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National protest agenda and the dimensionality of party politics: Evidence from four East-Central European democracies

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Introduction

Contemporary democracies differ considerably in the issue composition of their protest politics. In countries like Germany and the Czech Republic, the vast majority of protests have been mobilised around socio-cultural issues, such as human rights, peace or the environment, and only a tiny portion of protest has focused on economic issues (Císař 2013; Hutter 2014, 142; Kriesi et al. 1995, 20, 22; Rucht 1998, 40), whereas protest in France or Poland usually has a strong economic character and voices demands for material redistribution and social policy (Ekiert and Kubik 2001, 130; Fillieule 1997; Hutter 2014, 142; Kriesi et al. 1995, 20, 22). What lies behind the cross-country differences in national protest agendas?

We argue that, in addition to other factors (e.g. social structure, historical legacies, and external events) that determine which specific issues are contested in a given society, the types of issues that are salient in the national protest agenda depend on what issues the mainstream political parties are competing on – or in other words, on the content and strength of the master-issue dimension. Drawing on research into niche political parties, we expect that there is a substitutive effect; where the stronger a specific master-issue dimension (either economic or socio-cultural) is in party politics, the less salient that issue dimension is in protest politics. This substitutive effect results from the tendency of party politics to reduce political conflict to single-dimension equilibrium, which decreases the importance of other issue dimensions and relegates the contest over secondary, niche issues to the realm of policy-seeking strategies, with protest being a common type of this political strategy. In party systems where single-dimension equilibrium does not exist and the master-issue dimension is weaker, the same dynamics result in a more convergent relationship between party and protest politics and a greater similarity between the protest- and party-system agendas.

To investigate this theory, we examine the national protest agendas in four countries – the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia – that show four combinations of two crucial

factors that are not that readily available in the old Western democracies. The content and the strength of the master-issue dimension vary in these cases. We draw on an original dataset of protest events organised in the four countries between 1993 and 2010 and on qualitative and quantitative data on the issue dimensions of party politics, which we obtained from studies on party politics and expert surveys. The results show that in the Czech Republic, where the master-issue dimension has remained steadily and strongly economic, protest has been predominantly socio-cultural. In Poland between 1993 and 2001 and Hungary between 1993 and 2006, the master-issue dimensions are strongly socio-cultural, while protest is predominantly economic. There is no single-dimension equilibrium in party politics in Slovakia or in post-2001 Poland and mainstream parties compete on both economic and socio-cultural issues. Consequently, the substitutive dynamics between party and protest politics is weaker and the issue agendas in party and protest arenas are here more alike.

The national protest agenda and party politics

Do countries systematically differ in the types of issues that are articulated by their protest politics? Cross-country variations in the composition of national protest agendas have not been studied much. Social movement research has mostly examined variation in the volume and the repertoire of protest, disregarding the variation in issues (Della Porta and Diani 2015, pt. V). Studies on protest issues usually focus on a few single-issue movement families, such as radical right movements or global justice protest, and examine the issue positions, claims and framing strategies of selected movement actors (Benford and Snow 2000; Fillieule and Accornero 2016). Similarly, most research on protest in Eastern Europe has analysed only specific movements in single countries (Jacobsson and Saxonberg 2013). Because of their focus on individual social movements, those studies have been unable to analyse the aggregate picture of the issues that are salient in protest politics.

The national protest agenda is a system-level feature that captures issues articulated by protest in a given country and period. It is an aggregate of all protests organised at a certain place and time and indicates which issues receive the most attention in a given national protest arena. The concept of issue agendas has been pursued most by party system research on cleavages and the political space (Benoit and Laver 2006; Green-Pedersen and Mortensen 2010; Lipset and Rokkan 1967; Rohrschneider and Whitefield 2009) and has recently been applied to general

political conflict including protest (Hutter 2014, chaps. 6, 7; Kriesi et al. 2012). The national protest agenda has been analysed in several Western democracies (Fillieule 1997; Hutter 2014, chaps. 6, 7; Kriesi et al. 1995, 20, 22; Rucht 1998, 40). In Eastern Europe, the issue makeup of protest politics has been mapped for the transition and pre-transition periods in the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia (Beissinger 2002, della Porta 2014) and for the first years of transition in Poland (Ekiert and Kubik 2001). Comparative studies on the post-transformation period are not available. Studies so far have either focused only on one country (e.g. Robertson 2010) or covered a short period of time and pooled data on all countries together (e.g. Beissinger and Sasse 2014). Developing this stream of research further, this study examines the national protest agenda in four East-Central European countries in the period from 1993 to 2010.

What determines the types of issues expressed in national protest agendas? One factor is the broader political system that determines the political opportunities for and constraints on mobilization, with party politics being the system's important component (Tilly 1978; Kriesi et al. 1995; McAdam and Tarrow 2013; Meyer 2004). To explain the nature of the substantive demands that movements make, scholars use discursive or policy-specific opportunities and analyse the mobilisation of parties on the same issues (Giugni et al. 2005; Hutter 2014; Koopmans et al. 2005; Koopmans and Statham 1999; Kriesi et al. 1995; Meyer and Minkoff 2004; Soule et al. 1999; van Dyke 2003). This literature, however, mostly focuses on the actor level (parties and movements) and does not capture the aggregate relationship between the country's national protest agenda and the issues contested in party politics.

This article combines the concepts of issue dimensionality and issue salience developed in the policy space and niche party literature to explain how the character of the national protest agenda is tied to the issues contested in party politics (Adams et al. 2006; Ezrow 2010; Farrer 2014; Meguid 2005; Miller and Schofield 2003; Rohrschneider and Whitefield 2009; Rovny and Edwards 2012). First, we distinguish between the economic and the socio-cultural issue dimensions that structure specific political issues and constitute the main axis of political conflict. Then we explain the conditions of the eliminatory effect of the master-issue dimension in party politics on the protest agenda. Further, we discuss how this effect varies according to the strength of the master-issue dimension, i.e. depending on whether the master dimension is the only dimension that mainstream parties compete on or whether they compete on multiple issue dimensions. In the empirical section our theory is analysed on a comparative case study that

includes the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia and covers the period between 1993 and 2010.

The dimensionality of the political contest

In order to compare the different political issues in party and protest politics across countries and over time, we distinguish two issue dimensions that constitute the main axes of political conflict – the economic and socio-cultural dimensions. Specific issues, such as the reform of a pension system or the voting rights of Hungarians living abroad, are too idiosyncratic to allow systematic comparisons across various contexts. Moreover, empirical analyses of party politics and of public opinion show that positions on various specific issues correlate with each other in a way that they cluster around the two dimensions[1] (Benoit and Laver 2012; Bakker, Jolly, and Polk 2012; Costello, Thomassen, and Rosema 2012; Jost, Federico, and Napier 2009; Kriesi et al. 2008; Marks et al. 2006; Rovny and Edwards 2012). Similarly, protest activism tends to differ along the two issue dimensions, with 'old social movements' voicing primarily economic grievances and 'new social movements' mostly expressing cultural issues (Fraser and Honneth 2003; Hutter 2014, chap. 7; Kerbo 1982).

The economic dimension encompasses issues of economic redistribution, government regulation of the economy, taxation, welfare etc. It reflects the socialist-capitalist class conflict that exists in every society (Lipset and Rokkan 1967; Kitschelt 1994) and captures the political division between left-wing and right-wing economic demands. The socio-cultural dimension embraces a variety of non-economic issues that primarily relate to culture and identity. This issue dimension summarises the conflictual line between cultural liberalism and conservative socio-cultural positions. It includes issues connected to religion, traditional values and morality, lifestyles and sexuality, the role of authority, nationalism, community, or the environment (Marks et al. 2006) and captures political disputes waged from secular-religious, centre-periphery, urban-rural (Lipset and Rokkan 1967), libertarian-authoritarian (Kitschelt 1994), and postmaterialist-traditionalist positions (Inglehart 1977).

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[1] To be sure, economic and socio-cultural dimensions are in some contexts strongly correlated with each other. Also, some specific socio-cultural issues might in some countries stand out as an independent third dimension. The main finding, however, is that most socio-cultural issues show a high level of inter-correlation among parties, candidates and the public and thus can be subsumed under one abstract dimension that represents most socio-cultural issues.

The master-issue dimension

As noted already by Downs (1957), party politics tends to converge the political contest into centripetal single-dimension equilibrium (whether economic or socio-cultural). In order to maximise voter support and form a majority government, mainstream political parties in two-party systems and coalitions in multiparty systems have to find one unifying position under which they can align various other, often conflicting, issues. Coalition governments and mainstream parties are thus 'coalitions of enemies' (Miller and Schofield 2003, 249). Their alliance is only possible thanks to the reduction of political conflict to a single dimension that demarks the issues that the government can come together around and leaves aside other issues that challenge its unity. Mainstream parties strive to maintain this advantageous 'dimensional status quo' by 'freezing' party competition along one master dimension and thus try to eliminate competing secondary issues (Rovny and Edwards 2012: 60). Empirical research has provided supportive evidence of this. Mainstream parties tend to emphasise the salience of their master issue dimension; they employ various strategies to silence potentially disruptive secondary issues; they are generally reluctant to change their policy focus; and they try to respond to the median voter (Adams et al. 2006; Ezrow 2010; Meguid 2005; Meyer and Wagner 2013; Rovny and Edwards 2012).

Literature on niche parties explains how the tendency of party systems to converge the competition along a single master dimension affects competition on the secondary issues that do not fall under the master dimension. Niche political parties, such as the radical right parties or Greens that are present in the parliaments of several Western democracies, are parties that compete on issues and positions that mainstream parties do not emphasise. These are, predominantly, secondary issues that are neglected by mainstream parties (Wagner 2012; Meguid 2005); according to some authors, parties that occupy non-centrist extreme positions on the master dimension also belong in this category (Adams et al. 2006). Importantly, unlike mainstream parties, which are office-seeking, oriented towards the median voter and seek to maintain the single-dimension status quo, niche parties are mainly driven by their policy – they emphasise the salience of their issues, which are neglected by mainstream parties, and respond to the opinions of their issue-defined electorate (Adams et al. 2006; Ezrow 2008; Farrer 2014; Meguid 2005; Meyer and Wagner 2013; Rovny and Edwards 2012). By increasing the salience of secondary issues, niche parties 'challenge the structure of conflict between the major partisan competitors' and

operate as a destabilising force that tries to 'tear the system apart' (Rovny and Edwards 2012, 56, 61; Sartori 1976, 350).

The result for the whole political system is that the political contest is driven by a competition to determine the content of the master dimension, with mainstream parties and candidates seeking to maintain the current single-dimension equilibrium, which is being challenged by actors that are asserting other, secondary issues (Rovny and Edwards 2012; Adams et al. 2006; Meguid 2005; Miller and Schofield 2003). Importantly, the continuous conflict over the salience of different issue dimensions has the aggregate effect of establishing a 'dynamic stability' in the dimensional structure of issues (Miller and Schofield 2003, 245). The tendency of party competition to converge in single-dimension equilibrium and the stability of the resulting constellation are relatively strong. The issue dimensionality of party politics does not fluctuate much over time. Indeed, most contemporary democracies show a relatively stable dimensional structure in party politics over time, with mainstream parties competing on the master issue dimension, which is usually economic, and niche parties challenging the master dimension on secondary issues (Benoit and Laver 2012; Miller and Schofield 2003; Rovny and Edwards 2012).

We extend this theory to protest. As Farrer (2014; also Ezrow 2010) notes, niche political parties and advocacy groups are, in fact, fundamentally similar types of political actors, as both try to pursue neglected policy issues and both are thus very different from mainstream parties. Like niche parties, non-partisan advocacy actors and protest in general have traditionally acted as a 'rival to the political representation system' (Jenkins and Klandermans 1995, 5) and have sought to challenge the existing party system, introducing new and neglected issues (Goldstone 2003; McAdam and Tarrow 2013; Tilly 1978). Niche parties and protest are thus outcomes of the same process, which is the tendency of party systems to gravitate towards a single-dimension competition between mainstream parties. Moreover, the division of issue dimensions between mainstream parties competing around the master dimension in the party arena and the secondary issue dimension that protest focuses on should be even sharper than in the case of mainstream and niche political parties. Unlike niche parties that still need to compete for votes and thus cannot completely ignore the master issue dimension (Adams et al. 2006; Meguid 2005; Ezrow 2010), social movements and protest can focus solely on neglected issues because they are not trying to get into office. Because of that, we generally expect that in the long run there will emerge in standard democratic politics a substitutive effect between the issue composition of the national

protest agenda and the content of the master issue dimension contested in party politics. If the master issue dimension in party politics is economic, protest will predominantly focus on socio-cultural issues and *vice versa*.

The strength of the master dimension

The intensity of the substitutive effect in the issue dimensions contested in party and protest arenas depends on how strong the single-dimension tendency in the party system is. In situations where single-dimension equilibrium does not exist, the issues contested in party and protest politics will be more alike. This disequilibrium may be short term in nature, as is observed in the aftermath of an extremely powerful exogenous shock (economic crisis, regime breakdown like that in the time of the democratic transition, the collapse of one of the mainstream parties following a corruption scandal, as was the case in Hungary in 2006, see below). It may also be more gradual, as described in the literature on party re-alignment, when party and social movement activists try to increase the salience of the secondary issue dimension and mainstream parties start to appeal to potential new voters who are left out of the current single-dimension structuring of party politics (Miller and Schofield 2003; McAdam and Tarrow 2013).

A weak single-dimension tendency or even disequilibrium can also be more permanent in nature. In some countries, it is generally harder to achieve single-dimension equilibrium and build coalition governments because mainstream parties need to compete on more than one issue dimension at the same time in order to maximise votes and create coalitions (Rovny and Edwards 2012, 60; Meguid 2005). This means that mainstream parties cannot wholly and solely exploit the master dimension while doing away with secondary issues, either by subsuming them within the master dimension or by dismissing them, as in the case of single-dimension equilibrium (Meguid 2005). Rather, they need to balance their contestation between two independent dimensions of similar importance, but this reduces their ability to form a united coalition and divides their support base. By emphasising the secondary issue dimension, they undermine the primary role of the master dimension and *vice versa*. The consequence of this for the political conflict in these types of political systems is that the eliminatory effect the master dimension has on competition over the secondary issue dimension, which takes place when single-dimension equilibrium is strong, is weaker here. The distinction between mainstream parties and actors competing on the secondary dimension (niche parties and protest) tends to diminish and party and protest politics tend to

converge. The substitutive relationship between the issues contested in the party and protest arenas is weaker. As a result of this we should see greater long-term similarity between the party and protest agendas in systems with a weaker master dimension.

Importantly, there is no direct connection between a weak master dimension and multi-partism. Not all multi-party systems, i.e. systems with more than two political parties in the parliament often-forming multiparty coalition governments, automatically have a weak master-issue dimension. The presence in parliament of niche parties competing on a secondary socio-cultural dimension – for instance, an ethnic or Green party with a small and stable constituency – does not necessarily mean there will be a weak economic master dimension, as those parties might not affect the dynamics of the mainstream party competition, which may be single-dimensional. Similarly, two-party systems can lack single-dimension equilibrium when secondary issues are successfully made more salient by certain actors, who in these systems are more likely to be party activists than niche parties (Miller and Schofield 2003).

This has consequences when we are trying to explain what aspects of party politics affect protest. Other studies also expect a substitutive relationship between protest and party politics and suggest that 'the institutionalization of a cleavage … implies that the competition is no longer taking place in unconventional terms' (Kriesi et al. 1995, 6; also Koopmans et al. 2005, 187; Giugni et al. 2005). However, those studies do not distinguish between the master and secondary status of the dimensions of political conflict and expect that this substitutive effect will be generated by all the issues articulated in the party arena or by the very presence of different parties in parliament, regardless of what their master or secondary/niche position is. For instance, this theory would imply that a niche Green party in parliament (that competes on the secondary issue dimension in most party systems) would have the effect of reducing environmental protest the same way a social-democratic party (that in most party systems competes on the master issue dimension) would decrease economic protest.

In contrast, our theory emphasises the crucial importance of 1) the hierarchy of salience among issue dimensions, with the master-issue dimension being the primary factor constraining the actions of both niche parties and protest competing on secondary issues, and of 2) the strength of this issue hierarchy, i.e. the degree to which mainstream parties and the party system converge in single-dimensional equilibrium. To look only at the institutionalisation of an issue dimension in

party politics or the presence of specific political actors in parliament, irrespective of the importance of the issues that mainstream parties compete on, would blur this distinction.

As a caveat, our theory cannot predict the specific nature of the issues contested in party and protest politics in individual countries. That depends on exogenous factors, such as the social structure, historical legacies, political and international events, the design of political institutions etc. (Evans and Whitefield 1993; Kitschelt et al. 1999). Our theory only deals with the mechanism of how different issue agendas contested in party and protest arenas are related.

Design

Since almost all party systems in Western democracies have economic master-issue dimension (Lipset and Rokkan 1967; Benoit and Laver 2006; Rovny and Edwards 2012), we focus on four East-Central European democracies – the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia – that show variation in the content and strength of their master-issue dimension. In the analysis below we will present data on the dimensional structure of the four countries' party politics; here we discuss the logic of the design.

Because our theory applies to systems with consolidated democratic representation, our analysis of the four countries begins in 1993. The structure of political competition in the post-revolution period of 1989-1993 was in all four countries still influenced by the conflict between the old and new regimes and democratic contestation was still in the process of formation at that time (Enyedi 2005; Enyedi 2006; Mansfeldová 2013, 221–22). The data collection ends in 2010, which is often interpreted as a turning point for the party systems of some of the studied countries (Dawson and Hanley 2016).

Table 1 presents a summary of the research design and predictions. We split the sample into different country-periods based on the strength and the content of the master-issue dimension in the country's party politics. The first two columns of Table 1 show that the sample displays cross-country and within-country variation in terms of the strength (from strong uni-dimensionality to disequilibrium) and the content of their master-issue dimension (economic or socio-cultural). The content of the master dimension is economic in two countries (Czech Republic and Slovakia after 2001) and socio-cultural in two countries (Hungary and Poland). The variation in the strength of the master-issue dimension cross-cuts differences in content: there is strong single-dimensional competition in the Czech Republic, in Hungary between 1993 and 2006, and

in Poland before 2002; there is a weak single-dimensional tendency in Slovakia after 2001 and in Poland after 2001; and there is disequilibrium in Slovakia between 1993 and 2001 and in Hungary after 2006. The third column shows the expected character of the national protest agenda.

– Table 1 –

The sample also makes it possible to disentangle alternative explanations. Firstly, the differences in the national protest agenda across the four countries cannot be explained by the institutionalisation of an issue dimension in party politics, as most social movement literature would suggest, regardless of whether it was a master dimension or not. All four countries have multi-party systems with niche political parties and thus both issue dimensions are represented in their parliaments. Secondly, the design controls for the institutionalisation of specific party organisations, as the long-term stability of the issue dynamics of party competition, which is present especially in the Czech Republic and Hungary, is combined with a relatively high fluctuation in terms of specific party organisations (Rohrschneider and Whitefield 2009; Rovny 2015; Rovny and Polk 2017).

Data and measurement

The national protest agenda

We use data from protest event analysis (PEA), which is based on a content analysis of public records (e.g. newspaper articles) and makes it possible to capture aggregate levels of protest across space and over time and especially the protest's issue agenda. The data come from the electronic archives of the national news agencies: the Czech News Agency, the News Agency of the Slovak Republic, the MTI Hungarian News Agency Corporation, and the Polish Press Agency. The archives of these news agencies provide a very good picture of overall protest in the four countries. One reason is that the incidence of protest in the four countries is very low[2] and the countries are rather small (except for Poland). This means that protest is a special and remarkable event that

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[2] The four countries have some of the lowest levels of public participation in demonstrations among contemporary democracies, as no more than 5% of their populations participate yearly in demonstrations. Also, on most days there are no protest events (there were no protest events on 66% of days in the Czech Republic, 79% of days in Slovakia, 46% of days in Poland and 25% of days in Hungary between 1993 and 2010) and on the majority of protest days there were only a few events (there were three or fewer protest events on 77% of protest days in the Czech Republic, 79% in Slovakia, 60% in Poland, and 49% in Hungary).

attracts a great deal of media attention even at the national level. All four news agencies also have regional offices. As well, unlike print newspapers, the news agencies do not have a limit to the number of news items that can be covered in each day and thus they do not suffer from the selection bias in their coverage of events that occurs when multiple items have to compete for limited space in a news medium. The archives are moreover the single most important source of event data, more so than newspapers, because there is no explicit political bias in the agencies in favour of or against a particular type of event or actor. As we are primarily comparing the relative composition of national protest agendas and not the absolute numbers of protest events across the four countries, there is also less potential for bias resulting from the differences in the event coverage of the four news agencies.

A collective political event is defined as an actual gathering of at least three people who convene in a public space to assert claims that have a bearing on the interests of an institution/collective actor. A list of 22 keywords referring to collective political events was used to search all the news reported in the electronic archives. The whole period was covered without any sampling of years or days. All news items that matched our definition of protest, described above, were manually selected from the sample produced by the keyword search and relevant variables were manually coded for each event by eight coders.[3]

We use empirical findings from other studies on the dimensionality of political competition (Hutter 2014; Kriesi et al. 2008; Rovny and Edwards 2012) to classify the specific 'topic/policy areas' of each protest event under the economic and the socio-cultural dimension. Since the 'topics/policy' areas of some protest events are less clear-cut, such as industry- and infrastructure-related projects, where the construction of a building can be protested for economic reasons or also for environmental reasons, we add 'framing' as a second coding variable indicating whether the framing of the protest event was economic or socio-cultural. As a result, protest focusing on economic issues encompasses events concerned with economic policies (e.g. monetary issues, taxes) or social policies (welfare state issues) and/or use an economic framing (the main argument is, for instance, 'economic efficiency and economic needs' or 'socio-economic rights'). Protest events concerned with socio-cultural issues focus on socio-cultural topics/policy areas, such as immigration, rights or environment, and/or use a socio-cultural framing, such as arguments

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[3] All the coders spoke Czech in addition to the language of the country they coded. The Czech data were used for cross-country reliability tests.

referring to 'authority and tradition' or the 'benefits of cultural diversity'. 'Other' was used as the category for events that do not meet any of the criteria outlined above to categorise the event as concerned with either an economic or a socio-cultural issue.[4] The specific coding scheme is presented in the Appendix.

The content and strength of the master-issue dimension

To measure the dimensional structure of the national party agenda we use qualitative data on political cleavages (Kitschelt et al. 1999; Berglund et al. 2013; Bértoa 2014; Whitefield 2002) and standardised data on issue saliency from expert surveys: the 2006 Chapel Hill expert survey (CHES) (Bakker et al. 2015) and the 2003 Benoit-Laver expert survey (Benoit and Laver 2006). Both surveys asked the national experts to assess the importance/salience of various issues for each party on a scale from 1 to 10 or to 20 (see the Appendix). We weighted the salience each party attached to each of the issues covered in the surveys by the party's vote share to identify the system-level hierarchy of the salience of the individual issues contested in party politics. By using the same coding as that for protest events to distinguish between the economic and the socio-cultural issue dimensions, we identified the content of the master-issue dimension, i.e. whether the most important line of political conflict is economic or socio-cultural. To capture the strength of the specific master-issue dimension (i.e. whether the conflict between mainstream political parties is one-dimensional or whether the single-dimension equilibrium is weak/non-existent), we contrast the system-level salience of economic issues with that of socio-cultural issues. Specifically, we calculated the difference between the salience of the economic dimension and the most salient issue among the socio-cultural issues. A plus/minus sign attached to this measure indicates which of the issue dimensions is the more salient one (i.e. party systems with an economic master dimension have a plus sign, party systems with a socio-cultural master-issue dimension have a minus sign) and the number indicates the strength of this master-issue dimension (a greater number means a bigger difference in the salience of the two issue dimensions, i.e. stronger single-dimensionality).

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[4] The episodes of protest in Slovakia related to the semi-democratic regime of V. Mečiar (1992-1998) that were organised by mainstream political actors (main parties, president, MPs etc.) are also included in the 'other' category other (see below).

Results

Figure 1 presents the yearly sum of protest events by issues in the four countries from 1993 to 2010. Specifically, the first column shows economic protest events, the second column shows socio-cultural protest events, and the third column shows the 'other' category. As we are interested in issue dimensions that are salient in the national protest agenda, the primary interpretation of Figure 1 lies in the comparison between the share of economic and socio-cultural protest in a given country-period. Table 2 displays the relation of the national protest agendas to the issue structure of party politics. The second column of Table 2 presents the differences in the proportion of economic and socio-cultural protest across the country-periods. The third and the fourth column summarise the strength of the master dimension and its content. The fifth row presents the standardised measures of the content and strength of the master-issue dimension calculated on data from the two expert surveys (CHES 2006 and Benoit and Laver 2003), provided the data are available for a given period.

– Figure 1 –

– Table 2 –

In the Czech Republic, the composition of national protest agenda has been predominantly socio-cultural (mostly human rights, foreign policy, and environment) throughout the studied period (Figure 1). The number of socio-cultural protest events is almost in every year double than the number of protest events relating to economic issues. As Table 2 shows, there were 43% more socio-cultural protest events than economic protest events. Supporting our theory, the long-term predominance of socio-cultural dimension in the protest arena is consistent with the content and strength of the master-issue dimension of Czech party politics, as the economic dimension was a strong master-issue dimension in the Czech party politics throughout the period studied (Mansfeldová 2013, 221; Kopecký 2007, 120). The issues of economic transformation dominated the 1990s, and economic issues such as taxes, health care, and pensions have structured party politics ever since (Linek and Lacina 2010). Since 1996 the economic dimension was the focal issue dimension of the two largest political parties: the Czech Social Democratic Party, which was the dominant party on the left side of the political spectrum, and the Civic Democratic Party, which

was the dominant party on the right. In this respect, out of our four cases the Czech Republic is closest to Western democracies, where there is typically a strong economic dimension in party politics and where the protest arena mainly revolves around socio-cultural issues (Hutter 2014, 142). The standardised data from the expert surveys (1.0/0.27) shown in Table 2 confirm the strength of the economic dimension in party politics as well. The positive value of the difference indicates that economic issues are the most salient issue dimension in the party competition; that this measure is higher in the CR means that this master dimension is more dominant compared to the socio-cultural dimension in the CR than it is in Slovakia and Poland, which have values closer to zero.

Importantly, the strongly one-dimensional nature of Czech party politics centred mainly on economic issues has not been weakened by the presence of niche parties in parliament seeking to compete on socio-cultural issues. These included nationalistic parties fighting for the cultural and territorial autonomy of the eastern part of the country (the Self-governing Democracy Movement – Association for Moravia and Silesia, in parliament between 1990 and 1996); a far right nationalist and xenophobic party (the Association of the Republic – Republican Party of Czechoslovakia, in parliament in 1992-1998); and the Green Party (2006-2010). These parties were relatively small and did not destabilise the strongly one-dimensional nature of party competition over economic issues in Czech party politics. The simultaneous existence of relatively strong single-dimension party competition and the occasional presence of niche parties in parliament competing on the secondary-issue dimension provides important support for our theory. As we can see, the mutually exclusive relationship between the party and protest agendas is determined by the content and the strength of the master-issue dimension. It is not just a matter of the degree to which different issue dimensions are institutionalised in party politics, regardless of whether they form the primary (mainstream parties) or the secondary dimension (niche parties and protest).

Like the Czech Republic, Hungary shows the predominant presence of one issue dimension in its protest arena that is relatively stable until 2006. Thematically, protest is different from that in the Czech Republic. As Figure 1 shows, the vast majority of protest organised in Hungary addressed economic issues like taxes and wages. Table 2 reports that there were many more economic protest events (by 45% in the 1993-2006) than there were events focusing on socio-cultural issues. Consistent with our theory, the predominantly economic protest agenda is combined with strongly one-dimensional competition on socio-cultural issues in Hungarian party

politics between 1993 and 2006. Since 1994, 'non-economic issues defined party positions, inter-party distances and electoral behaviour... [and] economic policy issues and social class played a minor role in party competition' (Tóka and Popa 2013, 318). Specifically, the original economic master dimension that dominated Hungarian party competition in the first post-revolutionary years switched to a strong socio-cultural dimension after 1993 (Enyedi 2005). From 1994 several socio-cultural issues became more prominent and came to form the basis of the one-dimensional structure that divided Hungarian party politics between two poles: the socially conservative, Christian-national, anti-communist and agrarian position on one side, and the secular, cosmopolitan, and urban one on the other (Rovny and Edwards 2012; Tóka and Popa 2013). After 1993 FIDESZ gradually consolidated its 'reign over the [socially conservative] right' (Enyedi 2006, 233) and became the main force of opposition to the secular and cosmopolitan socialists (MSZP, Hungarian Socialist Party). In terms of institutionalisation, these two parties became the organisational hegemons on each side. In the elections between 1998 and 2010 (four elections) the two parties gained between 60 and 85% of the total vote. The relatively strong dominance of the socio-cultural dimension in party politics is also confirmed by the results from the expert surveys (-0.8/-0.18) accompanied by a negative sign (i.e. the socio-cultural content of the master dimension) and a greater value (i.e. the large gap in the strength of salience between the socio-cultural master dimension and the secondary economic issue dimension).

The one-dimensional equilibrium of Hungarian party politics was destabilised after the fall 2006 leak of Prime Minister Ferenc Gyurcsány's (MSZP) secret party meeting speech earlier that year that led to the ensuing collapse of the socialists. With the collapse of one pole of the main dimension in Hungarian party politics, the one-dimensional equilibrium posited on the socio-cultural dimension that had produced the eliminatory effect on the secondary economic dimension was disrupted. This opened up the mainstream space of competition to various issues and various actors and led to the greater convergence of issues contested in party and protest politics. Firstly, the party and protest politics aligned around massive anti-government protests (Kriesi 2014, 359–60), which are indicated by the large number of protest events related to democratic institutions and the state included in the category 'other' ('institutions' in Figure 1), and that contributed to the 2010 landslide electoral victory of FIDESZ. Secondly, after 2006 there was a decline in economic protest and a slight increase in socio-cultural protest, most of it produced by the conservative right (see also Greskovits and Wittenberg 2016). As the last row in Table 2 shows,

the disequilibrium in party politics, which lacks the previously strong hierarchy among contested issue dimensions (the socio-cultural master dimension and economic issues dismissed to a niche secondary position), goes together with a lacking hierarchy in protest issues. In this period socio-cultural and economic issues are evenly present in the protest agenda (with only 1% more socio-cultural issues).

In Poland, the national protest agenda was in the first decade predominantly economic, focusing mostly on economic issues such as taxes and wages. Almost every year the number of economic events is almost double the number of socio-cultural protest events. Between 1993 and 2001, economic protest account for 55% of events, and only 24% were socio-cultural (difference = 31% in Table 2). In line with our theory, this corresponds to the relatively strong socio-cultural master dimension that structured Polish party competition in this period (Stanley 2013). Until 2001, religion and the communist past were more salient in Polish party politics than the economy. Polish party conflict focused on diverging interpretations of basic religious and civilisational values that reflected a conflict between secular and confessional views and contrasting perspectives on the Polish communist past. This affected what 'left' and 'right' stand for in party politics. Unlike in Western Europe and the Czech Republic, where left and right align with different models of political economy, 'in the language of Polish politics this ideological cleavage, not the socio-economic one, is defined as the left-right dimension' (Jasiewicz 2007, 88). Throughout the 1990s the one-dimensional socio-cultural party competition was dominated by the post-communist Democratic Left Alliance on the left and there were a number of anti-communist parties on the right.

Around the start of the new millennium the agenda of party politics changed. The economic issues, most notably post-communist economic transformation strategy and privatisation became more relevant than before. It was the 2001 elections that put what at that time were understood to be conservative radicals (the agrarian-populist Self-Defence Party and the catholic-nationalist League of Polish Families) at the centre of attention (Stanley 2013, 180). New issues, such as privatisation, emerged that weakened the socio-cultural dimension and led to cross-cutting party contestation on both issue dimensions (Bértoa 2014, 26). As a result, the Polish party system became more bi-dimensional, with parties competing on socio-cultural issues intersected by economic issues. The values 0.05 and -0.08 in Table 2 for the indicators on party politics' issue dimensionality according to the expert surveys are very close to zero, which means that the gap

between the salience of the economic dimension and the socio-cultural dimension in party politics is small and that both dimensions are salient. The negative sign next to the greater figure indicates that the socio-cultural dimension is still the more important dimension.

The bi-dimensional character of Polish party competition is best symbolised by the Law and Justice Party (PiS) established in 2001. For the PiS, the left and the liberals of the first transition period represented not just a different model of socio-economic development, but also a serious civilisational threat to the very existence of the Polish nation and its core values. This is a reflection of the character of party competition in the second decade under study, when it revolved around both cultural and economic issues. Accordingly, in its programme PiS successfully merged the defence of Polish culture (issues of cultural nationalism) with the defence of the economically vulnerable parts of the population living outside metropolitan areas (issues of economic equality). The position of the PiS is not, however, offset by a single opposing position that could serve as a gravitational pole for cultural and economic liberalism, and instead there are two opposing positions: one represents the intersection of economic liberalism and cultural conservatism and the other the intersection of economic and cultural liberalism.

This shift in party politics affected Polish protest in the second decade, as we can see in Figure 1 and Table 2. When the exclusion effect of the one-dimensional equilibrium posited on socio-cultural issues observed in the first decade grew weaker, the protest agenda became more like the issues contested in party politics. Specifically, there was a minor decline in economic protest and an increase in socio-cultural issues, and particularly an increase in protests focused on foreign polity and international politics. Nevertheless, protest is still slightly more centred on economic issues (by 7 %, Table 2), which corresponds to the slightly greater importance of socio-cultural issues in party politics.

Unlike in the other three countries, the protest agenda in Slovakia has not been characterised by the predominance of one issue dimension for most of the studied period. As Figure 1 shows, both economic and socio-cultural protest have been salient in Slovak protest politics. In the first decade there was slightly more economic protest (4% more economic than socio-cultural, Table 2) and a significant amount of protest fell into the 'other' category. This is in line with our theory. The first decade of Slovak party politics was not characterised by the presence of a strong economic master dimension like in the Czech Republic; on the contrary, the more important socio-cultural issues of national identity and the communist legacy were crosscut by less salient but still

relevant economic issues (Bértoa 2014, 26). At the same time, as we can see in Figure 1, a large share of protest fell into the 'other' category between 1993 and 2001, the category in which we included protests relating to the post/semi-authoritarian period of Slovak politics under Prime Minister Mečiar and his Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (HZDS, in power 1992-1998). These democracy-related protests account for 21% of all protest events in the period between 1993 and 2001 and were organised by both HZDS (which kept organising protests even after the 1998 elections, when, even though it had won the elections, it was ousted from government because it had lost its coalition partner) and its opponents (civil society actors, the Party of the Democratic Left, the Christian Democratic Movement, and even the President). The reason is that during this period we do not see the standard logic of democratic politics at work, where the tendency should be for mainstream parties to compete on the most important issue dimension (either economic or socio-cultural) while niche parties and protest politics contest the secondary issues. Instead the political system showed short-term disequilibrium with political conflict revolving around the very character of the political regime, with all the democratic forces aligning against HZDS, which resulted in the convergence of party and protest politics above and beyond economic or socio-cultural issues.

Economic issues did not establish themselves as the stronger dimension of party politics until the beginning of the second post-communist decade, after Prime Minister Mečiar's semi-authoritarian government ended. After 2000, the party conflict settled mainly around economic issues, 'without abandoning the nationalist appeals altogether' (Deegan-Krause 2013, 276). In other words, around 2000 Slovakia experienced a shift in the content of its master dimension, which became more economic, though it retained a symbolic nationalist overtone (ibid: 272-273). The data from the expert surveys (0 and 0.02 in Table 2) show that there is no or only a small difference in the salience of the two dimensions, with slightly greater importance given to economic issues. In line with our theory, in the 2002-2007 period we find a balance between economic and socio-cultural protest. The decline in economic protest and the growth of socio-cultural protest during the period between 2002 and 2005 led to the predominance of socio-cultural issues in Slovak protest politics (Figure 1). In this period, the dimensional structure of Slovak party politics and its national protest agenda became more like the structure of protest and party issues in the Czech Republic, with economic issues being a single dimension of focus of party politics and socio-cultural issues the more salient concern of protest.

Conclusion

Social movement literature has traditionally recognised the exclusive insider–outsider pattern between party-electoral and protest-advocacy arenas (McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly 2001, 11; Tilly 1978). However, it has never been entirely clear what exactly distinguishes the two arenas as being in opposition to each other. Obviously, the difference does not lie in the type of actors and strategies used – political parties running in elections versus social movements protesting – as parties and movements get involved in both types of strategies (Goldstone 2003, 7; Kriesi et al. 1995, 152ff).

Drawing on the issue dimensionality and niche party literature, our theory suggests that the main line of demarcation lies in the hierarchy of issue dimensions that the actors compete on (master or secondary importance) and the resulting mechanism of representation through office- or policy-seeking. Specifically, the issue dimensions contested in the two political arenas have a substitutive effect in relation to each other that results from the fact that the office-seeking competition that dominates the electoral arena works to establish a one-dimensional equilibrium. These dynamics tend to reduce political conflict to just one main political divide at the centre of the mainstream parties' competition, squeeze out the other issue dimension, and relegate the competition over this niche dimension to the arena of policy-seeking strategies, with protest being a prominent type of such strategy.

When the uni-dimensional equilibrium in party politics is weaker or does not exist, the composition of the protest agendas is generally more balanced and the gap between economic and socio-cultural protest is much smaller. The reason is that the eliminatory effect of the master dimension is weaker because the single-dimension equilibrium of the whole party system is disrupted by a salient secondary issue dimension that mainstream parties compete on as well, in which case they do not try to push this dimension out of party politics. As a result, we see greater congruence between the issues that are contested in party and protest politics in these countries. We were able to empirically support this theory on the sample of four East-Central European countries that have a unique combination of characteristics to allow an empirical investigation. In contrast to most Western democracies, three of the four studied countries have had in at least one period or another a socio-cultural master dimension (Hungary 1993-2006, Poland, Slovakia 1993-

2001) and the country-periods varied in the strength of the master dimension (from strong uni-dimensionality, over weak uni-dimensionality to disequilibrium).

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Table 1: Research design and predictions

| Party Master Dimension | | Country-Period | Prediction: |
Strength	Content		Protest agenda
Strong one-dimensionality	Economic	Czech Rep., 1993-2010	Predominantly socio-cultural
Strong one-dimensionality	Socio-cultural	Hungary, 1993-2006	Predominantly economic
One-dimensionality	Socio-cultural	Poland, 1993-2001	Dominantly economic
Weak one-dimensionality	Socio-cultural crosscut by economic	Poland, 2002-2010	Convergence: economic
Weak one-dimensionality	Economic crosscut by socio-cultural	Slovakia, 2002-2010	Convergence: socio-cultural
Disequilibrium	Post/Semi-authoritarian regime	Slovakia, 1993-2001	Convergence
Disequilibrium	Collapse of one master pole	Hungary, 2007-2010	Convergence

Figure 1: National protest agenda
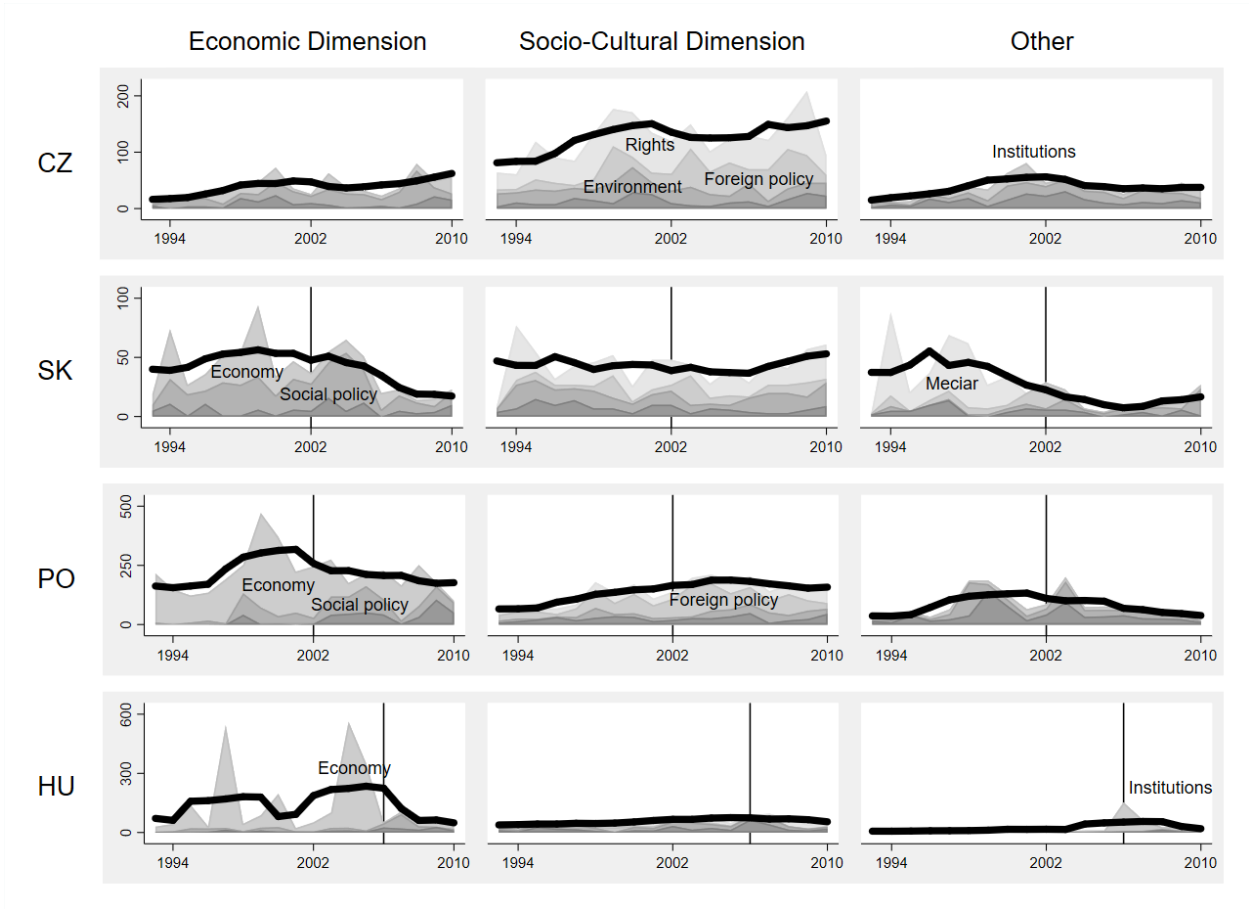
Note: Yearly absolute number of protest events by issue and country. The solid lines display smoothed trends (moving average, window 2 1 2). Economic dimension (from top): economy, social policy, other events with economic framing; Socio-cultural dimension (from top): Rights, foreign policy, environment, other events with socio-cultural framing; Other (from top): Mečiar (only Slovakia, events related to Mečiar's semi-authoritarian regime organised by political parties and politicians), institutions, industry and urban planning, other events. Vertical reference lines signify the change in the party agenda dimensionality in a given country. Data: PEA V4.

Table 2: National Protest Agenda and Dimensionality of Party Politics

Country-period	National protest agenda (% economic – % socio-cultural dimension)	Party agenda		Quantitative measures (Benoit and Laver 2003/CHES 2006)
		Strength of the master dimension	Content of the master dimension	
Czech Republic, 1993-2010	-43	Strong one-dimensionality	Economic	1.0/0.27
Hungary, 1993-2006	45	Strong one-dimensionality	Socio-cultural	-0.8/-0.18
Poland, 1993-2001	31	One-dimensionality	Socio-cultural	-
Poland, 2002-2010	7	Weak one-dimensionality	Socio-cultural crosscut by economic	0.05/-0.08
Slovakia, 2002-2010	-11	Weak one-dimensionality	Economic crosscut by cultural	0/0.02
Slovakia, 1993-2001	4	Disequilibrium	Semi-authoritarian regime	-
Hungary, 2007-2010	-1	Disequilibrium	Collapse of one pole of the master dimension	-

Note: Data on the national protest agenda come from the PEA V4, qualitative data on the content and dominance of the master dimension come from Berglund et al. (2013), Webb and White (2007), and Bértoa (2014), and quantitative data on party politics dimensionality are calculated from expert surveys (Benoit and Laver 2003/CHES 2006).