

# The Adolescence of East Central European Democracies: Europeanization as an Opportunity for Further Democratization

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## Introduction

Although the young East Central European democracies have reached the stage of early consolidation, they still have a considerable task of further democratization. This is not any longer an ‘infantile disease’ but a problem of ‘adolescence’ of democracy that is an early type of the structural problems of the advanced democracies. It is basically an enhanced or magnified democratic deficit in East Central Europe (ECE), similar to the democratic deficit in the EU but stemming from a much deeper social crisis. This paper discusses this question first of all in terms of the paradoxes (or contradictions) in both representation and participation process in ECE as obstacles to and opportunities for further democratization. The demobilization of the masses and relative social peace might have been viewed as positive factors in democratic transition, namely as an escape from the populist danger that could have threatened the new democracies. However, the present stage of early consolidation presupposes the mobilization as well as the pluralization of the organized civil society, including the empowerment of the losers of both systemic change and the EU accession. It needs political as well as policy channels of representation and forms of participation for all citizens, all organized groups and minorities.

The processes of Europeanization provide the general background of this paper since they have been dominant factors in shaping the ECE polities as a whole. At a theoretical level, the paper relies on Lijphart’s concept of consensual democracy, or on

his idea that ‘unequal participation’ is ‘democracy’s unresolved dilemma’. The low and further declining participation at the national elections has shown some deep problems in the democratization process which will be discussed in this paper as representation and participation paradoxes, revealing obstacles to and opportunities for further development of the ECE democracies. Actually, this enhanced democratic deficit is the main obstacle to efficient membership in the EU and to further democratization. At the same time, the challenge of Europeanization with all its comprehensive requirements gives the opportunity for the ECE countries to complete their democratization process.<sup>1</sup>

This paper starts from the assumptions that

(1) the **accession process** of the ECE countries to the EU has by and large come to an end, and now, in the new period they have to focus on effective membership (the advantages of a common market, efficient national interest representation and proper absorption capacity of institutions);

(2) the **political leadership** was very important in the accession negotiations and keeps its significance but in the second period effective membership will be possible only by the full participation of the population and through skillful policy-making in the EU policy universe as a whole;

(3) the concept of **early consolidation** has been reconfirmed by the latest developments but some features of consolidation – first of all the attitudinal consolidation – has been lagging behind more persistently than was expected in the late 1990s when I elaborated the concept.

The enhanced democratic deficit in the ECE countries has originated from the complex socio-political situation of early consolidation and EU accession. First, it is a typical negative side effect of Europeanization, i.e. the process of accession to the EU, in which the populations and their social actors have not been involved. Second, it comes from the incomplete institutionalization

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1 I do not deal in this paper directly with the Europeanization issues since I have discussed them in great detail in my recent book (Ágh, 2003). I focus here on parties and political elites on one side and on citizens’ behaviour on the other.

and the insufficient schooling in democratic practices. Consequently, basically it has been produced by domestic factors since the new ECE states are still fragmented and asymmetrical democracies, as I point out in the case of Hungary in detail (see Ágh, 1999; 2001). Namely, the new democratic institutions have not yet been coherently arranged and their competencies are overlapping; therefore they are still fragmented. In addition, the democratic institutions have been asymmetrically developed. Even after the first decade only the macro-political institutions have been completed, and the meso- and micro-political ones have not been fully developed and regulated. Both representation and participation paradoxes have their direct roots in the fragmented and asymmetrical democracy. Third, beyond this domestic institutional factor, there has been a deeper reason for the enhanced democratic deficit that can be identified as socio-political exclusion – and/or marginalization with dis-empowerment – resulting from the near collapse of the public sector that caused a drastic reduction of public services. Finally, one has to take into account the low performance of the new democratic regimes, which has appeared in the form of the low level of satisfaction with the performance of the new democratic regimes.<sup>2</sup>

In the EU, democratic deficit originally surfaced in the twin forms of the representation paradox and participation paradox. Simply said, national elites supported EU integration more assertively than their populations. This paradox, or structural contradiction, has been formulated during the EU history in several ways. In the initial period the EU was solely an elite-driven organization, but with the participation revolution the populations were more and more concerned and involved. Lately, in and after the Maastricht process, referendums have become more and more unavoidable in many member states as means of bridging the gap between the elite design and popular acceptance of institutions and this opening has basically changed the structure of the EU politics from ‘government’ to ‘governance’. However, this type

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2 I do not analyze these processes here (see e.g. Tang, 2000), only their political and attitudinal consequences.

of democratic deficit has emerged even more strongly in the accession states, indicating that the ‘infantile disease’ of young democracies has been overcome but that the structural problems of the advanced democracies have appeared here more sharply and in a more dangerous way. In the ECE countries, democratic deficit has mainly taken the form of vague popular support for membership, first as ‘Euro-phoria’, then as ‘Euro-fatigue’. This vague, unclear support has always been present without full understanding of the benefits of EU membership for the population as a whole. That is people see and accept benefits for the country but they hardly see those benefits directly for themselves. I try to prove that all the structural problems of the adolescent ECE democracies have been cumulated in this vague support for EU membership. The first part of this paper deals with the representation paradox in ECE and develops a four-level model for representation. In the second part, it investigates the participation paradox as the other side of the same coin. Finally, the paper outlines some solutions for overcoming the continued social crisis through the EU accession by establishing an ECE type of participatory democracy.<sup>3</sup>

## 1. The ECE Representation Paradox

### *1-1. Political Representation in ECE*

Advanced countries have created effective representative democracies since democracy needs representation and represen-

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3 The democracy deficit in ECE is not a special case of defective democracy. The innovative idea of Wolfgang Merkel on defective democracy has been targeted at the analysis of ‘half-democracies’ that violate the formal and informal rules of law. According to this approach, defective democracies significantly limit the functioning of institutions that secure basic political and civil participatory rights and freedoms. This means restrictions of the horizontal ‘checks and balances’ on power, and/or on the effective political power of democratically legitimated authorities (Merkel, 1999). This is certainly not the case with the ECE countries where the violation of the formal rules of democracy is an exception, although minor conflicts became more frequent when some efforts appear to create a quasi-majoritarian democracy. In my view, this trap of defective democracy has been avoided, but it may be even more difficult to overcome the next trap of democratic deficit in the ECE countries.

tation means acting according to the wishes of the people. Political representation, therefore, has been a classical topic of conceptual analysis in modern political science and it has always been at the centre of interest under different headings, including parliamentary representation. My concern is the analysis of the different conceptual frames of political representation in a broader framework of the ECE young democracies. The debate about democracy in the EU puts all the dimensions of political representation into a new context. Therefore, a revision of the theory of political representation has appeared as an urgent need in the West. Parallel to this, the elaboration of a special regional theory of political representation has come to the fore in ECE also as a pragmatic approach in the process of Europeanization. There is no doubt, however, that behind these theoretical considerations there has been a tough social reality of social-political exclusion, disempowerment and impoverishment in the new ECE democracies that has been the final reason for the twin representation and participation paradoxes.<sup>4</sup>

This contradictory process of the EU accession comes out clearly in some EU documents as well, although in a somewhat milder form than its real painful appearance in the ECE countries, presented here in the Hungarian case:

The transition from centrally planned to market economy had a high social price: the appearance of unemployment, impoverishment of certain social categories and the appearance of new inequalities went hand in hand with those reforms, and however necessary, were often deeply resented by the Hungarian society. In seeking to meet popular expectations, respective governments were constantly faced with a difficult choice between austerity and radi-

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4 I deal here only briefly with the relevant concepts of political representation, originating from Pitkin (1967), in current Western debates in order to clarify their contribution to, and meaning for, the assessment of the ECE democratic consolidation and European integration. There has been a very intensive Western debate since the mid-nineties that has turned to a complex East-West analysis in the 2000s, see e.g. Linde and Ekman (2003), or the Special Issue of *The European Journal of Political Research* on referendums (2002, Vol. 41, No.6).

cal reform, a minimum redistribution of wealth while continuing to pursue growth.<sup>5</sup>

### ***1-2. The Rokkanian Approach to Party Representation***

The first form of the ECE representation paradox appears here as the function of the parties cumulating support for, and expressing conflicts in, EU integration in the framework of their general interest in an articulation and aggregation role. Without doubt, Rokkan's theory of cleavages is the best point of departure but one has to have two caveats in mind even in this introductory analysis. First, the cleavage lines are not well-developed in the ECE region and their political expressions are also not so strong. Furthermore, as the pressure to translate or convert them into political alternatives is less strong than in the West, so are all the forms and organizations of political representation. Second, the Western parties demand very vehemently a structural accommodation from the ECE parties to their present structure, namely to the shape of the Western party system, while the ECE parties still represent a less developed or less structured society with a less clearly marked system of cleavages, still in a great rush of transformations. Yet, early consolidation of the ECE party system has taken place and the 'transnational party linkages' have played a great role in its completion. Transnational party linkages have also played a role in shaping the political profiles and the organizational patterns of the ECE parties. The European Party Internationals have exerted strong pressure on them and, as a result, the ECE parties have become 'over-adjusted' to their demands compared to the local conditions and the expectations of their constituencies. In addition, this pressure has considerably increased in the preparatory period of the June 2004 elections to the European Parliament.<sup>6</sup>

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5 European Parliament, Draft recommendation on the application by the Republic of Hungary to become a member of the European Union, 11 March 2003, PR/471788EN.doc., p. 7. This statement could have been written on all ECE countries.

6 See the Introduction by Pridham in Pridham and Ágh (eds.) (2001) and Pridham (2002). The cleavage theory of the ECE parties has been dealt with by Kostelecký (2002) and Toole (2000; 2003).

The ECE representation paradox appears most markedly in the weak conversion function from social cleavages to party political profiles, since the ECE parties – despite their diverging or even conflicting views – are unable and unwilling to express particular social interests in their Euro-politics. Most parties support EU membership so overwhelmingly that they are not able to convert the special views and interests of their own, socially vaguely defined constituency into clear political alternatives. And they are unwilling, too, because their national-domestic as well as international legitimacy depends on their unconditional support for EU membership. Thus, given the heterogeneous social character of the parties' constituencies, the parties in general do not perform well in this conversion function, so the diverging and conflicting social interests – above all in the accession process – have to find other ways and means for their political expressions. The parties have usually clashed not so much as complex interest representations but much more as value representations. Hence, in their common support for the EU they express their various political profiles above all by offering conflicting 'philosophies' about Europe, e.g., Christian Europe versus secular Europe. The individualization of electoral behaviour is even in the West a serious challenge to Rokkan's theory of basic cleavages, though obviously it exaggerates a real tendency to the other extreme (Dogan, 1995). However it warns us at the same time that there are many small cleavage lines beyond those four main cleavages pointed out by Rokkan.<sup>7</sup>

### ***1-3. The Schmitterian Approach: from Politics to Policy***

In ECE, to put it bluntly, the parties are unable to perform this interest conversion and representation job properly; therefore, social interests have to find their political expressions not so much at a general political but much more at a particular policy level. The extension of the interest conversion function beyond parties has been formulated within the concept of socio-cultural

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7 Namely (1) nation versus ethnicities, (2) nation-state versus church, (3) landed versus industrial interests, and (4) employers versus employees.

cleavages as an articulation and expression of organized interests 'before' their political articulation. Not only parties represent social cleavages, but also organized interests and civil society associations (Wessels, 1996). I call this a Schmitterian approach, since Philippe Schmitter, among others (G. Lembruch and C. Offe, etc.), was very active in the elaboration of modern corporatist theory. Actually, Schmitter has formulated this kind of 'pre-political' representation as the major precondition of democratic consolidation. This approach accepts the idea of basic cleavages and their role in democratic consolidation, but it draws attention to the many smaller cleavage lines. The 'semi-political' organizations are in fact 'translations' of those minor cleavages. Beyond these micro-cleavages, as particular forms of macro-cleavages, however, some new forms of organized interests also appear in the form of public interest groups, based on 'postmodern' cleavages. Altogether, through this corporatist-consensual politics, the socio-political representation in meso-politics gets a new dimension. Namely, a multi-actor dimension enters instead of a simple multi-party approach, without which the problems of 'policy representation' cannot be grasped. Representation by organized interests and other groups, as quasi-parties that represent social interests and in some ways replace parties in this function, shows the Europeanization paradox in its second form (Schmitter, 1995a; 1995b).

In the ECE countries, during democratic transition an extreme version of interest fragmentation has emerged with many conflicting interests. Individualization of citizens and their votes has taken place to an extent unknown in the West. Therefore, in the political integration, value orientation replaced societal interests in their role of organizing major political blocs. The various kinds of meso-political organizations and voluntary civil associations have rather successfully played the role of expressing the common concerns of some social strata. Thus, meso-political organizations like chambers, business interest associations and trade unions have sometimes reflected more properly the conflicting views and interests concerning EU membership than the ECE parties. Policy representation, as particular interests in the form of



policy demands and pressures, appears through a host of concrete actions in the political system as a whole, ranging from street demonstrations to the building of roadblocks by protesters in order to exert pressure on governments for special support in the EU accession process. This is a new type of conversion of social demands to particular policy actions that provides a societal approach in meso- and micro- terms, and is based on the process of multiple social differentiations. As an early witness of participatory revolution, as Jeremy Richardson has noted, in the West interest groups challenge political parties in the ‘market’ of political activism, hence citizen-orientated and policy-orientated forms of political activity are increasing. Thus, these ‘entrepreneur driven’ organizations are increasingly important in setting the political agenda, ‘to which political parties, as well as governments and legislatures, have to respond’ (Richardson, 1995: 124). The reason for the increasing importance of interest groups and their policy channels is ‘the emergence of new organizations either to replace the linkage when parties fail, or to provide the kind of linkage hitherto lacking in the political system’ (Richardson, 1995: 130).

#### ***1-4. The Sartorian Approach to Party Representation***

This level of analysis or conversion may be called a Sartorian approach since Giovanni Sartori has always emphasized the autonomy of the party system towards socio-cultural cleavages. Sartori has pointed out that parties and party systems have their own logic or laws of motion that cannot be derived from the nature and size of their social support. For Sartori, parties are not simple ‘conversion mechanisms’ but have their own way of life, being autonomous political actors. Parties appear as specific actors with a particular type of political profile and oriented towards the electoral behaviour of the general public. At the level of parties as special autonomous actions we identify the third form of representation paradox. Namely, parties as main actors in politics are of necessity much more Europeanization-oriented than their social constituencies, their own party members or their supporting interest-organizations, i.e. all the interests that they are supposed

to represent. Obviously, the political conversion of social demands as a political representation function produces a holistic view, going well beyond the particular set of segmented interests which altogether supports a given party. This particular conversion case with its paradox, however, helps us to understand the whole function of politics as such, that is, the aggregation of segmented interests and its transformation to the political level creates a new quality.

But the party paradox in ECE goes well beyond this normal interest aggregation function of parties. Because of their internal and external legitimacy needs, they support Europeanization more enthusiastically and unambiguously than their constituency can follow. The real difficulty for the parties is, of course, how to 'sell' these aggregated interests and transformed politics as a policy to their constituencies, first of all in the election period. Moreover, so far the ECE parties have still been rather incapable of completely understanding the EU policy universe, hence they have not yet developed any detailed EU policies for their constituencies but they still offer instead only some slogans and keywords for their electorate. Due to the over-participation, the EU representation paradox appears here in a very manifest way, although this time not from the social side, but from the political side. The result is a truncated public space without a clear and rational political discourse on Europeanization. But above the parties, in the activities of governments, this paradox even appears at a higher level.

#### ***1-5. The Blondelian Approach to Government Representation***

The final conversion from the parliamentary party positions into government formation and actual government programs offers the fourth form of representation paradox. It may be called a Blondelian approach since he has studied very carefully the conversion of the party activities into government politics in his *Comparative Government* (1990). This can be considered as the highest form of representation paradox that appears in the sharpest way when some governments – and even most opposition par-

ties – support EU membership but the populations vote against it in a referendum (Norway and Switzerland). Nowadays, representative democracy at this level is usually formulated as a problem of an ‘agency-principal’ relationship. Representative democracy implies delegation of power from the ‘principal’ to the agents to fulfill their tasks more effectively and efficiently (see Strom, 1997; 2000). Obviously, the governments as ‘agents’ usually support Europeanization much more than their constituent parties, and even more than their populations as ‘principals’, which has produced a widening gap. Initially, European integration ‘was conceived almost entirely without any public debate, and the subsequent evolution of the EC, too, is generally considered to have been largely an elite affair’. However, ‘a much wider, more basic gap between rulers and ruled’ has recently emerged in the EU and the period of the ‘silent or permissive majority’ seems to be over once and for all (Edwards and Pijpers, 1997: 341). Beate Kohler-Koch formulates this problem aptly and concisely by stating that ‘there is sufficient evidence to show that the gap is widening, and a two-tier Community is emerging: the EU is political space for a ‘Europeanized’ elite, but it is not an attractive option for the ordinary citizen’ (Kohler-Koch, 2000: 79-80).

Again, in ECE the government-level representation paradox has risen in an even more marked way. First, it has come into being because of the inner logic in the position of governments as international actors and negotiators. Second, the representation paradox has emerged because of the confluence of views or the ‘synergetic effect’ of parties representing the EU accession as a long-term national program. It has created a huge gap between parliamentary parties discussing the optional strategies in general and the short-term oriented and fragmented interests of the public at large. This gap between the government’s position and the public opinion on Europeanization issues has always been larger in ECE than in the West. Its further increase can be noticed, however, in the mid-nineties when, mostly due to ‘Euro-fatigue’, a bigger contrast was felt between the deeds and promises of the EU concerning the accession. This large gap between the governments’ actions and the popular views in ECE leads us to the

structural problems of proper political participation since the participation paradox is just the other side of the same coin.

## 2. The ECE Participation Paradox

### *2-1. From Mobilization to Demobilization*

The problem of participation as ‘political inclusion’ does not mean necessarily transforming or extending representative democracy to direct democracy. It means first of all organic contacts between the people concerned and the forms of representation at all levels of representative democracy. Active participation, in turn, has both procedural and substantive sides. Involvement in the various forms of representation has to be legally regulated and institutionalized in order to provide effective participation. Beyond this, however, there is a cultural side that includes a large spectrum of socio-political activities, cultural underpinnings and affirmative behavioural patterns for stabilizing the democratic order and, at most, for making its institutions efficient. Actually, this line of research dealing with multicultural societies and cultural cleavages quite directly couples the institutional issues – discussed here as consensual, multi-actor democracy – with the cultural approach.

Here the general problems of consensual democracy come to the forefront as the participation or involvement of interest groups and civil associations, or the population at large. As Bernhard Wessels indicates, in this concrete context of political representation, ‘democracy needs more than just formal democratic procedures for its stability’. Actually it needs some ‘organizational underpinnings’ with a large variety of institutions acting as connections between culture, social structure and political institutions. They provide a system of social and political integration through ‘the structure and density of social participation’. According to this approach to consensual democracy, the lack of the political integration of ‘intense minorities’, be they political, social, cultural or ethnic, can lead to the fragility of democracies. Thus, the support by, and involvement of, minorities is much more important than the rather abstract question of overall support for the

system. So, finally, political integration or involvement means providing ‘channels of representation’ as ‘policy channels’ for all organized groups and/or minorities. In this way, conflicts may be positive, exerting pressure on the institutions and actors, including parties, for innovation and a means for maintaining the collective identities of those institutions and actors (Wessels, 1996: 1-3).

However, conflict as a positive factor presupposes social capital formation creating efficient channels of representation, that is, stable structure and rich density of social participation. Instead, the ECE parties began the demobilization of the population right after the first free elections, precluding this rich density of the various forms of participation. Social integration and political conflict, however, can be regarded as two sides of the same coin in any society. In such a way, a specific mixture of social capital formation and conflict structures can contribute positively to democracy, especially in young democracies. In advanced democracies, actually no decline of social and political participation can be noticed in the recent period. On the contrary, new forms of participation and social movements have come into being in the West. Taking these new forms of collective action, i.e. new social movements and new types of interest groups, into account, one can realize that there has been a ‘participatory revolution’ in the West from the 1970s on. This new form of mass participation has changed the political landscape of representative democracy beyond recognition and contributed to a better performance of democracy. This participatory revolution, however, has also created serious conflicts at the EU level with a huge gap between representative democracy at the national and EU levels. As a result of the socio-political cleavage lines, the structural differentiation of political representation has gone further.

Participation or ‘political inclusion’ has become the key word for democratization worldwide, since it determines its quality. Democracy is an ‘unfinished project’ as a matter of progressive inclusion of the large variety of groups in political life. The concept of ‘difference democrats’ has been developed by John Dryzek as a demand for an ‘inclusive state’ or ‘actively inclusive representation’. According to Dryzek, various minority groups

should be guaranteed not just representation in the legislature but also veto power over policies that affect them, and guarantees that public officials will respond to their concern. In other words, the group should be represented qua group, rather than merely electing individual representatives with the characteristics of the group. Now, the idea that representation of groups rather than individuals should be the locus of democratic politics is not unique to contemporary difference democrats. Pluralists have always interpreted state-related politics in terms of the interaction of groups, and public policy as the output of that interaction ... In contrast, difference democrats see a variety of barriers to the emergence, recognition, organization, and assertiveness of groups. These barriers come mostly in the form of hierarchy and oppression, with cultural and economic as well as political causes (Dryzek, 1996: 476-477).

However, the basic fact is the inequality of participation as limited access to representation which needs to be radically corrected by the 'inclusive state' versus the 'exclusionist state' in Anglo-Saxon liberalism. This worldview considers the market as the only integrative force in organizing society. Therefore, it opposes the representation or mobilization of social groups, including minorities. Or in general terms, it downsizes the political capacity of civil society associations. Dryzek states that even in advanced democracies, 'The gain was a liberal democratic state, the loss was of discursive democratic vitality' (Dryzek, 1996: 485).

This loss of discursive democratic vitality is bigger in ECE countries. However, it is not necessary to argue too much about the importance of this 'inclusive democracy' for ECE democratization. The extension of the theory of inclusive democracy to ECE is especially valid and justified now. Demobilization of people has become the biggest danger of further democratization in ECE in the early democratic consolidation. In democratic transition the 'opposition public spheres', the organizations of civil society were turned into, or subjected to, mere party politics. In the present stage of party development in ECE, the parties face the detailed requirement of policy-making and, at the same time, have to establish connections with its actors, the policy communities and networks, first of all in the various fields of Europeanization.

Earlier the ECE parties tried to demobilize civil society associations. Consequently, there is a sharp contrast between the ECE young democracies and the Western developments concerning the participatory revolution. There was a drastic decline of social and political participation in ECE, right after the early mobilization phase of systemic change and the participatory revolution has not been yet completed. This contrast between ‘East’ and West, as the rise and decline of participation in ECE, offers the key to understanding the weaknesses of political representation in ECE. A short summary of these weaknesses is sufficient here, indicating its reasons in a historical sequence. First, the ‘missing middle’ is the traditional weakness of meso-politics with its intermediary organizations and social actors in ECE. It was reinforced by state socialism and it is still one of the most important characteristics of ECE democratization. Second, there has been a demobilization of the masses and social movements by the new power elites in the party formation process. The lack of political organizations for meaningful participation later on has caused a further shock to participatory behaviour. Third, the ‘over-participation’, that is, the quasi monopolization of the political scene by the parties has created an alienation from politics and low trust in the new democratic institutions, and it has kept its long standing effects (see Plasser, Ulram and Waldrauch, 1998; Ulram and Plasser, 2001).<sup>8</sup>

The ECE systemic change began with the mobilization of the masses in social movements for a breakthrough of politics as a ‘movementist’ aspect of civil society. But after the breakthrough in democratic transition the parties managed to demobilize and build up a system with the parties as quasi-monopolistic political actors. Thus, the initial large mobilization did not generate a participative culture as a new tradition in the ‘movementist’ dimension, only in ‘associationist’ dimension, due to the robust evolutive development in the 1990s. Participation deficit by demobilization, however, provokes crisis in representation. It is important to discern well functioning representation from representation defi-

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8 Fritz Plasser and Peter Ulram in their above quoted works have collected a huge data base on political culture and trust in public institutions in ECE and I rely on their research in my references to this topic.

cit as its partial failure and from the representation crisis as its complete failure and these forms correlate closely with those of participation. The distortions in democratic representation are not only the problems of the ECE states, since they have been mentioned in the consolidated democracies as well, most often concerning the EU and its institutions (see e.g. Hayward, 1995; Ryden, 1995). However, it is true that they come to the surface in the ECE countries in a more acute way. The above distinction between deficit and crisis is, of course, even more important for the new ECE democracies where proper participation and adequate representation is the exception. Therefore, the ensuing deficit or the crisis in representation is, of necessity, the rule since proper participation is missing and the whole system of representation is still in the making.

Certainly, these distortions have risen much more markedly in ECE in the first phase of democratic transition, what I call the original organizational chaos in political representation that was simply an institutional vacuum at the beginning of systemic change. This ‘chaos’ stemmed from the drastic change in the institutional structure and led to a creative crisis in public policy in ECE. Though this first period is over, the newly emerged democratic polities are still under great stress both to meet domestic claims for political representation and participation, and to apply EU standards effectively and efficiently. Seemingly, the terms ‘effective representation’ and ‘political efficacy’ are very difficult to define and to measure, but these concepts are rather clear in discussions about representative democracy in ECE and their definition can be a good starting point also for their empirical measurement. The whole creative crisis of political representation becomes clearer in ECE if we analyze the problems of effectiveness, efficiency and efficacy of participation in democratic institutions, and, as a result, the trust in public institutions in the ECE regional terms. Namely, the representation crisis contains three participation dimensions that have often been analyzed in the political science literature. The first one is from the input side – ‘unequal participation’ as a major obstacle to efficient representation. The second one is from the output side – the ‘politics matters’ is-



sue as a major result of effective representation, which gives a general frame of policy-making. The third problem is political efficacy – ‘participation matters’ or trust in institutions; this is, in fact, a synthesis of both aspects of efficient and effective participation that can be summarized from the viewpoint of satisfaction with democracy.

### ***2-2. Unequal Participation as Inefficient Representation***

In ‘input side politics’, the theory of political representation presupposes not only free and fair elections for all adult citizens as equal participation but also an actual, not only potential, quasi-full participation. For Arend Lijphart, in the spirit of consensual democracy, this issue of ‘unequal participation’ has become ‘democracy’s unresolved dilemma’. Namely, ‘unequal participation spells unequal influence ... the inequality of representation and influence are not randomly distributed but systematically biased in favour of more privileged citizens – those with higher incomes, greater wealth, and better education – and against less advantaged citizens’ (Lijphart, 1997a: 1). This ‘systemic class bias’ in electoral participation is the biggest problem of political representation for Lijphart. It manifests itself also from the ‘output side’ because the democratic responsiveness of elected officials depends on the quasi-full and equal citizen participation. Unequal representation produces a biased control and missing accountability of the government.

This unequal participation can be one of the major problems of political representation, in ECE even more than in the West. As we know, in the first free elections in the early 1990s the turnout was very high, first of all in the countries which saw abrupt changes like Czecho-Slovakia. Later on it declined very quickly in ECE. We have to note in this regard that ‘voter fatigue’ has also been responsible for the low turnout in the ECE countries, due to the frequent elections in some periods. But unequal participation with ‘class bias’ has appeared in ECE in all participatory forms other than parliamentary or municipal elections, so we can conclude that in ECE the constituency or citizenry itself is not ‘representative’ enough since the politically marginalized or silent

strata have no chance to express their views at the level of national politics.<sup>9</sup>

The populations of the ECE countries have been split into passive and active sectors and there has been a close correlation between political activity and support for EU membership. Regular public opinion surveys have shown that in Hungary those who support a party (about 56 per cent of the electorate), usually also support EU membership. Hence, those who are not party and EU supporters and usually abstain at the elections – some 10-20 per cent of the electorate – cannot express their possible anti-EU views in national politics in an organized way. Obviously, this is one of the major reasons for the latency of anti-European views in parliamentary elections and for their missing party expression. However, democratic consolidation cannot be successful without ‘inviting back’ a large part of this passive 40-50 per cent of the population to national and municipal politics. Political inclusion means also articulating their anti-EU views in a coherent form instead of the ‘anomical’ movements and outbursts of emotion that form a political undercurrent.

In the West there are also the more advantaged or even privileged citizens who have engaged in more intensive forms of participation. This is so with both conventional and unconventional participatory activities. Conventional activities like electoral campaigns, contacting elected officials and politicians, contributing money to parties, and informally organizing (local and/or basic) communities, etc. show a predominance of the more advantaged strata in participatory activities. So do unconventional ones – like demonstrations, boycotts, rent and tax strikes, and blocking traffic, etc. Consequently, the current participatory revolution has just made this contrast or ‘class bias’ of unequal participation bigger by mobilizing the ‘active partial publics’ beyond the party supporters. In these latter fields, the contrast in ‘class’ or strata participation is even bigger between ‘East’ (ECE) and West.

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9 In Czecho-Slovakia participation in the June 1990 election was 96.8 per cent but in the November 1996 Senate election only 34.6 per cent. In Poland the decline came earlier, already reaching 43.2 per cent in the Lower House parliamentary elections (Sejm) in October 1991.

There is a danger that nothing remains in ECE (and much more so in the Balkans) for a rather large segment of the population but to join ‘anomical’ movements. Another choice is for them to support the extreme right-wing populist or anti-political parties. But the bottom line of these common reactions is that the percentage of those completely ‘silent’ has been around 40-50 per cent as a regional average.

The old slogan ‘if you do not vote, you do not count’ remains profoundly true. Lijphart quotes Lipset’s famous formulation that elections are ‘the expression of the democratic class struggle’. There is a broad consensus on this issue that ‘Governments pursue ... policies broadly in accordance with the objective economic interests and subjective preferences of their class-defined core political constituencies’. Skeptics, as Lijphart mentions, have raised two critical questions about the strength of the link between core constituencies and the policies pursued by governments. The first one is the well-known phenomenon of the decline of class voting. The second objection is that the voting behaviour of non-voters may not be too different from that of voters. This skeptical view concludes finally that links between the voters’ preferences and the governments’ policy outputs are rather weak and/or the absence of non voters from the voting pool probably has little immediate effect on the policy output of government (Lijphart, 1997a: 4).

Nonetheless, this essential ‘linkage’ exists between constituencies and policies. First, the decline of class voting does not mean the lack of ‘issue voting’ by the particular strata concerned. Second, ‘politics matters’, that is, the policies of governments are significantly different according to their party compositions or political ‘colours’. Concerning the West, Lijphart notes flatly that the evidence strongly supports the view that ‘who votes and how people vote matter a great deal’, and ‘Indeed, any other conclusion would be extremely damaging for the very concept of representative democracy’ (Lijphart, 1997a: 5). Still the paradox is there: popular participation is very unequal in elections and referendums, albeit everybody would consider the institutionalization or legalization of the actual unequal voting participation patterns

– that is, giving special voting rights for wealthier and better educated people – as highly undemocratic. Yet, unequal participation is a fact in advanced democracies and it is even bigger in the ECE young democracies. Briefly said, we have good reasons even to presuppose that the weakness of this representative linkage in advanced democracies may deepen into a ‘misrepresentation’ in ECE. That is it may turn into a domination or overweight of representation in the elections (on the ‘input side’) by some very strong interest groups or by some large and well-organized strata of the population. This is a result of both electoral and non-electoral (conventional and unconventional) conscious participatory activities turning the governments’ policies to their favour against the underrepresented groups that have usually been neglected by the ECE parties.

This argument of Lijphart follows the line of his theory about consensual democracy. The theory of consensual democracy is not simply about ‘justice’ for minorities in abstract terms, it is also about the high political performance of democracies in pragmatic terms. The crucial issue for him is which democratic system – majoritarian or consensual – is better at coping with social, economic and political problems. Lijphart does not claim that there is a big difference between the two kinds of democracies as to macro-economic policy outcomes and law-and-order issues. He argues, however, for a big difference on other, ‘softer’ issues like electoral participation, income equality, etc. That is, in the case of ratings of ‘democratic quality’, consensus democracy performs better. Obviously, this problem leads us already to the issues of the ‘output side’, though first of all his theory originally was about the ‘input regulation’ of representative democracies. His theory is concerned with how to involve various minorities in the political process as both electoral participation and joint decision-making by their elected representatives. It is true, however, that this theory has moved closer to the output side, i.e. asking more and more about ‘the operation of democracy’ or ‘how well democracy works’ (Lijphart, 1997b: 195-197). All in all, Lijphart has pointed out systematically that ‘consensus democracy makes a big difference’ in macro-economic crisis management, control

of violence and quality of democracy (see Lijphart, 1999). In short, Jeremy Richardson argues that ‘the active participation of citizens is not only a good in itself, but it is also functional to the success of a liberal democracy’ (Richardson, 1995: 116).

### ***2-3. Effective Participation and Satisfaction with Democracy***

From the output side, the major question of representative democracy is, indeed, whether elections produce proper results, meaning that the interests and opinions of the population have been really represented in the policies pursued by the elected government or by other elected bodies. Actually, in many cases the over-participation of some dominant groups may distort the actual policies into some kind of misrepresentation. Initially, in the first period of policy sciences, ‘convergence theory’ became a conventional wisdom according to which the policies pursued by different advanced countries necessarily converge because of the common nature of (post-)industrial societies. This technocratic view had been swept away by the realities of the diverging public policies of various advanced states and continents, but it returned with a vengeance in the 1990s with the so-called decline of the welfare state and/or globalization of the world economy. The technocratic view can be summarized in such a way that politics does not matter since the measures taken by the governments of different political colours point in the same direction. Allegedly, with the globalization of the world economy, at least macro-economic decisions are not taken any longer by national governments but by the global actors. The representatives of the ‘politics matters’ argument turn against this old-new orthodoxy by arguing that politics is not ‘an epiphenomenon of economic modernization’. Thus, policy-making is not ‘the descriptive domain of public administration’ with policy outcomes accounted for only by economists and sociologists but also by political scientists in order to demonstrate ‘the continued relevance of politics’ (Castles and McKinley, 1997: 102-103, 106).

In the ‘politics matters’ debate Hans Keman takes a stand for the position that ‘political differences do matter considerably if

we are to understand why and to what extent countries differ in the policy efforts concerning social welfare'. He states that 'it is of crucial importance with respect to the policy choices made and the societal effects that result from the actual social policy formation'. Keman adds also the dimension of 'regime change-matters', that is, 'one might expect a larger role for politics throughout the (democratizing) world' (Keman, 1997: 162-63). Manfred Schmidt comments on Keman's analysis positively with an extension underlining two special political factors. First, 'the counter-majoritarian tendencies', that is consensual measures, and, second, the left-right dimension, that is, the party profiles of governments are, he argues, also important. Schmidt concludes that 'Without denying the importance of socio-economic constraints and socio-economic enabling conditions, the conclusion [is] that politics [do] indeed matter a very great deal' (Schmidt, 1997: 166). The global divergences of 'politics matters' have been demonstrated very markedly by Ronald Inglehart with an argument that 'values matter' more and more in various countries. This argument is in the direction that 'The rise of postmodern values changes the political agenda throughout the advanced industrial society, moving it away from an emphasis on economic growth at any price, toward increasing concern for its environmental costs' (Inglehart and Carballo, 1997: 37).

Systemic change in the 'East', allegedly, has brought a high satisfaction with democracy in the 'East' and produced a low satisfaction in the West.<sup>10</sup> This contrast between East and West re-

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10 Survey research has documented high enthusiasm for democratic ideals and democratic government among citizens in the newly established democracies of Central and Eastern Europe. Yet, there has not been a similar resurgence of positive attitudes toward democracy in the West in the aftermath of the Cold War. In fact, after the too much-heralded victory of liberal democracy around the globe in 1989-90, satisfaction with democracy and intermediary political institutions declined considerably in West European democracies. One explanation for this downward trend contends that the disappearance of communism as an alternative form of government no longer allows incumbents in the West to cover up some important weaknesses of democratic political institutions. Since the end of the Cold War, the 'easy' comparison with communism has given way to comparisons among the group of pluralist democracies with regard to

flects only the beginning of systemic change. Richard Rose himself has pointed out in several works that this enthusiasm for democracy was restricted to some countries and to a very short period. He has called attention to the key structural problem of the young ECE democracies, of how difficult it is to reconcile democratic representation with effective leaders (Rose and Mishler, 1996: 224). Satisfaction with representative democracy has two aspects: satisfaction with the democratic character of institutions (formal-procedural side) and satisfaction with the performance of democracy or democratic governance (policy-efficiency side). These two sides can also be separated in the West since the formal criteria have lost and the efficiency criteria have gained significance for the general public. The general concept of 'the people's interest in politics' relates more and more to the dimensions of the performance of democracy, especially in respect of political efficacy:

With regard to interest in politics, an extensive literature has demonstrated that it is related to political efficacy and political support. In turn, citizens who understand the political process and believe that their participation can influence policymaking are likely to take a more optimistic view of democratic governance. Therefore, we hypothesize that political interest and satisfaction associated, conceivably in a relationship that can work both ways. We do not account for the possible simultaneity here but hypothesize only that those who are more interested in politics also are more likely to be satisfied with the way democracy works (Anderson and Guillory, 1997: 72).

Based on this general concept of coupling an interest in politics and political efficacy, the degree of satisfaction with democracy depends rather directly on the 'Lijphart index' aggregating

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economic performance and optimal structures of democratic organization. Furthermore, economic difficulties – most notably high unemployment rates – have magnified the loss of enthusiasm for democratic politics among people in Western Europe because the shortcomings of democratic governance have been put in sharper relief than previously' (Anderson and Guillory, 1997: 67). The authors make references in the text above to Mishler and Rose (1996) and Kaase and Newton (1995).

the features of consensual democracy. Consequently, there is a close correlation between satisfaction with democracy and the consensual character of democracy which manifests itself more among the 'losers' of elections, i.e., in consensual democracies even those losers are to a great extent satisfied. Satisfaction with representative democracy ranges from Germany (83.9 per cent) to Italy (21.7 per cent), with a mean of 59.2 per cent and a standard deviation of 17.2 per cent. This satisfaction is, in general, very high in consensual democracies (Denmark, the Netherlands, Belgium etc.) and rather low in majoritarian ones (Greece, UK, France etc.). The contrast is even bigger when the winner-loser contrast is also taken into account. In consensual democracies the difference in satisfaction between winners and losers is usually within 10 per cent; actual system support is not coterminous with support for the incumbent government. In majoritarian democracies, however, it can be more than 30 per cent (Greece) or between 20 and 30 per cent (UK and France) (Anderson and Guillory, 1997: 70-73).

In ECE, the losers of systemic change have been almost completely excluded from political life. This might have been advantageous to avoid populist danger in the short term but it has been detrimental for the representative consolidation of the young democracies in the long term. Nowadays, the new losers of the EU accession may be in a similar situation (see Tang, 2000). Hence, satisfaction with representative democracy has been very low. It is better to term it as dissatisfaction and frustration. This dissatisfaction appears concerning both the low levels of political efficacy and trust in public institutions, obviously with a close correlation between the two. In addition, this asymmetrical character re-appears within meso- and micro-politics since as the middle class organizations are the most developed, so the economically advantaged have a 'voice' and the disadvantaged have also remained politically 'silent', and some may have only an 'exit' option again.

In a recent overview of the discussions on democratic deficit and satisfaction with democracy Jonas Linde and Joakim Ekman have drawn up a five-fold model of popular support based on the



concept of Pippa Norris. Norris – further developing the Easton model of a three-fold distinction – distinguishes between five levels of support: (1) diffuse support for the political or national community indicates a basic attachment to a political system; the distinction between (2) regime principles and (3) regime performance is made in order to account for the difference between support for the democracy as an ideal and attitudes towards the way democracy works in practice; (4) support for political institutions in general or for specific institutions in particular; and finally (5) support for political actors has to do with support for a particular person and/or a political party (Linde and Ekman, 2003: 393).

This sophisticated approach to political support enables the above authors to offer a detailed and nuanced analysis of satisfaction with democracy based on Central and Eastern Eurobarometer (CEEB) data. Their most important finding is that support for democracy in principles has been divorced from satisfaction with democracy as it works, that is the overwhelming part of the population still supports democracy as a political system in general but they have been deeply disappointed in the practice of democratic regimes in their countries concerned: ‘a respondent can be a convinced democrat, rejecting all forms of non-democratic alternatives, but nonetheless be dissatisfied with the way democracy works in his or her country at a specific point of time’ (Linde and Ekman, 2003: 396). Indeed, according to the CEEB data only 28, 32 and 35 per cent of citizens are satisfied with the way democracy works in Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Hungary respectively. Also developing the above-mentioned arguments of Anderson and Guillory (1997), the authors confirm that in ECE, party preferences have a significant impact on the levels of satisfaction with democracy. The winners of an election are more satisfied with democracy than its losers, since the political regimes and their elites are confrontational, as is the political culture as a whole (Linde and Ekman, 2003: 401-405). Following the same line of the Anderson-Guillory argument on the Polish case, Slomczynski and Shabad conclude that ‘As scholars, and, somewhat more belatedly, European and domestic elites of the EU Member States have come to realize, public opinion plays a sig-

nificant role in shaping the scope and pace of integration. ... public support for EU membership is also a crucial component of a candidate country's 'integration potential' .... As these countries gain entry, public support will continue to be crucial for the political and economic outcomes of EU enlargement' (Slomczynski and Shabad, 2003: 504, 527).

The ECE governments, in fact, have been under the double pressure of the EU to adjust to its requirements properly and the expectations of their own populations to represent their countries effectively in the accession process. Here the representation and participation paradoxes meet since the governments cannot represent their countries properly if they do not allow their populations as a pluralized and organized civil society to participate properly in Europeanization in general and in the accession negotiations in particular. In the Nordic extension of the EU, the countries concerned involved their social actors to the accession process, including the negotiations, very intensively. The ECE states, however, denied this opportunity for their organized civil society and offered them only meaningless 'consultations'; even their parliaments participated in the accession process very marginally. ECE governments have often been accused of a lack of social sensitivity and political responsiveness. So far the governments have been 'flying blind' and their populations have had the only means to influence them by changing governments through elections. Indeed, in ECE there have been very few cases when governments have been re-elected.

The input and output sides of representative democracy meet and reinforce each other in the questions of political efficacy or trust in political institutions. Political efficacy, in fact, means that 'participation matters', i.e. it has meaningful consequences for the desired outcome. In the final analysis, if this is so, people trust in public institutions in particular and representative democracy in general. If not, a serious crisis of representation follows. People usually couple the issue of political efficacy or 'participation matters' with political effectiveness and efficiency, or with the general performance of the political system, 'how democracy works'. Satisfaction with democracy involves both aspects, that is, the

public trusts in the institutions on the one hand, and appreciates the high efficiency of their workings on the other.

## Conclusion

The often discussed democratic deficit in the EU is a gap between the powers transferred to the EU level and their control through the usual vehicles of elected parliaments. These problems of representation and participation, however, have also to be addressed at the national level. Actually, David Judge writes about the 'dual democratic deficit' as an issue of 'dual legitimacy' of the member states (and their parliaments) and the European Parliament (Judge, 1993: 94, 97; see also Judge, 1995). The representation crisis, therefore, means in Western Europe that the EU institutional structure should be reformed anyway. Eastern enlargement can only be an additional reason for this. Thus, the key question of the democratic deficit in the EU first of all has to be raised in itself, that is, without any reference to ECE enlargement. It is enough to refer to the discussion around the 'second-order elections' in the EU. Namely, 'The composition of the directly elected European Parliament does not precisely reflect the 'real' balance of political forces in the European Community. As long as national political systems decide most of what there is to be decided politically, and everything really important, European elections are additional national second-order elections' (Reif and Schmidt, 1997: 109). Furthermore, as Pippa Norris notes, 'The most common meaning of political representation, deeply rooted within the European parliamentary tradition, is based on the 'responsible party model'. This places parties as critical institutions linking citizen and state. This model of democratic governance is one where the people choose legislative and executive branches, either directly or indirectly, in elections contested by parties competing on the major issues confronting the system .... So long as elections to the EP remain second-order contests, the legitimacy and authority of this body remains under question, and the ghost of the 'democratic deficit' will continue to haunt the European Union' (Norris, 1996: 113-14).

However, the crisis of representation in the EU is my concern here only in reference to Eastern enlargement. The issue of ECE enlargement can amount even to a victimization of the ECE states by declaring that they have caused or aggravated some problems, although these problems pre-existed and have remained unsolved for a long period. In this respect, however, the real difficulty is that this enlargement takes place when there has been an increasing politicization of Europeanization in the West. Most probably, this politicization – as the activation of different parts of the population and of various interest groups by representing their immediate or short-term interests – will hinder the long-term thinking in general and the arrangement of budgetary issues in particular. All this has resulted in a ‘cheap enlargement’ as it has been called by the Commissioner of Budgeting, Michaela Schreyer. The representation and participation paradox in the West returns here as a factor damaging the ECE interests in successful EU integration in the near future. The EU bodies and the national macro-political actors such as governments and parties seem to support further extension much more than the meso-level EU actors and the EU populations. Actually, what we have seen so far points more and more to this direction: the support of the Eastern enlargement by the EU governments and parties has been countered by the very active resistance of particular interest groups in the EU. The missing ‘integration’ and reconciliation of the political will or the ‘crisis of representative democracy’ at the EU level may be a serious negative factor in the ECE enlargement process.

Democratic deficit with the representation and participation paradoxes has been much more marked in the ECE region since the trust in public institutions has been much lower so the populations and organized interests accept much less the opinions and guidance of their governments and parties. The population-participatory phase in ECE is still far down the road. Parties so far have been both unable and unwilling to mobilize the ECE populations for participation in the Europeanization process. Their ‘external’ Europeanization as their accommodation to their Western partners and the expected patterns of behaviour in international

relations exceeds very much their ‘internal’ Europeanization as the modernization and democratization of party structures and rules. They have acted as a party ‘cartel’ in favour of Europeanization as an elite-driven process and in the spirit of over-participation. That is, they have been unwilling to give up their monopolistic approach to politics and allow a greater role for policy channels, organized interests, territorial actors and civil society associations in the Europeanization process. At the same time they have been unable to thematize and concretize Europeanization for their constituencies which has deepened democracy deficit in ECE. Hopefully, since full entry comes closer, outside and inside pressures will increase on parties to open up the Europeanization process to a multi-actor society in order to create a more developed consensual democracy for a real party-political convergence and a participatory revolution in Europe as a whole.

As the very low economic activity rate and very low electoral turnout demonstrate, systemic change has resulted in the social and political exclusion of the lesser half of the population and the EU accession may threaten some losers by further social and political exclusion. The ECE countries have turned their economic deficits into social deficit by the drastically reduced public services (less health care, education and social security), into political deficit of exclusion and marginalization, and finally into democratic deficit of mass dissatisfaction with the way democracy works, including the way the EU accession has been managed by governments without integrating the population at large to EU integration.

The ECE countries have cumulated a huge social and political deficit that will accompany Central European history for some generations to come. It is not the typical ‘infantile disease’ of new democracies which is usually conceptualized as a weakness of civil society and its associations in both their demand and control, input and output, and functions versus representative democracy. Democratic deficit in ECE is rather a big asymmetry between the weak interest representation and the strong organization of a robust civil society. Therefore, the social capital for the effective and efficient workings of representative democracy is still largely

missing. After the legal-formal ‘constitutional consolidation’, the ECE countries have not yet reached ‘representative consolidation’ through the completion of intermediary organizations and social ‘integrative consolidation’ through the elimination of anti-systemic movements. Finally, they have not yet reached the attitudinal consolidation of their citizens taking part in political life with firm democratic values.

However, with all these negative features, the positive side is dominant in ECE developments. It is quite remarkable that within a very short period of time the ECE countries have solved their socio-economic and political crises. After a short period they have overcome the vicious circle of mutually reinforcing crisis phenomena and they have reached the virtuous circle of mutually reinforcing socio-economic and political stabilization processes. Nowadays a new task has emerged as the removal of the representation and participation deficit, and even more the solution of the representation crisis through involvement of the whole population in politics, including the Europeanization process. A better informed and more organized participation of the ECE countries’ populations is urgently needed for a large and balanced popular support for the Europeanization process.

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