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# EUROPE AND THE CRISIS OF DEMOCRACY

**Elections in Europe: 1999 - 2002**

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*Notre Europe* participates in public debate in two ways. First, publishing internal research papers and second, collaborating with outside researchers and academics to contribute to the debate on European issues. These documents are made available to a limited number of decision-makers, politicians, socio-economists, academics and diplomats in the various EU Member States, but are systematically put on our website.

The association also organises meetings, conferences and seminars in association with other institutions or partners. Proceedings are written in order to disseminate the main arguments raised during the event.

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## **PARTICIPANTS:**

ANDERSEN, Jørgen Goul *Aalborg University*

ARNAUD, Jean-Louis *Notre Europe*

BARTOLINI, Stefano *European University Institute Florence*

BETZ, Hans-Georg *University of Geneva*

BOURLANGES, Jean-Louis *Member of the European Parliament*

CAUTRES, Bruno *Institut d'Etudes Politiques, Grenoble*

DEHOUSSE, Renaud *Sciences Po, Paris / Notre Europe*

ELCHARDUS, Mark *Vrije Universiteit Brussels*

GRUNBERG, Gérard *CEVIPOF, Sciences Po, Paris*

KEMAN, Hans Vrije *Universiteit Amsterdam*

KLINGEMANN, Hans-Dieter *Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin*

MARKOWSKI, Radoslaw *Centre for Russian Central and East European Studies, Rutgers University*

MAYER, Nonna *CEVIPOF, Sciences Po, Paris*

MUDDE, Cas *University of Antwerp*

NESTOR, Jean *Notre Europe*

SCHMITTER, Philippe *European University Institute Florence*

TAGGART, Paul *University of Sussex*

UCEN, Peter *International Republican Institute Bratislava*

## INTRODUCTION

*Renaud Dehousse*

Since 1999, Europe has been experiencing a period of electoral turmoil, mainly characterised by the emergence of populist movements led by somewhat offbeat characters: Jörg Haider's FPÖ, Jean-Marie Le Pen's Front National, the Pim Fortuyn List, etc. While recent polls have prompted much comment and passionate debate, an important aspect of the phenomenon has been ignored. What lessons can be drawn at European level from the rising protest vote in many countries of the Union? And are there any direct or indirect links between these national shocks and the European integration process?

The question is worth asking, at a time when the European Union is preparing to complete a historic enlargement process and is in the midst of a debate on its institutional architecture which will necessarily require it to reflect on its relationship with citizens.

However, we should not underestimate the complexity of the matter. It is hard enough to determine what lessons the *European* elections hold for the Union. Given the lack of clear European issues, these are often no more than life-size surveys of the popularity of the governments in power. We must therefore be all the more cautious when looking at national polls, where European affairs have generally been brushed under the carpet.

While initial analyses have focused on political *supply* (populist movements and their charismatic leaders), our aim, within the framework of this exercise, was to examine the *demand* side. Why have voters rejected the "traditional" parties and lent their support to protest groups?

### **Rise in populism or crisis of representative democracy?**

One initial point is clear. Populist movements have not gained a foothold everywhere. The United Kingdom has been spared, as has Germany, where the far right (whose advances in certain local elections had prompted a degree of concern) lost ground in the latest

legislative polls. However, fairly widespread distrust of politics can undoubtedly be noted throughout Europe.

There is no shortage of symptoms, as can be seen from the sheets below. Voter turnout is dropping everywhere. In France, it barely reached 71.6% in the first round of the presidential elections (a decrease of almost 7% compared with 1995). And only 64.4% of voters bothered to turn out for the legislative elections (3.5% less than 1997), despite having mobilised in large numbers for the second round of the presidential elections. Voter volatility has also increased. In the polls of June 2002, 30.7% of Dutch voters changed camp compared with the previous elections. Volatility is also reflected in the emergence of new parties, that are sometimes short-lived and often focused on a single cause (the pensioners' party in the Netherlands, the hunters of *Chasse, pêche, nature et tradition* in France, etc.).

And there are other patent signs of disaffection with politics beyond the elections themselves. Political activism is waning – and the decline is perceptible even in the United Kingdom, although a high number of people there claim to be happy with the way democracy is working. Confidence in political parties has also faded: 82% of persons surveyed in France believe that politicians are not concerned about citizens' welfare. By way of comparison, this indicator of distrust stands at "only" 68% in Slovakia (the accession candidate often said to have the most worrying political system). And it seems that, in many countries, the confidence crisis is affecting not just the parties but all representative organisations, including trade unions.

Hence this first conclusion: at European level, the most worrying factor in the latest electoral polls is not so much the rise in populism (which is undeniable, although of varying significance from one country to the next) as the *crisis in representative democracy* (which does, for its part, seem to be affecting most European countries). It is also notable that the confidence crisis seems deeper in "consociative" systems (where parties of diverse political persuasions are traditionally involved in policy-making). Populist movements have materialised in Belgium, Austria, Switzerland and now the Netherlands, but seem to have more difficulty emerging in countries that feature sharper transitions between left and right. That is certainly not a question of chance: consociativism, a system based on consensus among an elite, is an easy target for populist accusations of power-stealing by an upper caste



and also makes changes more difficult to achieve. In such a context, the temptation of a protest vote (whether left- or right-wing) is naturally strong.

We should beware, however, of concluding that the crisis of representative democracy necessarily amounts to a crisis of democracy itself. It is possible to criticise a political system without being against democracy. In Germany, the most vocal critics of the political system are the Green voters, who can hardly be regarded as advocates of authoritarian regimes. On the contrary, the disenchantment with representative democracy is coinciding with the rise of new forms of activism based on direct democracy. A multiplicity of non-governmental organisations are emerging throughout Europe. Even in the United Kingdom, the cradle of parliamentary democracy, new forms of activism and involvement are making their mark outside the parliamentary framework.

The recent electoral shocks have therefore taken place in the context of a paradigm shift. In Europe, as elsewhere, the democratic ideal is no longer restricted to traditional forms of representative democracy. That is probably a factor whose consequences will also need to be considered in the debate on how to organise the Europe of the future.

### **What about Europe?**

As regards the European side of things, two points are worth highlighting.

The partisans of protest movements are frequently hostile towards the European integration process, even though it is not one of their primary concerns. In France, for instance, far-right voters are the only ones who are predominantly against Europe. But the strongest opponents of the Union remain the leaders of these movements. The diatribes of people such as Bossi and Haider are still ringing in many ears. They had all the more impact since moderate parties are often remarkably coy about European issues, almost as if they had something to hide... However, we must also make allowances for political opportunism: there was a time when Italy's *Lega Nord* was complaining that the "Mezzogiorno millstone" could prevent it from joining the federalist hard core suggested by Karl Lamers and Wolfgang Schäuble. Furthermore, the most virulent Europhobia is to be found in the United Kingdom,

where populist movements have not really managed to gain much support. So populism cannot be said to equate with Euroscepticism.

Nonetheless, the studies conducted as part of our exercise reveal several signs of convergence between the two phenomena. Those who vote for populist movements typically tend to be worried about their future, perceived as bleak, and alarmed at the prospect of a decline in the welfare State. They feel their identity is threatened, and are therefore hostile towards immigration. They are frustrated at political leaders' lack of concern for their problems – hence their support for people who dare to say no (in particular if these do so in strident tones). These fears partly overlap with those of the Eurosceptics, who generally deplore the undermining of traditional society and defend an ethnocentric view of society.

While the European Union is not the primary cause of these fears, it can fuel them in several ways. The preoccupations of the populist electorate can be encapsulated in one word: insecurity. Yet the Union does not appear to be particularly concerned about security issues. On the other hand, the Union's emphasis on trade liberalisation is worrying those who feel they have been left by the wayside in the drive towards modernisation; efforts to achieve free movement are stirring up fears of the Union becoming a sieve for migrants; and the Union is sometimes perceived as a hindrance preventing governments from providing an appropriate security response. Lastly, the workings of the European Union – largely based on seeking compromises among national elites – do not really allow citizens to make their voice heard.

In other words, while European integration is not a direct cause of the protest vote, it can clearly become a factor in strengthening it.

### **What can be done?**

We should first understand that the protest vote is only the *tip* of the iceberg – the eruptive manifestation of a diffuse malaise within the societal body. Those who voted for Le Pen, Bossi or Haider are not the only ones worried about immigration, just as those who voted for Arlette Laguiller or Oliver Besancenot are not the only ones concerned about the future of the welfare State. To respond to their fears is to respond to the concerns of much vaster swathes of public opinion.

## **But how?**

We will limit ourselves to outlining two areas for further debate – one substantive, the other procedural – that are broadly based on ongoing research at *Notre Europe*.

As we have pointed out, the protest vote generally reflects a *diffuse desire for security*. The underlying preoccupations extend far beyond protection against assault and robbery. Social insecurity, loss of identity, concern about the quality of the environment and food are other important considerations at stake. In a rapidly changing world, there is strong demand for security.

Not all these areas are directly relevant to the European Union, but many have significant European aspects. And the Union is often viewed with suspicion in this context, for it was built primarily as a market.

Hence a very simple premise: only by adopting and displaying far-reaching ambitions in all these areas, including with respect to immigration, can the Union allay these fears. It must aim to establish an *area of security* for citizens worried at the rapid pace of change in modern society.

This is not purely a matter of political expediency. There has always been a close correlation between the legitimacy of political institutions and their ability to safeguard the security of the people under their authority. The nation-States established themselves as guarantors of security. The Union, which now exercises a significant proportion of their authority, cannot ignore the obligations this entails.

Furthermore, as regards procedures, the feeling of alienation demonstrated by the protest vote must be addressed. Quite obviously, the root causes of the phenomenon are to be found at national level. But the Union, which impacts on the life of these citizens in so many ways, must also be taken into account. Decision-making at European level is notoriously difficult for the general public to understand, let alone influence. In addition to the task of simplification, the European Convention should therefore also examine how citizens can be allowed to make their voice heard.

This debate should take account of the lessons of the latest electoral polls. All too often, the debates on the reform of the European institutions are based on national models. Yet the outbursts of protest voting in recent years have shown the limitation of these models. We always seem to turn to parliaments – at both national and European level – for the extra dose of legitimacy the Union needs. If representative democracy is in crisis at national level, would it not be unwise to expect too much of it at European level (where, apart from anything else, its implementation is fraught with structural difficulties)?

On the other hand, anything that is likely to allow citizens to influence policy-making by the Union is worth looking at closely: whether dialogue with civil society – which is still lacking a specific framework – or the possibility of European referendums (although perhaps on specific decisions rather than on treaty reform). Above all, we must reiterate an obvious fact: the simplest way to restore the general public's interest in public affairs is to allow it to have a direct influence on the appointment of its leaders. That is true at both national and local level. Why should the Union be any different? Yet this issue can hardly be said to have received the attention it deserves in the current discussions. There has been a lot of talk about leadership and institutional balance. It would probably also be useful to look into how a direct link can be established between voter preferences and the nomination of those who will, in future, be at the helm of the Union, in whatever capacity.

Let us repeat that these are merely avenues which should be explored. At this stage, our purpose is not to defend the merits of a particular system but to insist on the need, in discussions on the tasks of the Union and its institutional architecture, to respond to the concerns that have led to the manifestations of protest seen in recent years. Should the Convention come up with no more than cosmetic changes, there is a strong probability that the disaffection movements already observed will continue to grow.

## CONTRIBUTIONS

### **Political Disenchantment and Populist Mobilisation in Austria and Switzerland**

*Hans-Georg Betz, Department of Political Science, University of Geneva*

There are undoubtedly few cases among contemporary Western democracies, which have seen as pronounced an eruption of popular disenchantment with politics and more signs of democratic distemper than Austria and Switzerland during the past decade. This is particularly remarkable given the fact that the two countries have generally been regarded by political scientists and pundits alike as highly stable and successful examples of consociationalism and neocorporatism. In addition, the two countries are not only among the most affluent capitalist democracies in the world, but both also have traditionally had significantly lower rates of unemployment than their larger neighbours, and, last but not least, both boast a relatively extensive system of social security and public welfare.

Despite these achievements, both countries have experienced a dramatic rise in popular political disenchantment, reflected not only in a marked decline in electoral participation rates and falling support for the traditional parties, but also in a spectacular increase in support for right-wing populist parties and their charismatic leaders.

In Austria, the rise of right-wing populism is closely connected to the flamboyant leader of the Freedom Party, Jörg Haider, who, within the span of only a few years, transformed Austria's third party into a serious contender for political power. For most of the postwar period, the Freedom Party gained little more than five percent of the vote. In the mid-1980s, it was threatened with political extinction. Since Haider took over the chair of the party, the FPO's fortunes experienced a dramatic turnaround. 9.7 percent in the national election of 1986 was followed by 16.6 percent in 1990, 22.5 percent in 1994, and, after a momentary decline in the 1995 election, 26.9 percent in 1999, resulting in the FPO's inclusion in a coalition government with the Austrian People's Party.

Haider's rise has to be seen in a larger context of political instability and voter disenchantment. This was reflected in a significant decline in electoral participation as well as a rather dramatic decline in support for the two major Austrian parties, which for most of the postwar period had divided political power among themselves (via the famous Proporz system). From 1945 to the early 1980s, Austria boasted some of the highest electoral participation rates in Western Europe, ranging between 97 percent in 1949 and 92 percent in 1970. However, the rise of Haider's FPO also marked the beginning of a secular decline in electoral participation. After still reaching 91 percent in 1986, electoral participation declined to 82 percent in 1994 and, after a brief rebound in 1995, to 80 percent in 1999. A similar trend can be seen with regard to support for the two major parties as a share of the electorate (i.e., all eligible voters). Whereas in 1971, their share amounted to 85 percent, by 1990, it had declined to 63 percent. In the 1999 election, it had fallen to 47 percent. Clearly, at the turn of the millennium, a majority of the Austrian electorate no longer saw themselves represented by the two major parties, with a growing number of them either voting for the anti-system (i.e., anti-Proporz) or opting out of the institutional arrangements of formal democracy altogether.

Developments in Switzerland have followed a similar pattern, albeit less dramatic. In Switzerland, democratic distemper is closely associated with the rise of Christoph Blocher, the leader of the Zurich branch of the Swiss People's Party (SVP/UDC). For most of the postwar period a ten-percent party, which represented the interests of the rural constituencies in the German parts of Switzerland, the SVP made its dramatic gains only during the past five years. In 1991, it still garnered less than 12 percent of the vote; by 1999, it attained 22.5 percent of the vote, which turned it into Switzerland's largest party, whose support base increasingly extended beyond its traditional strongholds in the German parts of Switzerland. In fact, in 1999, for the first time, the SVP made major gains in parts of Suisse Romande. Among the main reasons for the party's success was its leader's carefully cultivated image as a "Neinsager," a principled opponent of the "political class," and this despite the fact that the SVP is one of the four parties that permanently make up the Swiss federal government; his vocal opposition to Switzerland's participation in the process of European integration; and his equally vocal defense of Switzerland's reputation in the wake of revelations about the Swiss role during the Second World War. Significantly enough, the gains of the SVP in the 1999 election came to an extent at the expense of the former Automobile Party, which in the early 1990s, with a mixture of right-wing libertarianism and xenophobia, had made significant gains on the national and cantonal level. As a result, the only other significant populist party in Switzerland that has resisted the SVP's onslaught has been the Lega dei Ticinesi, which, however, plays only a role in the Italian speaking canton of Ticino.

Like in Austria, the rise of Blocher has to be seen in a larger context of declining popular political participation and falling support for the four main political parties (including, of course, the SVP). However, the importance of electoral participation in Switzerland is difficult to evaluate. Switzerland has traditionally had one of the lowest participation rates among advanced democracies, owing to several factors, not least the country's system of direct democracy. On the face of it, Switzerland's participation rates have been abysmally low. The decline started in the 1970s, when for the first time participation fell below 60 percent and continued in the 1980s and 1990s. In 1979, participation fell below 50 percent. It reached an all-time low of 42 percent in 1995, only to recover slightly in 1999, by one percent. In recent years, participation rates have been particularly low in Suisse Romande, reaching as low as 32 percent in Vaud, 34 percent in Neuchatel, and 36 percent in Geneve, and reached even in Schaffhausen only 62 percent, despite the fact that Schaffhausen imposes a fine on those who don't vote (the fine, however, is only 3 Franken). Concomitantly with the decline in participation, Switzerland also witnessed a sharp fall in support for the four major parties, from 56 percent of the electorate in 1959 to 31 percent in 1999. Interestingly enough, in Switzerland, "opposition parties" benefited little from this decline. Their share of the vote remained fairly stable around 13 percent of the vote.

This situation might change in the future. Until now, the SVP has remained part of the grand coalition that makes up the federal government. However, under Blocher, the party has often been in opposition to the other members of the government, thus appealing to widespread popular resentment with the dominant parties. The extent of resentment was reflected once again during the recent referendum on the so-called gold initiative, where the majority of voters rejected both the official position of the government and the position of the SVP. It is too early to tell what will be the impact of this and other defeats in referenda (another important defeat was the positive result of the UN referendum) on the electoral fortunes of the SVP in the upcoming national elections in the coming year.

## **Discontent and the success of the populist right in Flanders and Belgium**

*Mark Elchardus, Vrije Universiteit Brussel*

Like many other western democracies Belgium has witnessed high levels of discontent, as well as the decline of trust in institutions, rising dissatisfaction with politics and the success of the extreme or populist right. In this note I shall focus on Flanders. The Dutch and French speaking parts of Belgium are largely distinct political systems with different (albeit still symmetrical) political parties.

### **Electoral participation**

Due to compulsory voting (the obligation to present oneself at the voting booth) discontent has not as clearly as in other countries expressed itself in declining political participation. Absenteeism rose from 6.4% of the electorate in 1985 to 9.4% in 1999. The percentage of invalid and blank votes was 7.5% in 1985 and 6.6% in 1999.

In surveys of the end of the nineties (1998-2000) about a quarter of the electorate states that it would not participate in elections if it weren't for the existing compulsion.

### **Discontent**

Within the Flemish electorate discontent has reached high levels in the nineties (trustworthy data to investigate the long-term development are not available).

Two good indicators are the 'expectations for the future' and the 'feelings of (in)security'. About a quarter of the population holds a pessimistic outlook on the future; more than half expects rising inequality and exclusion in the future, as well as the pending insufficiency of the public pension system. About 75 to 80% of the people polled, express the conviction that security has declined and the risk of victimisation increased. About one in two thinks that the police are no longer able to protect them against (rising) crime.

While the future outlook became somewhat more optimistic between 1997 and 2000, the level of perceived insecurity remains high and is relatively stable.

### **Trust in institutions**

The trust in institutions can be reliably documented in 1980, 1990 and by way of 8 different surveys for the period 1995 tot 2001. There is a general decline in trust in institutions (or societal trust) between 1980 and 1990. There are signs of a bottoming out of the decline around 1995 but then again a further decline during the Dutroux-crisis (1996-1997). Trust re-establishes itself somewhat from 1998 on, although in 1999 societal trust is still lower in Belgium than in Italy, France, Spain, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden, Denmark and Ireland (using data from the European Values Studies). Data from 2000 and 2001 indicate that trust continues to rise, but that distrust in institutions, especially political institutions is still very high.

For the period 1995 to 2000, the trust in about 20 institutions, as reported by 9500 respondents, can be compared. In general the lack of trust is highest for institutions with a

representative function (parties, parliament, unions, lawyers, the church). Among the representative institutions the specifically political ones are hardest hit. Trust is also relatively low in institutions that deal with the articulation of interests (parties, unions, and press) and the resolution of conflicts (lawyers, justice). As a matter of fact, institutions involved in crucial functions of the democratic state of law – representation, interest articulation and conflict resolution- are distrusted. Relatively more trust is placed in authoritative institutions that, in the mind of the citizens, are elevated above divisiveness and conflict (medicine, science, education, hospitals, and the king).

The distrustful citizen is not a “new”, more vocal, critical, involved and informed citizen. The contrary is true. Lack of trust in institutions is more prevalent among people with low degrees of social participation, low degrees of involvement in their immediate surrounding, low degrees of interest in politics and societal topics in general.

### **Membership of political parties**

Over the last 20 years political parties have lost members. Yet the loss was less pronounced than in other western societies (Mair & Van Biezen, 2001). If we leave Spain, Greece and Portugal aside, party membership declined with 38% in European democracies, and with 22% in Belgium.

Membership in the conservative liberal party (VLD), as well as in the new parties, Greens (AGALEV) and populist right (Vlaams Blok) rose during that period.

### **The electoral expression of discontent**

Discontent has expressed itself electorally in two ways. On the one hand through the success of parties that can be described as protest parties and that are characterised by a populist, anti-establishment style, more than by a program. Even when relatively successful in the elections, these formations tend to quickly disintegrate.

The other and far more important expression of political disenchantment is the rise of the extreme right or populist right wing Vlaams Blok. Founded in 1978 the party obtained 1.4% of the votes in that year’s parliamentary elections. Two decades later, in 1999, it obtained 15.4% of the vote in Flanders and about one out of three votes in the city of Antwerp. In the polls (elections are due in June 2003, but could take place earlier) the party is now estimated to obtain 17% of the vote (such estimates have, of course, to be treated with caution).

The origin of the Vlaams Blok can be situated in Flemish nationalism, with quite a few of the present core members and leaders coming from families that were active in fascist parties in the thirties and collaborated with the German occupational forces during the second World War. The success of the party is however not due so much to its nationalism as to its stand on immigration and crime. Its electorate attaches great importance to these issues, is in favour of hard repression of crime and against the growing ethnic and cultural diversity of their society.

The big breakthrough of the Vlaams Blok occurred in 1991, when it jumped from 3 to more than 10%. It’s gain in that election was largely realised to the detriment of the socialist party, which lost many of its traditional (working class, less educated) voters to the Vlaams Blok.



## **Explaining the success of the populist right**

The different developments mentioned - disenchantment, decline of trust, rise of the populist right - are closely interconnected, and their interconnectedness can in part explain the success of the right wing party.

People with a dim view of the future also tend to feel very insecure. Both variables can be used as closely interconnected indicators of discontent (or unease, or lack of well being). The pessimistic outlook on the future and the feelings of insecurity, translate themselves in an ideology that carries a particular view of the nature of man and of the conditions of social order. Man is viewed as an individual that will only pursue it's self-interest, and that can only be disciplined through self-interest or threat. Values and principles are seen as window dressing, used to better pursue one's interests. This conception of human nature is translated into distrust towards representatives (who only pursue their personal interest) and scepticism toward representative democracy, as well as feeling of powerlessness, and a preference for harsh repression of deviant behaviour. It is also linked to resistance against the multi-cultural or multi-ethnic society. Minority groups are considered "migrants", associated with crime and backwardness and perceived as a threat tot the social security system. These different attitudes (utilitarian individualism, authoritarianism, ethnocentrism, feelings of political powerlessness, preference for harsh repression of crime, scepticism towards representative democracy, and antipolitical feelings) are close interrelated. They are part of an alignment of attitudes and convictions<sup>1</sup>. This alignment is furthermore embedded in subcultures and taste cultures, solidifying into a societal cleavage. The right wing position on this cleavage is strongly associated with a vote for the Vlaams Blok; the left wing position with a vote for the green party.

A pessimistic view of the future, feelings of insecurity and the attitudes associated with the rightist position on the described cleavage, increase the likelihood that someone will place little trust in the institutions of one's society. It seems obvious that people don't trust the institutions of a society that does not guarantee them a future or give them a basic feeling of security. The relationship between the non or anti democratic values and the lack of trust, can possibly be explained by the fact that most people holding those attitudes do know that the elites, representing the institutions, do condemn them and consider them morally inferior.

Using survey data gathered in 1998, the intention to vote for the Vlaams Blok can to a quite significant degree be explained by the position on the cleavage and the trust in institutions. Both the position on the cleavage and the degree of trust in institutions are in turn very strongly influenced by the expectations with regard to the future and the feelings of (in)security. To an important degree explaining the rise of the populist right comes down to explaining the rising feelings of insecurity and pessimism with regard to the future, and the translation of these feelings in a particular view of the motives of people and the conditions of social order.

While there is serious empirical support for the thesis that the success of the populist right in Flanders can to a large degree be explained by these factors, there is no reason to assume that the conducive factors are not present in the French speaking part of the country as well. Yet, the populist right is much less successful there. The success of the populist right is clearly a question of supply and demand. Even if the conditions are fertile, there has to be a believable party or movement, and/or charismatic leader(s). The right wing movement in Flanders can dispose of both leaders, able to act strategically, and a substratum of nationalist organisations on which it was able to build an effective and disciplined party. These conditions seem to be

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<sup>1</sup> Akin to, yet different from Lipset's "working class authoritarianism" and Middendorp's "cultural conservatism".

lacking, until now, in the French speaking part of the country. There are also important differences in the reactions of the other parties to the threat of populism and the manifestations of dissatisfaction between the two linguistic communities.

## Denmark: A landslide to the right by trustful voters

*Jørgen Goul Andersen, Aalborg University*

The Danish election on Nov.20, 2001 brought a landslide to the right. The moderate and 'extreme' right - the Conservatives, Liberals, and two right-wing populist parties got a combined share of the vote of 52.9 per cent, which was the highest figure since 1920. The populist right - The Progress Party and the Danish People's Party - got a combined vote of 12.6 pct.. The huge majority of these votes - 12.0 per cent - were cast on The Danish People's party, formed in 1995 as a splinter from the Progress Party (but headed by its former leader, Mrs. Pia Kjaersgaard).

From 1990 to 2001, the 'extreme right' doubled its support among Danish voters. However, the Progress Party, formed in 1972, had obtained even more support in the 1970's (see Table 2). But the Progress Party was formed as an anti-tax party and did not mobilising around the issue of immigration until the mid-1990's when it had declined to about 2 per cent in opinion polls. Besides, the Progress Party was a pro-EU party until 1992 and again in 2001 whereas the Danish People's Party supports EU membership but is highly critical and against any steps towards further integration.

*Table 1. Danish Parliamentary Elections, 1990-2001. Percentages.*

	percentage of votes				
	1990	1994	1998	2001	change
Left Wing, subtotal	12.6	10.4	10.3	8.8	-1.5
Social Democrats	37.4	34.6	35.9	29.1	-6.8
Socialist parties, subtotal	50.0	45.0	46.2	37.9	-8.3
Centre Parties, subtotal	11.4	9.3	10.7	9.2	-1.5
Moderate right, subtotal	31.8	38.3	32.9	40.3	+7.4
Populist Right, subtotal	6.4	6.4	9.8	12.6	+2.8
Mod.+Pop. Right, subtotal	38.2	44.7	42.7	52.9	+10.2
Others/outside parties		1.0	0.4	0.0	-0.4
Valid votes, total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

*Table 2. Support for the extreme right in Denmark, 1973-2001. Percentages of valid votes.*

	1973	1975	1977	1979	1981	1984	1987	1988	1990	1994	1998	2000
Prog.party	15.9	13.6	14.6	11.0	8.9	3.6	4.8	9.0	6.4	6.4	2.4	0.6
Danish PP	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7.4	12.0
Total	15.9	13.6	14.6	11.0	8.9	3.6	4.8	9.0	6.4	6.4	9.8	12.6

In many countries, increasing support for extreme right parties has been accompanied by a decline in electoral participation and a decline in political trust. In Denmark, this is not so. Electoral participation has been steadily increasing since 1990 - even though Denmark follows, calculated on a 10-year basis, the general Scandinavian trend toward lower electoral participation. But in 2001, electoral participation was as high as 87.1 per cent - much higher

than in the other Nordic countries, and close to the average of the 1960's and 1970's.

*Table 3. Electoral participation in Denmark and in other Nordic Countries. Percentages of votes (including blanks) among people eligible to vote.*

	Denmark	Norway	Sweden	Finland	Average of 4 countries
1960's	87.3	82.8	86.4	85.0	85.4
1970's	87.7	81.6	90.4	81.1	85.2
1980's	86.0	83.1	89.1	78.7	84.2
1990's	84.5	77.1	85.0	70.8	79.4
last election	87.1	75.5	80.1	68.3	77.7
1990	82.8				
1994	84.3				
1998	86.0				
2001	87.1				

*Table 4. Political trust. Percentages.*

Generally speaking, how much trust do you have in Danish politicians?

	1991	1994	1998	2001
Very much	2	3	4	3
Quite much	38	50	55	62
Quite little	35	35	30	28
Very little	10	10	9	5
Don't know	14	2	2	2
Balance of opinion	-5	+8	+20	+32

Another peculiarity about the election is the high level of political trust. On most indicators, such as the one presented in Table 4, trust in politicians was the highest ever measured in election surveys since the beginning of the Danish election programme in 1971.

*Table 5. European Identity, 1990-2001. Percentages .*

		Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Balance of opinion
I feel as much European as I feel Danish	1990	17	8	75	-58
	1994	19	5	76	-59
	1998	23	12	65	-42
	2001	32	13	55	-23

Finally, even though there was a strengthening of the ‘Euro-sceptic’ Danish People’s Party, this did not mean a decline in support for the European Union; on the contrary, it was followed by much more pro-European attitudes in the Danish electorate, both as far as European identity is concerned, and in relation to the Economic and Monetary Union where a majority voted no to the introduction of the Euro in Denmark in 2000 but would vote yes by now (tables 5 and 6).

*Table 6. Attitudes to the Euro in 2001. Percentages .*

	Votes yes/ would vote yes	Don’t know/ didn’t vote	Voted no/ would vote no	Balance of opinion
Voted in 1998	43	9	48	-5
Would vote now	57	16	37	+20

*Source:* Danish Election Survey, 2001.

## Democratic Disillusion in Eastern Europe

Cas Mudde, University of Antwerp

### Introduction

In the following I present various possible indicators of democratic disillusion in six East European countries: the four Visegrad countries (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia), which are expected to join the EU in the next accession round, and Bulgaria and Romania, which are believed to be left out. Most indicators are problematic, and can at best be seen as part-indicators, which should be used in combination with others (at the individual level!). Moreover, one cannot speak of *one* clear East European trend. And as far as broad patterns are discernable, they do not point to a widely felt democratic disillusion in the region, let alone to a trend towards it.

### The Facts

*Turnout*, taken for elections to the lower house of parliament, is reasonably high to average throughout the region -- with the notably exception of Poland. Moreover, it doesn't show a sharp drop (see Table 1). That said, turnout is a problematic indicator, as it assumes that non-voters are dissatisfied with politics – a thesis that is refuted in Western Europe by most electoral studies. In addition, it assumes that those who do vote are satisfied with politics, which is doubtful as well.

Table 1. Turnout

<i>Bulgaria</i>	<i>Romania</i>	<i>Slovakia</i>	<i>Hungary</i>	<i>Poland</i>	<i>Czech</i>
1991 84	1990 86	1990 95	1990 65	1991 43	1990 97
1994 75	1992 76	1992 84	1994 69	1993 52	1992 85
1997 59	1996 76	1994 76	1998 56	1997 48	1996 76
2001 67	2000 65	1998 84	2002 71†	2001 46	1998 74
		2002 70			2002 58†

Source: [www.essex.ac.uk/elections/](http://www.essex.ac.uk/elections/) († taken from [www.electionworld.org](http://www.electionworld.org))

Another popular indicator for democratic disillusion is the vote for extremist parties. Table 2 presents the support for extreme right and extreme left parties in parliamentary elections (lower house, first round). In short, the '*extremist vote*' shows strong differences within the region (similar to Western Europe) and seems relatively stable. Moreover, and what the data do not show, extremist parties are increasingly pushed to the margins in East European politics (Mudde 2002).

Table 2. Extremist Vote (2)

<i>Bulgaria</i>	<i>Romania</i>	<i>Slovakia</i>	<i>Hungary</i>	<i>Poland</i>	<i>Czech</i>
1991 2	1990 0	1990 24	1990 4	1991 9	1990 14
1994 3	1992 15	1992 11	1994 5	1993 12	1992 21
1997 1	1996 13	1994 16	1998 9	1997 6	1996 18
2001 1	2000 22	1998 14	2002 7†	2001 18	1998 15
		2002 15*			2002 20†

Source: [www.essex.ac.uk/elections/](http://www.essex.ac.uk/elections/) († based on [www.electionworld.org](http://www.electionworld.org); \* based on [www.statistics.sk/volby2002/](http://www.statistics.sk/volby2002/))

The indicator of the ‘extremist vote’ is not straightforward either. First of all, not all of these parties (if any) will be regarded by the majority of their voters as anti-democratic. So, even though a vote for an ‘extremist’ party might be a protest vote, it is not said that it is a protest against democracy per se. Rather, and more likely, it will be a protest against the parties in power, past or present. In that sense, paraphrasing David Easton’s famous distinction, it would rather express a ‘specific’ democratic disillusion rather than a ‘diffuse’ democratic disillusion (cf. Easton 1965).

Table 3. Trust in democratic institutions

	<b>BG</b>	<b>ROM</b>	<b>SK</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>PL</b>	<b>CZ</b>	<b>EU</b>
<b>Political parties</b>	10	13	6	18	14	12	<b>17</b>
<b>Nat. parliament</b>	29	32	18	44	28	26	<b>40</b>
<b>Nat. government</b>	44	41	19	46	30	36	<b>38</b>

Sources: European Commission (2002).

Trust in democratic institutions is another often-used indicator for measuring disappointment with democracy. Again, this might rather measure specific than diffuse sentiments, particularly given the lack of experience with a full-fledged democratic system in the region (see Peter Ucen’s presentation). In any case, democratic institutions are not well trusted in Eastern Europe, particularly the parliaments (see Table 3). However, this is not much worse than the situation in the EU countries, and might also reflect (at least partly) the less convincing activities of these institutions in the region.

Moreover, *support* for the democratic regime - possibly the most pure indicator of ‘diffuse’ support for democracy - is above 50 percent in all but one of the countries (see Table 4). In Hungary and the Czech Republic this support even reaches 76 percent. Generally the majority of people are also optimistic about the future of the regime. Indeed, the vast majority of the people (except in Slovakia) believe that the (democratic) system will be good in five years time.

Table 4. Attitudes toward old and new regimes and the future

	BG	ROM	SK	H	PL	CZ
<b>Old Regime</b>	57	55	61	68	?	31
<b>Current Regime</b>	58	50	39	76	?	76
<b>Future</b>	58	62	49	87	?	83

Source: Centre for the Study of Public Policy (2001)

At first sight the high number of people with a positive *attitude* toward the old (i.e. communist) regime is perhaps worrying. In all but one of the countries a majority of the population perceives the communist regime in a positive way. However, it is doubtful that these evaluations refer to the political aspect of these systems. Rather, they seem to express nostalgia for the (perceived) equality and safety of the ‘welfare states’ of the former regimes.

Table 5. Endorsement of non-democratic alternatives

	BG	ROM	SK	H	PL	CZ
<b>Communist</b>	24	20	29	25	15	16
<b>Military</b>	12	18	6	1	6	3
<b>Dictatorship</b>	29	26	23	18	27	13

Source: Rose (2001).

The only truly worrisome indicator is the remarkable support for *non-democratic alternatives* in virtually all the countries. Between 13 and 29 percent of the people in ECE countries would support a dictatorship – though ‘only’ 1 to 18 percent would support a military regime (see Table 5). The 13 to 29 percent support for a communist regime must again be interpreted with caution. However, tables 4 and 5 show that only a part of the people that evaluate the communist regime positively support an actual ‘return’ to that regime.

## Conclusion

It is difficult to find straightforward indications (or indicators for that matter) of democratic disillusion in Eastern Europe. That said, it seems that democracy still has some way to go to convince all the people in the region of its merits. Clearly, the current democratic politicians are not helping much. Indicators of ‘specific democratic disillusion’ show even higher scores than in Western Europe. Whether East Europeans will continue to be able to separate the behaviour of ‘democratic’ politicians and institutions from ‘democracy’ itself remains to be seen.

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## **Democratic disillusion and protest vote in France**

*Nonna Mayer, CNRS, CEVIPOF Sciences Po*

### **The following tables present obvious symptoms of “democratic disillusion” in France**

- The drop in voting turn out with a record level of abstention in the first round of the 2002 presidential election (28,4%) and of the parliamentary elections (35,6%) (table 1)
- The sharp decline in political trust, with 83% of the voters, in April 2002, considering that politicians do not care what people like them think and 58% that they are corrupt (table 2)
- The decline in support for parties in office and the rise of protest votes, for the extreme left –5% for Arlette Laguiller in the 1995 presidential election, over 10% of the valid votes for the three trotskysts candidates in 2002- and even more for the extreme right – almost 20% of the valid votes, Jean Marie Le Pen alone drawing 16,86% of the valid votes, ahead of the socialist Prime Minister Lionel Jospin (16,18%) and qualifying himself for the second round where he attracted 5,5 million voters (table 3). Three quarter of Le Pen agree that the political class is corrupt and over 90% that politicians don't care what they think.
- And the social bases of the FN have extended to new groups of voters, farmers and rural residents (table 4) and lower middle class employees. On April 21<sup>st</sup> only two groups of voters still show strong reluctance, the upper and upper middle class group of salaried workers, and women. If only women had voted thaht day, Le Pen would have come in third position, after Jospin, if only men had voted, he would have been the first!

### **What was the part played by the UE in that process?**

- Europe was not the main issue of these elections. Among the three problems perceived as “the most important” at the time of voting in the 1<sup>st</sup> round, unemployment and law and order came first (61 and 60%), the making of Europe before last (9%).
- The European integration process was largely approved. At the same time, 63%of the voters saw it as “ a good thing” and there was a majority of positive opinions in all the electorates, from left to right, with the exception of Le Pen and Mégret voters (37 and 27% positive opinions). But even they did not see it as “a bad thing”, almost half consider it “neither good nor bad “ (47%). And 14% of the voters approved of the proposal of the Le Pen of denouncing the Maastricht treaty (45% of his own voters).
- Yet indirectly, the growing weight of the UE may have played a part, increasing the feeling that politicians are helpless to control economics and that the sovereignty of the states is limited. And also by blurring the traditional left right cleavage, for the UE has opponents, for very different reasons, on the extreme left as well as on the extreme right.
- Lastly, the UE arouses no strong positive feelings, mostly fears, that nurture protest votes.

*Table 1. The drop in voting turn out in the first rounds*

Rate of abstention in Presidential elections	<u>1965</u> 15,2%	<u>1969</u> 22,4%	<u>1974</u> 15,8%	<u>1981</u> 18,9%	<u>1988</u> 18,6%	<u>1995</u> 21,6%	<u>2002</u> 28,4%			
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Rate of abstention in Parliamentary elections	<u>1967</u> 18,9%	<u>1968</u> 20,0%	<u>1973</u> 18,7%	<u>1978</u> 16,8%	<u>1981</u> 29,1%	<u>1986</u> 21,5%	<u>1988</u> 34,3%	<u>1993</u> 30,8%	<u>1997</u> 32%	<u>2002</u> 35,6%
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*Table 2. The decline of political trust*

Generally speaking would you say that elected representatives and public officials are mostly honest or mostly corrupt ? ”

%	1977	1987	May1990	Nov1990	1991	1999	2000	2002
Honest	32	36	40	31	21	25	28	38
Corrupt	<b>38</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>58</b>
NA	30	22	4	14	4	14	8	4

“ Do you have the feeling that, on the whole, politicians care what people like you think: very much, a little, very little, hardly at all ? ”

%	1977	1979	1983	1985	1989	1990	1995	1997*	2002
Care	53	47	45	38	47	34	27	19	17
Don't	<b>42</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>82</b>
NA	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>

SOFRES polls \*In 1997 the answers were : a lot, enough, not much, not at all ”

*Table 3. Presidential scores of the extreme right in France, Fifth Republic*

<i>1st round</i>	<i>Votes</i>	<i>% registered voters</i>	<i>% valid votes</i>
1965	1 260 208	4,4 %	5,2 %
1974	190 921	0,6 %	0,8 %
1988	4 375 894	11,5 %	14,4 %
<u>1995</u>	<u>4 571 138</u>	<u>11,4 %</u>	<u>15,0 %</u>
<b>2002, 1<sup>st</sup> round</b>	<b>5 471 739</b>	<b>13,3 %</b>	<b>19,2 %</b>
Le Pen	4 804 713	11,7 %	16,9 %
Mégret	667 026	1,6 %	2,3%

Source: Ministry of the Interior

*Table 4. Le Pen vote 1st round 2002 presidential election by occupation\**

	Farmer	Self employed	Higher level executive	Middle level executive	Clerk	Blue collar
1988	10%	19%	14%	15%	14%	17%
1995	10%	19%	4%	14%	18%	21%
2002	22%	22%	13%	11%	22%	23%
	+12	+3	-1	-4	+8	+6

\*Unemployed and retired classified according to previous occupation

## **Political developments in the Netherlands: Volatility & the Rise & Decline of a Populist movement.**

*Hans Keman, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam*

### **Introduction**

The Netherlands has experienced the most dramatic election ever (except perhaps for 1946, when the Communist Party - CPN got 10% of the vote and in 1977, when the Labour Party: PvdA got more than ever: 34% due to the hostage crisis. Not only the wholly unexpected murder on 'newcomer' Pim Fortuyn turned this election into a dramatic event, but even more dramatic has been the fact that a non-descript 'new' party became the second largest and got in government. Finally - as an unexpected "finale" - the internal strife within LPF [Lijst Pim Fortuyn] has led to the ending of this government [on 16 October 2002]. This government - a coalition formed by Christian Democrats [CDA], the Conservative Liberals [VVD] and LPF - turns out to be the most short-lived one since World War 2. In short, it implies new elections [within 3 months] and possibly even more volatile developments than already have occurred throughout the last decade. The account given will focus on the electoral developments in the Netherlands since the early 1990s, the changing political landscape in order to shed some light on the question how the established parties lost so much ground in the Netherlands of late.

### **Electoral development in the Netherlands (1994-2002; see Table 1)**

Two features stand out 1) The tremendous *growth of electoral volatility (EV) after 1989*: 25,4% with an all time peak in 2002 surpassing lands slide election in 1994. 2) The strong *growth of "New Parties"* (i.c. those participating for the first time in 1989). This concerns N = 6 out of the 12 competing in 2002: Green Left [GRL], Socialist Party [SP], Leefbaar Nederland [LN], Lijst Pim Fortuyn, the Christian Union (a merger of Protestant Orthodox parties) and the Party of Elderly. Hence party system change in the Netherlands has been not only large but also strong in terms of electoral success. The 'new' parties gained more and more votes. 1989: 5%; 1994: 12%; 1998: 11%; 2002: 32%!

Yet, this development can be observed throughout Europe: E.V. has grown everywhere. However, the difference is that in a number of countries it is a *within* shift of votes (e.g. Portugal, Spain & UK) whereas in other countries the change went primarily to 'new Parties' (Austria, Denmark, France, Finland, Italy, and, of course: the Netherlands).

*In sum*: Electoral change takes place in Europe as a whole, but in the Netherlands somewhat more drastically during the 1990s. It should also be noted that there is not (yet) a *lower turnout* in the Netherlands (only for EU-elections this is the case). However, it remains to be seen whether or not this has been an exception to the European trend due to the dramatic events that led up to the last election. Calculations derived from surveys show that probably 5% of the electorate will not turn out in the next election.

*The Drive to the Centre*: the electoral competition changed in tow ways: 1) The established parties converged in terms of left vs. right in particular since the elections of 1994. This has meant, in my view, that more room was available for 'newcomers' both on the right and the left-hand side of the Dutch political system (i.e. the new 'left' is equally large as the PvdA, and the LPF is bigger than the VVD on the right). 2) this convergence has diminished the room for genuine political choice for electors and made the established parties look like a

‘closed shop’. Hence party competition decreased and increased the idea that most parties were rather rent seeking by forming self-interested coalitions.

My hypothesis is that the New Parties could indeed make a difference in the Netherlands and together with a gradual shift to the right in the Party System has been conducive to a stronger position in parliament as compared with 1989. This structural development explains for a large part what has gone on before 2002, but not yet sufficiently what happened in 2002!

This difference is *Pim Fortuyn!*

Two topics we will address here: 1) To what extent he and his new party are extremely rightwing or not; 2) Whether or not Fortuyn and his electoral movement can be considered as ‘populist’.

1. On the basis of programme analysis we have compared the LPF with established parties throughout Europe that can be considered as member of the ‘Conservative’ party family. As it turns out *LPF can be classified as such*. Yet, many have also argued that Fortuyn was similar to LePen, Haider, and Blocher etcetera. Therefore we compared also the Right Wing Extremist parties. The results show that the LPF is not more less extremist than many other right-wing parties in Europe (VVD or CDU/CSU would fall in the same category!). Hence, LPF is a rightwing party, however, without clear extremist tendencies (so far). This conclusion is supported by the developments during government formation after the elections. Actually this turned out to be ‘business as usual’ and resulted in a policy agreement that was certainly ‘right wing’ in character but not dramatically different from previous ones.
2. What happened in 2002 in the Netherlands cannot be understood if one does not see that the ‘new’ leader of LPF: Pim Fortuyn also brought into the Dutch campaign a new style that was strongly build around his personality. Both aspects: personality and style can be seen as an introduction of ‘populism’ in Dutch politics. My arguments are (following Paul Taggart):
  - strong *vertical and direct* ties between the ‘leader’ and the followers/supporters;
  - explicit rhetoric on the *nation*, its future (based on the past) and the need for cultural homogeneity (but not outright xenophobic);
  - Fortuyn presented himself as a ‘*crisis manager*’ (Prime Minister to be!) to remedy the Welfare State, the Big State and the Permissiveness in Dutch society;
  - The LPF condemned the political elites in the Hague, the traditional parties and thus *questioned the legitimacy* of Dutch representative Government.

Taken together we can conclude that both the person and the new party made a crucial difference to the Dutch election result of 2002. It remains a counterfactual whether or not his untimely death would have meant another result. The recent developments, however, show that without a leader and an organisation and without a “radical” programme (i.e. transparent and different) this ‘populist’ movement was not able to gain momentum let alone to govern.

## Conclusions

The past decade has shown a dramatic change and ‘confusion’ in the Dutch party system. Voters do turn out but not to vote automatically for the established parties. On the contrary, electoral volatility is mainly beneficial for new parties, many of them being ‘protest parties’ or those parties that outflank the traditional ones in terms of policy pursuit.

Additionally, it must be observed the ‘style of politics’ has changed. One could well say that this is a definitive farewell to ‘Consociationalism’. For instance it implies an end to ‘elitism’, i.e. delegated representation that it is accepted by the public. It also means that ‘new parties’, i.e. competitors on the electoral market have a much higher chance to succeed (e.g. SP and LPF in 2002). As far as there is disillusionment with democracy it is not yet exemplified in lower turnouts (except for EU-elections) but rather switching loyalties by the elector.

Finally: it should be stressed that, if the ‘political elite’ or establishment does not alter its attitude and behaviour, populist movement or radical parties will have more room for manoeuvre than ever before. This may well be conducive to a lower degree of “governance” and not only become visible in a loss of representative government, but also a growing loss of legitimacy of the democratic state and the rule of law. Depending on whether or not new personalities emerge and the learning behaviour of the ‘old’ parties increased Dutch politics will remain in dire straits for some time to come.

*Table 1: number of seats by party in lower chamber from 1989 - 2002 (Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal: total N = 150)*

Party	Party Family	1989	1994	1998	2002	98-02 +/-
<i>Socialist Party (SP)</i>	Socialists	-	2	5	9	+4
<i>Green Left (GRL)</i>	New Left/ecologists	6	5	11	11	0
PvdA	Social-Democrats	49	37	45	23	-22
D66	Progressive Liberals	12	24	14	7	-7
<i>Leefbaar Nederland</i>	Regional Coalition	-	-	-	2	+2
CDA	Christian Democrats	54	34	29	43	+14
VVD	Conservative Liberals	22	31	38	23	-15
<i>List Pim Fortuyn (LPF)</i>	Right-wing populist	-	-	-	26	+26
SGP, GPV, RPF (CU=RPF+GPV)	Orthodox Christians	6	7	8	6	-2
CD, CP86	Extreme (near racist) right	1	3	0	-	-
Others	[concerned Party of Elderly]	0	7	0	0	-
Electoral Volatility	Party System Level [%]	5.3	22.7	18.7	30.7	+12.0

*Source:* Keman, 2002; there is no electoral threshold [0.67% of the vote equals one seat]; Electoral Volatility is measured according to Pedersen, 1979.

Figure 1. Number of Seats in NIPO-Polls

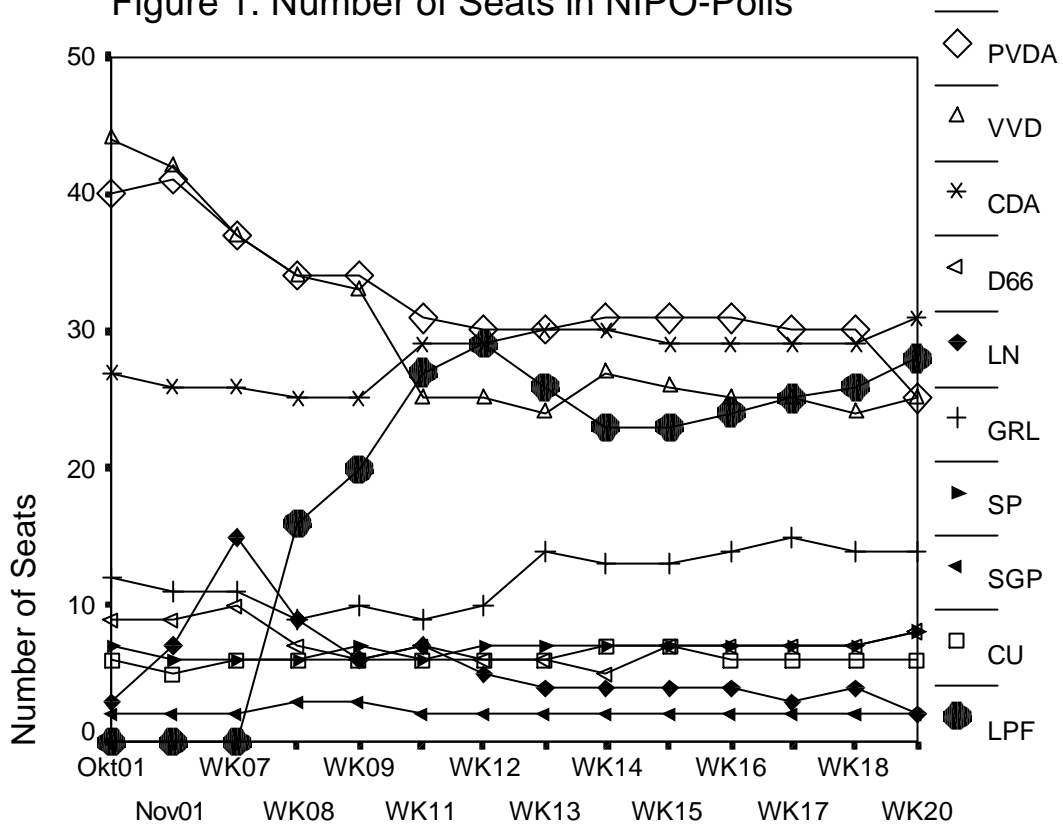


Figure 2. Left versus Right since 1977

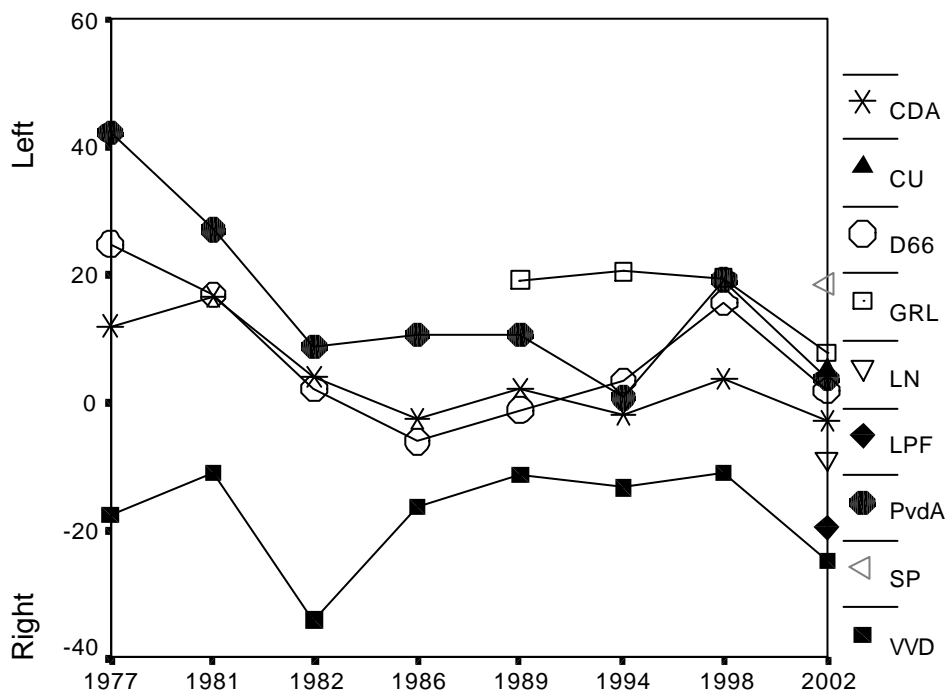


Figure 4. Progressive vs. Conservative in 2002

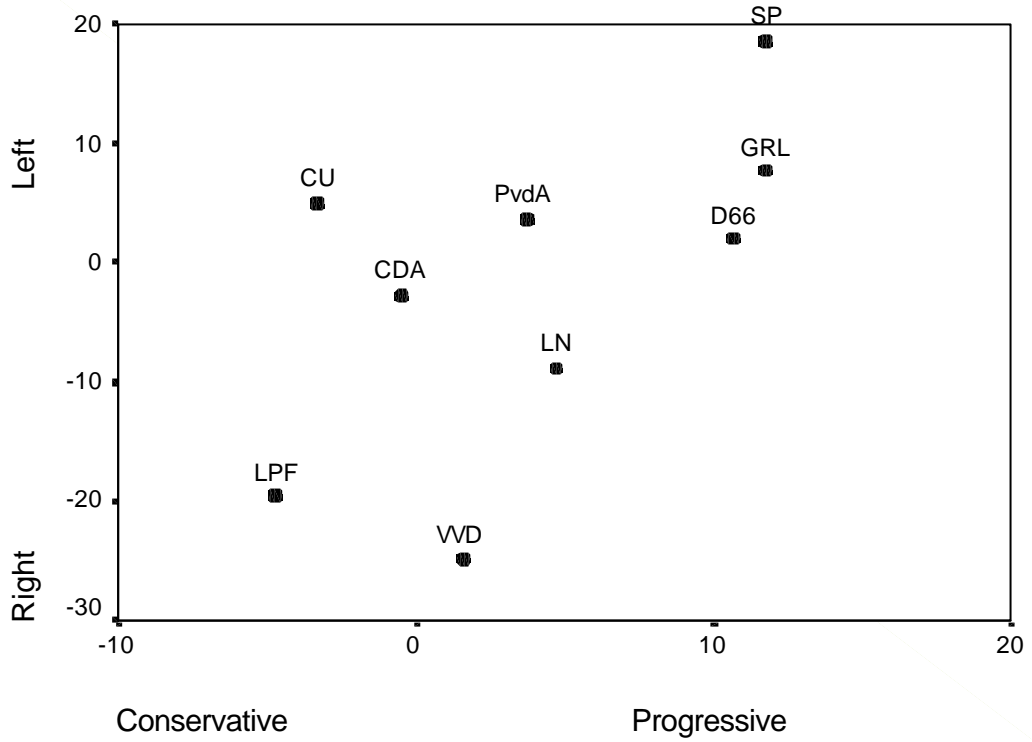


Figure 5. Dutch and European Conservative Parties

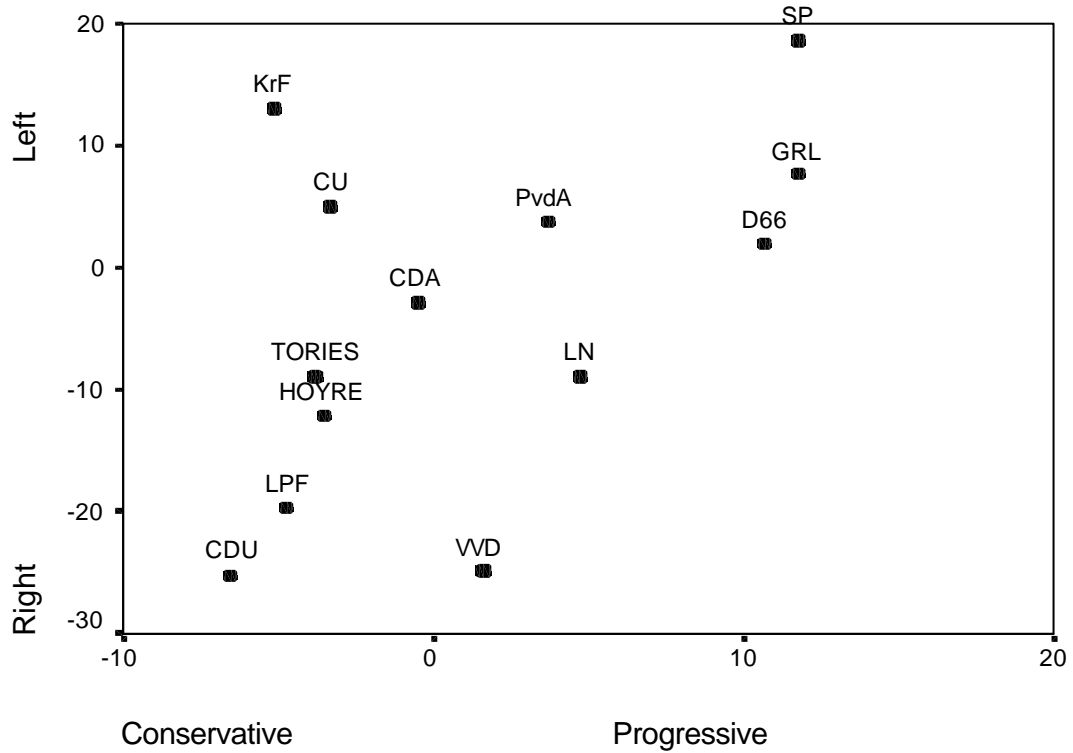
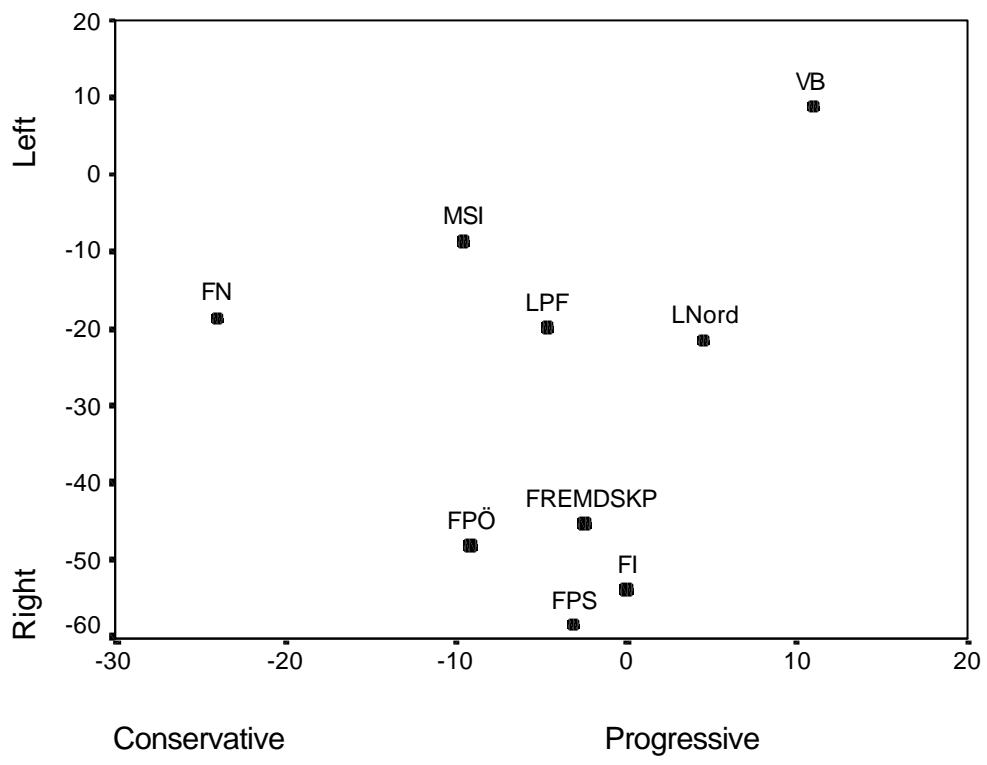




Figure 6. Pim Fortuyn and the Extreme Right in Europe



## Disillusionment with Democracy and Populism in Poland

Radoslaw Markowski, Institute of Political Studies, Polish Academy of Sciences

(1) General remark and a word of caution: Western dissatisfaction with democracy and populist/radicalist trends are ontologically different phenomena (at least partly) from the manifestations of similarly dubbed processes in East-Central part of the continent. This is so for at least three reasons:

- 1) The different socio-historical context in which the stable democracies of Western Europe are today as compared to the CEECs. To start with a major difference is the very existence and stage at which the nation-state formation and developments in Slovakia and Croatia, the two instances in which state/nation-building has been sought instead of democratic institutions, is very telling in this respect.

CEECs populist/xenophobic movements and parties differ clearly from the current Western phenomenon in that there is no single party that resembles the New Radical Right of the West. All of these CEECs parties are definitely opting for state protectionism and economically leftist ideas. Neo-liberal stances are totally missing.

- 2) In the post-World War II West, “populist” movements never gained power (the debatable case of Berlusconi being, if one wishes, the only exception). In Eastern Europe several countries had experienced the rule of “populist” governments (cf. Slovakia, Belarus, Romania and their strong occurrences in Ukraine, some fission products of Yugoslavia). On the distinction between populists as incumbents and as contenders for power in the following parts.
- 3) In the West and East we seem to witness different focuses of the “populist” movements/parties. In the West they most often question the political organisations of the state (governments, parliaments, parties) and sometimes the performance of democracy, while in the East the critique is more widespread and broad, challenging the newly established institutions as well as the essence of political community (the inclusive-exclusive debate) and fairly frequently the axiological bases of the regime, as well as the very ideals of liberal democracy.

(2) Defining “populism” is certainly a task that exceeds this short presentation. Let me however try to enumerate three facets (types) of “populism” as they surface in Poland. I tend to believe this distinction – to a different degree – is valid for many other CEECs:

1. **“procedural populism”** – questioning the necessity, aimed at limiting the role of the: (i) democratic procedures, (ii) basic liberal institutions: parliament, parties, (iii) elites of all pedigree, and (iv) non-electoral constitutional bodies designed to check and balance contemporary democratic procedures (Central Bank, Constitutional Court and the like)
2. **“substantive (issue/content-driven) populism”** – challenging policies and policy stances concerning “distributive” issues (welfare provisions, social assistance, state interventionism, taxation, egalitarian justice, etc.)
3. **“axiological (value-oriented) populism”** – defending identities, faith, national symbols etc, in a nutshell – focused on “non-distributive” issues.

Populism #2 is characteristic of LEFTIST populist parties (in Poland: Samoobrona and PSL which are axiologically (#3) either indifferent or diffusely-neutral, respectively)

Populism #3 is predominantly associated with the RIGHT, and their public axiological rhetoric (in Poland: LRP).

In broader context, one may claim the *first* pertains to the old Burkean dilemma: the new populists aim at switching from "trustee" to "delegate" representation relationship. The *second* is oriented towards "change", in everyday political practice it is active in organising radical political actions etc. (usually practised by leftist populists). The *third* is "conservative", past-oriented in nature, aimed at preserving the, mainly cultural, status quo.

(3) "Political EXIT" - non-voting as an indicator of disillusionment : The Polish case, indeed, deserves separate attention as the turnout rates have been dramatically low since the very first (semi-free) election of 1989 (62%) and have never exceeded 68% (second round of parliamentary election 1995). Most of the time the figure in parliamentary elections was below 50 %, in presidential ones between 50 and 65 percent and in local elections, usually around 40 %.

Explanation of this phenomenon is complicated, but there are several crucial factors. The Polish low turnout figures are to start with not so much an indicator of disillusionment with democracy as with politics in general. In addition, several other factors account for the enormously low electoral participation of Poles: the shape of the social structure (low educational attainment, proportion of marginalised social strata – numerous segments of autarkic peasantry, extremely high post-war mobility – to the re-gained territories, no traditions of civil society in the Russian partition; absenteeism inherited as a communist legacy, deeply rooted anti-partyism, etc)

Several traits of Polish non-voters should be mentioned at this point:

- a) although they are numerous, they are not radical; their spatial location (measured by ten policy-stances) indicates they are to be found right in the middle of the Polish space of political competition spectrum with - more or less - equal distance to major political parties.
- b) About one-third of these non-voters enter and exit the electoral market at each election, contributing to minor shifts in support for particular parties. The growth of Samoobrona at the last election can by no means be explained by mobilisation of non-voters (frequent interpretation by both Polish and foreign political commentators) as almost 93% of their 2001 supporters were active voters in the 1997 election.
- c) Polish electoral activity is much more determined by "political dislikes (hatred)" than by political attachments or identities. The phenomenon points to the fact that the party identifications are rather weak and volatile (figures of volatility are astronomic if computed on party bases; significantly less so if on the basis of "party families"). Briefly, the Polish electorate is to a considerable extent composed of "anti-voters" and non-voters.
- d) As transformational time passes by, Polish non-voters are becoming more similar to the voters in their policy/issue preference profile. This, accompanied by the fuzzy, though numerous group of SLD supporters, tells us fair amount of the story - Polish electorates and non-voters have become in 2001 much more heterogeneous. The desperate search for the relevant party continues.

- e) Polish problems with institutionalised electoral activity can also be interpreted, following Linz and Stepan's (1996) ideas, as problems in smooth switching from (overmobilised) civil society to (consolidated) political community.
- f) The major part of the blame for the continuing high abstention rates goes however to the behaviour and deeds of the elites. Permanent fluctuation of organisational structures, mergers and dissolutions of parties going far beyond "ideological necessity" to mention just a few, had created a situation in which it was close to impossible to develop cognitive maps which allow us to identify parties likely to represent individuals and particular groups, not to mention the creation of political attachments and identities.

(4) Between 1997 and 2001 Polish NES data records a significant worsening of the public mood concerning basic indicators of democratic performance.

The main "barometer" question concerning "satisfaction with the performance of democracy in a given country" shows a dramatic decrease from 54% in 1997 to 34% in 2001. A long story would have to follow to explain why, but what seems worth emphasising is that satisfaction with the democratic performance does not run along political winners vs losers line. Quite to the contrary, it is highly correlated with the ideological camp individuals fall into: the winning "left" is much less satisfied with democracy than the ousted from power "right" supporters.

Worsening of other "efficacy", "alienation" and the like indicators looks as follows: (percentage positive answers to the survey items, between 1997 and 2001)

"voting makes sense as it can change things"	from 27 to 20 percent
"parties care about what people think"	from 15 to 9 percent
"who is in power matters"	from 73 to 57 percent
"parties are necessary for the state to function"	from 60 to 51 percent
"is there any party you feel close to"	from 64 to 54 percent

(5) Polish "populist" parties. Polish and foreign commentators label as such two political entities existing currently on the Polish political arena: SAMOOBRONA (Self-defence) and LPR (League of Polish Families).

One caveat at the beginning is due: as of 2001, compared to the 1997 election, almost all parties and their electorates have moved towards the economically populist parts of the political space and towards, though less visibly, the secular part. This applies also to the major player, Polish social-democracy (SLD), as it had a very "irresponsibly promising", populist and overbidding 2001 campaign. The exact characteristics of these two "populist" parties will follow, but the main point I want to make (based on complicated empirical analyses of the Polish NES 2001 data) is the following: Samoobrona's supporters are by far less radical than most political observers tend to believe. Among ten monitored issues, which cover most of the policy space, only in one instance (EU enlargement) Samoobrona followers reveal the most radical stance (in fact accompanied by other main-stream parties' electorates). Where they substantially differ from other parties is in their radical stance towards "procedural politics" (evaluation of the functioning of the basic democratic institutions, satisfaction with democracy, efficacy indicators, necessity of parties, fairness of elections and the like). Nevertheless they do not differ that much in terms of their policy preferences.

Both Polish populist/nationalist parties have a clear socio-demographic profile. Samoobrona has transparent "male" support (2.5 to 1 ratio) and, contrary to many claims by those who are too lazy to look at empirical data, it has no rural overrepresentation, although its programmatic appeal is addressed mostly to rural electorate. Their supporters are very poorly educated, occupying rather low professional positions, falling into all age cohorts and clearly secular.

League of Polish Families (LPR) supporters are more evenly distributed between sexes. Their education is rather poor, professional position differentiated but rather low, more likely to be found among housewives and other strata "outside the labour market", significantly overrepresented among frequent churchgoers.

It is important to note that - unlike their Czech (Sladek's Republicans) or Hungarian (Csurka's "justice" party) counterparts - their "nationalism" is inward-oriented and has virtually no ethnic, "blood" superiority overtones. In a nutshell, they are aggressively critical of the behaviour and deeds of the Polish (liberal) elites and focus on the economic protectionist (Samoobrona) or cultural defensive (LPR) positions.

In terms of their parliamentary positions, they are clearly in a minority, but, what seems obvious by now, are aspiring to expand to control the policies via "normal politics". Briefly, they hardly can be called anti-system. Because of their entry into the parliament, no surprise, the Polish lower house has become more "representative" than before - 25-30% of Poles skeptical of EU integration now have parliamentary representation.

Finally, Samoobrona seems to be more pragmatically-driven in its opposition to EU integration and objects mainly to the very way in which Poland negotiates entry, while LPR seems to have more fundamental and ideological reservations towards entry. In economic terms (including the issue of FDI, privatisation mode and the like) followers of both parties do not differ significantly from the electorates of the two incumbent parties - SLD and PSL.

(6) Channelling discontent is of utmost important for any political system; for the new ones in particular. In Poland individuals dissatisfied with democracy are relatively unevenly distributed, overrepresented, of course, among the non-voters and the radical populist parties following. The so-called "Dissatisfied Democrats" (conceptualised by D. Fuchs and H.D. Klingemann, as those who cherish the democratic ideal simultaneously being critical of the democratic performance in a given country) as well as clear Autocrats are also overrepresented among these groups. In 2001 the "dissatisfied democrats" amounted to 60% of Samoobrona followers, 46% of PSL (peasant incumbent party), 45% of non-voters and 37% of LPR. Fortunately the proportion of "dissatisfied democrats" to "very-likely-autocrats" (those who poorly value the democratic performance AND democratic ideal) is about 4/3 to 1 among these groups.

(7) Geographical spread of populist support:

1. in the regions of weak social bonds (re-gained territories after WW II)
2. regions of no civil society traditions (former Russian partition)
3. undergoing radical economic deterioration (dynamics more important than static indicators)
4. in regions proximate to the West (mechanisms of relative evaluation at work)

## Democratic Disillusion in the United Kingdom

*Dr. Paul Taggart, Sussex European Institute*

In looking for evidence of democratic disillusion in the UK I examine a number of indicators and deal briefly with the question of Europe in the concluding points. In the UK overall there is little evidence of a significant decline in support for democracy. In relative terms there is actually little evidence of a democratic distemper in comparison with other West European states.

### Electoral Trends

If we look at levels of turnout at general elections since 1974, there is a slight decline since 1974 but it is difficult to discern a clear trend with fluctuations both up and down. There was a severe drop in turnout at the last General Election in 2001. This may well be due to the state of the opposition Conservative Party and the apparent inevitability of a second victory for the (New) Labour Party of Tony Blair.

*Table 1: Turnout in UK General Elections<sup>2</sup>*

1974 Feb	1974 Oct	1979	1983	1987	1992	1997	2001
78.7%	72.8	72.0	72.7	75.3	77.7	71.3	59.5

*Sources:* British Governments and Elections since 1945

<http://www.psr.keele.ac.uk/area/uk/uktable.htm>

Support for xenophobic parties of the far right is very limited in the UK. Looking only at support for the National Front/British National Party, it is clear that the far right has negligible electoral support. Occasionally attention in the UK is focused on localised electoral success of the far right, such as in Tower Hamlets in London or Oldham in Lancashire but this is invariably in areas where racial tensions are high and electoral support are rarely meaningful in national terms. It is notable that the UK, unlike most other European countries has very low neo-fascist or new populist mobilisation.

*Table 2: Electoral Support for the British National Party/National Front at UK General Elections*

1974 Feb	1974 Oct	1979	1983	1987	1992	1997	2001
3.6%	3.1	1.4	1.1	-	0.7	0.1	0.2

*Sources:* various

Looking at whether the political parties have suffered a decline, we can assess (with caution) one aspect of their survival through looking at membership. Evidence here (table 3 below) shows all three major parties have declined since 1974 but that the trend is not uniform for

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<sup>2</sup> It is worth noting that under devolution turnout for the 1999 Scottish Parliamentary elections and elections for the Welsh National Assembly were 54% and 46% respectively.

the parties with Labour seeing a massive loss of membership in mid-80s but thereafter experiencing a gradual increase.

*Table 3: Party Membership in the UK since 1974 (in thousands)*

Year	1974	1979	1983	1987	1992	1997	2001
Cons	1500	1350	1200	1000	500	400	350
Lab	692	666	295	289	280	420	361
Lib Dem	190	145	145*	138*	100	100	90

*Source:* Webb, Farrell & Holiday (eds.) *Political Parties in Advanced Industrial Democracies* (OUP, 2002 forthcoming)

\*Includes SDP membership

### Public Opinion

Public opinion polls show there is little indication of a decline in satisfaction with national democracy and only marginal increases in dissatisfaction. Using Eurobarometer data since 1996, it is also clear that levels of satisfaction are generally higher than EU averages and levels of distrust are lower.

*Table 4: Satisfaction with National Democracy in the UK*

Year	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Satisfaction	63%	64	-	62	64	67
Dissatisfaction	25%	25	-	28	27	27

*Sources:* Eurobarometers (various)

### Popular Mobilisation

One measure of democratic disillusion which is not numerical is the increasing use of protest tactics and mass extra-parliamentary mobilisation which has occurred in the UK. While anti-globalisation/anti-capitalist protests in the City of London on recent May Days fit with the protest tactics of the left, what is more notable is the new mass mobilisation of movements not of the left. The key examples would be the fuel protests in 2000 and 2001 where petrol refineries were blockaded by truck drivers protesting fuel prices, and the mobilisation of the Countryside Alliance (including a mass protest in London in September 2002). The Countryside Alliance is an unusual coalition of pro-fox hunting activists and other rural movements and is at odds with the present Labour government.

### Conclusions

- The UK appears to be remarkably resilient from trends of democratic disillusion seen elsewhere in Europe.
- Public opinion, electoral abstentionism and support for xenophobic parties show little evidence of democratic distemper but there is more evidence in terms of extra-parliamentary protest and in declining membership of political parties.

- In looking at the influence of European integration on these trends it should be noted that this lack of democratic disillusion goes hand in hand with the highest levels of party and public Euroscepticism in EU member and candidate states.
- Any 'Europeanisation' of trends towards democratic disillusion are limited with most trends seeming to be national but with some Europeanisation of social movement activism.



## Democratic Disillusion in Slovakia.

*Peter Ucen, International Republican Institute, Bratislava*

Data for Slovakia will be presented elsewhere (Cas Mudde) so it would be useless to replicate them here. I will present some data collected in Slovakia by local agencies, but this data is far from being so complete, consistent, and comparable as those from the Candidate Countries Eurobarometer and similar. I will mainly focus on a narrative explanation of the context. (Most of the data is courtesy of FOCUS polling agency and Institute for Public Affairs (IVO) in Bratislava.)

Before I present an empirical case for Slovakia, I would like to point out a few caveats concerning the troublesome aspects of research on democratic disillusionment in post-Communist countries.

The notion of democratic disillusion, as currently conceptualised by western scholars, pertains to societies where democracy has been in place for a prolonged period of time (and this is certainly not the case of post-Communist states). It refers to the processes of change that took place among populations of democratic countries as far as their relationship to the system of representative institutions and to political elites is concerned (decreasing trust, increasing protest vote). Thus, the concept inherently assumes *populations, which were once satisfied with democracy are now becoming increasingly disenchanted with it.*

However, people in post-Communist societies have not yet had a chance to be satisfied with their democratic regimes as they are generally perceived as not satisfactorily developed yet, unconsolidated. Instead, *Post-Communist populations were once full of various expectations as to what democracy should deliver to them and various perceptions of what democracy - which were not rooted in their life experience.*

That is why, I suggest, we have to bear in mind these different premises when measuring post-Communist people's dissatisfaction with democracy. It is reasonable to assume that when we are measuring their current attitudes to democracy in polls, we are actually measuring how they tackle a situation that their expectations might not have been met. This difference suggests caution in interpreting popular reactions to disillusionment with the working of their democracies.

### *Different Premises*

West	Populations once satisfied with their democratic regimes	Dissatisfaction with the decaying performance of these regimes
Post-Communist countries	Populations with various empirically unrooted expectations on democracy	Dissatisfaction with the fact that their expectations have not been met

For full-fledged research on this topic in post-Communist conditions I would propose to answer an additional question before embarking on an analysis of the processes which are typically in the West identified as syndromes of democratic disillusion, namely growing abstentionism and protest vote. This would be *“What people in post-Communist countries mean by democracy when expressing their attitude to it? What they expect it should deliver?”* This should provide a context for interpreting the rates of their dissatisfaction and trends in the aforementioned syndromes.

## 1. Meaning of democracy and expectations attached to it

Perceptions of the majority of the population are *contingent upon a political context*, namely on respondents' *evaluation of the social and economic situation* and on the *incumbency factor* – the fact as to which party/bloc is in government and in opposition shapes supporters' perceptions what democracy should be (namely in terms of how the opposition should be treated).

According to some researchers, reference for 'democracy as procedure' has been lagging behind the 'democracy as material benefit' but its support is consolidating. Except for the 1990-91 period, when the 'rights and liberties' aspect prevailed as the dominant feature of democracy, the majority of the population in the 1990s perceived democracy in terms of socio-economic 'substance' (satisfaction of economic needs). During civic polarisation under the Meciar III government there was an increase of sensitivity to 'rights and liberties' by opposition supporters. After the defeat of Meciar, there was another similar increase as his supporters became sensitive to it after moving into the opposition. After the turn of centuries there are signs of recovery for the perception of democracy's priorities in terms of freedoms and procedures.

There is, however, other research which claims that Slovaks' perceptions of democracy has always been dominated by the 'freedom and liberties' aspect. In spite of this disagreement, it is clear that social and economic concerns strongly influence people's perceptions of democracy. Moreover, the Consolidation of Democracy Project suggests that popular perceptions of democracy are today more confused than they were in 1990.

*Table 1. Perceptions of Democracy's Priorities (December 1994)*

Satisfaction of economic needs	42%
Freedom	21%
Equal justice for all	18%
Economic prosperity	7%

*Source:* Institute of Public Affairs (IVO), Bratislava

*Table 2. "What is democracy" (open-ended question 2001)*

Freedom	50,7%
Legal-institutional democracy	13,2%
Participation	12,1%
Other	8,3%

*Source:* Consolidation of Democracy Project (H. D. Klingemann)

## 2. Support for democracy as (the best) principle/form of government

Unfortunately, here there is no consistent measurement for the entire post-1989 period because pollsters have been changing questions in polls. Moreover, there are hardly any

‘pure’ measures. The ‘impure’ measures such as preference for current regime as opposed to previous one clearly mix the evaluation of democracy as a principle and of the performance of a democratic regime (see section below). Indirectly, it is possible to conclude that preference for democracy as the best form of government in Slovakia prevails over preference to alternatives at least in ratio 2:1.

Table 3. “Which do you think would be better for your country?” (%)

	1990	2001
One-party system	11.2	21.8
Multiparty system	88.8	78.2

Source: Consolidation of Democracy Project (H. D. Klingemann)

### 3. Satisfaction with performance of democratic regime

Previous research (Toka) suggests that in post-Communist countries *there is ‘a substantial correlation between regime support and popular evaluations of economic conditions’*. Persistently the rather low esteem of the current regime in Slovakia should be interpreted in these terms as well as in terms of frequent identification of the regime with incumbency.

Table 4. “Satisfied with current regime” (% agree)

May 1990	71
Oct 1990	37
May 1991	21
Apr 1992	26

Source: IVO, Bratislava

Table 5. “Does the current regime have more negatives or positives than the previous one?”

	More negatives	More positives
Jan 1992	37	42
Oct 1993	51	35
Dec 1994	45	37
Dec 1995	39	43
Jan 1997	42	36
Nov 2000	48	32

Source: IVO, Bratislava

Winners tend to praise democratic performance on the basis of the ‘freedoms and liberties’ aspect of democracy. Their negative evaluations come from frustration with democratic regress and international isolation of the country under Meciar.

Losers tend to be alienated from the democratic regime on the basis of its insufficiency to cope with a social impact of transformation.

Table 6. “In whose interest is the country run?” (%)

	1990	2001
In the interest of majority of people	62.5	14.8
In the interest of few groups	37.5	85.2

Source: Consolidation of Democracy Project (H. D. Klingemann)

#### 4. Trust in specific institutions of democracy

In general, the army, president and church enjoy relatively high and stable degree of trust. Trust in political parties, as such, has not been measured by local pollsters. There are, however, some data available from the Consolidation of Democracy Project:

Table 7. Attitudes to Political Parties (% agree)

Statement	1990	2001
We need parties if we want democracy	82	78.1
I can not see any difference between the existing parties	30.8	34.3
Parties only serve their leaders' interests	45.9	68.6

Trust in key institutions of democracy – government and parliament, has been *fluctuating remarkably*. The reason is that it is *highly dependent on a political context*, namely on *incumbency* (who, which party, controls the institutions) and the involvement and the role of the institutions in a dominant political conflict (Meciar vs. ‘democratic opposition’).

Table 8. Trust in Government (1991 – 2002)

Date	Trust (%)	Political context
Mar 1991	68	Meciar I government, few weeks before PM's dismissal
May 1991	29	After dismissal of PM Meciar
Apr 1992	31	End of Carnogursky government
Mar 1993	47	Meciar II government, first months of independence
Oct 1993	40	Crisis of Meciar II government
May 1994	55	Interim anti-Meciar government of PM Moravcik
Dec 1994	52	End of interim government, beginning of Meciar III gov'n't
Jun 1998	36	End of Meciar III government
Nov 1998	55	Start of Dzurinda I government (anti-Meciar opposition)
Jan 1999	57	Climax of Dzurinda I popularity
Mar 2000	35	Mid-term of Dzurinda I
July 2002	23	End of Dzurinda I government
Oct 2002	50+	Respondents satisfied with assumed Dzurinda II government

Source: IVO, Bratislava.

## 5. Trends in electoral abstentionism

There is a continuous mild drop in turnout interrupted only by a massive turnout mobilisation campaign in 1998.

Table 9. Electoral Abstention Rates, Parliamentary and Popular Presidential Elections (percentages)

Election	1990	1992	1994	1998 <sup>1</sup>	1999 Pres.	2002 <sup>2</sup>
Turnout	95.39	84.20	75.65	84.24	73.83	70.06
<b>Abstention</b>	<b>4.61</b>	<b>15.80</b>	<b>24.35</b>	<b>15.76</b>	<b>26.17</b>	<b>29.94</b>
Wasted votes <sup>3</sup>	7.70	23.80	10.95	5.78	-	18.09

Source: Slovak Statistical Office, <http://volby.statistics.sk>

<sup>1</sup> Indicates presence of a major external turnout mobilisation campaign (successful)

<sup>2</sup> Indicates presence of a major external turnout mobilisation campaign (unsuccessful)

<sup>3</sup> Votes cast for parties and coalitions which failed to reach a legal threshold for parliamentary representation

## 6. Patterns of protest vote

In Slovakia, there is a politically motivated proliferation of suggestions as to which parties should be considered extreme, non-standard, anti-system etc. Practically all parties which base their appeal on some forms of critique of and attack on the establishment/mainstream and on critiques of regime performance are labelled so. The usual suspects of weaker commitment to democracy have been:

- National populist **HZDS** (Movement for Democratic Slovakia)

- Extreme (majoritarian nationalist) Right, **SNS** (Slovak National Party) + **PSNS** (Real Slovak National Party)
- **SOP** (Party of Civic Understanding), targeting mainstream from the centre
- **ANO** (Alliance of New Citizen), targeting mainstream from the right-of-centre position
- **SMER** (Direction), targeting mainstream from the left-of-centre position
- **KSS** (Communist Party of Slovakia), unreformed Communists, original refusal of the post-1989 regime
- **ZRS** (Association of Workers of Slovakia), late-coming refusal of the post-1989 regime, party of the victims of regime change

Overall, only four parties, SNS (PSNS), ZRS and KSS qualify as extreme (tiny extremist groupings are omitted).

*Table 10. Trends in electoral support for extreme parties in Slovakia (% of votes)*

<i>Election</i>	<i>1990</i>	<i>1992</i>	<i>1994</i>	<i>1998</i>	<i>2002</i>
SNS (PSNS)	14	7.9	5.4	9	7
KSS	13	0.8	2.7	2.8	6.3
ZRS	-	-	7.3	1.3	0.5
<b>Total extreme</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>8.7</b>	<b>15.4</b>	<b>13.1</b>	<b>13.8</b>

### **Conclusions :**

- Preference for democracy as a desirable principle of government in Slovakia prevails over alternative forms
- People perceive democracy mainly in terms of rights and liberties but evaluate it mainly in terms of economic performance. Moreover, a democratic regime is frequently identified with incumbency.
- Dissatisfaction with the performance of a democratic regime is widespread, but even though it brings about various reactions, it does not significantly increase support for extreme parties, which are moreover increasingly marginalized (out of parliament or isolated when in it)
- There is a mild drop in electoral turnout but it is difficult to convincingly attribute this trend to dissatisfaction with democracy

## **SYNTHESIS OF THE DISCUSSION**

*Jean Louis Arnaud*

Are Europeans falling prey to democratic disenchantment? An Academic seminar was held in Paris in October to address the issue, on the initiative of the research and study group *Notre Europe*, the *Institut d'études politiques* of Paris and the European University Institute of Florence. The purpose of the day's discussions was to draw lessons from the protest votes and demonstrations of dissatisfaction expressed in most countries of our continent over the last two years – reflected in spreading voter apathy, significantly reduced support for traditional parties of both right and left and the electoral successes of populist protest movements that are often close to the far right.

These electoral outcomes were unexpected and prompted many questions. Certain common characteristics are obvious: notably the accusation that politicians and technocrats have been unable to cope with the economic changes taking place at global level, and have also very often ignored the real concerns of their electorate by failing to respond to market uncertainties and the fears these have generated.

Nonetheless, the situations in the various countries are sufficiently diverse to invite caution and discourage a one-size-fits-all explanation. Abstention has sharply increased in southern Europe but has spared the Scandinavian countries. And we have not seen the emergence of any transnational populist movement; instead, alongside the traditional parties, a mosaic of groupings has formed, not all of which belong to the far right.

### **A fragmented political landscape**

Any disenchantment there may be stems from very distinct circumstances and its nature must therefore be further clarified. A protest vote does not necessarily mean that voters are not satisfied with the way their political system works. As suggested by Peter Ucen of the International Republican Institute of Bratislava, we should refrain from comparing what is happening in the central and Eastern European countries, where democracy is all the more fragile since it is very young, with the change in political customs of the western European

countries, where it has been in practice for two centuries. And we can agree with Stefano Bartolini, of the European University Institute of Florence, that to speak of democratic disillusionment implies that citizens had illusions in the first place – something he doubts, at least in Italy's case.

To understand this European kaleidoscope, we will retain the method put forward by Hans-Dieter Klingemann, of the *Wissenschaftszentrum* in Berlin, who believes the analysis should revolve around three questions:

- the exercise of citizenship;
- the forms of democracy selected;
- the role given to Europe in the most important choices, in particular with respect to redistribution.

Throughout the seminar, we saw that the question of citizenship cannot be dealt on without tackling the joint issues of immigration and integration. Rather than the migrant *per se*, it is the non-integrated migrant who is resented. The lack of integration is what fuels xenophobia, when the migrants' own culture makes them stand out and the trend towards a multicultural society seems to threaten the image of national identity and the place of each individual in society.

These fears are strongest in the working-class electorate. For a long time, these voters trusted the Social-Democrat parties to distribute the benefits of the welfare State as widely as possible. The trust has gone and the right-wing parties today claim they are doing as much, if not more, than their left-wing counterparts in this respect. Meanwhile, fringe movements take every opportunity to pinpoint failings on both sides and aggressively condemn the inability of the large parties to satisfy the most basic needs of voters.

The need for security – the corollary of distrust for all that is foreign – stems from disturbances due to incivility as well as the fear of crime, which is perceived as being rapidly rising. In a world where the prevailing impression is that "everything is going to the dogs", there is naturally an aspiration to return, through law and order, to the golden age of a well-policed society.

The feeling of insecurity also feeds on a diffuse fear of globalisation, which is prompting tens of thousands of demonstrators to take to the streets and, if necessary, cross



oceans. As pointed out by Paul Taggart, of the Sussex European Institute, the large government parties have little control over the street movements triggered by globalisation or the demonstrations that are staged to defend established traditions – such as fox hunting in the United Kingdom – and that act as a refuge against globalisation and cosmopolitanism.

Can the traditional political machines harness these new forms of protest for their own benefit, as they have done in the past with other movements? Not very likely, observed Cas Mudde, of the University of Antwerp, pointing out the ability of the new groupings to build up their own momentum independently of any other political and ideological reference.

The daily practice of democracy is no longer what it was a century or even half a century ago. All participants agreed on that point. Fewer people are joining political parties, noted Gérard Grunberg, of the Paris *Institut d'études politiques*, and institutions no longer enjoy the same degree of trust as before, even if this disaffection does not necessarily mean that people have given up the democratic ideal itself. What is in question is the way representative democracy works. Modern, emancipated and cultivated citizens are no longer willing to delegate their voice unreservedly to elected representatives. They wish to do so on an *ad hoc* basis and on specific issues. The militant citizen advocating an all-encompassing vision of society has been replaced by a consumer citizen, who picks and chooses from the offerings available. The statistics have shown that, after having been initially attracted by populist political proposals at local level, people can subsequently turn them down on the assumption that they will not work at national level. The media – and commercial television networks in particular – play a predominant role in these trends.

### **A missing Europe?**

And where is Europe in all this? Nowhere, concluded the participants, who pointed out that the European Union is not the subject of any identifiable electoral issue. Only the far right – where it exists – is openly hostile, more out of xenophobic habit rather than for any specific institutional reasons. The European Union, which is absent from the everyday political debate, is often said to be suffering from democratic deficit. To bring it closer to its citizens, some observers have suggested the use of forms of democracy that are more direct than a

representative system. The latter is poorly adapted, in their view, to a union of 500 million people, and they believe institutions such as the Swiss referendum would be better.

Is Europe exacerbating the problem or, on the contrary, can it provide the solution? Philippe Schmitter, of the European University Institute of Florence, noted the paradoxical dilemma facing the European Union: either to move closer to those who derive no benefit from it, or to favour those who are already benefiting from it, given that the mechanisms that could allow it to make choices do not exist.

For Jean Nestor, secretary general of *Notre Europe*, the eclipse of European issues in national politics is having disastrous consequences both for the political elite and for the way ordinary citizens perceive Europe. The phenomenon is particularly dangerous, he said, for the Social-Democrat parties. They need a European level to ensure the credibility of proposals for increased regulation – proposals that are liable to bring back voters who have tended to abandon them. Meanwhile, the right's commitment to Europe has cooled somewhat further to the prudent and pragmatic approaches taken by leaders such as Aznar and Berlusconi.

The presentations are detailed in the preceding sheets. We might highlight the following points:

- The observations of Jørgen Goul Andersen, of the University of Aalborg, about the 2001 elections in Denmark, which saw not only the triumph of the right, and even the far right, but also the highest turnout rate (87%) and highest rate of satisfaction with politicians (62%) of the past 10 years. Surveys have also shown that voters are increasingly favourable to the euro, and that the Danes' awareness of their European identity has increased somewhat unexpectedly.
- The comments of Norma Mayer, of the Paris *Centre national de recherches scientifiques*, criticising national politicians who shun their responsibilities by blaming Brussels for all wrongs. Hence the general public's feeling not only that they are the victims of a plot, but also that their national elected representatives are not telling them about it.
- The pessimistic vision that Flemish voters in Belgium have of their future: 50% of persons surveyed believe inequalities and exclusion will increase and are losing faith in the police's ability to protect them, while 80% are convinced that insecurity will

continue to rise. In the opinion of Mark Elchardus, of the *Université libre de Bruxelles*, this outlook explains the successes of the far-right Vlaams Blok. This Flemish nationalist party created in 1978 won 3% of the vote in 1987, 10.4% in 1991 and 15.4% in 1999. Opinion polls are predicting it will obtain 17% in the elections due next June.

- The developments that have rocked the Dutch political party system, referred to as "dramatic" by Hans Keman, of the Free University of Amsterdam: a strong degree of voter volatility that has benefited new parties, both right-wing and left-wing but almost all populist; the failure of the elite and the resounding success of Pim Fortuyn, who put forward a radical programme and managed to appear as a leader capable of resolving the social crisis he was denouncing; and lastly, the inability of Fortuyn's followers to form a real party – let alone govern – once the leader was gone.
- The spectacular demonstrations of disenchantment in Austria and Switzerland – two wealthy and socially very advanced countries –, resulting in electoral successes for Jörg Haider and his liberal Austrian party (FPÖ) in the former and for Christoph Blocher and his Swiss people's party (SVP) in the latter. Hans-Georg Betz, of the University of Geneva, linked these results to a perceptible decrease in voter turnout.
- Finally, the spread of Euroscepticism over the last ten years, highlighted by Bruno Cautrès, of the *Institut d'études politiques* of Grenoble. He pointed out that, following a marked increase in support for European integration from 1982 to 1990, in the spring of 1991 72% of the European population believed that their country's membership of the Union was a good thing, while just eight years later that percentage had fallen to 49%.



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