



Martin Ehl

Třetí dekáda

O životě, politice a lidech mezi Bruslem a Gazpromem

Burning Issues Of Visegrad Four



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Warning: If you are optimist or idealist, do not listen to me.

As journalist, I have got the worst task:

to develop the most negative topics

- ▶ relation of **society and elites**, which is worsening
- ▶ the **role of media** which is diminishing
- ▶ **lack of leadership**, which provides us with no perspective on the horizon of development
- ▶ **corruption** as common denominator of the bad shape of public space and political life



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Society – elites I.

Actual situation is reflection of longterm divisions

Hungary: one year after Fidesz victory, voters are dissatisfied, decreasing support of Fidesz, but not increasing support of oppositon

Poland: year after plane crash division between two political camps even deeper than before, (there was a wave of common solidarity immediately after crash)



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Society – elites II.

Czechia: right wing government lost credibility due to internal coalition disputes, anticorruption drive waned away

Slovakia: governing coalition just keeping together, long term division of society, hard to overcome

Result: Growing feeling of voters that politicians do not understand them.



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The role of media

- ▶ Media law in Hungary: attention to the role of media in V4 (postcommunist) countries
- ▶ Public media tied to political will
- ▶ Private media undercut by crisis and tied by vested interests of the owners (examples: Romania, Slovakia)
- ▶ Reporting is the most expensive part of media work: Cuts in investigating and in general quality due to crisis: less people do more work, result is lower quality of reporting, resulting in being less critical and less reflective of the real situation



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The lack of leadership I.

- ▶ Originally political (ideological) cleavages change into societal using historical, economical and other sources of division → Deep division in the societies: political one as well as in society
- ▶ Politicians exploit this division for long term gains: to keep power and being connected with corruption schemes tied to public procurement: main source of finances for parties (In Poland due to different type of financing of political parties politicians has different relation towards state)



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The lack of leadership II.

- ▶ Lack of long term visions after entering the EU and NATO: confirming thesis about the lack of leadership
- ▶ What to do with societies? With economies in crisis? Future development of countries?



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Corruption I.

- ▶ Connected with lack of leadership issue and finance of political parties, corruption is actual and future burning issue connected with the state of law

Transparency International Corruption perception index: it is perception, not reality, but gives some picture:

Poland 41. (improvement)

Hungary 50.

Czechia 53.

Slovakia 59.



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Corruption II.

- ▶ Economic activity undercut: private as well as public (state): Greece as extreme example of malfunctioning state
- ▶ Trust in the society: lower → result: **social capital** gets lower and chances of society (state) to develop and improve in the global (European) competition are severely damaged