

Paper prepared for the Euroacademia International Conference
The European Union and the Politicization of Europe

Vienna, 8 – 10 December 2011

This paper is a draft

Please do not cite

European Parliamentary Elections: Candidates as Possible Politicisers?

Jan Kovář: PhD candidate, Metropolitan University Prague & Institute of International Relations Prague

Kamil Kovář: Graduate student, London School of Economics and Political Science

Abstract: Elections to the European Parliament (EP) fall within the category of second-order elections. Because these types of elections do not lead to the formation of government there is less at stake and, consequently, voters behave differently when casting vote. Given their aggregate nature, the predictions of the second-order elections theory have mostly been tested using aggregate electoral data and election-related survey data. Recently, scholars have also started to uncover some micro-foundations of second-order election theory and confront them with micro-level empirical evidence. The question that arises then is simple: do also political parties perceive the less-at-stake dimension of second-order elections and thus behave differently which can result in depoliticisation of EP elections? Politicisation of EP elections is understood as an increase in polarization of opinions, interests or values leading to increasing prominence of party political conflict. This paper draws on a unique dataset on the political experience of party candidates in the Czech Republic and Slovakia to explicitly link the second-order election model to independent actions of political parties. In this we, it is attempted to analyze one potential manifestation of possible politicisation of EP elections by national political parties. The results show, nonetheless, that political parties indeed nominate higher-quality candidates to the first-order arena where more is at stake. Moreover and in accordance with predictions derived from the second-order election theory, I show that parties in government in first-order arena react to domestic situation and nominate lower-quality candidates to EP elections than parties in opposition at national level.

Keywords: European Parliament, second-order elections, political parties, candidate quality, first-order elections.

Introduction

The fact that elections to the European Parliament (EP) are different from national parliamentary elections in the European Union (EU) member countries has been evident ever since the very first of these Europe-wide elections were held in 1979. In their immediate aftermath, Reif and Schmitt (1980) labelled first direct EP elections “second-order national elections” (for an overview, see Marsh and Mikhaylov 2010). In a later work, Reif (1997, 117) proposed an operational definition of such second-order elections (SOEs): “All elections (except the one that fills the most important political office of the entire system and therefore is the first-order election) are “national second-order elections”, irrespective of whether they take place in the entire, or only in a part of, the country”. After more than three decades and six more sets of European elections since Reif and Schmitt (1980) published their seminal work, the SOE model has, by and large, become one of the most widely tested and supported theories of voting behaviour in elections to the EP (e.g. Hix and Marsh 2007; Reif 1984; Marsh 1998; Hix and Marsh 2011).

It is logical that given their aggregate nature (see below), the SOE model’s predictions have been mostly tested using aggregate electoral data and election-related survey data. This led researchers to focus primarily on sophisticated strategies of voters. However, by primarily focusing on the strategies of *voters*, the model is rendered blind to independent actions of the rest of the electoral circle: the *media* and the *political parties* (see also Weber 2007). Since perhaps the most important aspect of SOEs is that there is less at stake (Reif and Schmitt 1980, 9), it is viable to assume that all the three abovementioned actors are subject to the less-at-stake dimension likewise. In this paper, we thus attempt to fill a void in the literature by directly linking the SOE model to independent actions of other actors in the electoral circle than to voters: the media. We do this through analysis of the quality of candidates in the 2004 and 2009 EP elections in two countries that joined the EU in 2004 – the Czech Republic and Slovakia – and *at the same time* applying the SOE model.

The remainder of this paper is as follows. The next section briefly discusses the literature on candidate quality and candidate selection to the EP, followed by a section reviewing the literature on the SOE model. These two sections thus introduce the main concepts and present the theoretical background. The fourth section unveils expectations based on the previous two sections. The next section, then, clarifies methodological issues, operationalises concepts, and presents the dataset. The fifth section presents the results of the analysis and, finally, the last section concludes by summarizing the findings and discussing their implications in the light of relevant research literature.

Political selection and candidate quality in the EP

Dynamics of candidate selection are crucial for political representation because the issue of who is – and who is not – selected as a candidate has fundamental implication for all the other meanings of political representation (Krook 2010). Candidate selection procedures and their outcomes influence party cohesion within the legislature as well as the way representatives and voters perceive the representational relationship (Hazan and Rahat 2006). Within the realms of the EP, Meserve et al. (2009) showed that Members of European Parliament (MEPs) legislative behaviour (voting choices) is conditioned by his individual, domestic-party, and national-level characteristics. Taken together, the types of candidates national parties choose to run for EP office is of substantial importance to both electoral and policy outcomes.

Nevertheless, we still know oddly little about candidates nominated for EP elections, not to speak about any systematic comparison of candidates across different types of elections (i.e. first vs. second order). Studying which types of candidates get selected for the elections to the EP, Meserve et al. (2009) argue that national parties are strategic in choosing which individuals to run. They claim that nomination strategies during the candidate selection process for EP elections are primarily a function of the party's stance on European integration, its domestic position, size, and internal organisation – namely the degree of (de-)centralisation of candidate selection (Meserve, Pemstein, and Bernhard 2010). The more pro-EU party's stance is the more quality candidates it sends to the EP, leading to higher probability of sending a candidate with previous political experience (Meserve, Pemstein, and Bernhard 2010, 2009). Moreover, based on their new dataset, coding all previous elected positions of all MEPs, they find that – if all elected positions are aggregated – 63% of MEP served before in some elected capacity.

A few studies examined the characteristic and career paths of MEPs. In terms of social representation, Norris and Franklin (1997) point out that the EP is socially unrepresentative and that supply-side factors prove more strongly related to chances of candidates of gaining a winnable seat than demand-side factors. In her cross-national study, Scarrow (1997) suggests that an increasing proportion of MEPs choose Brussels as their principal political career path (see also Verzichelli and Edinger 2005). However, there is still considerable cross-national variation in the background of MEPs (Scarrow 1997, 256-58; see also Norris 1999). In fact, over half of the MEPs from the four countries under analysis in Scarrow's (1997, 256-7) study held no previous elected position. Stolz (2001) uses similar data to calculate “exchange rates” between domestic and European levels of legislative office. Stolz's results also support the emergence of a European career path and suggest that both “parliaments on the regional and European level (...) function as career arenas in their own right” (2001, 2). On the other hand, in the case of the Czech Republic, Linek and Outly claim that “[i]f a politician wants to remain active at the national level, he cannot become a MEP” (2006, 7).

There are a number of studies investigating candidates and candidate selection process for EP elections in a particular country or a small set of countries (Gherghina and Chiru 2009, 2010; Linek and Outly 2006; Kauppi 1996; Meserve, Pemstein, and Bernhard 2009). Reviewing all these studies is out of the scope of this study. Suffice to look at some of the EU member states from the CEE region analysed here. For example, Gherghina and Chiru (2009) found that during the candidate selection process Romanian parties assigned high importance to candidates' previous experience in the EP and their capacity to contribute to the campaign costs. Moreover, Auers (2005) pointed out that the quality of candidates standing in the CEE countries was striking, a number of candidates were politicians in their prime. Other claim that many parties in the region have put forward high-profile candidates for the 2004 EP elections (Hobolt and Høyland 2011). Jurek (2009) pointed out that the 2009 European election in Romania featured some high-profile politicians, usually at the top positions of ballot lists. In the Czech Republic, many candidates with long-term experience in European issues were at the forefront of ballots for the 2004 EP election (Perottino 2005). By contrast, Klíma (2010, 16) argues that Czech political parties put influential party politicians at the top of their ballot list and others are low- or non-profile politicians.

Finally, to the best of our knowledge, the only studies directly dealing with candidate quality and linking it to the (results of) European elections is Hobolt and Høyland (2007; 2011) and Gherghina and Chiru (2009). Drawing on an original dataset, Hobolt and Høyland (2007) show that candidate quality varies considerably across EU member countries. In addition, quality candidates have the potential to increase turnout in EP elections, and parties that are putting forward “high quality” candidates are consequently rewarded by voters. Conversely, Gherghina and Chiru (2009, 93) found that in Romania “the majority of the candidates have no prior public experience”. In addition, both studies find the relationship between candidates' previous political experience and chances of being elected in European elections to be strongly correlated with each other.

The SOE Model

After briefly reviewing the literature on candidate selection process and candidate quality in European elections, we now turn to the literature on the SOE model. As was hinted at in the Introduction, the SOE model has become the dominant one in any academic discussion of elections to the EP. It is important to note that in their ideal form, SOEs are fought within the same party system as the FOEs (Reif and Schmitt 1980; Marsh and Mikhaylov 2010).¹

Perhaps the most important aspect of SOEs is that there is less at stake in these types of elections. The SOE model suggests that there is a qualitative difference between different types of elections depending on the perception of what is at stake; compared to FOEs, in SOEs there is *less-at-stake* due to the fact that they do not determine the composition of government (Reif and Schmitt 1980).

Owing to this fact, the SOE model is built around three broad propositions: 1) *lower level of voter's participation*; 2) *brighter prospects for small parties*; and 3) *government parties lose*. Furthermore, as a consequence of less-at-stake dimension, "voters cast their votes (...) not only as a result of conditions obtaining within the specific context of the second-order arena, but also on the basis of factors in the main political arena of the nation" (Reif and Schmitt 1980, 9). The campaign and results of SOEs are influenced by the political constellation of the national political arena (Reif 1997). Hence, the last broad proposition is: 4) *election campaigns comprise not only second-order-arena-specific issues but also (if not dominantly) first-order-arena-specific issues* (Reif 1984; Marsh and Mikhaylov 2010).

One of the shortcomings of the SOE model may be in the fact that the (aggregate) propositions of the SOE model have been mostly tested using aggregate electoral data and election-related survey data. This, however, leads to methodological problems of observational equivalence and ecological fallacy as well as disregard for the need for individual-level explanations of vote choice (e.g. Hobolt and Wittrock 2011; Clark and Rohrschneider 2009; Tiemann 2009). Scholars thus recently began to use individual rather than aggregate models and data in order to build solid micro-foundations of individual vote choice and overcome the problems of observational equivalence and ecological fallacy (Weber 2009; Tiemann 2009; Hobolt, Spoon, and Tilley 2009).

Another important shortcoming of the SOE model lays in its primary focus on sophisticated strategies of voters. The model does not involve an explicit link to independent actions of the rest of the electoral circle: the media and the political partiesⁱⁱ, despite the findings of many studies showing that (1) parties allocate fewer resources for campaigns in SOEs than in first-order contests (Maier and Tenscher 2009; Hertner 2011) which, of course, has consequences for organisation and conduct of campaigns; and (2) EP election campaigns are of low intensity and are dominated by national issues (Kauppi 2004; Irwin 1995). Moreover, European elections are consistently found not to be very visible in national television news and there is little doubt that media find them less interesting than national FOEs (Kovář 2010; de Vreese et al. 2006; Schuck et al. 2011). The absence of direct link to political parties and the media is surprising given the (not unusual) conclusion of a recent analysis of EP elections in the Czech Republic claiming that "political parties drew little attention to European issues and put lower profile party figures on their ballot sheets, and (...) the media paid little attention to the elections" (Klíma 2010, 18). Since perhaps the most important aspect of SOEs is that there is less at stake (Reif and Schmitt 1980, 9), it is viable to assume that all the three abovementioned electoral actors perceive the less-at-stake character of SOEs likewise and thus EP elections matter less not only to voters but also to political parties and the media. Because SOEs are less important, how voters, parties and the media perceive SOEs can be presented graphically as in **Figure 1**.

[Figure 1 about here]

In their review article Marsh and Mikhaylov (2010, 18) argued that in order to better understand EP elections, more attention should be given to the mechanism(s) that give rise to the second-order effects. In particular, it is viable to assume that actions of political parties and the media help give rise to these second-order effects. In fact, findings of a recent study examining the conditioning effect of party polarisation on the EU dimension show that in EP elections "voters only take EU-specific considerations into account when political parties provide them with clear choices" (Hobolt and Spoon 2010, 23). This is echoed by another study concluding that EU-issue voting is much more pronounced when parties and the media provide higher level of political information on European matters (de Vries et al. 2011). Yet another recent article argues that should citizens be fully informed at EP election time it would result in roughly 30 per cent increase in turnout (Bhatti 2010). Put differently, the behaviour of parties and the news media is crucial in shaping the nature of electoral choices and levels of turnout in EP elections. Consequently, in order to better understand EP elections we would benefit from focusing on the links between voters, candidates, political parties and the media (see also Hobolt and Franklin 2011).

In relation to our study, the SOE model does not offer explicit propositions or testable hypotheses concerning the quality of candidates running for MEPs. But the implicit assumption of the model seems to be that the quality of candidates is generally fairly low as the parties are likely to nominate high-profile candidates to the first-order arena (Hobolt and Høyland 2011). Since EP elections are rather low-profile, SOEs it is not necessary for potential MEPs to have significant face value or reputations for their list. Literature on MEPs' career path reviewed in the previous section concludes that candidates for EP office and MEPs are either young and inexperienced or old and about to retire and that low-profile candidates contribute to lack of voter's interest in EP elections (Hobolt and Høyland 2007; Meserve, Pemstein, and Bernhard 2010; Scarrow 1997). Analysing the impact of candidate quality on electoral fortunes, Hobolt and Høyland (2011) complement to the standard understanding of the SOE model, arguing that the degree to which governing parties are punished/rewarded depends also on the experience of their candidates for EP office. This effect is greatest when EP elections are held in the middle of national electoral cycles.

Moreover, the number of candidates with previous political experience that parties put on their ballots for EP elections depend on national context, namely their electoral results in previous FOEs. Parties that have lost national elections tend to send more experienced politicians in their prime to the EP (Meserve, Pemstein, and Bernhard 2010). Parties are thus drafting ballot lists for EP elections based on national political situation, another second-order characteristic of EP elections and evidence that national political arena remains the main arena of reference in these elections. These studies as well as the ones reviewed in the previous section give us an important insight into the composition of the EP, yet they do not explicitly address the question of how the quality of candidates differs across first- and SOEs. These studies also do not provide cross-national comparison of candidate quality in EP elections. In these areas of research, we have to so far rely on anecdotal and mixed evidence. That is where we would like to contribute some theoretical structure as well as empirical evidence given what Verzichelli and Edinger (2005, 270) point out: “a systematic comparison between national MPs and MEPs is useful to determine (...) to what extent the European representative elite is different from the national”.

Expectations

Although the standard SOE model does not offer explicit propositions about the quality of candidates, the nature of the model and its less-at-stake dimension, along with the findings of previous research bring about some clear expectations about the quality of candidates. The nature of the SOE model provides political parties with the opportunity to experiment insofar as there is less at stake.ⁱⁱⁱ Accordingly, national political parties will nominate high-profile politicians to first-order rather than to second-order arena. Indeed, most of political parties do not nominate their high-profile politicians for the EP elections (Meserve, Pemstein, and Bernhard 2009; Hobolt and Høyland 2011). Meserve et al., for example, argue that “parties could nominate “low quality” politicians to serve in Europe. By sending these politicians to Brussels, the party gets low quality politicians away from the arena of national politics where they could hurt the party’s domestic political fortunes” (2010, 15). We would not go that far, not least because ultimately all political parties are in business to win elections, but also because they believe that the candidates they present will maximise their vote share. Nonetheless, we expect that the quality of candidates differ across first- and second-order elections in a way that candidates standing for SOEs are of lower quality than those standing for first-order contests. In other words, they will have less previous political experience.

Moreover, the availability of high-quality candidates may be a limiting factor for all parties (Besley 2005). This limiting factor might, actually, be stronger for political parties in government at the national level since they may have a smaller pool of high-quality candidates to choose from than other parties. Moreover, if a party lost seats in last national election and remains in opposition, many quality politicians are left without a seat. EP elections are a potential outlet for quality candidates looking for positions. Correspondingly, parties that do not form government at the national level may send more quality candidates to the EP given their wider pool (Meserve, Pemstein, and Bernhard 2010, 2009). We therefore expect that parties in opposition put forward higher-quality candidates than parties in national government.

Data, methods, and operationalisation

The mechanism presented graphically in **Figure 1** is the starting point of our analysis, as it directly links the SOE model and its less-at-stake dimension with independent actions of political parties and the news media. In this paper, we focus only on the link to actions of political parties. In both countries, only political parties and their coalitions can be nominated in elections and as such the selection of candidates occurs solely within running parties (Linek and Outlý 2006; Outlý 2007). Given that national political parties establish the procedures governing selection process in both national parliamentary and European elections; select the candidates for both offices; set the content of electoral campaigns in both elections; and structure the label under which parliamentarians are elected (Linek and Outlý 2006; Hix and Lord 1997), we suppose that analysing candidate quality and comparing it across first- and SOEs might tell us about if and how second-order political parties perceive EP elections and as such help us to uncover how high (stakes) importance and motivation political parties assign to first-/second-order elections.

In order to measure quality of candidates in EP election in the Czech Republic and Slovakia we have to provide an operational definition of the concept. It has been argued that one of the most often ways of distinguishing between “bad” and “good” political representative is the prior experience of potential representatives which works as an informative cue about the quality and competence of the candidate (Meserve, Pemstein, and Bernhard 2010; Squire 1995; Hobolt and Høyland 2011). Stone et al. (2004) pointed out that the office-holding and fundraising abilities are generally taken as surrogates for challenger quality. Meserve et al. (2010, 19) suggest “[c]andidates with elected experience are (...) higher quality candidates than candidates without this experience”. Most of the literature on candidate quality written in the US context has focused on prior office-holding experience (Jacobson and Kernell 1983; Jacobson 1989). Some scholars use a simple dummy variable which contrast candidates with and without prior political experience in public office (Lublin 1994), whereas other scholars have

refined this measure by calibrating the status of previous offices held (Krasno and Green 1988; Hobolt and Høyland 2011).

In this paper, we operationalise candidate quality in terms of the political profile of each candidate, i.e. previous political experience. However, rather than using a simple dummy variable of previous position in office, we follow Hobolt and Høyland (2011) and use an additive scale of various aspects of previous experience, calibrated by the level of the position. Single candidate thus becomes a unit of analysis. The scale is calibrated by the level of position since voters (and parties) will consider candidates with experience on various levels quite differently. National-level elected experience indicates a much higher candidate quality than local/regional level experience (Meserve, Pemstein, and Bernhard 2010).

The scale is calibrated as follows: the highest position in the index is president or prime minister in the country (weighted by 5); the second highest post is ministerial position (weighted by 4); next in line are party leadership and/or other high-profile positions, such as mayor, commissioner; ombudsman etc. (weighted by 3); and, finally, national parliamentarians are given a double (2) score. In addition to this, it has been argued that MEPs are often either young and inexperienced or old and about to retire (Scarrow 1997; Meserve, Pemstein, and Bernhard 2009; Verzichelli and Edinger 2005). In a bid to capture this trend, we also include a single (1) score for those who enter the EP in their prime political age between 35 and 55. Candidates who enter later are likely to use it as a retirement home, whereas MEPs under 35 have little experience (Hobolt and Høyland 2007). See **Table 1** for the overview of the coding scheme. To create such a measure of candidate quality, we collected data on political experience of successful candidates in both the 2004 and the 2009 European elections in the Czech Republic and Slovakia (73 successful candidates).

[Table 1 about here]

The data on political experience were obtained by systematically coding the biographies of Czech and Slovak MEPs included at the Members of European Parliament for term 6–7 (European Parliament 2006, 2011), official web pages of the European Parliament as well as party and candidate's official websites and other documents. In fact, in order to increase reliability of the measure we used triangulation, which involves using multiple data sources (Prakash 2008; O'Donoghue and Punch 2003). We therefore involved analysing biographies of candidates made available on the Internet in the run-up to the 2004 and the 2009 European elections, as well as other sources of information, such as national governments' and parliaments' public data on candidates for public office, official websites of parties and their local branches, official websites of candidates, and also campaign blogs, newspaper and other documents, as well as personal communication (e.g. European Parliament 2006; AmCham EU 2007, 2009). Furthermore, in order to compare candidate quality across first- and second-order elections, we had to obtain information on political experience of members of NPs of the Czech Republic and Slovakia for the 2006–2010 and 2010–present terms. We systematically coded the biographies of Members of Parliament (MPs) of the Czech Republic and Slovakia included at official websites of both parliaments (Parlament České Republiky 2011; Národná Rada Slovenskej Republiky 2011). Again, to ensure the reliability of the measure we triangulated by using multiple data sources, such as those mentioned above, and also the catalogue of Czech personalities (Třeštík 2005) as well as personal communication.

The operationalisation of first- and second-order elections and government/opposition parties is straightforward. First-order elections are operationalised as the most important elections in a given country (Reif 1984). In both countries, these are national parliamentary elections. All other elections in a given country are second-order national elections (Reif 1997). Although SOE model has proved to be useful in studies of a range of elections beyond just those of the EP, including those of regional and local councils as well as referendums, in this paper we focus only on European elections. Moreover, we put forward an expectation that governing parties in the first-order political arena will send lower-quality candidates for EP elections than parties that form opposition in the first-order political arena. Operationalisation of those parties rests on which parties form government and which opposition in the first-order national political arena at the time of EP elections.

Before presenting results, we have to deal with potential caveats of this research project. The type of electoral system used is argued to affect how parties organise the candidate selection process (Linek and Outlý 2006; Blomgren 1999). The number of constituencies and district magnitude influence the level of (de-)centralisation of candidate selection process within parties (Linek and Outlý 2006). In addition, when it comes to examining the candidate quality in different types of elections, the most important aspect of the electoral system is the degree to which the ballot structure allows voters to determine the fate of individual candidates, that is how "candidate-centred" it is (Farrell and Scully 2007). Farrell and Scully (2007) distinguish between open (candidate-centred) systems – in which the candidates' electoral fates are affected by their personal vote-chasing activities and closed (party-based) systems – in which candidates' electoral fates are determined by their party list placement. Finally, there are ordered list systems, in which there is some, however, limited scope for candidates to improve their list placement through personal votes.

Both countries, nonetheless, use some kind of proportional representation (PR) electoral system (Šedo 2007), with the possibility of preferential voting in both first- and second-order elections (Outlý 2007, 13). Each

country's ballot structure is characterised as ordered list system by Farrell and Scully (2007), despite the fact that both Czech and Slovak voters have multiple-candidate vote option.^{iv} In reality, Klíma (2010, 15) concluded that preferential voting had practically no influence on the outcome in the Czech EP elections. Thus, the ballot list ranking of candidates by political parties is in both countries across first- and second-order elections rather definitive and the impact of preferential voting is negligible (see also Linek and Outlý 2006; Lebeda 2007). In Slovakia, the number of constituencies is the same (1) across both types of elections. More challenging is the situation in the Czech Republic, where the country is divided into 14 constituencies for national parliamentary elections. On the grounds of comparability, we decided to pick three constituencies that are allocated similar number of mandates as the Czech delegation to the EP.^v The three constituencies we have picked are as follows: (1) Hlavní město Praha, (2) Moravskoslezský kraj, and (3) Jihomoravský kraj.^{vi} We assume that similar number of allocated mandates make the comparison of different types of elections more viable and feasible.

Last but not least, it is important to point out that we were unable to obtain data on political experience for everyone who stood as a candidate in the 2004 and 2009 European elections and in national parliamentary elections that took place in a given country. Our analysis of candidate quality is thereby based only on candidates who were actually elected. When facing the same hassle, Hobolt and Høyland (2011) suggested that this problem is partly alleviated by the fact that parties tend to rank order ballots according to prestige of candidates and, thus, high-quality candidates are likely to be listed as one of top candidates and are consequently unlikely to be among the unsuccessful candidates. Meserve et al. (2010, 10) argue that elected experience is much more common for individuals with a good chance of capturing a seat. In other words, parties have little incentive to pay careful attention to the quality of candidates far down on their lists. This fact and the importance of initial ordering of ballots by political parties in EP elections have been empirically supported by several other studies (Gherghina and Chiru 2010; Linek and Outlý 2006).

Results

Do political parties nominate candidates of lower quality for SOEs as opposed to first-order contests? At the outset of the previous section, we suggested that voters use European elections as an opportunity to select good representatives rather than to sanction them on the basis of past performance. For such selection logic to work there has to be between-party variability in MEPs/MPs political experience given the party-centred context of elections in both countries whereby only political parties and their coalitions run for elections (Outlý 2007). In **Figures 2–5**, we present mean, minimum and maximum candidate quality by party and type of election. From these figures, it is clearly evident that there is some between-party variance in MEPs/MPs experience: The coefficient of variation is 47% for elections to the EP and 40% for elections to the NPs. Given this variance, it is reasonable to assume that if voters would like to use European elections as an opportunity to select good representatives they can do so since parties' candidates indeed vary in their previous political experience.

[Figures 2–5 about here]

Turning towards differences in the political quality of candidates, we have put forward a proposition, derived from the SOE model, expecting that candidates standing in SOEs will be of lower candidate quality than those standing in first-order contests. **Figures 2** and **4** show that at the party (individual) level, the quality of candidates differs across first- and second-order elections in both countries. Especially when looking at maximum candidate quality, we see that parties put forward higher-quality candidates to first-order than to second-order elections. The pattern is clear in both countries analysed. Moreover, looking at the aggregate country level, **Figures 6** and **7** show that the mean candidate quality is higher in first-order elections than in second-order contests. The differences in mean values are, however, rather narrow. However, in both countries the mean values of candidate quality were always higher in first-order than in second-order elections. Concretely, in 2004 the mean value was 3.9 in the Czech Republic and 4.5 in Slovakia. After 2006 national parliamentary elections, the mean value was 4.5 in the Czech Republic and 4.7 in Slovakia. In 2009 the mean value was 3.5 in the Czech Republic and 4.8 in Slovakia, whereas in 2010 it was 4.0 in the Czech Republic and 5.0 in Slovakia.

[Figures 6 and 7 about here]

More telling is the measure of maximum candidate quality in both countries. **Figure 6** shows that maximum candidate quality was higher in national parliamentary (first-order) elections than in election to the EP in the Czech Republic. This was the case in two out of three constituencies analysed in 2006 and in all three constituencies in 2010. In general, maximum candidate quality was 11 for the 2004 EP elections and 16 after the 2006 national parliamentary elections. For the 2009 EP elections maximum candidate quality was 9 and it was 14 for the 2010 elections to the Czech national parliament. Furthermore, from **Figure 7** it is clearly evident that in Slovakia maximum candidate quality differed even more across first- and second-order elections. Although for the 2004 EP elections maximum candidate quality was 10, it was 30 after the 2006 elections to Slovak national parliament,

representing tripling of the value. For the 2009 EP elections maximum candidate quality was 12 and it was 23 for the 2010 national parliamentary elections in Slovakia, representing almost doubling in maximum value of candidate quality. Refer to **Table 2** for comparison of mean and maximum candidate quality as well as their relative differences across SOEs and FOEs. All in all, in both countries parties really differ in quality of candidates they put forward to first- and second-order elections, with candidates in FOEs having higher candidate quality (especially not only maximum values, but also means) than candidates in SOEs.

[Table 2 about here]

We now turn to our last expectation that parties in opposition at the national level put forward higher-quality candidates to second-order elections than parties in government at the national level. In **Figures 8 and 9**, we present mean, minimum, and maximum candidate quality by government and opposition parties. In terms of the mean candidate quality, Czech political parties in opposition forwarded higher-quality candidates to the EP than parties in national government at the time of elections to the EP. In Slovakia, opposition political parties put forward higher-quality candidates than parties in government for the 2004 EP elections. The mean value of candidate quality for opposition parties was 5.34 whereas government parties scored only 4. However, the mean candidate quality was the same across government/opposition parties for the 2009 EP elections.

In addition to mean candidate quality, the results in terms of maximum candidate quality are more conclusive. Candidates of Czech opposition political parties were of higher quality than those of government parties in both the 2004 and 2009 EP elections. In 2004, candidate quality of top opposition candidate was 9 whereas it was only 5 for candidates from governing parties. Similarly, top opposition candidate scored 9 and top candidate of governing parties 7 in the 2009 elections to the EP. Similarly, candidates from Slovakian opposition parties were of higher maximum candidate quality than candidates from governing parties in both election years. Refer to **Table 3** for comparison of mean and maximum candidate quality as well as their relative differences across government and opposition parties in SOEs. Taken together, we found some empirical evidence to support our expectation that parties in opposition at the national level put forward higher-quality candidates to SOEs than parties in government and as such we complement the standard SOE model.

[Table 3 & Figures 8 and 9 about here]

Conclusions and Discussion

At the outset of the paper, we posited that by focusing only on strategies of voters, the SOE model is rendered blind to independent actions of the rest of the electoral circle (see **Figure 2**) – political parties and the media – and that the study of political parties and the media during the elections to the EP would, in theoretical terms, benefit from application of the SOE model and vice versa (e.g. Weber 2007). In this paper, we thus attempted to directly link the SOE model to independent actions of political parties. Hence, we decided to apply the SOE model to the quality of candidates in elections to the EP and choose the Czech Republic and Slovakia as case studies. We operationalised candidate quality as previous political experience calibrated by the level of office. Drawing on an original dataset of elected MEPs and MPs in both countries, we show that the quality of candidates standing for first-order as compared with second-order elections, we show that the mean as well as the maximum candidate quality is higher for candidates standing for FOEs than for those running for office in second-order contests. Nonetheless, our results of mean candidate quality challenge the implicit assumption of the SOE model that the quality of candidates is generally fairly low (Hobolt and Høyland 2007), since parties are unlikely to nominate politically experienced candidates to a second-order arena. Although higher in the FOEs, the differences in mean values of candidate quality were rather narrow.

However, the measure of maximum candidate quality complements the standard SOE model and support findings of prior research literature claiming that political parties nominate their high-profile candidates to FOEs (Gherghina and Chiru 2009; Meserve, Pemstein, and Bernhard 2010; Hobolt and Høyland 2011). Furthermore, we found some support for our expectation – derived from the SOE model – that parties in opposition at the national level put forward higher-quality candidates to SOEs than parties in government. Again, this was especially evident when focusing on maximum candidate quality and also at the mean values. The results therefore show that when parties draft their ballots for EP elections they respond to situation in national political arena, which thus remains the dominant frame of reference for EP elections (Marsh and Mikhaylov 2010).

A recent inspection into electoral democracy in the EU demonstrates that during EP elections voters are most inclined to act upon their EU preferences when casting their ballot: (1) if media politicise EP elections by paying a lot of attention to the EU (issues) and (2) if political parties politicise EP elections and offer clear choices when it comes to EU issues (de Vries et al. 2011; Hobolt and Franklin 2011; Hobolt and Spoon 2010). Moreover, politicisation of EU institutions, decision-making processes and issues generally is often being offered as one of the possible solutions for EU's democratic as well as legitimacy deficits (Lord 2010; Føllesdal and Hix 2006; Tsakatika 2007; cf. Majone 2002; van der Eijk and Franklin 2004; Bartolini 2006). In the concrete, it is the politicisation of

EU issues at both European and national level (Bartels 2008), the politicisation EP elections (Gagatek 2009), politicisation of the relationship between the European Parliament and the Commission (Hix 2008; Featherstone 1994), and the politicisation of EU decision-making. Gagatsek (2009), for example, offers the politicisation of EP elections by political parties – of both policy and office-seeking – as one of the solutions for increasing stakes in these second-order contests. Politicisation is, at large, understood as an ‘increase in polarization of opinions, interests or values and the extent to which they are publicly advanced towards the process of policy formulation within the EU’ (de Wilde 2011, 560). In other words, politicisation usually means a more important role for mass, competitive, and partisan politics both on the input- and on the output- side of European decision-making system (Papadopoulos and Magnette 2010, 711).

At the national level, there are two possible agents of politicisation: mass media and political parties (Hooghe and Marks 2009). Politicisation of EP elections can be observed when there is an increased relevance of political parties and partisan conflict in these elections. One of the ways EP elections could become politicised is through a kind of personalization and nomination of high-profile candidates to run for MEPs. According to the literature on signalling, one important cue on which voters rely in elections is an “observable costly effort” (Lupia and McCubbins 1998). Nominating high-profile candidates to run for EP elections represents such observable costly effort.^{vii} High-profile candidates raise the awareness of the EP and mobilise voters. Parties can thus politicise EP elections and mobilise voters by nominating high-profile, politically experienced candidates. This is a very welcome effect, given the low levels of turnout and general lack of interest in the EP elections. Nevertheless, we can’t report very positive news from this point of view since political parties nominate their high-profile candidates rather to national than EP elections, and thus are not politicising EP elections to a large extent.

Bio:

Jan Kovář is currently a PhD candidate and junior lecturer in International Relations and European Studies at Metropolitan University Prague and Institute of International Relations Prague jointly. He graduated in International Relations and European Studies from Metropolitan University Prague (M.A.). During the academic year 2006/2007 he spent a semester at University of Twente in Enschede as a part of Erasmus exchange programme. His research interests include democratic politics in the European Union, European Parliament and elections to this institution. European elections are also the subject of his dissertation. Contact: jan.kovar@mup.cz; GSM: +420 723 436 116.

Kamil Kovář is currently a student in program MSc Economics at London School of Economics and Political Science. Prior to joining LSE he graduated summa cum laude in Economics from University of Economics in Prague (Bachelor), and received reward for being among the top one percent of his program graduates. Simultaneously he studied political science, also at University of Economics. This program is currently discontinued; completion of this program is expected in end of 2012. In 2011 he spent one semester at Bocconi University in Milano as a part of Erasmus program. His economics research interests are in macroeconomics, monetary policy and working of financial markets, while in political science he concentrates on democratic theory and economic theory of politics (public choice). Contact: k.kovar1@lse.ac.uk; GSM: +420 606 689 989.

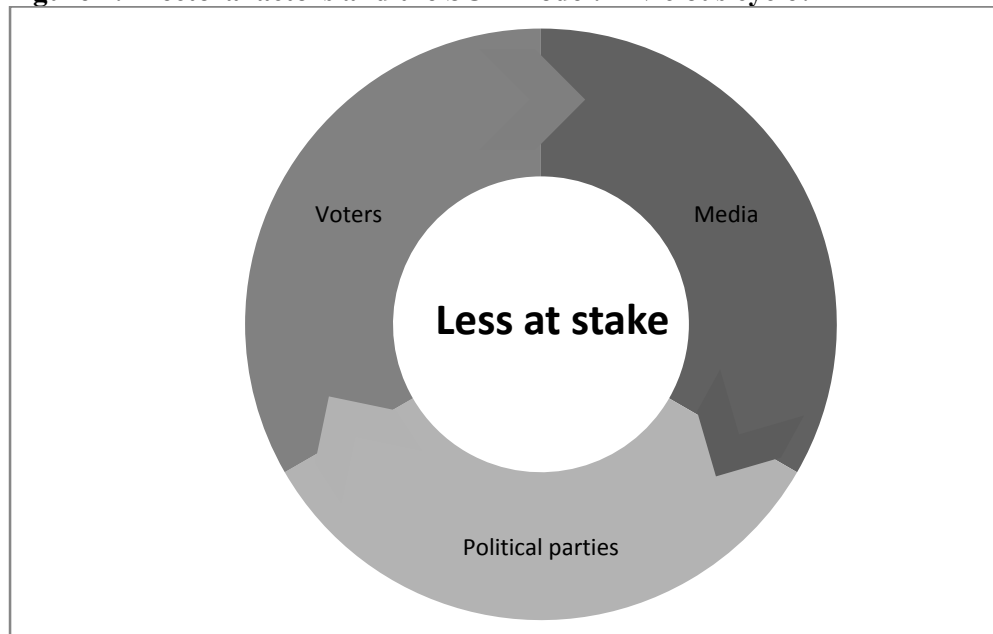
References

2003. *Act No. 63/2003 Sb., on Elections to the European Parliament and on Amendment of Some Laws.* 63/2003 Sb.
1995. *Act No. 247/1995 Sb., on Elections to the Parliament of the Czech Republic and on Amendments and Supplements to further Acts, as amended.* 247/1995 Sb.
2004. 2003. *Act No. 331/2003 Z. z., of the Slovak Republic on European Parliamentary Elections, as amended.* 331/2003.
2004. *Act no. 333/2004 Z. z., on the election of the Slovak National Council, as amended.* 333/2004.
- AmCham EU. 2007. *Guide to the European Parliament, 2007-2009.* Brussels: American Chamber of Commerce to the European Union.
- AmCham EU. 2009. *Guide to the European Parliament, 2009-2014.* Brussels: American Chamber of Commerce to the European Union.
- Auers, Daniel. 2005. European elections in eight new EU member states. *Electoral Studies* 24 (3):747-754.
- Bartels, Koen P.R. 2008. A Historical Framework of Bargaining and Contention: Legitimacy and Democracy in the EU. *CEU Political Science Journal* 3 (2):165-186.
- Bartolini, Stefano. 2006. Mass Politics in Brussels: How Benign Could It Be? *Zeitschrift für Staats- und Europawissenschaften* 4 (1):28-56.
- Besley, Timothy J. 2005. Political Selection. *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 19 (3):43-60.
- Bhatti, Yosef. 2010. What Would Happen If We Were Better Informed? Simulating Increased Knowledge in European Parliament (EP) Elections. *Representation* 46 (4):391-410.
- Blomgren, Magnus. 1999. Candidate selection to the European Parliament: A comparative study of Ireland, the Netherlands and Sweden. In *ECPR workshop Mannheim*.
- Clark, Nick, and Robert Rohrschneider. 2009. Second-Order Elections versus First-Order Thinking: How Voters Perceive the Representation Process in a Multi-Layered System of Governance. *Journal of European Integration* 31 (5):645-664.
- de Vreese, Claes H., Susan A. Banducci, Holli A. Semetko, and Hajo G. Boomgaarden. 2006. The News Coverage of the 2004 European Parliamentary Election Campaign in 25 Countries. *European Union Politics* 7 (4):477-504.
- de Vries, Catherine E., Wouter van der Brug, Marcel H. van Egmond, and Cees van der Eijk. 2011. Individual and contextual variation in EU issue voting: The role of political information. *Electoral Studies* 30 (1):16-28.
- de Wilde, Pieter. 2011. No Polity for Old Politics? A Framework for Analyzing the Politicization of European Integration. *Journal of European Integration* 33 (5):559-575.
- European Parliament. 2006. *The Members of the European Parliament: 6th Legislative Period.* Luxembourg: Secretariat of the European Parliament.
- European Parliament. 2010. *Your MEPs 2006* [cited 25 December 2010]. Available from <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/members/archive/alphaOrder.do?language=EN>.
- European Parliament. 2011. *The Members of the European Parliament: 7th Legislative Period.* Luxembourg: Secretariat of the European Parliament.
- Farrell, David M., and Roger Scully. 2007. *Representing Europe's Citizens?: Electoral Institutions and the Failure of Parliamentary Representation.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Featherstone, Kevin. 1994. Jean Monnet and the 'Democratic Deficit' in the European Union. *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies* 32 (2):149-170.
- Føllesdal, Andreas, and Simon Hix. 2006. Why There is a Democratic Deficit in the EU: A Response to Majone and Moravcsik. *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies* 44 (3):533-562.
- Gagatek, Wojtech, ed. 2009. *European political parties as campaign organisations: Toward a greater politicisation of the European Parliament elections.* Brussels: Center for European Studies.
- Gherghina, Sergiu, and Mihail Chiru. 2009. Where is the difference: The profile of the Romanian Candidates for the 2009 European Elections. *Romanian Journal of European Affairs* 9 (4):79-99.
- Gherghina, Sergiu, and Mihail Chiru. 2010. Practice and payment: Determinants of candidate list position in European Parliament elections. *European Union Politics* 11 (4):533-552.
- Hazan, Reuven Y., and Gideon Rahat. 2006. The influence of candidate selection methods on legislatures and legislators: Theoretical propositions, methodological suggestions and empirical evidence. *The Journal of Legislative Studies* 12 (3-4):366-385.
- Hertner, Isabelle. 2011. Are European Election Campaigns Europeanized? The Case of the Party of European Socialists in 2009. *Government and Opposition* 46 (3):321-344.
- Hix, Simon. 2008. *What's wrong with the European Union and how to fix it / Simon Hix.* Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Hix, Simon, and Christopher Lord. 1997. *Political Parties in the European Union.* New York.: St. Martin's Press.
- Hix, Simon, and Michael Marsh. 2007. Punishment or Protest? Understanding European Parliament Elections. *The Journal of Politics* 69 (2):495-510.
- Hix, Simon, and Michael Marsh. 2011. Second-order effects plus pan-European political swings: An analysis of European Parliament elections across time. *Electoral Studies* 30 (1):4-15.
- Hobolt, Sara B., and Bjørn Høyland. 2007. Candidate Quality in European Parliament Elections. In *European Union Studies Association (EUSA) Tenth Biennial International Conference.* Montreal, Canada.
- Hobolt, Sara B., Jae-Jae Spoon, and James Tilley. 2009. A Vote Against Europe? Explaining Defection at the 1999 and 2004 European Parliament Elections. *British Journal of Political Science* 39 (1):93-115.
- Hobolt, Sara Binzer, and Mark N. Franklin. 2011. Introduction: Electoral democracy in the European Union. *Electoral Studies* 30 (1):1-3.
- Hobolt, Sara Binzer, and Bjørn Høyland. 2011. Selection and Sanctioning in European Parliamentary Elections. *British Journal of Political Science* 41 (03):477-498.

- Hobolt, Sara Binzer, and Jae-Jae Spoon. 2010. Motivating the European Voter: Parties, Issues, and Campaigns in European Parliament Elections. In *PIREDEU Final Conference*. Brussels, Belgium.
- Hobolt, Sara Binzer, and Jill Wittrock. 2011. The second-order election model revisited: An experimental test of vote choices in European Parliament elections. *Electoral Studies* 30 (1):29-40.
- Hooghe, Liesbet, and Gary Marks. 2009. A Postfunctionalist Theory of European Integration: From Permissive Consensus to Constraining Dissensus. *British Journal of Political Science* 39 (01):1-23.
- Irwin, Gael. 1995. Second-order or Third-rate? - Issues in the Campaign for the Elections for the European Parliament 1994. *Electoral Studies* 14 (2):183-199.
- Jacobson, Gary C. 1989. Strategic Politicians and the Dynamics of U.S. House Elections, 1946-86. *American Political Science Review* 83 (3):773-793.
- Jacobson, Gary C., and Samuel Kernell. 1983. *Strategy and Choice in Congressional Elections*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Jurek, Peter. 2009. Rumunsko. In *Eurovolby 2009: Prostor pro evropeizaci politických stran ve středovýchodní Evropě?*, edited by L. Cabada and V. Hloušek. Plzeň: Aleš Čeněk.
- Kauppi, Niilo. 1996. European Union institutions and French political careers. *Scandinavian Political Studies* 19 (1):1-24.
- Kauppi, Niilo. 2004. "Europe": A Side Issue in European Parliamentary Election Campaigns. *EUSA Review* (3).
- Klíma, Michal. 2010. Conceptualising European Elections: The Case of the Czech Republic. *Politics in Central Europe* 6 (2):5-23.
- Kovář, Jan. 2010. Second-rate coverage of second-order elections: Czech and Slovak elections to the EP in the media. *Central European Political Studies Review* 12 (4):225-254.
- Krasno, Jonathan S., and Donald P. Green. 1988. Preempting quality challengers in house elections. *The Journal of Politics* 50 (4):920-936.
- Krook, Mona Lena. 2010. Beyond Supply and Demand: A Feminist-institutionalist Theory of Candidate Selection. *Political Research Quarterly* 63 (4):707-720.
- Lebeda, Tomáš. 2007. Electoral Systems and Voting Behaviour: The Case of the House of Deputies Elections in the Czech Republic. *Contemporary European Studies* 2 (2):25-48.
- Linek, Lukáš, and Jan Outlý. 2006. Selection of Candidates to the European Parliament in the Main Czech Political Parties. *Contemporary European Studies* 1 (1):5-31.
- Lord, Christopher J. 2010. The aggregating function of political parties in EU decision-making. *Living Reviews in European Governance* 5 (3).
- Lublin, David Ian. 1994. Quality, not quantity: Strategic politicians in U.S. Senate elections, 1952-1990. *The Journal of Politics* 56 (1):228-241.
- Lupia, Arthur, and Matthew D. McCubbins. 1998. *The democratic dilemma: can citizens learn what they need to know?* Edited by M. D. McCubbins, *Political economy of institutions and decisions*. Cambridge, UK Cambridge University Press.
- Maier, Michaela, and Jens Tenscher. 2009. "Struggling for Voters": European Campaigning in Germany. *Journal of Political Marketing* 8 (1):20-34.
- Majone, Giandomenico. 2002. The European Commission: The Limits of Centralization and the Perils of Parliamentarization. *Governance* 15 (3):375-392.
- Marsh, Michael. 1998. Testing the Second-Order Election Model after Four European Elections. *British Journal of Political Science* 28 (04):591-607.
- Marsh, Michael, and Slava Mikhaylov. 2010. European Parliament elections and EU governance. *Living Reviews in European Governance* 5 (4).
- Meserve, Stephen A., Daniel Pemstein, and William T. Bernhard. 2009. Political Ambition and Legislative Behavior in the European Parliament. *The Journal of Politics* 71 (03):1015.
- Meserve, Stephen A., Daniel Pemstein, and William T. Bernhard. 2009. Who Goes to Europe: Strategic Candidate Nomination to the European Parliament. In *2009 Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association*. Chicago, Illinois.
- Meserve, Stephen A., Daniel Pemstein, and William T. Bernhard. 2010. Candidate Selection in European Parliament Elections. . .
- Národná Rada Slovenskej Republiky. *Abecedný zoznam poslancov*. Národná Rada Slovenskej Republiky 2011. Available from <http://www.nrsr.sk/default.aspx?SectionId=60>.
- Norris, Pippa. 1999. Recruitment into the European Parliament. In *The European Parliament, National Parliaments and European Integration*, edited by R. S. Katz and B. Wessels. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Norris, Pippa, and Mark Franklin. 1997. Social representation. *European Journal of Political Research* 32 (2):185-210.
- O'Donoghue, Tom, and Keith Punch, eds. 2003. *Qualitative Educational Research in Action: Doing and Reflecting*. London: Routledge.
- Outlý, Jan. 2007. The electoral systems for elections to the European Parliament: A comparison of the original and the newly admitted countries. *Contemporary European Studies* 2 (1):5-20.
- Papadopoulos, Yannis, and Paul Magnette. 2010. On the Politicisation of the European Union: Lessons from Consociational National Politics. *West European Politics* 33 (4):711-729.
- Parlament České republiky. *Poslanci poslanecké sněmovny*. Poslanecká Sněmovna Parlamentu České republiky 2011. Available from <http://www.psp.cz/sqw/fsnem.sqw>.
- Perottino, Michel. 2005. Legitimita voleb do Evropského parlamentu. In *Kam kráčíš, Evropská Unie?*, edited by M. Klíma and J. Bureš. Plzeň: Nakladatelství a vydavatelství Aleš Čeněk.
- Prakash, Deepa. 2008. Practicing pluralism. In *Qualitative methods in International Relations*, edited by A. Klotz and D. Prakash. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Reif, Karlheinz. 1984. National Electoral cycles and European elections 1979 and 1984. *Electoral Studies* 3 (3):244-255.
- Reif, Karlheinz. 1997. Reflections: European elections as member state second-order elections revisited. *European Journal of Political Research* 31 (1-2):115-124.

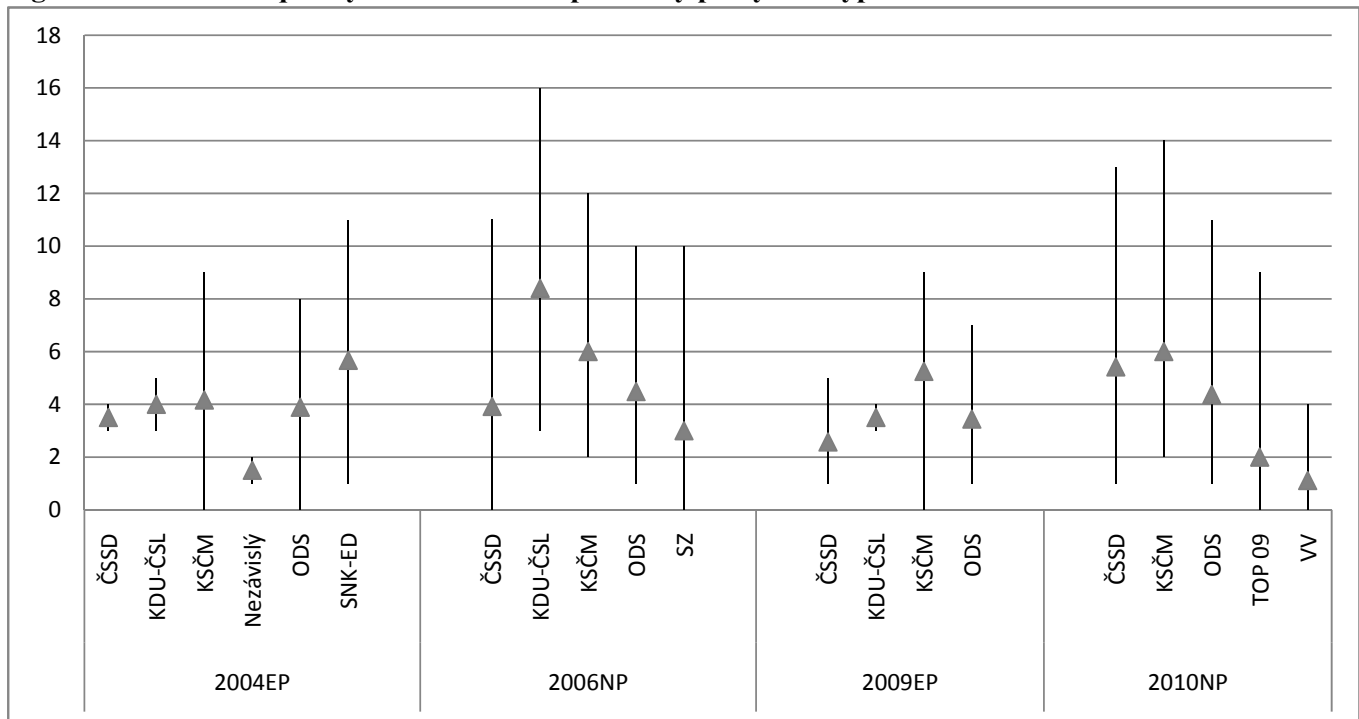
- Reif, Karlheinz, and Hermann Schmitt. 1980. Nine Second-Order National Elections - A Conceptual Framework For the Analysis of European Elections Results. *European Journal of Political Research* 8 (1):3-44.
- Scarrow, Susan E. . 1997. Political Career Paths and the European Parliament. *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 22 (2):253-263.
- Schuck, Andreas R. T., Georgios Xezonakis, Matthijs Elenbaas, Susan A. Banducci, and Claes H. de Vreese. 2011. Party contestation and Europe on the news agenda: The 2009 European Parliamentary Elections. *Electoral Studies* 30 (1):41-52.
- Squire, Peverill. 1995. Candidates, Money, and Voters: Assessing the State of Congressional Election Research. *Political Research Quarterly* 48 (4):891-917.
- Stolz, Klaus. 2001. Parliamentary Careers in Europe: Between the Regional, National and Supranational Level. In *European Consortium for Political Research Joint Sessions of Workshops*. Grenoble.
- Stone, Walter J., L. Sandy Maisel, and Cherie D. Maestas. 2004. Quality Counts: Extending the Strategic Politician Model of Incumbent Deterrence. *American Journal of Political Science* 48 (9):478-495.
- Šedo, Jakub. 2007. *Volební systémy postkomunistických zemí*. Brno: Centrum pro studium demokracie a kultury.
- Tiemann, Guido. 2009. The Europeanization of European Parliament Elections. In *European Union Studies Association Conference*. Los Angeles.
- Třeštík, Michael, ed. 2005. *Kdo je kdo? Osobnosti české současnosti* 5. vydání ed. Praha: Agentura kdo je kdo.
- Tsakatika, Myrto. 2007. Governance vs. politics: the European Union's constitutive 'democratic deficit'. *Journal of European Public Policy* 14 (6):867-885.
- van der Eijk, Cees, and Mark N. Franklin. 2004. Potential for contestation on European matters at national elections in Europe. In *European integration and political conflict*, edited by G. Marks and M. R. Steenbergen. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Verzichelli, Luca, and Michael Edinger. 2005. A critical juncture? the 2004 European elections and the making of a supranational elite. *The Journal of Legislative Studies* 11 (2):254 - 274.
- Weber, Till. 2007. Campaign Effects and Second-Order Cycles: A Top-Down Approach to European Parliament Elections. *European Union Politics* 8 (4):509-536.
- Weber, Till. 2009. Exit, Voice, and Cyclicity: A Micro-Logic of Voting Behaviour in European Parliament Elections. In *EUSA Conference*. Los Angeles.

Figure 1: Electoral actors and the SOE model: A vicious cycle?



Source: (Gagatek 2009); authors' modifications.

Figure 2: Candidate quality in the Czech Republic by party and type of election

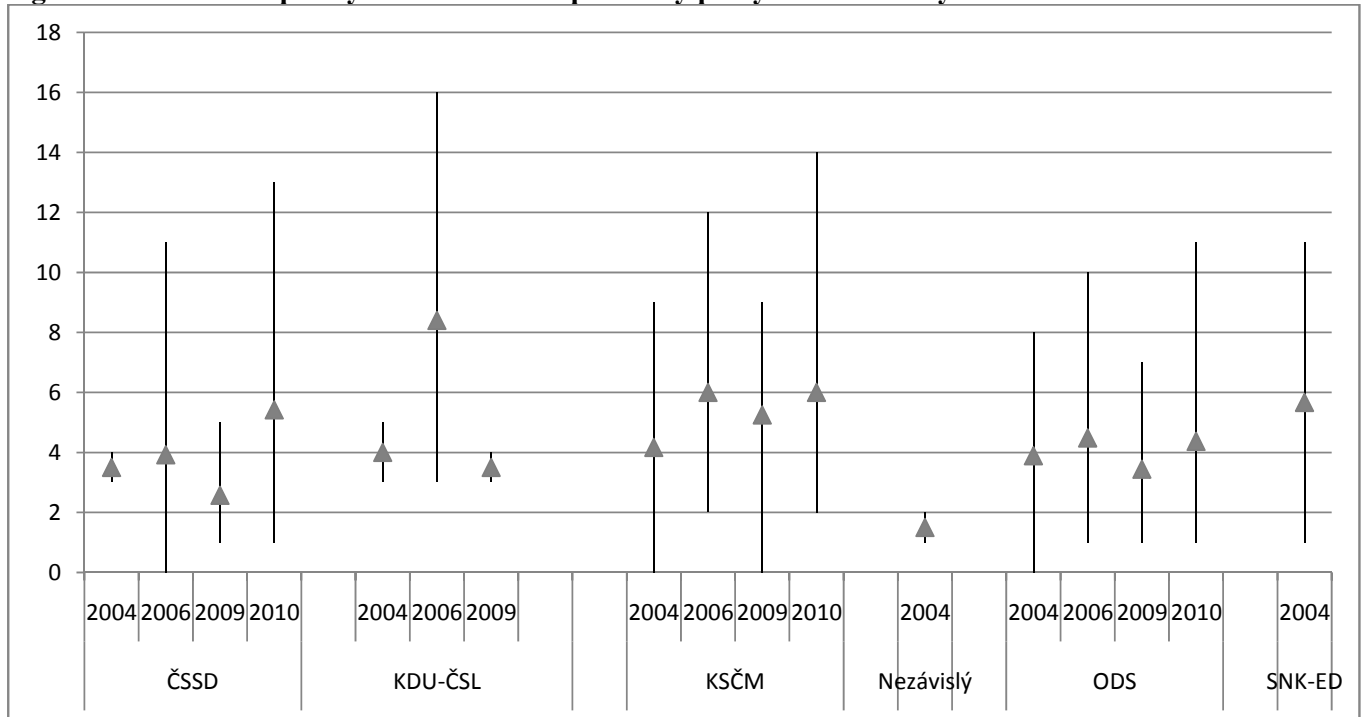


Notes: Values show minimum, mean and maximum as well as range of candidate quality.

ČSSD=Czech Social Democratic Party; KDU-ČSL=Christian and Democratic Union-Czechoslovak People's Party; KSČM=Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia; Nezávislý=Independent; ODS=Civic Democratic Party; SNK-ED=Union of Independents-European Democrats; SZ=Green Party TOP09=Tradition Responsibility Prosperity 09; VV=Public Affairs.

Source: Authors.

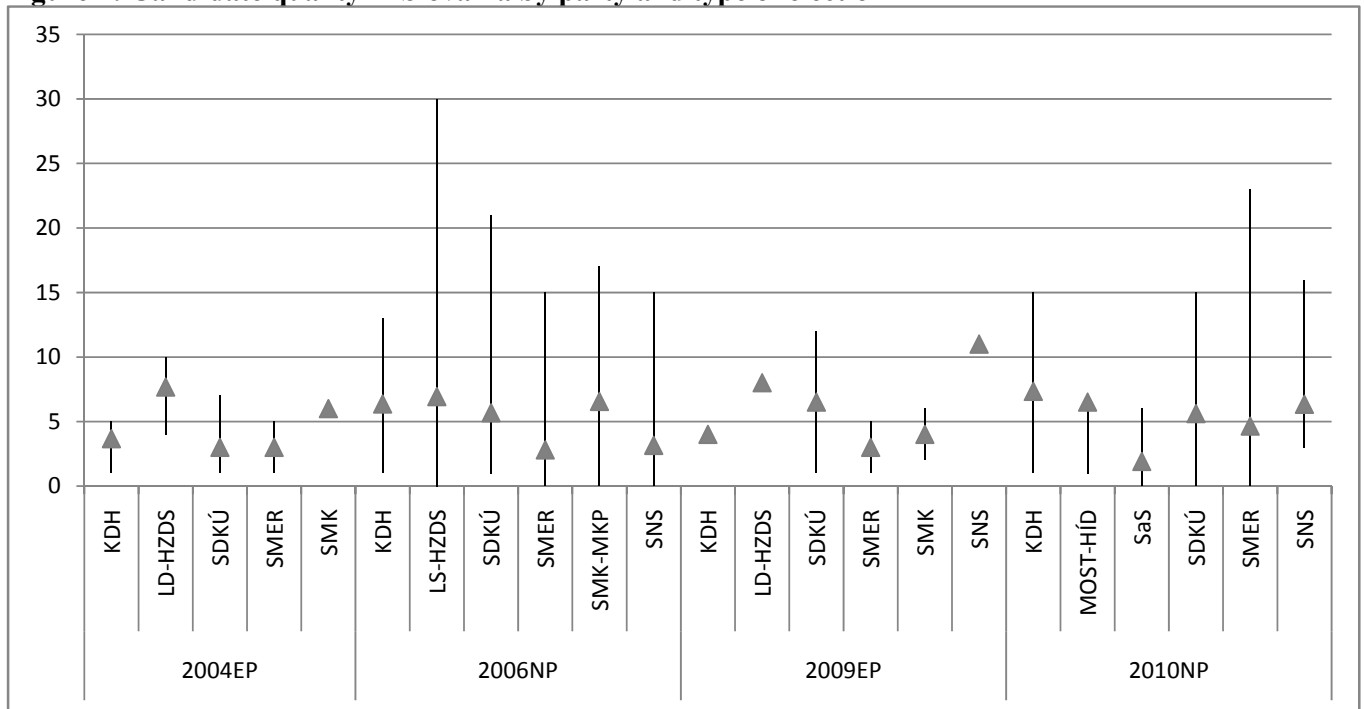
Figure 3: Candidate quality in the Czech Republic by party and election year



Notes: Values show minimum, mean and maximum as well as range of candidate quality.

ČSSD=Czech Social Democratic Party; KDU-ČSL=Christian and Democratic Union-Czechoslovak People's Party; KSČM=Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia; Nezávislý=Independent; ODS=Civic Democratic Party; SNK-ED=Union of Independents-European Democrats. Source: Authors.

Figure 4: Candidate quality in Slovakia by party and type of election

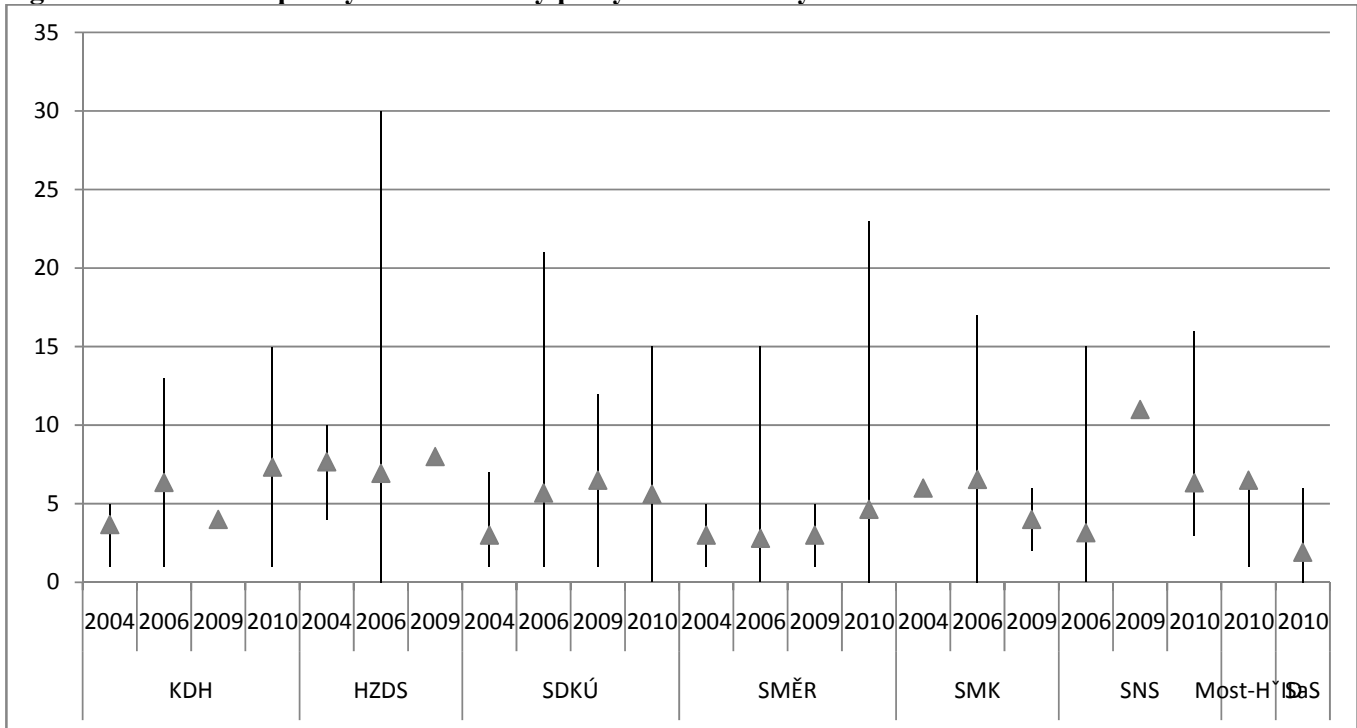


Notes: Values show minimum, mean and maximum as well as range of candidate quality.

KDH=Christian Democratic Movement; LD-HZDS=People's Party-Movement for a Democratic Slovakia; SDKÚ=Slovak Democratic and Christian Union; SMER=Direction-Social Democracy; SMK/SMK-MKP=Party of the Hungarian Coalition; SNS=Slovak National Party; MOST-HÍD=MOST-HÍD(Bridge); SaS=Freedom and Solidarity.

Source: Authors.

Figure 5: Candidate quality in Slovakia by party and election year

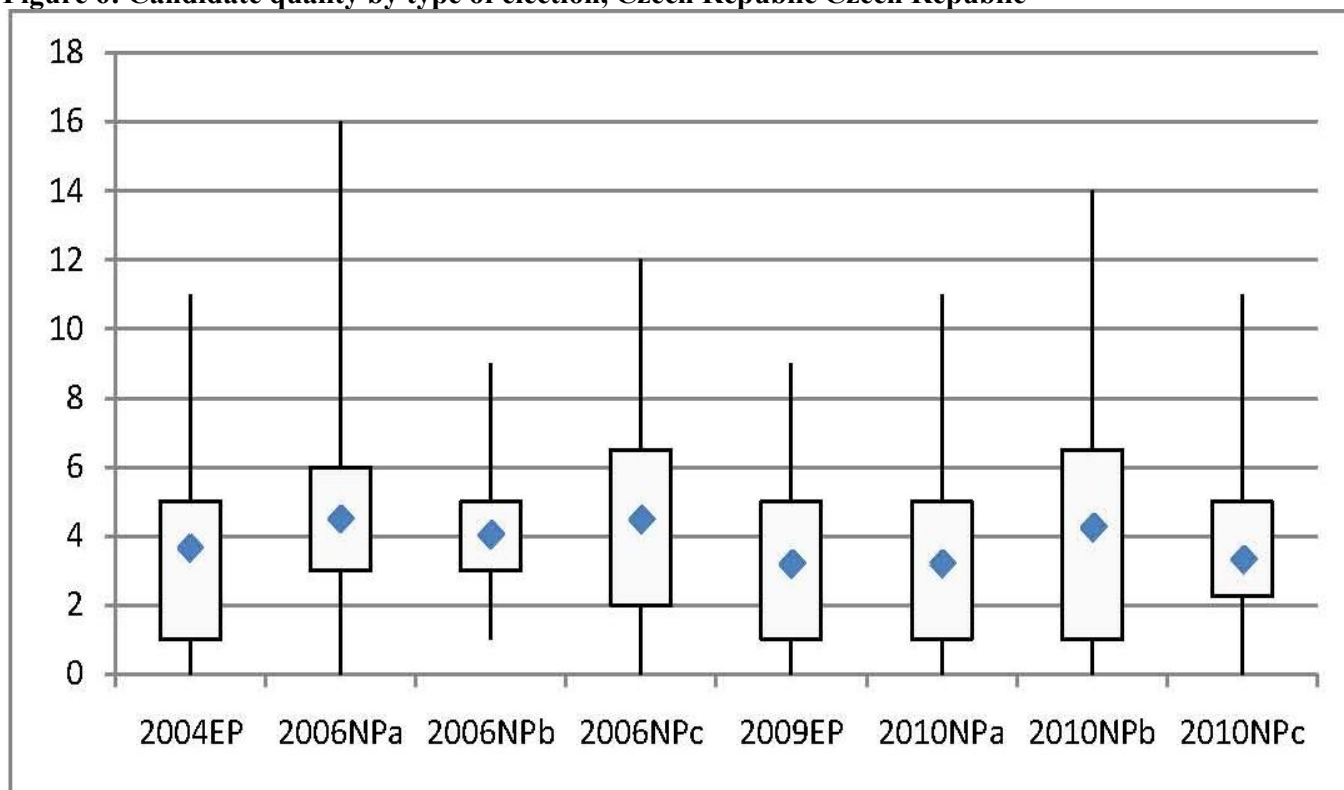


Notes: Values show minimum, mean and maximum as well as range of candidate quality.

KDH=Christian Democratic Movement; LD-HZDS=People's Party-Movement for a Democratic Slovakia; SDKÚ=Slovak Democratic and Christian Union; SMER=Direction-Social Democracy; SMK/SMK-MKP=Party of the Hungarian Coalition; SNS=Slovak National Party; MOST-HÍD=MOST-HÍD(Bridge); SaS=Freedom and Solidarity.

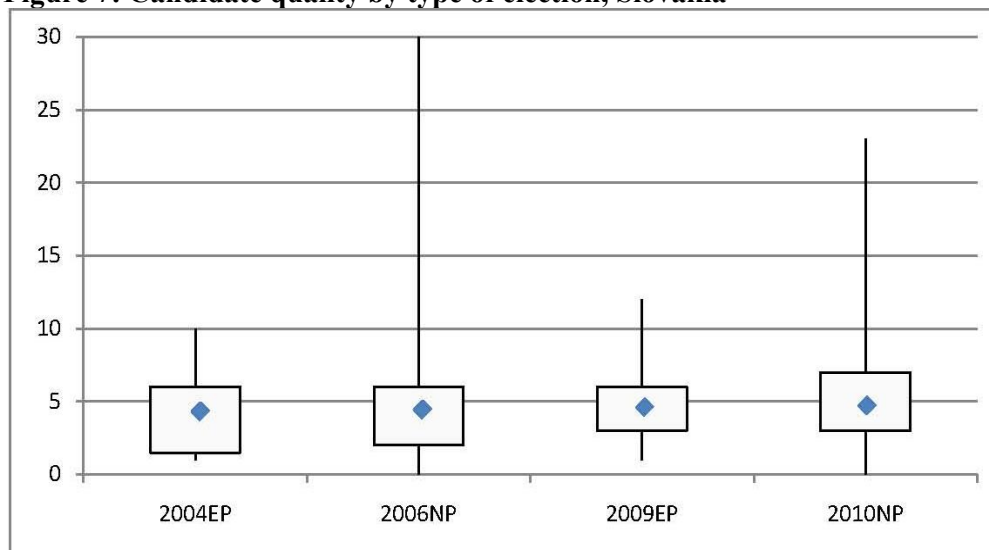
Source: Authors.

Figure 6: Candidate quality by type of election, Czech Republic



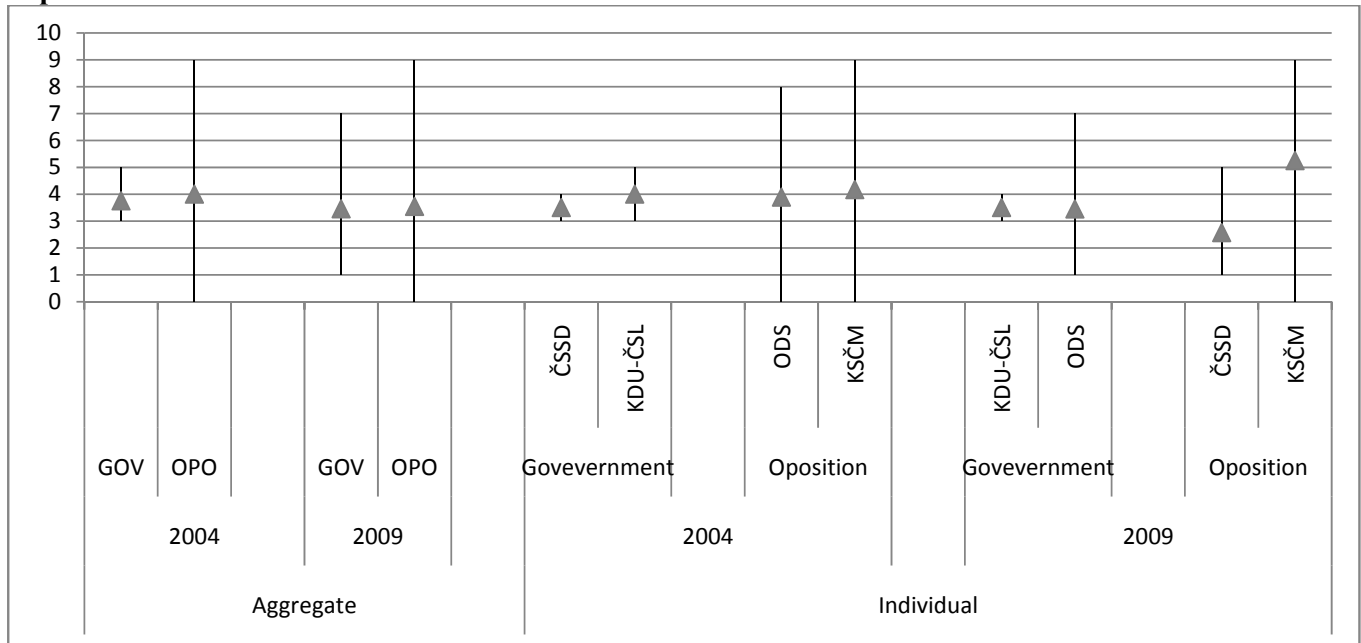
Notes: Values show minimum, mean, maximum, range and inter-quartile range of candidate quality. We analyzed three constituencies during both the 2006 and 2010 national parliamentary elections in the Czech Republic. These constituencies are denoted with a, b, c signs behind electoral year. See the section on methods for specification of these constituencies. EP=European Parliamentary elections; NP=National Parliamentary elections. Source: Authors.

Figure 7: Candidate quality by type of election, Slovakia



Notes: Values show minimum, mean, maximum, range and inter-quartile range of candidate quality. EP=European Parliamentary elections; NP=National parliamentary elections. Source: Authors.

Figure 8: Candidate quality by government/opposition parties in EP elections in the Czech Republic



Notes: Values show minimum, mean and maximum as well as range of candidate quality.

GOV=government parties; OPO=opposition parties; ČSSD=Czech Social Democratic Party; KDU-ČSL=Christian and Democratic Union-Czechoslovak People's Party; KŠČM=Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia; ODS=Civic Democratic Party;

Source: Authors.

Table 1: Coding scheme for operationalisation of candidate quality

Aspect of Candidate Quality	Score assigned
Prime ministerial experience	+ 5
Ministerial experience	+ 4
High profile positions	+ 3
National parliamentarian experience	+ 2
Prime political age (35-55)	+ 1

Table 2: Comparison of candidate quality across FOEs and SOEs

	Average candidate quality		Relative difference	Maximum candidate quality		Relative difference
CR: 2004EP- 2006NP	3,96	4,64	14%	11	16	31%
CR: 2009EP- 2010NP	3,5	3,91	10,5%	9	14	36%
SR: 2004EP- 2006NP	4,57	4,69	2,6%	10	30	67%
SR: 2009EP- 2010NP	4,84	4,97	2,6%	12	23	48%

Notes: Values show mean and maximum candidate quality as well as their relative difference.

EP=European Parliamentary elections; NP=National parliamentary elections; CR=Czech Republic; SR=Slovakia.

Source: Authors.

Table 3: Comparison of candidate quality across government and opposition parties

	Average candidate quality		Relative difference	Maximum candidate quality		Relative difference
CR2004: GOV-OPO	3,75	4	6,25%	5	9	44,5%
CR2009: GOV-OPO	3,45	3,55	2,8%	7	9	22,2%
SR2004: GOV-OPO	4	5,34	25%	7	10	30%
SR2009: GOV-OPO	4,86	4,84	-0,4%	11	12	8,3%

Notes: Values show mean and maximum candidate quality as well as their relative difference.

GOV=government parties; OPO=opposition parties; CR=Czech Republic; SR=Slovakia.

Source: Authors.

ⁱ In the countries under analysis (i.e. Czech Republic and Slovakia) this condition is satisfied, as both types of elections were fought within almost identical party system.

ⁱⁱ In reality, Reif (1997) argued that the extent to which EU-specific factors determine campaign and outcome of SOE varies *inter alia* with the relative importance attributed by citizens, parties, and media. Nevertheless, the SOE election model does not offer any expectations and/or testable hypotheses. The connection thus remains rather implicit.

ⁱⁱⁱ Indeed, given the fact that becoming a MEP is viewed as a last stop in political career the selection can be less dominated by intra-party issues and politics. Thus the candidates could also be of higher quality, albeit in completely different sense than we measure in our article (e.g. with higher education attained, more experience from outside political life and/or higher knowledge of European affairs).

^{iv} In elections to European as well as national parliament Czech voters may use as many as two preferential votes (Act No. 63/2003 Sb., on Elections to the European Parliament and on Amendment of Some Laws 2003; Act No. 247/1995 Sb., on Elections to the Parliament of the Czech Republic and on Amendments and Supplements to further Acts, as amended 1995). In EP elections Slovak voters may use as many as two preferential votes whereas they may use up to four preferential votes in national parliamentary elections (Act No. 331/2003 Z. z., of the Slovak Republic on European Parliamentary Elections, as amended 2003; Act no. 333/2004 Z. z., on the election of the Slovak National Council, as amended 2004).

^v Czech Republic had 24 MEPs after the 2004 EP elections and 22 MEPs after the 2009 EP elections.

^{vi} Hlavní město Praha (Prague) had 25 MPs after both the 2006 and 2010 national parliamentary elections, Jihomoravský kraj (South Moravian Region) 23 MPs, and Moravskoslezský kraj (Moravian-Silesian Region) had 23 and 22 MP respectively.

^{vii} If a party nominates a high-profile, politically experienced as a candidate to the EP, he or she will no longer be able to play an active role in national politics, and this signals that the party regards EP as one of high priority (for further discussion, see Hobolt and Høyland (2011)).