N = 79. Own table, data source: questionnaire survey "Organisations representing employers and businesses." REG - Registration as an employer organisation; P-P - Participation in parliamentary sessions and committees; P-A - Participation in advisory bodies - government or ministries; ON - Official negotiations with politicians and senior civil servants; UNO - Unofficial negotiations with politicians and senior civil servants; FC - Formal commenting on draft bills; IC Informal commenting on draft bills, PR - Press conferences; PRM - Promotion of the group offline; INT - Publishing of information online; LEG - Legal strategies; PRES - Pressuring strategies; MED - Media appearances.

In comparison with the original coefficients, some partial coefficients decreased fairly substantially. The only case where budget size did not play a significant role was in connection with participation in parliamentary committee sessions. In the case of three strategies (unofficial negotiations with politicians and sen-

ior civil servants, publishing of information online and pressuring strategies), the original correlation disappeared entirely and was obviously only a false correlation linked to the group's budget size. For the remaining strategies, it is true that a correlation remained apparent, but for the most part, it was lower than seen for the original coefficients. Although differences existed between employer and business groups in terms of selecting strategies, these were not great and were at least partially the corollary of the larger budgets that employer organisations have at their disposal.

Discussion and conclusion

The results of the questionnaire-based survey show that groups registered as employers certainly cannot be considered to be organisations focusing solely on defending employers' interests. Similarly, organisations that are not registered as employers also substantially defend interests of their members that are linked with their positions as employers. An explanation for these facts can be sought on multiple levels:

The defence of employer and business interests cannot be entirely separated in practice because the conditions under which a company or a self-employed individual engages workers inevitably influence their business interests. Even groups that focus primarily on the social dialogue might view their activities as being in the defence of business interests and choose their answers accordingly. By the same logic, business organisations which do not directly intervene inthe social dialogue defend the interests of their members qua employers: a typical example of this is the already mentioned involvement of the Chamber of Commerce in negotiating the Labour Code (see Valterová 2008 for more details). We can therefore assume that this is the reason why some organisations claim to defend employers' interests even though they do not participate in collective bargaining in any way, and vice versa.

On top of this, the law does not stipulate any special criteria for the registration of employerorganisations. It is therefore quite possible that a number of organisations registered in the early 1990 s or later as employer organisations (notably this is an area where the registration procedure is also simpler), but in later years their activities went in a different direction. This means that in addition to functioning organisations which do not participate in collective bargaining, the list also includes many groups which no longer exist or are inactive. As registration does not bring any obligations or disadvantages, groups which do not really represent their members in collective bargaining have no reason to change their registration.

A casual glance at the membership structure of the main umbrella organisations in this area suggests that registration as an employer organisation is not decisive when it comes to establishing cooperative relations among the groups:

umbrella organisations registered as employers count many business groups among their members, and vice versa. Similarly, comparing the answers to the two questions concerning the division into employer and business organisations suggests that registration is not decisive for interest group orientation. A significant share of interest groups registered as employer organisations represent their members primarily as businesses, and a few of the non-registered groups examined represent their members more or even primarily as employers. This does not mean that there is no correlation between the variables "registration as an employer group" and "representation of employer vs. business interests," however given the nature of the variables, the correlation level is surprisingly low (0.390). Outside the specific area of collective bargaining, it seems therefore that the matter of registration as an employer organisation does not determine the focus of the interest group.

The results of the analysis also suggest a weak correlation between the frequency of employing most of the strategies observed and the (non-)registration of an organisation as an employer. This difference is substantially due to the fact that larger groups more often tend to be registered as employer organisations. In the analysis presented here, group size was represented by the "budget size" variable. If the correlation is stripped of the influence exerted by budget size, small differences between employer and business groups remain; in practice, however, the two types of organisations do not diverge significantly in how they promote their interests vis-à-vis the bureaucratic and political elite.

Another area in which differences between employer associations and other business organisations might be detected concerns the formal channels offered by the political system for influencing the political process. As one side in tripartite negotiations, employer associations are in a more advantageous position in this sense. Employer associations which fulfil the so-called representativeness criteria may become members of the RHSD. Although the conclusions reached by this Council and the documents negotiated therein are not legally binding and the Council only has an advisory role (unlike its members, itis not mandatorily consulted in the law-making process), these tripartite negotiations are important because they allow social partners to present their views, obtain information from their counterparts and promote their interests. Nevertheless, given the way that the representativeness criteria are set up, the chance to take part in tripartite negotiations at national level is only open to the largest organisations; from among the employers, this means SP ČR, KZPS ČR and the Czech Confederation of Commerce and Tourism, the last through SP ČR.

On the whole, it can be said that in practice the differences between employer and business organisations appear chiefly in connection with collective bargaining, which business groups can only enter into indirectly based on their membership of an employer umbrella organisation. At the same time,

a non-negligible number of employer organisations do not participate in collective bargaining at all; they represent their members solely as businesses and not as employers. In other areas, the differences between the two types of organisation are minimal, and in certain respects (membership of secondary organisations, for example), they fade away entirely. The research shows that in the Czech Republic, it only makes sense to distinguish between business and employer organisation if one focuses on the issues of collective bargaining or on the activities of large umbrella organisations which are represented in the Council for Economic and Social Agreement. An employer organisation may be understood most fruitfully as a subtype of business organisation, i.e. as a business interest group that is registered as an employer organisation. This conclusion partially questions the meaningfulness of the traditional Czech dichotomy between employer organisations and trade unions. The defence of employers' interests is much wider than collective bargaining and includes issues such as lobbying for changes in labour law legislation. The results of the questionnaire survey presented in this article demonstrate that many business groups represent (or see themselves as representing) their members as employers even though they are not allowed to participate in collective bargaining (or in negotiations of the tripartite RHSD). Bearing this in mind, a dichotomy between business groups and trade unions makes more sense in the Czech context than the more often used one between employer groups and trade unions.

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Epistocracy and democratic epistemology[1]

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Abstract: *Epistocracy, the rule by the experts or educated, poses a significant challenge to authentic democratic rule. Epistocrats typically reason from the premise, "experts have knowledge of political truths" to the conclusion, "experts should have the authority to rule." There may be powerful moral reasons for thinking that the inference is fallacious. Invoking a public reason standard of acceptability, David Estlund makes a powerful argument of this sort. I argue that Estlund's argument against epistocracy overlooks democratic epistemology, which can and should be utilized to strengthen the epistemic merits of a democratic rule. I therefore examine whether democratic democracy's epistemic value can rest on a formal epistemic model. The inadequacy of the formal epistemic model leads us to defend democratic epistemology differently. This will be defended in two ways. The first step will be to cast doubt into the epistemic merits of expert rule in two ways. First, experts sometimes do not have access to privileged information of citizens who bear the consequences of expert decisions. Second, experts themselves can be biased. I argue that democratic deliberation can offset those two disadvantages of expert rule. The second step will be to examine the epistemic values of inclusive democratic rule.*

Keywords: ***Epistemic democracy, epistocracy, epistemic proceduralism, David Estlund, collective wisdom, democratic epistemology***

Introduction

That modern societies are complex and large is a 'social fact.' Consequently, political problems are enormously complex and there are good reasons to appeal to experts in many policy making decisions and evaluations. Epistocrats argue that the experts ought to rule because they know how best to govern.

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Epistocracy, however, creates an antinomy in a modern society because there is a tension between making good decisions and upholding the democratic values of self-rule and popular sovereignty. Call this the *problem of epistocracy.*

This essay argues that any adequate solution to the problem of epistocracy requires us to investigate the epistemic merits of democratic rule. Epistocrats typically reason from the premise, "experts have knowledge of political truths" to the conclusion, "experts should have the authority to rule." There may be powerful moral reasons for thinking that the inference between "experts know the best" to "experts should rule" might be fallacious. Invoking a kind of public reason standard of acceptability, David Estlund makes a powerful argument of this kind (§ 1). I argue that Estlund's argument against epistocracy overlooks democratic epistemology, which can and should be utilized to strengthen the epistemic merits of a democratic rule[2] (§ 2). I therefore examine whether the epistemic value of democracy can rest on a formal epistemic model (§ 3). The inadequacy of the formal epistemic model leads us to defend democratic epistemology differently. This will be defended in two ways. The first step will be to cast doubt into the epistemic merits of expert rule in two ways. First, experts sometimes do not have access to privileged information of citizens who bear the consequences of decisions. Second, experts themselves can be biased. I argue that democratic deliberation can offset those two disadvantages of expert rule (§ 4). The second step will be to examine the epistemic merits of inclusive democratic rule (§ 5). This essay does not claim to provide a novel theory that captures the epistemic merits of democratic rule. Rather, the modest contribution is in synthesizing the relevant literature in 'epistemic' democracy to shed light on the epistemic merits of democratic rule.

The problem of epistocracy

It is a social fact that modern societies are large and complex. Consequently, many political problems are enormously complex and there are good reasons to appeal to experts in many policy making decisions and evaluations. Even in a firm of forty people, there is a need for a division of labor where some specialize in a trade or an issue. In a large polity like the United States, it is all the more true to think that experts are inevitable part of modern governing. Plato offers a classic argument in its favor: the ruling privilege is reserved for the philosopher-kings whose superior knowledge of the Form of the Good justifies their rule in the ideal republic (Plato 2008). Joseph Schumpeter doubts that anything like the will of the people could be formed; *hence*, he thinks that democracy is a power struggle among the elites who compete for votes from the citizens, the consumers of politics (Schumpeter 1950). Walter Lippmann

2 Similar arguments have been made by Anderson 2008, Chappell 2011, and Landemore 2012.

also affirms that in a complex world of governing and intricacies of lawmaking, governing should be left to the experts (Lippmann 1925). Despite their philosophical and normative differences, they all believe that governing ought to be left to those who know the best, the experts. This is the core of epistocracy: the experts ought to rule because they know how best to govern. Epistocracy creates an antinomy in a modern society because there is a tension between making good decisions and upholding the democratic values of self-rule and popular sovereignty. Call this *the problem of epistocracy.*

To appreciate this tension, let us conceive of democratic theories to be situated on a continuum between being insufficiently epistemic on the one hand and overly epistemic on the other. On the one hand, if a democratic theory is not epistemic enough (in other words, procedural fairness alone matters), then the substantive quality of decisions is not taken seriously. Procedural fairness is attractive because of the problem of pluralism. In a pluralistic society like the United States, people do not agree on the same conception of the good. In a society marked by the fact of reasonable pluralism, procedural fairness is a virtue of democratic institutions. But politics is, at least partially, about making decisions and decisions are enormously consequential – decisions affect a lot of people. Laws and policies have consequences and poorly designed laws create real injustice to real people. In other words, the substantive quality of decisions also matters. Hence, the epistemic dimension has to be added to underwrite legitimate authority. On the other hand, if the substantive quality of decisions matters, then why not have the wise among us rule? After all, if we are sick, we go to the doctor who is more educated and wiser about all things medical. In other words, if the theory is too epistemic so that what underwrite legitimate authority are the correct decisions themselves, then outcome is legitimate if it is correct. If what underwrite legitimacy were the correct decisions, then why not hand things over to the experts? The political situation is different because political decisions aim at decisions that are justifiable to all. Those decisions are not something that the wise can decide for us.

David Estlund (2008) provides one of the most sophisticated responses to the problem of epistocracy to date.[3] Let us therefore examine how Estlund deals with the insufficiently epistemic horn of the dilemma first. Estlund thinks that pure proceduralism is the tendency in the literature that attempts to do away with any substance, what he calls "the flight from substance." Pure proceduralism is the view that "the justification of the outcomes would be…in terms of the fairness of the procedure that produced the decision" (Estlund 2008: 6). By fairness, Estlund means "giving each person an equal chance at changing the outcome" (6). This is a procedural conception of fairness because giving each person an equal chance is fair; it is not concerned with the actual outcome. Consider the

3 Cf. Estlund 1993 and 1997.

coin toss to determine which team kicks off first in a football game. The toss is fair because the coin has an equal chance of coming up heads or tails, and each party makes its pick without foreknowledge. If the team picks head and head appears after the coin toss, then the decision is legitimate to both parties. According to a pure procedural conception of legitimacy, then, a good procedure alone is necessary and sufficient for legitimate outcomes; it follows that a pure procedural legitimacy rejects a procedure-independent standard of correctness.

There are at least two reasons for rejecting pure proceduralism. First, Estlund argues that if the value of democracy is in its fair procedure, then flipping a coin would be fair.[4] Flipping a coin is fair because it gives everyone an equal chance of changing the outcome. Estlund thinks that this is absurd because there is more to fairness that can justify legitimacy than such an empty notion of fairness that a coin flip invokes. Flipping a coin would be an empty notion of fairness because there seems to be more normative weight that should be placed in the notion of fairness. Second, we want people's view to be intelligent; we would expect a democratic process to be better than random at getting the right answer –i.e., better than a coin flip (better than 50%). This introduces the epistemic dimension because democracy is capable of producing decisions better than random; that is an instrumental value of the procedure beyond fairness. The key idea is this: the substance of outcome matters.

Estlund's problem with deliberative democracy reveals the force of the last point. Estlund complains that deliberative democrats hope to explain "why deliberation is required in addition to merely fair procedures of voting, but it hopes to do so in a way that never appeals to the existence of any procedure--independent standard for better or worse political decisions" (30). In a later passage, he writes:

[Rational Deliberative Proceduralism] insists that the only thing to be said for the outcomes is that they were produced by a reason-recognizing procedure; no further claim has to be made about whether the outcomes tend to meet any independent standard of correctness. The process is not held to perform well or badly in this procedure-independent sense (Estlund 2008: 100).

Estlund's complaint is this: either (1) deliberative procedure is reason--recognizing, which means that there has to be a procedure-independent standard to judge whether reasons are good or bad, better or worse; or (2) deliberative procedure is a fair procedure where fair procedure is interpreted as fair deliberative procedure – giving everyone an equal opportunity to express one's voice. Estlund argues that if (1) were true, rational deliberative proceduralism would be an epistemic view. The reason for this is because in order to recognize a reason, a procedure-independent standard has to be posited to distinguish good reasons from bad reasons. This would contradict deliberative democrats' insistence on

4 The argument for the rest of this paragraph draws from Estlund 2008, chapters 4 and 5.

rejecting a procedure-independent standard. And, if (2) were true, then rational deliberative proceduralism collapses down to a fair deliberative proceduralism – a version of pure proceduralism that takes fairness as the only intrinsic value of deliberation and no procedure-independent standard is necessary to judge the correctness of outcomes. This means that flipping a coin would be enough to say that the decision is legitimate. If this were true, then fair deliberative procedure would not be a reason-recognizing procedure. This would contradict deliberative democrats' insistence that the reason-recognizing procedure of deliberation is what separates their theory from the aggregative voting approach. Estlund concludes: either way, an epistemic dimension has to be introduced.

If Estlund is correct in thinking that an epistemic dimension has to be introduced to a theory, then it raises a worry. If the correct answer is what matters to underwrite legitimacy, then why not have the wise (or the experts) rule over us? Let us call this "epistocracy." Estlund's solution to epistocracy is an application of the qualified acceptability requirement (henceforth, QAR). The QAR – a requirement that the exercise of political power must be justifiable to all the qualified points of view—is a version of public reason. In order to justifiably rule, the rulers must pass the requirement of the QAR. Epistocracy cannot pass the requirement. Therefore, epistocracy is unjustifiable.

What justifies the idea that the epistocracy cannot pass the QAR? Estlund helpfully puts the problem this way. He thinks that the epistocracy is comprised of three tenets:

(1) There are true statements and judgments (the truth tenet);
(2) Some are better knowers than the others (the knowledge tenet); and
(3) Better knowers have the authority to rule (the authority tenet) (Estlund 2008: 30).

According to the truth tenet, there are true statements and judgments in politics. Here is one true judgment. It is morally wrong to rig the financial system to the brink of collapse without being held accountable. According to the knowledge tenet, some are better knowers than the others. It is true that some people are better knowers and more virtuous than others. Given the fact that knowledge is unevenly distributed, it seems obvious that some people are better knowers, concerning things political or not. If you are sick, you go to the doctor and not your friend. If you want to build a bridge, then you go see a civil engineer and not your neighbor. The third tenet is the authority tenet; better knowers have the authority to rule. This is what Plato believed. The guardians in the *kallipolis* are morally superior (they are made out of the "gold' material) and they are trained and educated in the way suitable to be the knowers. The moral and intellectual superiority justifies their rule over the others.

Now, Estlund grants (1) and (2). Where Estlund disagrees with epistocracy is that even if some are better knowers of the truths and they can rule more wisely than others, those two facts do not justify giving authority to have them rule

over the people. Giving authority to better knowers constitutes the expert/boss fallacy: you might be the better knower, but what made you boss? The fallacy occurs in accepting (1) and (2) and therefore concluding (3). The reason why this is a fallacy is instructive.

The basic idea is that epistocracy is not a *decision procedure* that can be acceptable to the qualified points of view. The key concept here is invidious comparisons, by which Estlund means attempts to claim that some are better knowers than others and therefore will rule more wisely than others. Estlund thinks that invidious comparisons about political wisdoms of the expert will be subject to controversy among the qualified points of view. Unlike universal suffrage – every adult gets a vote – epistocracy brings in an added burden of political justification because the claim that the wise gets to rule over the rest is subjected to reasonable (or qualified) disagreement. The wise will be subject to reasonable disagreement because there will be disagreement about who the wise are among us. The wise are not so wise that all the reasonable people will be able to identify them. Hence, invidious comparison cannot pass the QAR (Estlund 2008: 33–8). This is a crucial point to grasp because epistocracy, *qua* decision procedure, is something that cannot pass the QAR.

Moving away from the correctness theories to the middle allows Estlund to introduce an epistemic dimension without privileging the knowers (i.e., the experts and educated). The QAR blocks epistocracy and so an epistemic dimension can be introduced to democracy without privileging the wise. On the other hand, moving away from pure proceduralism, Estlund can introduce an epistemic dimension without sacrificing the proceduralist element of democratic theory. Democrats have an answer against the proponents of the epistocracy and an answer against those who say that democracy is stupid. Estlund's theoretically sophisticated and powerful view extends democratic theory into an exciting arena. Nonetheless, there is a problem with Estlund's theory, which I turn to next.

Objection against Estlund

I accept Estlund's solution to the 'insufficiently epistemic' horn of the dilemma. But I wish to raise a problem with his solution to the 'overly epistemic' horn of the dilemma, which is that the solution relies too heavily on the public reason standard (QAR). Notice that Estlund's solution to epistocracy that we examined in the previous section relies on invidious comparison; that is, there is a reasonable disagreement among the qualified on identifying the experts and hence there is an added burden of justification. Estlund's argument is that no experts are wise or smart enough to pass the muster in the added burden of justification.

One might object that Estlund's solution to epistocracy overlooks the epistemic values of democracy. According to Elizabeth Anderson, [Estlund] chose to rest his case against epistocracy on the qualified acceptability criterion…[t]

he qualified acceptability requirement, is not an epistemic criterion at all. Its foundation, like the closely related principle of public reason, lies rather in a commitment to civic respect for citizens who hold a plurality of reasonable moral, theological, and philosophical ideals (Anderson 2008: 134).

I am not sure Anderson's criticism hits the mark because Estlund's defense of democracy against epistocracy rests on a moral reason. That is, democracy is morally valuable in respecting those who hold various comprehensive doctrines and democracy is the fairest way of resolving political problems and conflicts. So, insofar as that is Estlund's goal, he succeeds in doing that. But Anderson raises a valid point: because the QAR carries nearly all the normative weight in responding to epistocracy, Estlund almost overlooks epistemic values of democracy. I say "almost" because while he has a resource available to answer Anderson's challenge, it rests on a rather unstable ground.

Consider Estlund's argument against John Stuart Mill's epistocracy of the educated argument. Mill, in *A Consideration of Representative Government,* offers a solution to the problem of epistocracy (Mill 1991). His infamous solution is the extra vote for the educated. The solution is ingenious because while he wants to preserve citizens' right to vote and participate, he also needs to address the reality that the masses of people are not all that competent. Mill is a liberal, meaning that he believes in equality of all citizens and their right of participation. He is a consummate defender of women's right to vote. Hence, giving the educated an extra vote would in the end off-set the votes of lesser educated.

Estlund objects to the "epistocracy of the educated" because "the educated portion of the populace may disproportionately have epistemically damaging features that countervail the admitted epistemic benefits of education" (Estlund 2008: 215). The basic argument is this: the educated are subjected to heuristics and biases that result from their education. The epistemic benefits of education can be offset by their biases. Because of this, there is an epistemic reason for pooling diversely situated knowledge distributed across the society so that the biases from one subsection of population can be offset by the perspectives coming from other parts of population.

So the objection against the 'epistocracy of the educated' rests on the epistemic benefits of deliberation among multiple viewpoints. Indeed, liberals since Mill have argued for the epistemic benefits of deliberation (Mill 1991; Sunstein 2003). Mill, for example, recognized that people ought to have the freedom of thought and expression that enable them to express their opinions freely and test their ideas in the "marketplace of ideas." In such a society, the truth will eventually "win out" in the deliberative process of pooling and exchanging diverse opinions (Mill 1972).

In some ways, this is a surprising argument against Mill. It is not because the epistocracy of the educated is true. Rather, it is because the force of Estlund's argument against Mill does not rely on the argument from invidious

comparisons, but from a "diversity of multiple opinions" argument. The invidious comparison argument would go something like this: giving an extra vote to the educated is making an invidious comparison between citizens and citizens can reasonably disagree about who are the educated. But, Estlund does not employ this particular argument because having a criterion of education is reasonably acceptable from the qualified points of view. Having a competence requirement as a condition of citizenship is now universally accepted. In the United States, for example, there is an age limit of 18 as a requirement of voting, which is a condition of competence. That is Mill's point. So, here Estlund resorts to the epistemic benefits of deliberation among multiple perspectives to dispel the epistocracy of the educated.

Given Estlund's argument against Mill's epistocracy of the educated, he seems to recognize the epistemic values of diverse perspectives and pooling such varied experience in decision-making process. Here Estlund does not *merely* rely on invidious comparison – the normative basis of which is the QAR – but on the epistemic values of utilizing diverse perspectives. I believe this is a response to Anderson's criticism: Estlund does have epistemic reasons for valuing democracy over epistocracy. Because of the epistemic limitations of experts, democracy is valuable, on an epistemic basis. Nonetheless, Anderson's criticism remains: his analysis can and should be extended to theorize about the epistemic values of democracy in a more fully robust way. The next section, therefore, considers Estlund's theorizing about the epistemic value of democracy.

Formal vs. substantive epistemic values of democracy

Recall this formulation of legitimacy: "democracy is better than random and is epistemically the best among those that are generally acceptable in the way that political legitimacy requires" (Estlund 2008: 8). What justifies the idea that democracy performs better than chance in choosing good or just laws?

Estlund argues that democracy does well in producing good decisions if it avoids what he calls the "primary bads." They are "war, famine, economic collapse, political collapse, epidemic, and genocide" (Estlund 2008: 163). The claim is that *if* democracy performs well (at a rate better than random) with respect to avoiding these primary bads, *then* there is good reason to think that the same procedure would tend to perform well with other less weighty and varied matters. Surely, this is a reasonable list of disasters that any society would want to avoid. The economic collapse of 2008 in the United States, for instance, provides us with a chilling example of the lack of the democratic process's ability to solve economic problems. While it seems obvious that we want a political order to avoid such disaster like an economic collapse, the relevant question is what reasons are there for thinking that democracy would do a better job than non-democratic alternatives?

Estlund's formal epistemic account provides us with an answer. He distinguishes between substantive and formal epistemic accounts. On the one hand, the s*ubstantive epistemic account* posits some substantive standard (i.e., truth, justice, or the common good) and claims that democratic procedures are likely to get it right according to that standard. Estlund seems to have Rawls in mind here. Rawls, in *A Theory of Justice*, describes a hypothetical contract situation, what he calls the original position. In the original position, agents are rational (in the rational choice sense) and are behind the veil of ignorance. Behind the veil, agents only have knowledge of the basic laws of nature, economic laws, general features of human nature, and the like; but the agents do not have any information about themselves, including their preferences. In such a hypothetical situation, Rawls asks what the rational choice is for the agent. Because any agent could end up in the worst situation – for example, the basic structure of the society under a utilitarian model could mean that an agent could be in the bottom of the societal rung – Rawls argues that any rational agent would choose an egalitarian system. Then Rawls draws the two principles of justice: one of basic liberties, and the other of difference principle. Rawls deduces two substantive principles of justice and argues that social democracy will most likely reach those principles of justice.[5]

The *formal epistemic account*, on the other hand, asserts that the democratic process is held to have the tendency to reach correct decisions from the standpoint of justice or the common good, *whatever the best conception of those might be* (Estlund 2008: 169).[6] In other words, a democratic procedure (whatever it is) has the tendency to reach just decisions on some conception of justice (whatever conception that is). The formal epistemic account has one advantage over the substantive account. It does not posit any particular substantive standards of justice or the common good, and so it will be acceptable from the qualified points of view. There are at least two problems with the formal epistemic account.

First, Estlund seems to argue that we know democracy performs well (better than random) because we already see that democracy performs well. This may well be true, but that surely puts the cart before the horse. He needs to show that democracy performs well according to an independent standard, not just assert such. As commentators have pointed out, there is empirical evidence to support the claim that democracy performs well according to an independent standard (Anderson 2008). For example, Amartya Sen has shown through a robust generalization that there has never been a serious famine in a democratically organized society (Sen 1999). Famine, which results from an unequal distribu-

5 One might raise an objection that I have not discussed Rawls' new book, *Justice as Fairness: A Restatement*. While I appreciate this objection, this paper is not directly about Rawls. I invoke Rawls to show that he might espouse a substantive theory.

6 Emphasis mine.

tion of food and not from the lack of food, is a primary bad. The explanation that Sen provides is that in a democratic society there is a freedom of the press that informs the citizenry of the actions of the elected representatives. Because of the open access to government and accountability of the elected leaders, the leaders will have incentive to prevent famine. Because of this and other examples, Estlund's assertion that democracy does a good job (better than random) in preventing primary bads is a reasonable position. However, that assertion rests on a speculation and not based on any existing empirical evidence.[7]

Second, the formal epistemic account is acontextual and therefore it is uninformative when it comes to testing whether democracy actually performs better than random. Since whether democracy performs well or not is ultimately an empirical question, we need some mechanism to evaluate whether democracy performs well or not. Furthermore, democracy's performance is subject to situational and contextual factors. For example, the standard for democracy's performance in China will be different from the standard for democracy's performance in the United States. In China, simply having a little of democratic discussion is a success whereas in the United States we expect a more robust deliberation.[8] Even in the United States, we judge democracy's performance on contextual matters. While it is true that democracy has the tendency to perform well, that is an evaluation that can be made only if we know the contextual factors and only if we know what we are trying to do.

Instead of appealing to a formal epistemic account to find epistemic powers of democracy, we should take a different strategy. The key idea is that we can talk about the epistemic powers of democracy without privileging the wise because the epistemic power of democracy comes from democratic people and institutions, and not from the experts' epistemic power to know the moral and political truths.

Two negative epistemic arguments against epistocracy

This section provides two epistemic arguments why one should be skeptical of expert rule: (1) experts do not have access to privileged information of citizens who bear the consequences of expert decisions; and (2) experts themselves can be biased. In what follows, I want to elaborate on these two

7 Estlund might retort that he is concerned primarily with giving a philosophical justification of legitimate authority, and not doing empirical work. And hence my objection misses the point of the motivation of his project. However, I do not think that we are having a methodological debate about the difference and the superiority of ideal vs. non-ideal theories of democracy. Rather, any epistemic theory of democracy and legitimate authority must have some answer as to what kind of democratic mechanisms are likely to bring about good decisions and why. It is because epistemic claims are about "making good decisions" and making good decisions are in the final analysis an empirical claim.

8 Although China is not a democratic nation, there is deliberation occurring at a local level. See Dryzek 2010 for the discussion.

points that cast doubt into the epistemic efficacy of expert rule, beginning with the first argument.[9]

(1) In order to show that experts do not have access to privileged information of citizens, let me first reconsider the knowledge tenet of epistocracy, which states that some are better knowers than the others. That is a trivial statement from factual and phenomenological perspectives. From the factual perspective, people have different IQ's, education levels, talents, and aptitudes. From the phenomenological perspective, we evaluate our intelligence and talents against others. That evaluation would not be possible unless we are aware that there are differences between intelligence and talents. However, the question is not whether some knowers are better than others – a trivially true point – but some knowers are better than others, *in some relevant areas of inquiry*? The last qualification, I believe, is important. Cardiologists, for example, are better than patients about all matters pertaining to the human heart. They have the technical expertise, knowledge, and degrees to back up their authority on matters pertaining to the human heart. But cardiologists are not better than their patients about playing poker. Setting aside the fact that poker requires strategic reasoning and arithmetic skills and doctors are probably good at that, there is no reason to think that cardiologists know how to play poker better. The operations of the heart and poker are two different areas of inquiry. Furthermore, a cardiologist obviously knows more about the heart than their patients do, with respect to the technical aspects of treating the heart: which surgery option is better, what medicine to take, and so forth. It is not immediately obvious, however, that they know how to treat the heart for a particular patient, in a way that is beneficial to an individual patient, with different interests, perspectives, values, and the make-up of the body.[10]

This insight can be captured with an anecdote by John Dewey, who was fond of saying that only an individual knows where and how the shoe pinches. An expert shoemaker knows all about the shoes: That is, the shoemaker has the technical knowledge (*techne*) to make the most comfortable shoes. The expert shoe maker, however, is not "epistemically privileged" to say whether the shoe fits a particular individual. That is something only an individual wearing the shoes has the introspective knowledge to feel the pinching. The first-hand knowledge of a particular situation or problem prompts democratic deliberation – or what Dewey calls dramatic rehearsal of problematic situations – to devise a solution.

9 To be clear: I am not arguing that experts are not necessary or we should do away with experts. Contrarily, experts are valuable part of modern decision-making process in any democratic society; my arguments are intended to show, however modestly, that there are sound epistemic reasons to include citizens in the decision-making process.

10 Biomedical ethics provides a good example of why patients need to be taken into consideration in medical decision-making process. See Dresser 2001 for example. The anonymous reviewer suggested that this point has been stated by Hans-Georg Gadamer.

The epistemic benefit of deliberation – the practical activity of giving and taking reasons and listening to what others have to say – is in constructing a more complete picture of a political problem or conflict. John Rawls articulates the epistemic benefits of democratic deliberation:

We normally assume that an ideally conducted discussion among many persons is more likely to arrive at the correct conclusion (by a vote if necessary) than the deliberation of any one of them by himself. Why should this be so? In everyday life the exchange of opinion with others checks our partiality and widens our perspective; we are made to see things from the standpoint of others and the limits of our vision are brought home to us.…The benefits of discussion lie in the fact that even representative legislators are limited in knowledge and the ability to reason. No one of them knows everything the others know, or can make all the same inferences that they can draw in concert. Discussion is a way of combining knowledge and enlarging the range of arguments (Rawls 1971: 358–359).

As Rawls says, "no one of them knows everything the others know." Because no one individual has a full picture of the way the world is made up, it is in everyone's interest to listen to what other people have to say. Citizens come from diverse backgrounds, they have the insights and perspectives that they gain from various life experiences and occupying social roles and space. Occupying the social space from an isolated corner of existence garners only a narrow understanding of the complexity of social processes. Citizens learn from differently situated people. Citizens, because of their particular life history and experience, have knowledge arising out of occupying social space and functioning: occupation, gender roles, religious affiliation and so forth. Citizens also learn about how the society is constituted in a way that creates systemic conflicts and problems. By learning from each other and learning about the basic structures of their shared society, citizens come to a more inter-subjectively valid understanding of the world in which they dwell together. The collective learning process enlarges one's perspectives (Young 2000). This suggests that social knowledge about the world in which deliberators occupy is something that no one individual or social group can achieve by themselves. This social knowledge is possible only through pooling diversely situated knowledge. Hence, social knowledge is achievable only within the context of an inclusive deliberative process among diverse perspectives.

The achieving of a social knowledge about a political problem or conflict requires the knowledge of how the shoe "pinches" for an individual or a social group. Those suffering the consequences of a social action are in unique positions to evaluate the effects of a policy, law, or action. While those affected by consequences are not in the position to have the full knowledge of said effects, they know how the policy affects their life. In other words, they know "how the shoe pinches." There is a reason, then, experts have to be open and be sensitive

to the inputs coming from the people who are affected by decisions. They can provide a valuable feedback to the experts, which improve the decision-making process.[11] Experts in the European Union, for instance, deliberate about policy matters, but that is mostly an expert deliberation. The Catholic Church deliberates about church-related policy matters, but again, that is a deliberation among the leaders of the Church. Expert deliberation is valuable in figuring out how to most efficiently carry out the policies willed by the people. Experts have the necessary technical knowledge resulting from formal education and professional training (Anderson 2011). While there is a place for experts in a complex democracy, and probably a large place in domains of inquiry like scientific and technological research, there should also be a place for public deliberation among ordinary citizens. Public deliberation is an avenue in which ordinary citizens who "know where the shoe pinches" can provide valuable inputs necessary to solving collective problems. In short, experts lack the "perspectival--knowledge" – that is, first-personal knowledge of one's phenomenological experience – which seems important for good decision-making in a democracy.

Indeed, if the modern political problems are so wicked and complicated, then there is good reason to think that political problems can be framed only with all the relevant perspectives. In order for a problem to be solved, the problem has to be framed in the right sort of ways. Framing a problem in the right sort of ways requires all relevant perspectives. A missing perspective will create an incomplete picture of the problem. Additionally, perspectives are not merely knowledge claims about a proposition; rather, perspectives are the experiential source of an epistemic agent that informs her reasons, opinions, beliefs, and worldviews (Bohman 2006). By taking the perspectives of others, "one may attempt to enter into the other's perspective, not so as to critique it, but more open-endedly to attempt to understand it" (Bohman and Richardson 2009: 272). Entering into other citizens' perspectives is an expressive attempt to understand the other and it is a way in which their problem becomes my problem. The interaction between multiple perspectives bearing on an issue creates a more complete picture of an issue.

(2) Experts can be susceptible to cognitive biases and errors. The fact that experts, who are human beings like the rest of us, are biased is not in itself problematic. What is problematic is that various cognitive biases and errors are responsible for many wrong-headed and consequential decisions. These cognitive biases and errors have been extensively explored in social psychology in depth in the last few decades. Bounded rationality – the idea that human rationality is bounded by certain biases and heuristics – not only questions the assumptions of modernity, but also the assumptions of modern economics and rational choice theory. Below I discuss three cognitive biases.

11 Empirical evidence on this idea can be found in diverse sources. Cf. Tetlock 2005 and Trout 2009

First, consider the cognitive bias of 'groupthink.' Groupthink was "coined and elaborated by Irving Janis, suggests the possibility that groups will tend toward uniformity and censorship, thus failing to combine information and enlarge the range of arguments" (Sunstein 2006: 192). In the United States, for example, "groupthink" explains why the officials in the Bush Administration failed to speak out against the rationale behind invading Iraq. Because the dominant opinion was such that the U.S. should invade Iraq, for spurious reasons it turns out, the opinions of other members of the Administration, like Colin Powell's, were not considered.

Second, deliberating groups could lead to group polarization. Group polarization means that "members of a deliberating group will predictably move toward a more extreme point in the direction indicated by the members' predeliberation tendencies" (Sunstein 2006: 176). Sunstein offers two explanations for this phenomenon. The first explanation is the role of persuasive arguments. If there is a limited argument pool – that is, lack of persuasive arguments – deliberators tend to move towards extreme positions. The second explanation is this: People want to be viewed favorably by others. Hence, even if deliberator has the correct information, she would be reluctant to disclose the information because of the fear that others will not view her favorably (Sunstein 2006). Group polarization could occur in small scale deliberative settings like deliberative polling. Sunstein argues that polarization occurs because of the lack of persuasive arguments and that people have the natural inclination to be viewed favorably by others. The general point that I want to make is this: if the group polarization is intended to show that deliberation as such is problematic, and not just deliberation by ordinary folks, then expert deliberation could just as easily lead to polarization.

Third, consider the cognitive bias of "framing effects." A set of experiments on framing effects performed by the psychologists Amos Tversky and Daniel Kahneman (1981) indicates that different phrasing affected participants' responses to a question about a disease prevention strategy. One of the problems given to participants offered two alternative solutions for 600 people affected by a hypothetical Asian deadly disease:

If Program A is adopted, 200 people will be saved.

If Program B is adopted, there is 1/3 probability that 600 people will be saved, and 2/3 probability that no people will be saved (Tversky and Kahnaman 1981: 453).

These two decisions have the same expected utility value of 200 lives saved: 72% of participants chose Program A, whereas only 28% of participants chose option B. The point is clear: while decisions have the same expected value of 200 lives saved, the participant's choices were subjected to "framing effects" because their perception of the risk shifted based on how the question was framed. This and other results have been exploited by political operatives who frame the issue in a way that tries to bypass people's rational thinking capacity.

If cognitive biases discussed above affect experts (as well as non-experts), then what is the antidote? Luckily, there is empirical evidence that suggests that biases can be offset by interpersonal deliberation and discussion. The political scientist James Druckman in various experimentation shows that introducing "counterframes" to interpersonal discussions lessen the effects of frames. Questioning the dominant assumption of social sciences that human reasoning is irrational, Druckman writes that ''individuals who engage in conversations with a heterogeneous group will be less susceptible to framing effects than those who do not engage in conversations" (Druckman 2004: 675). Furthermore, in a minipublic setting where participants discuss political issues with one another, there is a measurable effect of the transformation of preferences after a round of deliberation. In a famous Citizen's Assembly on Electorate Reform experiment, for example, 160 British Columbians were drawn at random from a list of voters. They met on six weekends, specifically to 'learn about, deliberate on, and decide between three alternative proposals (Warren and Pearse 2008).

Mining these and other empirical evidence Habermas concludes that "all these studies offer empirical evidence for the cognitive potential of political deliberation" (Habermas 2006: 414). Deliberative democrats, including Habermas, take these lessons as evidence that deliberating in heterogenous groups can improve the epistemic quality of deliberation by reducing cognitive biases and errors.

(3) Let me illustrate the arguments of this section by examining the case that Mansbridge et al. (2012) recounts:

In 1955, for example, Cook County Hospital had to decide whether to expand its central facility or build a second facility in another area. The hospital's deliberative process involved experts on issues that ranged from parking to the costs and benefits of advanced medical equipment in one central facility versus proximity to underserved populations through a second branch. When the hospital decided, based on expert deliberation, to build a second branch, that decision met with significant opposition from spokesmen for the Chicago African American community, because creating a branch of the racially integrated public hospital in the chosen area would undermine a proposed campaign to force the private hospitals in that area to integrate. This was not an issue the experts had even considered (Mansbridge et al. 2012: 21).

This illustrates that the solution set resulting from expert deliberation did not include the perspective of the marginalized group, the African-American community. Assuming that the experts were publicly spirited, their solution shows the two *epistemic* limitations of expert deliberation. First, the experts did not consider the perspectives of the African-American community because they themselves are not privileged to that information. The solution would have actually undermined the interests of the community that they avowed to serve because the community judged that the branch would be detrimental to the

shared project of integrating the private hospitals. Second, the experts were biased towards their solution. They were insulated from the perspectives of the marginalized group and because they talked among themselves, their decision could have had negative consequences for the African-American community. This example does not show that experts can never learn the perspectives of others or that their epistemic limitations are permanent. But the example shows the importance of dialogue, discussion, and deliberation in coming to a more complete understanding of the problem and what the just solutions would be.

The upshot of this discussion is this: experts can be biased and the citizen deliberation and participation can offset expert bias. There is then a good reason the perspectives of the relevant stake-holders should be taken into consideration in formulating political problems and solutions. This implies that each citizen's knowledge-claims need to be made publicly known through a deliberative process. This knowledge needs to be considered and taken into account in a collective decision-making process. The next section therefore considers epistemic mechanisms by which we can pool distributed knowledge in the vast social field of democratic society.

Epistemic powers of democratic rule

Because of the distributed nature of information and the impossibility of one institution in pooling all the information, one of the oft-invoked epistemic benefits of democracy is its capacity to pool diversely situated knowledge distributed across the social space (Hayek 1945, Anderson 2006, Goodin 2008, Knight and Johnson 2012). Two epistemic mechanisms of information-pooling are often invoked: vote and talk. The vote aspect of democratic epistemology has been expressed through the Condorcet Jury Theorem (CJT). The talk aspect of democratic epistemology has been articulated by what Goodin calls the 'discursive information-pooling' (Goodin 2008). Although the talk and vote aspects of deliberative democracy were conceived to be in a tension with each other (Elster 1998), theorists now suggest that they are not (Goodin 2008, Mansbridge et al. 2012).

Talking is valuable as a 'discovery procedure,' which means that it is a good way to consider all the policy options and evaluate the weaknesses and strengths of such proposals (Goodin 2008). Furthermore, talking is valuable in framing and restricting the range of acceptable solutions. The framing of a problem is important because before the problem can be solved, we have to know what the problem is. It is also important to devise a possible solution set: what counts as an acceptable solution (or the range of acceptable solutions) is constitutive of what everyone could agree to in a deliberative process. Of course not all reasons will survive the pre-voting deliberation because some reasons are crazy, vicious, and unworthy of consideration. Moreover, we should aim at not only

efficient solutions but also solutions that are acceptable to those who will likely bear the brunt of the consequences. When it comes to the 'discovery' phase of deliberation, 'discursive information-pooling' is necessary.

But, talking by itself is subject to what Goodin calls 'path dependency': roughly, talk as a decision-making procedure can be subjected to dynamic updating and serial process. By 'serial process', Goodin means that talk requires turn-taking: one person speaks, then the next person, and so forth. By dynamic updating, as one person speaks, the other people in the group revise their beliefs as evidence comes in. Because of path dependency, it might be necessary to make a decision at some point, even if the decision needs to be contested at a future point.

Given the necessity of taking votes, the Condorcet Jury Theorem (CJT) demonstrates that a voting tends to outperform individuals in producing good epistemic outcomes (Cohen 1986, Coleman and Ferejohn 1986, Goodin and List 2001). The CJT shows that if the voters (a) face two options (the binary condition), (b) vote independently of each other (the independence condition), (c) vote their judgment on what the solution to the problem should be, and (d) have better than a 0.5 chance of being right, then the probability that the majority vote will be correct rapidly approaches 1 as the size of the voting group increases. The principle behind the math is the law of large numbers. The CJT shows that the majority rule is nearly infallible in making the right decisions. The CJT displays some epistemic powers of a democratic procedure of voting under idealized circumstances.

Helene Landemore (2012), conceiving democracy as a kind of a cognitive system,[12] argues that democracy should be more than procedural legitimacy; we should value democracy because it has the capacity to produce good decisions, at least better than non-democratic political regimes. The collective intelligence or wisdom of the crowd hypothesis can be traced to Aristotle (1998), Dewey (1984), and Rawls (1971). The epistemic mechanism behind this research is what James Suroweicki has aptly called the phenomenon of the "wisdom of the crowd" (Suroweicki 2004). Elaborating on the wisdom of the crowd, Aiken and Clanton writes that "over the last decade or so, engineering firms have increasingly come to favour a collaborative approach to problem-solving. In addition to more traditional collaborative approaches, more and more research teams have 'crowd-sourced' their unresolved or otherwise costly engineering problems; over the internet, they have offered rewards and other incentives to amateur netizens who can help find solutions" (Aiken and Clanton 2010: 410–11). Aiken and Clanton's point generalizes not only to highly specific institutional settings like minipublics, but it also extends to deliberation in informal public spheres – the opinion-formation stage of deliberative lawmaking. Aiken and

12 Compare Landemore's thesis with Hayek (1945), who argues that we should us impersonal and mechanistic market prices as a means of pooling dispersed knowledge

Clanton's argument assumes that the situated knowledge distributed in the social space can be relevant to making good decisions.

Landemore (2012) provides the most sophisticated treatment of the 'wisdom of the crowd' thesis to date. She specifies the conditions under which the cognitive diversity of citizens can be harnessed to make the right decisions. Although Landemore makes a number of arguments,[13] let me just focus on her use of the Diversity Trumps Ability Theorem (DTA). Advanced by social scientists Lu Hong and Scott Page, the DTA states that "if (a) the problem is hard (no individual always gets it right), (b) the problem solvers converge on a finite set of solutions, (c) the problem solvers are epistemically diverse (they don't all converge on the same local optimum), and (d) there are many problem solvers who work together in moderate sized groups, then a randomly selected collection of problem solvers outperforms a collection of the best problem solvers" (Anderson 2006: 13). The main premise of Hong and Page's argument is the cognitive diversity of participants. Cognitive diversity refers to

> [a] diversity of ways of seeing the world, interpreting problems in it, and working out solutions to these problems. It denotes more specifically a diversity of perspectives (ways of representing situations and problems), diversity of interpretations (ways of categorizing or partitioning perspectives), diversity of heuristics (ways of generating solutions to problems), and diversity of predictive models (ways of inferring cause and effect) (Hong and Page 2004: 7).

Translating Hong and Page's research into democratic context, Landemore argues in favor of an inclusive democratic polity because it is a way of harnessing the cognitive diversity. Landemore (2012) makes a novel argument that democracy has the capacity to solve complex social and political problems through harnessing the cognitive diversity of its citizens. Those political problems are cashed out in terms of moral facts and the claim is that democracy can track those moral facts better than non-democratic alternatives can. What follows is that the epistemic benefits of deliberation come from the sheer number of perspectives bearing on and formulating problems rather than on any one individual or group's abilities. In short, "number trumps ability." Consider this example from Landemore (2012).

Residents of a New Haven neighborhood, called the Wooster Square, were experiencing a problem of mugging after dark. Because of this persistent problem, citizens took action and began an online forum to coordinate their walks home in the dark. After meeting with the mayor and the city council, the affected parties convened a deliberating group. In four successive deliberations, they went from an inferior solution to the problem – posting of police cars near the bridge after 6 pm was ineffective because the muggers were mugging at times

13 Landemore appeals to the CJT and miracle of aggregation theorem to argue for the epistemic superiority of democratic majority rule.

police were not present – to the superior solution of installing solar powered lamps on the bridge. Since then, there has not been a single incident of mugging.

Landemore's example shows, at least under a small scale setting, that people with cognitive diversity can solve complex problems. This case shows that people with cognitive diversity were able to solve the problem of mugging. The solution not only worked, but it was more inclusive because experts (the police department) took up results from citizen deliberation. In fact, citizens offered more creative solutions to the problem than the experts have previously given. Furthermore, the result of deliberation was revisable. After it became known that the posting of police car after 6 pm was ineffective, they were able to reconvene and find a different solution.

Landemore provides a theoretical basis for thinking cognitive diversity is the key to solving collective problems. The policing example is a small scale sample of how citizen deliberation can solve the problems of safety in their neighborhood. Whether this kind of small scale deliberation can be replicated in a larger scale context is unknown. But I hope that this brief treatment merits a further examination.

Conclusion

In an increasingly complex and plural modern society, expertise is inevitable. Many policy choices and decisions require input from experts from diverse domains. Most philosophers and public policy scholars recognize this "social fact" of modern society. But there is an ever-tempting tendency to reason from the premise that "experts have knowledge of political truths" to the conclusion "experts should have the authority to rule." The valuable contribution of Estlund's epistemic proceduralism is in providing a moral foundation to block that inference. Insofar as he is offering a moral foundation, he has succeeded: on the one hand, we have good moral reasons to reject epistocracy, but we also have good reasons to think that democracy has epistemic value. The inadequacy of the theory, I argued, is that his argument against epistocracy rests primarily on his public reason standard, the QAR. Even when Estlund appeals to epistemic values of democracy, his theory is inadequate because he relies on a formal epistemic model of democracy. Instead, we should contest epistocracy from an epistemological perspective. The arguments provided in sections 4 and 5 showed that the epistemic powers of democracy come from the people and democratic institutions, and not from the experts' ability to know the moral and political truths. The epistemic power of democracy is derivative of satisfying the democratic values of inclusion and equality of all citizens. Whether satisfying the democratic values of inclusion and equality *actually* leads to good decisions is an empirical question. If what I have argued in this paper is in the right track, then we have reasons to further investigate the epistemic efficacy of democratic rule.

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DISCUSSION

Public Attitudes towards Monetary Integration in Seven New Member States of the EU[1]

CSONGOR-ERNŐ SZŐCS

Abstract: *Existing work on euro support has provided insights into the dynamics of preferences, but most of these studies focus on older member states that already form an integral part of the Eurozone. This article inquires into public attitudes towards monetary integration in new member states of the EU: Poland, the Czech Republic, Romania, Hungary, Croatia, Bulgaria and Lithuania. Focusing on the cross-sectional variation of preferences, it applies multilevel logit regression to test three perspectives – economic, conceptual and political – using individual-level survey data and NUTS-2 regional statistical data from seven countries for 2013. One of its novel findings is that beliefs such as the one that European Monetary Union (EMU) adherence will cause a spiral in economic inflation are powerful disincentives to euro support in these countries.*

Keywords: public support, euro introduction, inflation fears, Eurobarometer, Eurozone

Introduction

On 01 May 2004, the European Union (EU) underwent a historical enlargement, expanding from 15 to 25 members (Drinkovic 2010), and after another two enlargements in 2007 and 2013, it is now a union of 28 member states. Following their accession to the EU, the next challenge for the new member states is to join the European Monetary Union (EMU) and introduce the euro as their national legal currency (Allam 2009). The adoption of the euro is an integral part of the requirements under these countries' accession treaties. As such, the new member states are obliged to adopt the euro as soon as they fulfil the entry criteria (Škerliková 2009). Slovenia joined the euro area in 2007, Malta and Cyprus followed in 2008, Slovakia adopted the euro in 2009, Estonia is 2011, Latvia in 2014 and Lithuania in 2015 (European Commission 2015).

1 Special thanks for professional advice to prof. Gabriel Bădescu and prof. Nagy Gyula.

In 2015, the Eurozone embraces 19 members of the EU. Denmark and the United Kingdom have a specific opt-out defined in the Maastricht Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (Sion 2004), and after a 2003 referendum resulting in a majority rejection of euro adoption (Evans-Pritchard 2003), Sweden is intentionally avoiding fulfilling the convergence requirements. Before adopting the euro, a country must comply with the Maastricht criteria including membership of the Exchange Rate Mechanism II (ERM II) for a minimum of two years. Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Bulgaria and Romania have not yet joined this mechanism (Flash Eurobarometer 2014).

This study aims to analyse public attitudes towards monetary integration in the new member states which have not yet adopted the euro. It processes survey data from 2013. By the "New Members States 7" (NMS7), we refer to Lithuania, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Bulgaria and Romania.

Though their legal obligation persists, "Member States with a derogation" (Art. 122 TEC) status have some leeway in setting the target date for entering the EMU (Miriam – Achim 2008). Due to changes in the economic climate caused by the 2008–2009 financial crises and the European sovereign debt crises, some Central and Eastern European countries have been reconsidering the original timing of their EMU membership. At the time of writing, only Romania has an official target for the adoption of the euro and Lithuania has recently joined the Eurozone. The Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Poland, Croatia and Hungary have no official targets.

Table 1: Euro introduction targets in NMS7

Country	Initial target	Communicated target	Official target (in convergence report 2014)
Lithuania	2007	2015	2015
Czech Republic	2010	after 2019	–
Romania	2015	2019	2019
Bulgaria	2012	2018	–
Hungary	2007/2008	after 2020	–
Croatia	2015/2016	2019	–
Poland	2012	2020	–

Source: Author's own table

Political decisions about the introduction of the euro are linked to public support for this step. The costs and benefits of the euro, as perceived by the public, are reflected in the level of support for the euro (Felix – Lars – Felicitas 2012). Knowing the factors that impact on public attitudes to the euro is therefore especially important for politicians who wish to garner public support for Eurozone

accession (Allam – Goerres 2011). Citizens' support is crucial for the political legitimacy of the euro (Bordo – Jonung 2003), and a high level of public support can be interpreted as a sign of a 'commonality of destiny' according to Baldwin and Wyplosz (2009). The issue of support for European monetary unification and the euro is critical for evaluating the future of European integration (Banducci – Karp – Loedel 2003).

Why do some individuals support the introduction of the euro while others do not? Why is support in some regions higher than in others? This study contributes to the understanding of these dynamics in seven Central and Eastern European new EU member states which have a legal obligation to adopt the single European currency, but have not yet introduced it. As noted above, the countries analysed are Romania, Hungary, Poland, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Bulgaria and Lithuania. Despite the latter's introduction of the euro in 2015, at the time of data collection (2013), it was not part of the Eurozone. In addition, we believe it is useful to analyse data from Lithuania's regions for reasons of robustness.

Existing work on euro support has provided deep insights into the dynamics of preferences, however most of these studies focus on the older member states that already form an integral part of the EMU. In contrast, this work explores public attitudes towards monetary integration in the new EU member states. It does not focus on variations across time, but on the cross-sectional variation of preferences (across regions and individuals). It applies multilevel logit regression to test three perspectives – economic, conceptual and political – using individual-level survey data and NUTS-2 regional statistical data from seven countries. The three-perspective approach is based on a study by Allam and Goerres (2008), who found that a combined model best explains variations in support for the euro. Two levels of data are necessary because we are dealing with a hierarchical structure: the opinions expressed by respondents living in different regions on euro adoption, and indicators available at a regional level. Multilevel models recognise the existence of such data hierarchies by allowing for residual components at each level in the hierarchy.

The main research questions posed by this study are: Which factors and other preferences cause some individuals to decide to support the introduction of the euro while others do not? Why is support in some regions higher than in others? The hypothesis is that economic, political and conceptual factors jointly affect the decisions of individuals. We assume that variables already correlated in other studies on euro support apply to regions in the above-mentioned seven new member states, but that Central and Eastern Europe also has some specificity. One of the hypotheses is that fear of price increases is one of the main obstacles to support for the common European currency.

Existing Work on Euro Support

Several studies have made important contributions to our understanding of public support for European monetary integration. The alternative perspectives applied by researchers to explain variations in individual-level and aggregate-level support for the single EU currency can be clustered into three groups: economic (utilitarian rationality), conceptual (symbolic concerns) and political factors.

Economic Determinants

Existing work has clearly demonstrated that economic calculations and changes in economic conditions lead to changes in public support for the euro. Most studies have analysed support for the euro from the standpoint of economic self-interest (Hobolt 2009). S. Allam and Goerres (2011) argue that public opinion about the euro is determined by citizens' assessment of the personal and aggregate costs and benefits associated with EMU membership. McLaren (2002) finds that from a utilitarian perspective, public support for European integration is determined through a rational cost-benefit analysis: those who benefit economically from European integration are supportive while those who stand to lose are more hostile. The work of Banducci, Karp and Loedel (2009) shows that individuals are more likely to support integration if it results in a net benefit to the national economy or their own pocketbook

A study of support for the euro by Kaltenthaler and Anderson (2001) found that sociotropic (retrospective as well as prospective) economic concerns also play a role. In countries where the euro is expected to enhance economic stability, people are more in favour of joining the currency union. Monetary integration should lead to increased trade and, as a consequence, individuals with high levels of involvement in international trade should support the euro more than individuals employed in non-trade sectors (Banducci – Karp – Loedel 2009).

Garry and Tilley (2009) show that citizens with positive economic perceptions in the new EU member states, are more likely to support European integration. Other studies infer that in evaluating Eurozone adherence, individuals rely on its presumed impact on purchasing power. Before the introduction of the common currency, a high level of inflation was associated with greater support for the euro (Banducci – Karp – Loedel 2003), suggesting that citizens expected the European Central Bank to bring about stability and lower inflation. If these expectations are not met, then support for the euro should decrease (Banducci – Karp – Loedel 2009).

A country's budget deficit may play an important – if indirect – role in shaping attitudes about the common currency. Before joining the Eurozone, member states are required to reduce their debt under the convergence criteria, which produces a 'squeeze effect' for countries with a loose fiscal policy (Gartner 1997).

Austerity measures may decrease public support for the adoption of the euro. An analysis using individual level data on public support for the euro before its adoption found that such support was lower when debt decreased. Prior to EMU adherence, citizens of EU member states with a looser fiscal policy and higher deficits were more likely to support the euro (Hobolt 2009). Our research analysed the relationship between budget deficits and euro support, but in the case of new member states, we found no significant correlation.

Conceptual Determinants

Symbolic concerns play a significant role in explaining variations in support for the euro across countries and individuals within nations (McLaren 2002). These alternative explanations for variations in support for the euro and for European integration more generally, focus less on economic self-interest and more on the threat that European integration may pose to national identity and a country's symbols and values (Hooghe – Marks 2004). Some have suggested that feelings of national identity and pride (Gabel 1998) exert a more powerful influence. Regarding public opinion of the euro in the older EU member states, Gabel (1998) shows that adoption of the European currency touches on issues of state sovereignty and culture.

Giving up the national currency is related to the risk of losing a symbolic marker in nation-building efforts (Risse 2003). Astudy by Hooghe and Marks (2004) indicates that attachment to the nation, and particularly to an "exclusive" national identity, is a powerful predictor of negative attitudes towards European integration.

Kaltenthaler and Anderson (2011) also conclude that feelings of national identity and diffuse support for European integration influence the opinions of individuals about monetary integration. In the context of the referendums on the euro in Denmark and Sweden, Jupille and Leblang (2007) demonstrate that identity concerns played a greater role than 'pocketbook calculations' and citizens who thought that the EU undermined national sovereignty were more likely to vote against the euro's introduction.

Political Determinants

Political explanations of public attitudes to monetary integration focus on the political values and preferences of citizens. The argument is that public opinion about the euro is cued by political partisanship and attitudes towards the domestic political system (Allam – Goerres 2011). Anderson (1998) shows that citizens are not well informed about Eurozone membership because the integration process is too abstract and uninteresting; instead, they use proxies rooted in domestic politics, such as support for the system or government, to

form their attitudes to the euro. Citizens who are satisfied with the domestic political system, political parties and government are more supportive of EMU adherence (Anderson 1998).

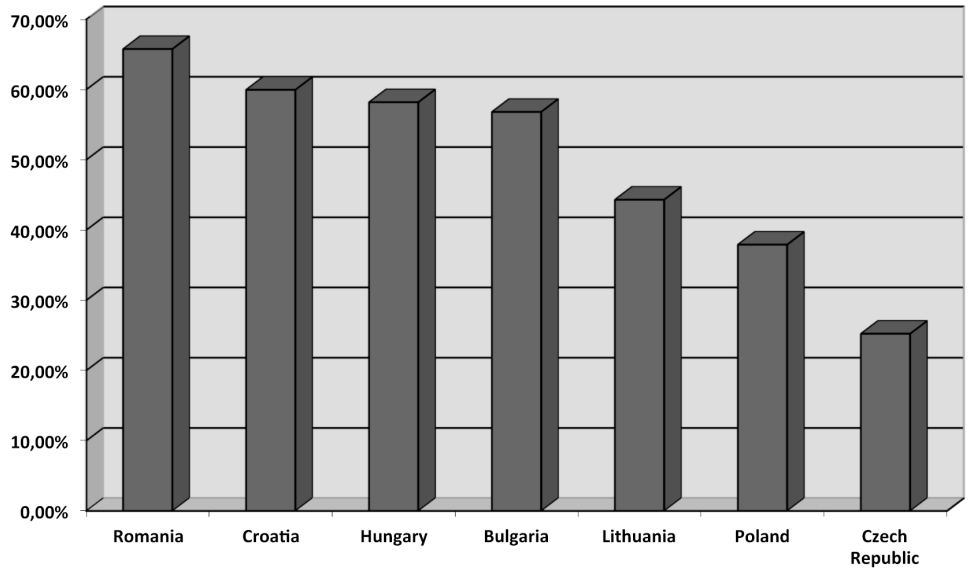
Rohrschneider and Whitefield (2006) contend that in order to understand public opinion about European integration, it is essential to analyse citizens' commitment to democracy. An empirical analysis by Cichowski (2000) dealt with data from Central European countries and found that citizens who were satisfied with democracy supported the free market; they were also more likely to take cues from political parties and to support EU membership.

Steenbergen and Jones (2002) prove that a positive correlation exists between an individual's position on European integration and the position of the political party he/she supports. Gabel and Hix (2005) add to the literature by concluding that higher levels of public information increase support for the euro. Research shows that the media's effects on attitudes to European integration are context-specific and depend on the interaction between elite opinion and news coverage (Allam – Goerres 2011).

Empirical Analysis

We constructed our measure of public support for the euro from data about responses to the Standard Eurobarometer (EB) survey carried out in November--December 2013. The survey covers about 1000 respondents per EU member country. The basic sampling design in all member states is multi-stage and random (probability-wise), guaranteeing the polling of a representative sample of the population. To measure public support for the euro survey, respondents were asked their opinion on several proposals: 'Please tell me for each proposal, whether you are for it or against it.' One proposal then stated: 'A European Monetary Union with one single currency, the Euro.' The respondent could choose from the following answers: 'For,' 'Against' or 'Don't Know.' Use of this survey question has underpinned the literature on public attitudes towards the single currency (Kaltenthaler – Anderson 2001; Banducci et al. 2003 and 2009; Felix – Lars – Felicitas 2012; Allam – Goerres, 2011). We assumed that we had a valid measure of our dependent variable and that individuals understood that the question referred to their preference for the common currency. The sample we were working with consisted of 7126 observations, and after eliminating 'Don't Know' answers – for robustness reasons – its size dropped to 6468.

Figure 1: Public support for the euro in the NMS7 (% of 'For' answers of total answers)



Data: Eurobarometer 2013

The hypothesis that we were testing was that individual- and group-level economic, conceptual and political variables jointly exert significant effects on individual preferences when it comes to support or rejection of monetary integration.

Our pool of independent variables was grounded in three sources: individual--level data was obtained from Eurobarometer 2013 Fall; macroeconomic data for 52 regions was accessed from the Eurostat database; and other macro-level data was derived from Flash Eurobarometer no. 377 (Introduction of the Euro in the More Recently Acceded Member States). Proven suitable for the analysis of nested data, the methodological approach applied is multilevel logit regression, a research tool designed for understanding unobserved heterogeneity in relationships between variables that are measured on individuals clustered within higher order units.

Regional Level

Economic Determinants

Average Regional GDP/Capita Growth (2006–2011)

Citizens outside the Eurozone are more in favour of joining the EMU when they are experiencing worsening economic conditions than when such conditions are improving. When such citizens perceive economic conditions to be deteriorating, they are more likely to think that belonging to the common currency area will generate more economic stability and prosperity (Hobolt 2009). Individuals in less successful economies may perceive Eurozone entry as a means not only to obtain a stable currency but also to enhance the country's economic credibility (Kaltenthaler – Anderson 2001). At the same time, individuals in more economically successful societies might be more willing to take on the perceived risks of further economic integration (Christin 2005). We expected that the magnitude of the economic crises had appreciably affected preferences for monetary integration. The constructed measure built on a purchasing power-adjusted GDP measure (PPS units) and took into account the average annual growth rate for a six-year period.

Unemployment

Past research has demonstrated that unemployment may be another economic stability indicator that has a significant effect on public attitudes towards monetary integration. Studies suggest that higher unemployment leads to increased support for a common currency although the effect is not consistent across model specifications (Kaltenthaler – Anderson 2001).

Conceptual

Inflation Fears

Qualitative research about the introduction of the euro currency has suggested that European citizens are concerned about price increases. These worries are echoed in the fact that many citizens are still convinced that the introduction of the euro would increase prices (Banducci – Karp – Loedel 2009). Using Flash Eurobarometer regional data focusing on new member states, we included citizens' fear of inflation in the list of independent variables. We expected that in regions where the belief that the euro changeover would cause a loss of purchasing power was more widespread,support for the euro would diminish.

Political

Position of the Central Bank

We expected the opinions expressed by central bank governors on the euro changeover to have a significant effect on the preferences of individuals. Our constructed measure indicated whether at the specified time, the governor of the relevant national central bank had expressed a positive (0), neutral (0.5) or negative (1) judgement about the country's adherence to the monetary union.

Individual Level

Economic Determinants

Perception of Personal Financial Situation

Economic theories argue that public opinion about European monetary integration is consistent with economic self-interest (Baldwin 1989). Individuals with a more positive outlook should consider their country readier to join the Eurozone (Allam – Goerres 2011). We expected citizens whose income and amount of capital assets were high relative to the national average to be more supportive of the common currency because they would benefit more from capital market liberalisation and lower transaction costs for cross-border capital investments (Gabel 1998).

Perception of National Economic Situation

As previously noted, the attitude towards monetary integration is dependent on economic conditions. Gabel and Whitten (1997) demonstrate that perceptions of the economic climate weigh more heavily in decision-making than actual objective economic indicators. We expected that individuals who judged the economy positively would feel secure enough to support the new challenges and opportunities that come with the introduction of the euro (Allam – Goerres 2011).

Conceptual Determinants

Sense of European Citizenship

Given the symbolic importance of currencies, we expected that a stronger European identity would boost euro support, while a strong national identity would decrease that support (Banducci – Karp – Loedel 2009). National identity has several components, including a sense of national purpose and historical memories of national friends and enemies, and these factors have shaped trust and mistrust among European states to a great extent (Wallace 2001).

International Openness Index

The measure is constructed by Eurobarometer based on questions about socialising with people from other EU member states, visiting other EU countries, watching TV programmes or reading in languages other than the mother tongue and usage of the Internet to buy products or services in another EU country. Individuals benefiting from the European Union's free movement principle are expected to be more supportive of the euro.

Political Determinants

Trust in National Government

Satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the domestic political set-up may serve as a shortcut to forming attitudes towards the European integration process according to Anderson (1998). Jupille and Leblang (2007) found in their study of the Danish euro referendum that voters' trust in politicians had a positive impact on support for the euro. Individuals who have confidence in their national political institutions are in a better psychological situation to trust them to accompany further economic and political integration (Allam – Goerres 2011)

Trust in the EU

We expected that general levels of diffuse support for the European Union would affect support for monetary integration (Hobolt 2009). There is a slight positive correlation between public support for the euro and trust in the EU (Kendall's tau b = 0.279).

Media Use Index

Our expectation was that better informed individuals would be more likely to have a positive opinion about the euro, being conscious of the benefits that the economy is likely to enjoy. Forming Eurosceptical opinions can, however, also drive individual preferences in the opposite direction.

Satisfaction with Democracy

Cichowski (2000) found that citizens in five Central European countries who were satisfied with democracy supported the free market and EU membership. We expected democratically engaged citizens to be more likely to support the European currency.

The individual-level control variables implied in the analysis were: gender, age (six categories), occupation (eight categories), home ownership (as an in-

dication of household income). Previous research has found that older people are less likely to have an opinion about the euro (Allam – Goerres 2011). Those citizens whose occupational skill level is high relative to the national average are more supportive (Frieden – Broz 2001). Citizens whose income and amount of capital assets are high relative to the national average may have a greater desire for the euro because they benefit more from liberalising the capital market and the lower transaction costs for cross-border capital investments (Gabel 1998).

Results and Discussion

The logit regression combining individual- and regional level data was assembled using the HLM 6.0 software package.

Table 2: Level–1 descriptive statistics

Variable name	N	Mean	Standard deviation	Min.	Max.
ECONOMY	6034	3.8	0.72	1	4
PERSONAL	5986	2.62	0.76	1	4
GOV_TRUS	5789	1.77	0.42	1	2
EU_TRUST	5424	1.48	0.5	1	2
DEMOCRACY	5973	2.95	0.83	1	4
CITIZENSHIP	6037	1.62	0.63	1	4
INTERNAT_INDEX	6126	2.66	0.64	1	3
MEDIA_USAGE	5807	1.97	0.79	1	3
GENDER	6126	1.56	0.5	1	2
AGE_6CAT	6126	3.75	1.64	1	6
OCCUPATION	6126	4.92	2.6	1	8
HOUSE_OWNER	6126	1.23	0.42	1	2

Table 3: Level–1 descriptive statistics

Variable	N	Mean	Standard deviation	Min.	Max.
GDP_GROW	46	4.78	2.16	1.9	9.5
UNEMPL	46	9.73	2.97	3.1	16.5
CB_POSITION	46	0.74	0.4	0	1
INLF_FEAR	46	0.66	0.13	0.39	0.85

Our outcome variable has a Bernoulli (0 or 1) distribution; we used restricted maximum likelihood with LaPlace iteration control. First, we created a null

model. The fact that the intercept component is significant at 10% (p=0.092) means that the intraclass correlation coefficient, ICC, is also significant, indicating that a multilevel model is appropriate and needed (deviance of null model = 17376.56).

Formula 1: Equation for this model

Level–1 Model

Prob(Y=1|B) = P

log[P/(1–P)] = B0 + B1*(ECONOMY) + B2*(PERSONAL) + B3*(GOV_TRUS) + B4*(EU_TRUST) + B5*(DEMOCRACY) + B6*(CITIZENSHIP) + B7*(INTERNAT) + B8*(MEDIA_USAGE) + B9*(GENDER) + B10*(AGE_6CAT) + B11*(OCCUPATION) + B12*(HOUSE_OWNER)

Level–2 Model

B0 = G00 + G01*(GDP_GROW) + G02*(UNEMPLOY) + G03*(CB_POSITION) + G04*(INLF_FEAR) + U0

Table 4: Summary of the model

Independent variables	Coeffi-cient	Error	T-ratio	d.f.	P-value	Odds ratio	Confidence interval
GDP_GROW	-0.04	0.04	-0.94	41	0.35	0.95	(0.872,1.048)
UNEMPLOY	-0.03	0.02	-1.76	41	0.085 (*)	0.96	(0.922,1.006)
CB_POSITION	0.51	0.28	1.77	41	0.082 (*)	1.65	(0.924,2.958)
INLF_FEAR	4.1	0.70	5.67	41	0 (***)	56.18	(13.462,234.498)
ECONOMY	0.08	0.07	1.11	4405	0.265	1.8	(0.939,1.258)
PERSONAL	0.10	0.05	1.87	4405	0.06 (*)	1.10	(0.993,1.225)
GOV_TRUS	-0.12	0.08	-1.47	4405	0.141	0.88	(0.749,1.046)
EU_TRUST	1.00	0.10	9.14	4405	0 (***)	2.72	(2.199,3.387)
DEMOCRACY	0.21	0.05	3.81	4405	0 (***)	1.23	(1.108,1.382)
CITIZENSHIP	-0.00	0.03	-0.16	4405	0.866	0.99	(0.922,1.070)
INTERNAT	0.19	0.05	3.34	4405	0.001 (***)	1.21	(1.082,1.355)
MEDIA_USAGE	0.20	0.06	3.51	4405	0.001 (***)	1.23	(1.096,1.383)
GENDER	0.24	0.05	4.65	4405	0 (***)	1.27	(1.149,1.409)
AGE_6CAT	0.08	0.02	3.25	4405	0.002 (***)	1.8	(1.032,1.137)
OCCUPATION	-0.01	0.01	-0.06	4405	0.952	0.99	(0.973,1.026)
HOUSE_OWNER	-0.11	0.10	-1.03	4405	0.3	0.89	(0.725,1.104)

We used a fixed-effects model. The dependent variable was a 0–1 variable, with 1 implying "Yes, I do support the euro" and 0 implying "No, I do not support the euro".*** p<=0.01, ** p<=0.05, * p<=0.10.

The overall test of the model is reflected in the likelihood ratio test of the difference. Compared to the null model, deviance decreased (deviance of specified model =13362.10) significantly (Chi-square statistic = 4014.46, P-value = 0.00) in our model.

Our analysis confirms the hypothesis that individual- and regional-level economic, conceptual and political determinants jointly elucidate public attitudes towards monetary integration. We find that the presence of fear of losing purchasing power by joining the Eurozone is the major factor when deciding about Euro support (coefficient of 4.01 and odds ratio of 56.18) in NMS7. This is a novel finding since up to now studies have not emphasised the importance of fear of inflation among individuals.

The data suggests that individuals living in Central and Eastern European regions where there are higher unemployment rates are less supportive of the common currency. The opinion communicated by central bank governors about the euro's introduction tends to have a significant persuasive effect on preferences about monetary integration. Our research confirms that having a better perception of the shape of one's personal financial situation leads to greater support for the euro. We find no evidence, however, that averages of annual GDP growth or perceptions of the state of the national economy have significant effects on our dependent variable.

Trust in the European Union is transferred into support for the common currency. In line with expectations based on the literature, we find that individuals from NMS7 who are more satisfied with the state of the national democracy are more likely to stand on the side of the euro. Our model shows that individuals who consume a denser mix of media tend to be more in favour of the introduction of the euro. Frequent contact with the international community also increases overall support. The data suggests that male and younger citizens are more supportive of the European currency.

Conclusion

Our study applied multilevel logit regression using individual-level survey data and NUTS-2 regional statistical data from seven countries and found that a combination of economic, conceptual and political factors shapes attitudes to monetary integration across European Union new member states from Central and Eastern Europe. The novelty of this work derives from the fact that no deep research has previously been conducted on the determinants of diffuse euro support in these new member states, and regional-level data analysis also qualifies as a new feature.

The results show that from an economic point of view, individual-level perspectives such as the perception of one's personal financial situation, and macro-level indicators such as unemployment, exert a significant effect on monetary

integration preferences in the new member states, which goes in line with the literature on euro support.

We find that beliefs, such as the one that joining the EMU will cause a spiral in economic inflation, are powerful disincentives for euro support. This is a novel finding since the effect of inflation fears is not pointed out in the existing literature on euro support. The data also demonstrates that individuals familiar with other EU member states (measured with the help of the International Openness scale) have a greater appetite for the common currency. Numerous political factors extend our understanding of euro support: statements of central bankers, trust in the EU and democratic engagement all have powerful impacts on individual decisions about whether to back or rule out a country's euro adoption.

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REVIEWS

Finn Laursen (ed.), *EU Enlargement. Current Challenges and Strategic Choices* (2013), Multiple Europe No. 50, Peter Lang.

HELENA BAUEROVÁ

The issue of enlargement policy is a relatively well-explored area of European Studies. Each round of enlargement has focused attention on the description and theoretical grasp of the enlargement process. In the last decade, attention has been paid mostly to the massive EU enlargement in 2004. This can be seen in a number of books (e.g. Albi 2005; Lippert, Becker 2001; Poole 2003; Pridham 2005; Nugent 2004; Němcová 2011 etc.). The most recent EU enlargement (in 2013 when Croatia joined) has created a space for further research. First of all, this is a space where we can study the likelihood of further EU enlargement and and EU member states' perspectives. Secondly, we can consider the positions of potential/candidate states. This book edited by Finn Laursen is an example of a work which tries to summarise all these issues.

The book is divided into five parts, which at first glance divide logically into thematic blocks: Issues in Enlargement Policy; Conditionality, Compliance, Europeanisation; Political Parties and Enlargement; The Western Balkans and EU Enlargement; and Turkey and the End of Enlargement? The first part (introduction) deals with enlargement issues in the period after the 2004–2007 enlargement; it highlights key moments in the EU enlargement process and tracks the formalisation of the rules of accession. Here the reader will gain basic information about the primary legislation and milestones that influenced the enlargement process. The next three chapters point out particular areas that affect enlargement policy. The role of the European Commission is shown with a focus on the strengthening of its role in the enlargement process. The reader is made acquainted with the accession criteria and the reality of how they are circumvented. The weakness of the second chapter by Kerikmäe and Roots lies in the absence of information about paradigms and strategies, which are only mentioned in the article title. The third chapter by Bindi and Angelescu concentrates on neighbourhood policy, dealing only with the main issues around Turkish accession to the EU. This chapter is, for the most part, an essay that is missing references.

The second part of book is divided into four chapters, whose pass between theory and its applications. The first chapter by Mbaye introduces the theory

of compliance and enforcement. Derderyan's second chapter connects enlargement with corruption. The third chapter concentrates on Europeanisation and offers a new view of this concept. The fourth chapter, whose authors are Milenković and Milenković, uses anthropological analyses of Europeanisation and focuses on one case study – Serbia. Overall, the first and second parts of the book promise a theoretical approach. In reality, however, they combine the theoretical and practical aspects of enlargement; the chapters make an imaginary leap from one subject to another and do not form a coherent whole. These sections collect articles that summarise the contributions of various authors whose themes and time frames are different.

The following three sections (III, IV and V) of the book are divided logically with respect to the topic. The third part concentrates on the role of political parties in the enlargement process. Siaroff's chapter analyses the transformation of the political party system with respect to the European Parliament elections. Most of the text focuses on member states; only a short section is devoted to acceding states. Gülmez's chapter highlights Euroscepticism among the political parties. Its main section focuses on an explanation of terminology. The last chapter by Stojić is very interesting because of its analyses of political parties in Serbia and Croatia. Still, the reader is left with the question: Why are these chapters not in the part of the book on Western Balkan states?

The fourth part of book concentrates selectively on Western Balkan countries and their accession to the EU. The fifth part analyses Turkish perspectives on accession. In these two sections, we are given really topical information about enlargement policy. We can monitor changes in EU attitudes to these candidate and potential candidate countries. Interestingly, there are descriptions of changing opinions of EU institutions and the member states, which have various motivations. The reader also finds information about the concrete situation in the Western Balkans.

If I had to summarise this volume, I would say that not all chapters are equally good; not all of them have a clear theoretical background and not all have a good resource base. As is typical, the book is a collection of a lot of articles of varying quality. On the other hand, for anyone looking for a source of selected new and timely information about EU enlargement, this book is quite a good choice.

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