The cohesion of European democracy: The consolidation of democracy in Central and Eastern Europe

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Introduction
With pomp and circumstance the European Union 10 new member states in 2004. Among these five former Soviet satellite states of Central Europe and the three Baltic States. Festivities took place all over Europe heralding the ‘healing of Europe’ finally overcoming the scar left by the 2WW and 50 years of communism in the east. The road to membership was long. Poland, The Czech Republic and Hungary were admitted 14 years after the first free elections. By comparison it took Greece, Portugal and Spain respectively 7, 11 and 11 years to move from dictatorship to EU membership. This prolonged period reflected not only the dire state of economies in Central & Eastern Europe being relatively poor not only in comparison with EU-15 but also in comparison with the countries of the southern enlargement at the time of their entry. The prolonged waiting also reflected the rapid development of the EU itself. The acquis communautaire had grown and the scope of the acquis agenda involved almost every aspect public policy-making, the entire judicial system, subnational governments and new regulatory institutions (Grabbe, 2001). Finally concerns were also raised about the state of democracy in the accession countries and about the perspective that a grand enlargement (EU-25 or EU-27) could block necessary political and economic reforms of EU itself.

The European Union took specific measures aimed at these concerns. First, in order to avoid political deadlock one third of Member States can further political and economic integration through enhanced cooperation. This instrument was first decided at the Nice Summit (Amsterdam Treaty art, 43) and included in the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe art. I-44. Second, The European Union formulated a set of conditions that moved beyond formal democracy (European Council, 1993; Pridham, 2002) and furthermore developed a set of pro-active policies to strengthen participatory democracy and civil society in the candidate countries. For example, a procedure was setup in which the acquis working groups, within each Ministry, had to include representatives from civil society organizations and the development of tripartite committees were generally recommended. The pro-active policies should also be seen in relation to the gate-keeping role adopted by the EU to determine when (and if) a candidate had progressed or should be relegated in the accession process (Grabbe, 2001). In his case study of Pridham (2002) discusses just how far EU – conditionality came to influence Slovakia who for long was considered foot-dragging.

In this paper we seek to move beyond the case study by comparing the state of democracy in seven of the new EU memberstates. We are, in particular, concerned with the issue of substantive democracy and its consolidation through the pro-active role played by the European Union. Thus we, specifically, first seek to compare the countries with respect to the consolidation of democracy using a wide range of indicators spanning from formal democracy over actors acceptance to public attitudes to democracy. Secondly, we address if there is European commonness, by comparing the
new member states with other post-communist countries, in the attitude among the elite to the role of citizens, the value of including civil society organization into the policy process and the degree and form of cooperation between the administration and civil society. Besides the publicly accessible data used to determine consolidation the latter part build on 955 elite interviews in 15 countries.¹

In the following we first discuss the intrinsic elements of democracy and consolidation with a particular emphasis on the concept of European democracy and the pro-active policies employed by the EU.

The quality and consolidation of the European model of democracy

Democracy is a prerequisite for membership of the European Union. In connection with the Central & Eastern European countries this requirement was first formulated in the Europe Agreements between 1988 and 1991 giving preferential access to markets and associated status.² Thus countries that reversed to authoritarian forms of rule could be and would be punish by the European Union. At the Copenhagen Summit 1993 the criteria for membership were no only spelled out but also tightened in comparison with the Europe Agreements. Prospective members should demonstrate stable institutions of rule of law, democracy and the protection of human- & minority rights (European Council, 1993:12).

The wording ‘stable’ has a strong flavour of what scholars of democratization label consolidation. Even if the term is relatively new, as focus in the 1990s shifted towards the successful stabilization of the 3rd wave democratizations (Diamond, 1999, p. 162), earlier contributions to the debate have also been concerned about the stability of political systems. Modernization theory spoke about the stability of the democratic society (Lipset, 1959) and studies influenced by system analysis introduced concepts such as system maintenance (Lijphart, 1977). Linz (1978) discussed the factors that could lead to a breakdown of democracy and Rustow (1970), developing a phase model for consolidation.

¹ A number of the indicators are developed from the Demstar survey. The Demstar survey targeted present and former ministers of government (and high placed administrators) posing a number of questions concerning state-society relations. For more information about the Demstar survey see www.demstar.dk. For information about the questions used in this paper see appendix A & B. The Demstar survey has been carried out in 15 different countries from 2000 to 2003. The survey was carried out in the following countries at the following time; Armenia in 2002 (n = 100), Azerbaijan in 2002 (n = 100), Bulgaria in 2003 (n = 81), Czech Republic in 2002 (n =49), Estonia in 2001 (n = 50), Georgia in 2002 (n = 100), Hungary in 2001 (n = 35), Kazakhstan in 2002 (n = 30), Kyrgyzstan in 2002 (n = 38), Latvia in 2000 (n = 51), Lithuania in 2000 (n = 53), Moldova in 2003 (n = 79), Mongolia in 2002 (n = 103), Poland in 2002 (n =36), and Slovenia in 2003 (n = 51). For the EU countries there are a total of 325 respondents. For the non-EU countries there are a total of 630 respondents. The total number of respondents in the Demstar survey is 955.

² The first generation Europe Agreements with the Baltic States concluded in 1991 were more limited that that of the agreements with the Central European Countries reflecting weariness among EU countries to promise the three states negotiations for membership (Sedelmeier & Wallace, 1996).
democratic transitions, framed the final phase as where democracy became ingrained in values – habituated – once the democratic regime had successfully been installed.

Democracy: The European model

The difficulties in employing the term are enormous. In his reflection over the consolidation of 3rd wave democratizations O'Donnell (1996) argues that two tasks are involved. The first task is to establish a cut-off point that separates democracies from non-democracies and the second task is to establish the criteria of consolidation. This two-task-job is in principle not different when judging the quality and consolidation of democracy as a conditionality for EU-entry.

O’Donnell quickly adopts Dahl’s (see ex. 1989) institutions of polyarchy as the working definition of democracy. In their review of the democratizations in central and Eastern Europe Kaldor & Vejvoda (1997) distinguishes between formal and substantial democracy. As concerns formal democracy their point of departure is similar to O’Donnell’s but formal democracy is in their view a minimalist definition in as far as it is also entailed in the concept of substantive democracy. Substantive democracy is in turn (p. 62) defined as a continuously reproduced process where power relations are regulated to maximize opportunities for individuals to influence and participate in the political process. Not unexpected civil society, media and human rights and minority rights become key issues.

The strength of employing formal democracy is evident. With its clear focus on the institutionalization of rights and rules a crucial cut-off point, ‘... separating cases where there exist inclusive, fair, and competitive elections and basic accompanying freedoms from all others ...(O’Donnell, 1996, p. 36)’ is established. Furthermore, formal democracy, in the form of polyarchy, is silent about institutional characteristics, as differences in, for example, the electoral laws, is only considered to constitute varieties of democracy. It is therefore avoided that such issues blur the debate. However, when the institutions of polyarchy are silent about issues such as the rule of law and whether this is extent across the state or the actual distribution of power within a society there is a leap to substantive democracy. True, the electorate can vote the rascals out but this does not necessarily transform in plural societies. Pluralism did attack the importance of voting pointing out that organized groups do possess the capability to influence policy (Dahl, 1967) and that group pressure was a way to limit the power of the state providing a more democratic society. Critics were, however, quick to point that in reality societies were not plural but some groups had preferential (and undemocratic) access to decision making (Lindblom, 1977). In Bernhard’s (1996) analysis of the relation between civil society and the state in Poland this critique is echoed. He

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This is, however, only a valuable claim if there is congruence between the moral content of institutions and the basic values of a society. (Przeworski, 1995, p. 42)
points out that only when strong civil society is matched by an equally strong state democracy prevails (also over time). In the ‘newisher’ literature the critique against the core pluralism is re-raised as capture; that is, if decisions are made to appease specific interests as opposed to the public interests aggregated and mediated through democratic processes there is a case of state capture (Hellman, Jones and Kaufmann; 2000). Consequently, and with the critique of pluralism as point of departure neo-pluralists argue the necessity for the state to take a pro-active role nurturing and supporting civil society organizations (other than the peak) thereby levelling the playing field of interests’ access to the political processes (Dunleavy & O’Leary, 1987; Petraca, 1994).

Substantive democracy is thus a democracy were citizens are encouraged to participate, organize and seek influence. Thus, the substantive form of democracy requires inclusion of civil society organizations. This may be in the state active form represented by neo-pluralism or through the development of corporatist structures in which some civil society organizations receive privileged access to decision making. A European model of democratic inclusion of civil society interests can be traced back to the historical development of the European Union reflecting the logic of both neo-pluralism and corporatism (Hix, 2005; Falkner, 2000). The European Model, however in both the neo-pluralist and corporatist underline the importance of inclusion of civil society as one of the cores of a democratic society.

Historically delegation of executive powers the European Union Commission was not followed up by an equivalent control mechanism. Member states’ governments have rather than building up a huge, costly bureaucracy controlling that the Commission implements the decisions taken by the European Council relied on public interest groups to do the monitoring for them. The strategy, known as ‘fire-alarm’ oversight, relies on interest group activities. The logic is that if the Commission is captured by a particular interest group, thus diverting the decisions of the Council, competing groups will inform the governments and make them react. The Commission is required to give information and access to decisions to any group that expresses its interest in a particular subject. This requirement is in general forms expressed in the Treaty Establishing a Constitution for Europe article 1-46 as a right for citizens to participate and a principle of openness. This principle is reformulated in article 1-50:1 that the European Union institutions in order to promote good governance and ensure the participation of civil society must conduct their work as openly as possible. More detailed principles of civil society inclusion are formulated in article 1-48 requiring that the Union actively facilitate dialogue between social partners and in particular that the Tripartite Social Summit for Growth and Employment must contribute.

This strategy, however, assume that interest groups have equal (or nearly equal) access to information and resources. Accordingly, the Commission is required take a pro-active role and
support, subsidize and equalize interest representation between stronger and weaker interest organizations. This requirement is explicitly spelled out in Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe article III-211 with respect to the management and labour interests and in article III-235 with respect to consumer interest. However, although it is possible to depict a general model of neopluralism it is more correct to describe the model in social- and labour market politics as corporatism. While there is a requirement to include civil society and public interest in general and to support consumer interests in particular the inclusion of labour market interests in decision making through the process of social dialogue is stronger and more institutionalized.

The European model of democracy is therefore a substantive democracy where civil society in close interaction with governments and administration. In cases where interests are diffuse and organization therefore often lacks necessary resources the European model takes the form of neopluralism, i.e. an active state encouragement and support civil society organization. Thus, in cases of strong interest representation as in labour market policy the European model takes a corporatist form. The European model in this way is a model of democracy where participation and free organization are encouraged to the point where elected officials and administrators ‘feel the heat’. Only in such form can a vibrant civil society perform the role as fire-alarm for the Commission and in more philosophic terms be the bulwark against authoritarian tendencies.

Neo-pluralism is not an argument for corporatism even if neo-pluralistic practice can result in corporatism, just as it can be part of a strategy to break strong triad relations, accounting for Lindbloms (1977) critique, by opening them to other interests. The Committee’s active inclusion of social NGO’s, for example representing consumer and environmental interests, in the so called ‘civil dialogue’ is a case where the strong iron-triangle of bargaining between the state (EU), labour and capital interest are gradually being eroded (Hix, 2005:219). The negative consequences, as pointed out by Simon Hix, are that the combined corporatist and neo-pluralist strategies by the Commission has created a new distinction between ‘insiders’ and ‘outsiders’ in which non-governmental organizations that have not been able to socialize their members into acting actively inside governmental decisions also are more definitely ‘outside’ than in a pure corporatist system. However, the question imposed in this paper is how the EU model may have influenced the development of a more democratically consolidated inclusion of civil society organizations in the new member states.

Howard (2000) describes the weakness of civil society in the CEE and finds that the prior communist experience has a strong negative effect on contemporary organizational membership. Thus due to gaps left by communist system civil society structures in CEE are relatively underdeveloped. On the one hand those civil society organizations that functioned as a transmission
belt between the Communist Party and the populations have made them untrustworthy. On the other hand civil society organizations have been mushrooming since 1990. A hypothesis that the institutional development in CEE is influenced by the European Model is based on the fact that it has been encouraged by the Commission during the pre-accession process in three ways. First, although the European Union do not have a common guidelines with respect to public administration an informal working document produced by the Commission in 2000 set out the main administrative structures required for implementing the acquis (Grabbe, 2001: 1023). Accordingly the 31 negotiating chapters of the acquis were dealt with through working groups including relevant civil society organizations. Second, the negotiation guideline set up by the Commission refers to the social dialogue that according to the Treaty gives additional power to social partners. The Commission then explicitly spells out that part of the evaluation of the country’s readiness for EU membership is the annual evaluation that ‘social partners are sufficiently developed in order to discharge their responsibilities at the EU and national level’ (Negotiation guide, 2004: 47). During the negotiation process the negotiation guideline was carefully monitored by the Commission through annual reports. This process made the applicant counties fully aware of gabs they had to fulfill before being acceptable members to the EU. Third, the EU has in substantive ways encouraged and financially supported civil society organizations making it clear to the applicant counties that civil society organizations were and should looked upon as a value essential for a democratic society. Before accessing the outcome of the negotiation process i.e. the inclusiveness of civil society structures in CEE we return to the question of formal versus substantive democratic consolidation.

Consolidation in concentric circles: issues, time, value and state-society relations

The difficulties in judging consolidation are enormous. Gill (2000, p. 235) defines consolidation as embedding of democratic procedures into the infrastructure as a hole so that the system is secure and generally seen as the appropriate way of organizing political life.’ Notions of consolidation can be illustrated as four concentric circles. In agreement within the literature formal democracy comes to the core, that is, the embedding of the democratic procedures and the observance of these over time is a precondition for considering more substantive aspects of consolidation. The differences in the extended circles relates to when these procedures can be considered embedded, by whom should democracy be seen as an appropriate way of organizing political life and what is implied by the system as a hole?

With respect to when democratic procedures can be considered embedded an incremental perspective may suffice. That is the longer democracy have lasted the more likely it is that it will survive in following years. Even if this seems a fallacy, but can gain some credence as a process of
habituation, longevity have been applied in several studies of democratic stability chiefly because it
gives a focused variable that are easy to handle in multi country studies. There are, however, also
limits to its usefulness. For example in the now classical debate over the virtues and perils of
parliamentarism and presidentialism, empirical studies reached different conclusions depending on
the length of uninterrupted democracy required. Stepan & Skach (1993) uses a measure of 10 years
uninterrupted democracy whereas Mainwaring (1993) employs a 25 years survival requirement.

When Shugart & Carey (1992) employ a two-election test in their contribution to the debate they
are on theoretical and empirical firmer ground. The two-election test is not only a durability
measure but addresses the second question above. Successful repetitions of elections imply that the
political actors ‘adhere to the processes and abide by the result – even when the current election
result is against them. A better test may be the turnover test as suggested by Huntington (1991)
where two changes of government have taken place through electoral competition as this
unambitiously focus an the behaviour of successive losers and winners in elections. That is not only
that the political actors (in this case parties) give principal support to democracy but through their
actual behaviour, i.e. the loser are not challenging the electoral result and gives away power, respect
the ‘rules of the game.’ Time indicates a change in elite perceptions and behaviour as the important
factor for democratic consolidation which constitutes our second circle.

The restriction of the support for democracy to the elite and significant political actors is however a
contested matter. On the one hand Linz (1978) identified the disloyal opposition facilitating the
breakdown and political actors do possess the ability and means to undermine or nurture
democracy. On the other hand maverick or populist political forces may exploit public sentiments
as electoral democracy is no stronger than the electorate. Procedural democracy may be established
by elites but underpinned by a culture of support it is more consolidated (Gill, 2000). We therefore
contend that the third concentric circle consisting of the populations view is a necessary addition to
consolidated democracy. Diamond (1999) interprets the view of democracy as an appropriate way
of organizing political life to the mass public to a consistent belief in democracy as preferable to
any other form of government and a situation where only a few can actively prefer an authoritarian
form of government. To measure this Diamond (p. 69) formulates stringent rules. Thus to remain
within a democratic culture he suggests that no more than 15 percent must actively prefer
authoritarian solutions and more than 70 percent should express preference for democracy

The fourth concentric circle includes not only the state-society relationships but also the
organization and capacity of the state itself. The first part harbours on the discussion of substantive
democracy. Here, a strong civil society is depicted as a reservoir of support for democracy (Gill,

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4 Initiated by the two contributions of Juan Linz (1990a, 1990b)
2000), complimentary to the political society (Linz & Stepan, 1996) and in balance with the state to avoid capture (Bernhard, 1996). The latter is not only a critique against formal democracy’s failure to take the extent of rule of law into account but a premises that stable democracy requires a state that is effective in the protection and extension of the rule of law (Linz & Stepan, 1996), a state that is effective in decision-making (Lijphart, 1977), and capable of regulation and extraction (Linz and Stepan, 1996). The state in the words of Linz & Stepan (1996) has to be ‘usable’ otherwise it runs the risk of not being able to fulfil the ‘normatively desirable and political desired objectives’ (Przeworski, 1995, p. 107) of a society. Thus a weak and inefficient state may backfire on the democratic project and, in particular, if there are authoritarian residues within the political community or within the mass public. The fourth concentric circle of consolidation should also be seen against the backdrop of the debate concerning state capacity, democracy and the development state. The works of Evans (1995), Weiss (1998) and Leftwich (1995) point to the existence of a west European state type, where societal actors are included in the policy process, embedding the state and increasing the legitimacy and usability of the state. The west European state type thus resembles or is parallel to our concept for European democracy.

The consolidation of European democracy

As we are about to discuss the snapshot of the empirical reality we have chosen single out issues of state-society relations to the second part of the debate thereby providing a stronger focus on the preferred model for democracy and the inclusion of civil society into the policy process. In the following we thus begin our review of the consolidation of European democracy utilizing a number of indicators from the first three circles and two items that seeks to tap the effectiveness of the state.

Consolidation in concentric circles: 1st cut.

All seven countries (see table 1) in our sample have few difficulties in passing the traditional consolidation benchmarks as applied by Stepan & Skach (1993) or Shugart & Carey (1992). They have all been rated ‘free’ by Freedom House for a minimum of 10 years and within that timeframe at least 2 free elections have been held. Almost needless to say is that none of the countries would fit into Mainwarings (1993) stricter 25 years of uninterrupted democracy requirement.

With respect to Linz & Stepan’s (1996) addition of a ‘usable state’ two items from the Demstar survey illuminates the difficulties. The aggregate measure for escape regulation implies considerable shortcomings in enforcement of regulations. For example no less than 70 percent of the Estonian interviewees agreed that it was possible for powerful non-state actors (NGO’s, business, and individuals) to escape regulation. As if enforcement problems were not enough the
interviewees also recognizes around 4 of 8 implementation problems mentioned in the standard literature within public administration (Hogwood & Gunn, 1984). Thus in as far as the questions concerns ‘usable’ states it is at least troubled states that have significant difficulties in uniform enforcement and in implementing political decisions.

Two items tap the actors’ acceptance of the ‘rules of the game’. The first is the turnover test. In all countries governments have peacefully changed hands by the ballot, even if some reservations can be argued in the case of Slovenia where the Liberal Democracy almost uninterrupted have served in government since the founding elections. The second item taps more directly the leading actors’ observance of democratic decision making. The interviewees in the Demstar survey were asked whether they, when confronted with a problem, would take administrative action (regardless of law) or initiate introduce new legislation to the parliament (and then take action). Only in Poland and Lithuania more than half of the interviewees choose to introduce legislation first. The number who will want to disregard the law is highest in Estonia (16 percent) and in Slovenia (12 percent) but in general many will want to take administrative action and at the same time forward the necessary legislation for debate and decision to the parliament. Shortcutting the legislative procedures is hardly evidence of democratic thinking. Perhaps it is not only a legacy of the communist systems, with parliaments reduced to rubberstamps, but also the legacy of the heralded ‘window of opportunity’ where the extra-ordinary capital (Balcerowics, 1995) invested in the governments implied a rule by the few.

This insight leads us to the third circle, i.e. the democratic attitudes of the population. The standard reply ‘we get the politicians we deserve’ to aired frustrations about politicians qualifications or policies not only reflect that these are elected democratically but also that we (i.e. the frustrated) are no better than the politicians. Granted it would to stretch this argument inferring from a single item above but survey by survey in Central & Eastern Europe have demonstrated that a significant large part of the population hold authoritarian values and have not accepted neither the democratic institutions or procedures.

In Estonia and Lithuania no less than 40 percent would support the emergence of a strong leader. In Poland the strong leader is support by a third and in the Czech Republic where the strong man ‘only’ can count on the support from 13 percent almost a quarter would support the closure of the parliament. In Lithuania thrust for authoritarian alternatives runs high in the public as less than half is in the affirmative for support for the current system and only 56 percent would disapprove the closure of the parliament. Belief in the elite, rather than in democratic selection runs higher than the wish for a strongman. Thus in all countries large proportions of the respondents do at least somewhat agree that a unity government consisting of only the best people (government of
excellence) should replace that of elected politicians. Even if it is questionable if the respondents correctly understand this question it is arguably not evidence of a democracy culture. Applying Diamonds (1999; p. 69) two rules, i.e. that 1) ‘…more 70 percent of the mass public consistently believes that democracy is preferable to any other form of government …’ and 2) that ‘No more than 15 percent of the public actively prefers an authoritarian form of government’, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania falls short on the first rule if support for the current system is interpreted as a preference for the democracy in place and all countries fall short on the second rule. The shortfall on the second rule is evident even if we only focus on the two strongest worded authoritarian options (i.e. support for the strongman and closure of parliament) and disregards the support for a government of excellence. However, the high degree of support for a government of excellence is only the tip of iceberg illustrating the low degree of trust in the representative institutions of democracy in Central & Eastern Europe. The literature is burgeoning with studies finding and discussing why trust in political parties and the parliament are, for example, very low in general. These studies, in conjunction with the findings above indicates that the new EU-member states of Central & Eastern Europe are still in the process of consolidating and have by Diamonds (1999) standard not yet reached the threshold.

All in all the Central & Eastern European states possesses formal democracy and have observed the democratic producers, perhaps not for a considerable time, but at least there have been no breakdowns since regimes change and, furthermore, actual behavior suggest that democratic processes are respected even if this is not firmly extended to the parliamentary chain of control as many ministers believe in the right to act without a democratic mandate. The states definitely need to upgrade operations and they are burdened with enforcement and implementation problems suggesting a complimentary explanation as to why there are large residues of authoritarian values within the mass public and less support for the present political system than desired.

Consequently the states do pass the two inner circles in our four concentric circle requirement for at consolidated democracy. Extended problems appear with respect to the two outer circles. While the problems of popular attitudes consolidating democracy have been discussed, the next part of the paper looks into the state-society relation addressing how for the European model have been extended to the new Member states. Asking whether there is cohesion in the new European Union with respect to values of participatory democracy and the inclusion of civil society into the policy process we compare the seven new member states with eight other former post-communist countries. Although these eight countries do not in all respects fulfill the requirements to constitute formal democratic systems, we find that their value as control cases may be even more solid. We argue that to the extend that there are no difference between the EU member states and the control group, which is less democratic measured by our two inner circles in their values and practices
related to the inclusion of civil society, then neither the pro-active role of the European union nor formal democracy in itself have mattered much for the development and consolidation of European democracy.

*European democracy: 2nd cut*

The European model of democracy is valued by the Demstar surveyed elite in the new member states and more so than in the countries to the east of the European Union (table 2). The evaluation includes five items relating the European Model (see Appendix A for explanations to the questions).

The question about the role of the public in the political decision process shows that there are in general much more support for a participatory democracy in which citizens organize and are directly included in the political process among the EU countries than say in the Caucasus Republics where preferences for elite democracy is much more widespread. The EU effect or perhaps rather the support for the European model of democracy does also have strong connotations in Bulgaria. With the possible exception of Kazakhstan it appears that attitudes to the role of the public gravitate, in geographical terms, towards the EU implying that participatory democracy where citizens organize to seek influence is a common (and core) European value.

The difference between the two groups are, however, not significant when asked if inclusion of concerned interests into the process of policy formulation would actually improve decision making. Statistically, this is largely due to the Czech answers but the question may also be difficult to interpret. Is a decision better because inclusion bring new ideas facilitating a better cause-effect design or is a decision better because, irrespective of how fallacious the policy may be, inclusion bring consensus with it? The interpretation of value is consequently non-specific but the conclusion firm. A majority both among the EU members and those not find value in including interests into the decision-making process.

*Table 2: Attitudes to democracy, civil society and evaluation of the role of civil society*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role of Public</th>
<th>Decisions improved by inclusion</th>
<th>Feel pressure from CS</th>
<th>Admin. working with CS</th>
<th>Institutionalization of contacts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Estonia</td>
<td>2.7 (1-3)</td>
<td>1.2 (1-4)</td>
<td>2.5 (1-5)</td>
<td>2.0 (1-3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latvia</td>
<td>2.7 (1-3)</td>
<td>1.2 (1-4)</td>
<td>3.1 (1-5)</td>
<td>2.1 (1-3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lithuania</td>
<td>2.5 (1-3)</td>
<td>1.1 (1-4)</td>
<td>3.1 (1-5)</td>
<td>1.5 (1-3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>2.5 (1-3)</td>
<td>1.1 (1-4)</td>
<td>2.5 (1-5)</td>
<td>1.4 (1-3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>2.7 (1-3)</td>
<td>1.1 (1-4)</td>
<td>2.6 (1-5)</td>
<td>1.6 (1-3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovenia</td>
<td>2.4 (1-3)</td>
<td>1.2 (1-4)</td>
<td>2.9 (1-5)</td>
<td>1.8 (1-3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech R.</td>
<td>2.7 (1-3)</td>
<td>1.7 (1-4)</td>
<td>2.3 (1-5)</td>
<td>1.8 (1-3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU av.</td>
<td>2.6 (1-3)</td>
<td>1.2 (1-4)</td>
<td>2.7 (1-5)</td>
<td>1.6 (1-3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. diff. from</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-EU av.</td>
<td>2.0 (1-3)</td>
<td>1.5 (1-4)</td>
<td>4.1 (1-5)</td>
<td>1.7 (1-3)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
With respect to how vibrant the civil society is, that is whether civil society organizations are able to put pressure on governments, the difference between the new EU members and the Non-members are stark and significant. On average the pressure is felt in important issues among ministers in the EU countries whereas their colleagues rarely feel any pressure from NGO’s or other interest organizations. In this respect the difference between those who made it to the EU and Bulgaria that remained a candidate country is also rather stark. Whereas the difference between Bulgaria and the EU-members on all the other questions is relatively small Bulgarian politicians rarely feel pressure from interest organizations to initiate new legislation signifying the halfway house position.5

On the other hand the data show no significant differences between the two groups when it comes to actual working relationships between interest organizations and the administration or the form of inclusion (the degree of institutionalized contacts). There are few differences between EU members and the countries further to the east. The administrations in the EU countries do have working relations with interest organizations, in particular about important issues and the preferred form of inclusion is to set up ad hoc arrangements. Only in Hungary the preferred form seem to be permanently established forums while more informal relations are preferred in Poland, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Armenia.

The elements of European democracy are thus valued in the new member states. There is strong support for a participatory democracy in which citizens organize and seek influence. Politicians and administrators in the member states also find value in including societal interests in the policy process and certainly the feel the pressure, and more so than their colleagues to the east. However, even if it seems evident that civil society is stronger and supported by the EU elite these values and this activity have not translated itself into a more permanent institutional setting (except for Hungary).

5 Cluster analyses (K-means) also suggest the halfway house. If two clusters are iterated all EU members are classified into the same cluster whereas Bulgaria is grouped together with the non-members. Three clusters do not alter this picture. With three clusters the Caucasian republics are placed in the same group, the EU members in their own and the remaining countries in a third group.
Discussion and final remarks

Lijphart (1977) conceded that there was a need to express stability in probabilistic terms. This should be sufficient warning against too firm conclusions. The Central & Eastern European countries are democratic, formally consolidated and in process of developing and consolidating the European (and substantive) form of democracy. The project of consolidating a democratic model along the European line of substantive democracy is, however still in the perspective.

In conclusion we cannot argue the direct influence of the EU’s pro-active role. Possible the development of the European model is a function of the countries being both democratic (in the formal sense), perhaps shared values from the outset and the pro-active policies. Certainly the EU members have much more in common with each other in terms of values and an active civil society than they have with the non-members. Important is, however, that nor can we argue against the positive effect of the pro-active policies. The European Union appears to extent itself in concentric circles both geographically and certainly politically. Witness Bulgaria and it seems evident that our discussion indicate that the European model of democracy also extent itself in concentric circles.

The question is what will happen when the conditionality imposed by the Commission in the negotiation process disappears? Being EU member states the Central and Eastern European countries do not have the same incentive to institute the European model than they had when they were under annual scrutiny by the Commission. The expressed value of participatory democracy and inclusion of the public in decision making points to a positive development. The same goes for the positive assessment of inclusion in the form of improved decisions. Moreover, the high institutionalization of contacts with civil society organization in Hungary may be seen as an example of an internal drive towards further consolidation on the outer concentric circle once the process of formal democratisation, the two inner circles, is set of.

The pending problem lay in the third concentric circle, what does the population think about participation and direct inclusion of civil society organizations in the political decision making? The search for a strong leader, a government by excellence reflects values that do not correspond with the European model. Thus, the project of substantial consolidation in the new EU-member states seems as in the previous change to a formal democracy to be an elite project. The consequences for the European Model as such and the institutional coherence and congruence with the societies in an enlarged union are consequently still pending.

References

Bernhard, Michael (1996). "Civil society after the First Transition: Dilemmas of Post-Communist


Appendix A: Demstar questions in table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable Name</th>
<th>Question 37 – Average: “If solutions to problems are hindered or cannot be solved by current legislation, what do you believe to have been the general response in various ministries?&quot;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Administrative vs.          | 1 = Solve problems by administrative means, regardless laws  
| legislation first           | 2 = Solve problems by administrative means, initiate law change  
|                             | 3 = Initiate change of legislation before addressing the problem                                                                                                                                 |
|                             | **Escape regulation**  
|                             | Question 42 – Average: “Powerful non-state actors can escape regulatory measures”  
|                             | 1 = Strongly agree  
|                             | 2 = Agree  
|                             | 3 = Disagree  
|                             | 4 = Strongly agree                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Implementation problems     | **Average Implementation problems based on questions 39_1-39_8**  
|                             | 39_1: “Have you experienced inadequate resources as an obstacle to have a policy implemented effectively in your ministry?”  
|                             | 39_2: “Have you experienced lack of understanding of and agreement on objectives by the involved officials as an obstacle to have a policy implemented effectively in your ministry?”  
|                             | 39_3: “Have you experienced poor policy design as an obstacle to have a policy implemented effectively in your ministry?”  
|                             | 39_4: “Have you experienced lack of coordination and information as an obstacle to have a policy implemented effectively in your ministry?”  
|                             | 39_5: “Have you experienced lack of monitoring and evaluation activity as an obstacle to have a policy implemented effectively in your ministry?”  
|                             | 39_6: “Have you experienced insufficiently specified tasks as an obstacle to have a policy implemented effectively in your ministry?”  
|                             | 39_7: “Have you experienced interference in the program from outside as an obstacle to have a policy implemented effectively in your ministry?”  
|                             | 39_8: “Have you experienced insufficient staff motivation as an obstacle to have a policy implemented effectively in your ministry?”  

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable Name</th>
<th>Variable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feel the pressure from CS</td>
<td>Question 24 – Average: “Have you ever felt under pressure from outside actors (NGOs, non-state organizations, peak level business, etc.) to initiate new legislation?”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| | 1 = Often  
| | 2 = Often, but not concerning really important issues  
| | 3 = Sometimes  
| | 4 = Rarely  
| | 5 = Never |
| Admin. working with CS | Question 26 – Average: “Do the civil servants in your ministry have close working relationships with major IO’s within the ministry’s resort?” |
| | 1 = Yes, most of the time  
| | 2 = Yes, but only concerning important issues  
| | 3 = No |
| Decisions improved by inclusion | Question 28 – Average: “Do you believe that decisions are improved when concerned interests are incorporated or consulted in the process of formulation?” |
| | 1 = Yes, mostly  
| | 2 = Yes, sometimes  
| | 3 = No, only rarely  
| | 4 = No, worse |
| Institutionalization of contacts | Question 28a – Average: “In which form is/was the concerned interests incorporated or consulted in the process of the policy formulation?” |
| | 1 = Institutional forum for discussion and cooperation  
| | 2 = Institutional forums on ad hoc basis  
| | 3 = Informal forums depending on character of the case |
| Role of Public | Question 45 – Average: “What role should the public primarily play in politics and government?” |
| | 1 = Public should elect representatives and let them run the country  
| | 2 = Public should take interest in politics and communicate their views  
| | 3 = Public should become engaged in organisations to gain influence |
Table 1. Indicators of democratic consolidation in Central & Eastern Europe

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Est</th>
<th>Lat</th>
<th>Lit</th>
<th>Hun</th>
<th>Pol</th>
<th>Slo</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Regime</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Freedom House (av. 1997-02)</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>3.0</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes*</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 free elections</td>
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<td><strong>Effective state</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Escape regulation (1-4)</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.7</td>
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<td>Implementation problems (av. 0-8)</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>4.8</td>
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<td><strong>Acceptance of procedures</strong></td>
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<td>2-turnover</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes**</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Administrative vs. legislation first (1-3)</td>
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<td>2.1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.3</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Support for democracy/alternatives</strong></td>
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<td>Strong Leader (% support)</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>33</td>
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<td>13</td>
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<tr>
<td>Government of Excellence (% support)</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>66</td>
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<tr>
<td>Current System (% support)</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>76</td>
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<tr>
<td>Closure of parliament (% approve)</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Czechoslovakia was measured as 'free' since 1990 and after the velvet divorce the Czech Republic remained so. Slovakia however was not considered 'free' until 1998 but she is not included in our data material; ** Until December, 2004 the Liberal Democracy of Slovenia have been the key member of various government coalitions only interrupted by the short interlude of Andrej Bajuk’s coalition from June, 2000 until the end of November, 2000.

Sources: Demstar survey (see appendix a); Freedom House rankings at www.freedomhouse.org.; Rose, Richard (2002)