Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung

WZB

Elections and Democracy: The Relevance of Election Studies in the Balkans

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(Institut Društvenih Nauka, IDN), Belgrade, Serbia

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1. Elections – Electoral Research: Why? For What?

– Democracy and Freedom
(No taxation without representation)

– Democracy and Power
(Acceptance of collectively binding decisions)

– Democracy and Public Goods/Policies
(There is no truly best policy)

Possible Decision Criteria for Choice:
The Funnel of Causality
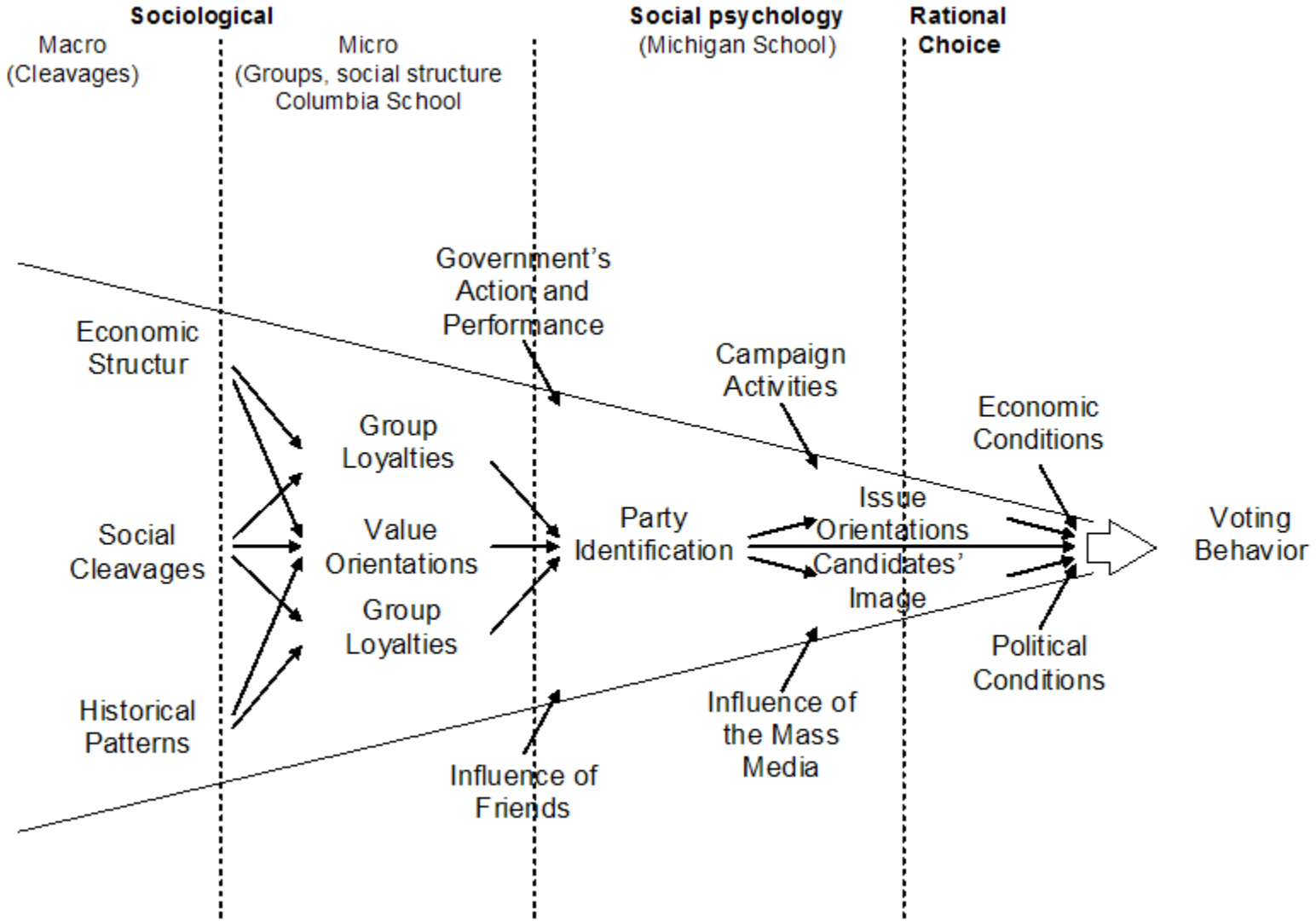
2. Elections – Conditions to make them work

A. RESPONSIBLE PARTY MODEL

Demands on Parties

– Political parties must present different policy alternatives to the voters
– the internal cohesion, or party discipline, of parliamentary parties must be sufficient to enable them to implement their policy program

Demands on Voters

– Voters must have policy issue preferences
– Voters must be aware of the policy positions of parties
– Voters must compare their own position with that of the parties
– Voters should vote for the party that most closely represents their policy preferences/guarantees the highest "utility"

(Pierce 1999, Thomassen 1994).

B. MANDATING – PRINCIPAL-AGENT RELATION

PA-Relation Parliaments (Müller 2000)

– Voters vote for a party (policy-package)

– Parties commit their elected representatives to the policy package/election program

– Mandate goes from voters to parties, and from parties to representatives, i.e.: the principal for the party are the voters; the principal for the representatives is the party

PA-Relation Presidents

– party 'mandate representation should be less common as we move from the ideal-type parliamentary chain of delegation' to presidentialism (Samuals/Shugart 2010)

– Voters vote for a president(ial policy-package). Presidents apoint/propose the government.

– Mixed delegation: voters to president / parties; president/parties to representatives

Meaningful Choices and Meaningful Elections

Meaningful Choices

– Supply: Are there substantively different choices?

– Demand: Do voters make a reasoned choice?

Meaningful Elections

– Do principales have control over the agents?

– Do agents have control over policies?

How and what can election research tell us about the working of democracy?

Two basic perspectives:

– Country-specific evaluation of the working of elections and democracy

– Comparative analysis of the working of elections and democracy

Two analytical dimensions:

– Directly evaluative

– Conclusions from relationships about the working of elections

General Analytical Perspectives and Topics

Monitoring, self-observatiion of performance and problems

– Direct evaluation of elections and democracy

Explaining performance and problems from a voters' perspective

– Reasonable voting:
  - supply conditions
  - structure of the impact of voters' evaluation of political object on behavior (participation, choice)

– Implication of determinants of voters' behavior for parties'/president's strategy

– Investigating the working of electoral institutions, supply structures in terms of do voters to with them what resembles their normative goals
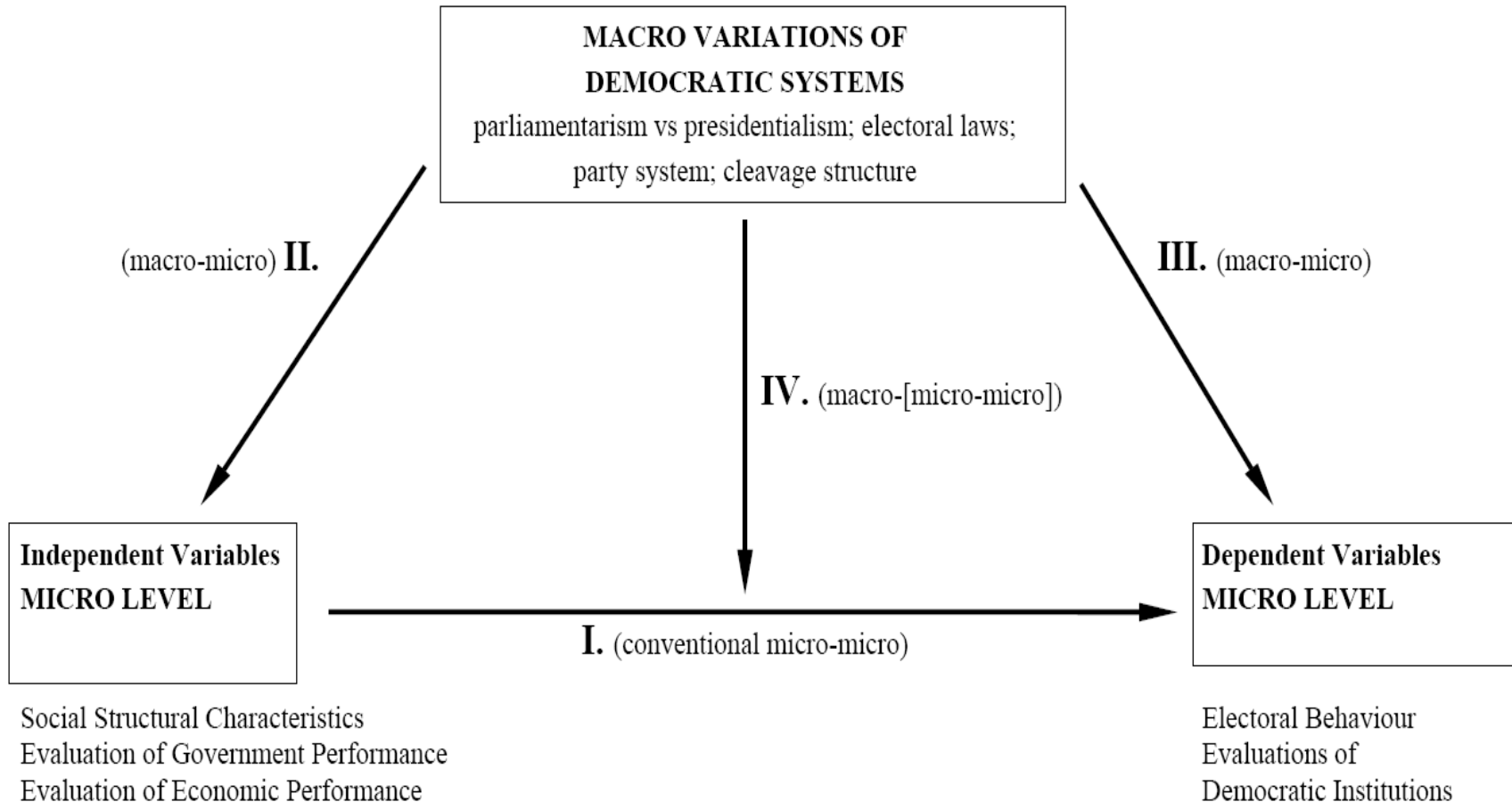
All topics under the perspective of representation and accountability

Country-specific / comparative and evaluative / explanatory (examples)

	Country-specific	**Comparative**
Directly evaluative	- Government makes a difference - Voting makes a difference - Satisfaction with the working of democracy	
Conclusion from relationship	-Who turns out (social inequality; representation gap) -Correct / sincere / strategic voting	- Social determinants of turnout depend on supply structure and competition -Voters apply evaluations, depending on electoral system

The Macro-Micro Design of Comparative Research

MACRO VARIATIONS OF DEMOCRATIC SYSTEMS
parliamentarism vs presidentialism; electoral laws; party system; cleavage structure

(macro-micro) **II.**

III. (macro-micro)

IV. (macro-[micro-micro])

Independent Variables MICRO LEVEL

Dependent Variables MICRO LEVEL

I. (conventional micro-micro)

Social Structural Characteristics
Evaluation of Government Performance
Evaluation of Economic Performance

Electoral Behaviour
Evaluations of
Democratic Institutions

Evaluating Elections and Democracy by Looking at Voters

A) Using the Responsible Party Model as Yardstick

– Does the individual voter have a political position/preference?
(left-right; policy preferences, party leaning)

– Do voters perceive differences between parties/candidates?
(policy stands, performance)

– Do voters decide according to the match with a party?
(proximity, evaluations)

B) Looking to the Perception of Mandating

- – If voters vote for parties, is their primary criteria the evaluation of parties or candidates; if they vote for candidates, it their primary criteria the evaluation of candidates rather than parties?
  ("paradox of personalization of politics")

- – Do voters think that it matters whom they vote for?
  Do voters think that it matters who is in government?
  (accountability)

C) Looking to the Impact of Institutions on the Calculus of Voting

– Do incentives and constraints of institutions work according to the norms/goals embedded in them?

Examples:
Does introducing a regional proportional system with small districts lead to a candidate-centered voting? (Albania)

Does introducing a mixed member proportional system lead to a candidate centered voting regarding the personal vote (Romania, Bulgaria)

Do hurdles lead to Duvergers strategic voting?
(avoiding wasted votes)

– Do voters think that it matters whom they vote for?
Do voters think that it matters who is in government?
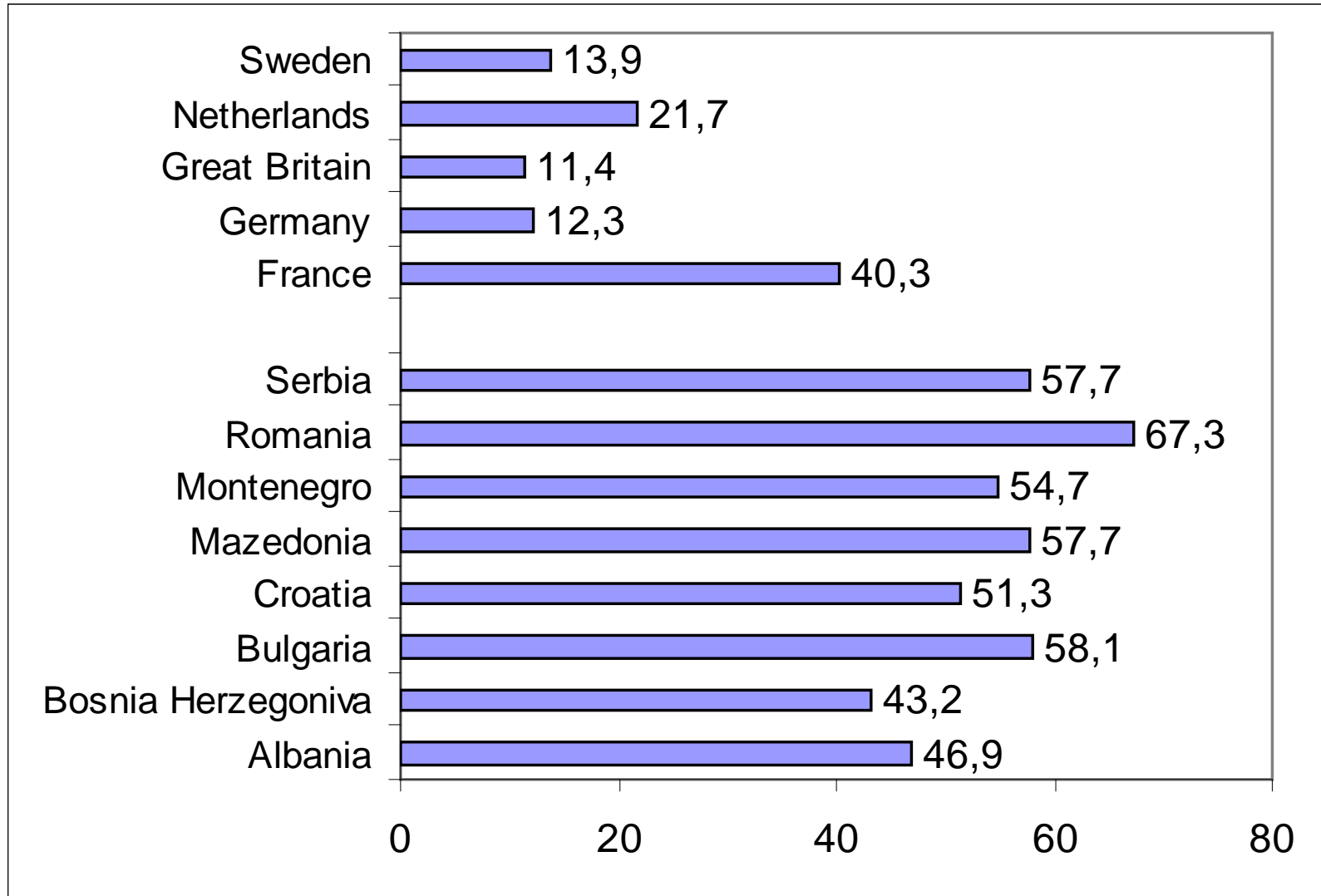(accountability)

Summary: Determining the Quality of Democracy by Electoral Research

- Performance evaluations by citizens
- Does mandating work properly
- Can representation work (demands on voters and political supply)
- Can accountability work (depends on more than electoral institutiions)

The Role of CSES

– Offers a question module which contains basically all elements of the funnel of causality in condensed form

– Includes direct evaluative questions

– Offers the opportunity to compare:
  - descriptively (yardstick)
  - analytically (the behavioral consequences of institutions and context

– Is of value for single country analysis, however, also offers the opportunity for comparison as the "King's road" of social sciences

# Aggregate Volatility of Vote Shares (Mean 1991-2011)

Country	Value
Sweden	13,9
Netherlands	21,7
Great Britain	11,4
Germany	12,3
France	40,3
Serbia	57,7
Romania	67,3
Montenegro	54,7
Mazedonia	57,7
Croatia	51,3
Bulgaria	58,1
Bosnia Herzegoniva	43,2
Albania	46,9

Parliamentary Election Turnout

	2003	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Albania		48.73				50.77	
Bosnia-Herzegovina			54.94				56.49
Croatia	61.65			59.58			
FYR Macedonia			55.98		57.99		
Kosovo				44.90			45.62
Montenegro			72.05			66.19	
Serbia				60.57	61.35		

Source: IDEA (International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance) voter turnout
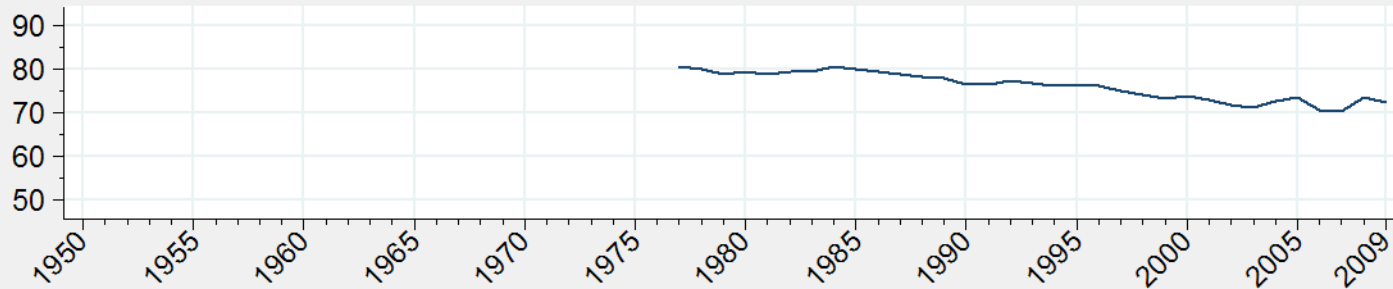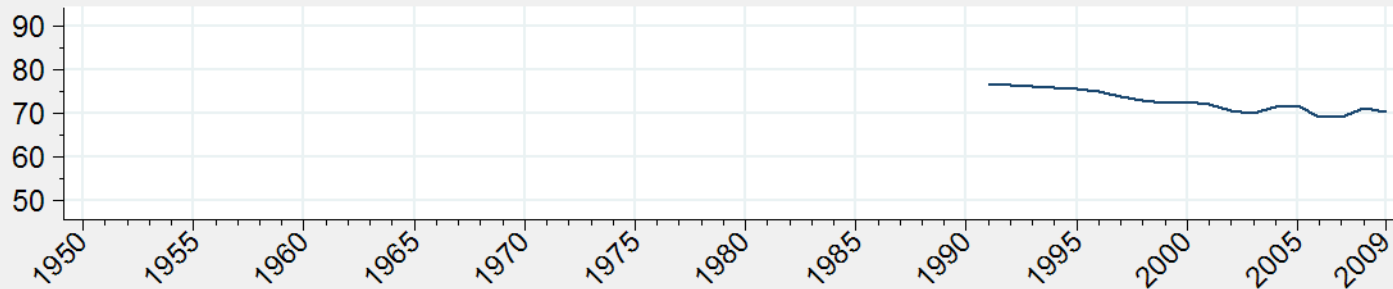
Turnout in OECD Countries

Turnout since 1950*
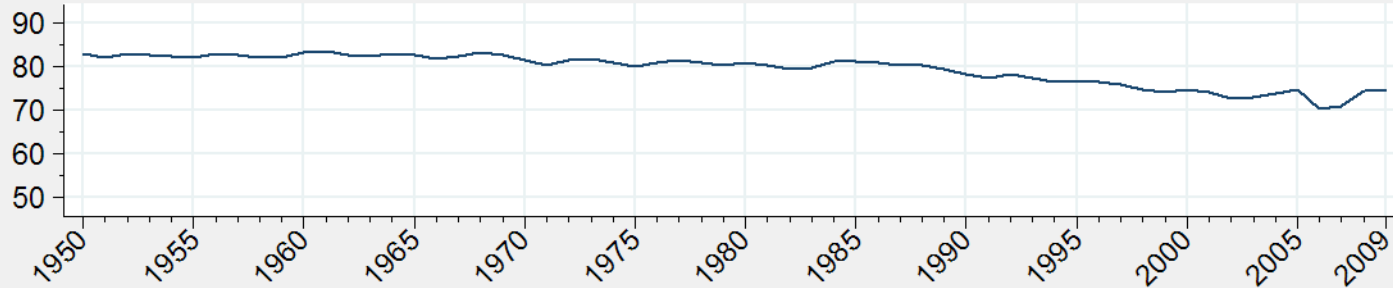
* Excluding Southern and Eastern European Countries as well as Chile, Mexico and South Korea (N = 21);

Turnout since 1977**

** Excluding Eastern European Countries, Chile, and South Korea(N = 25);

Turnout since 1991***

*** Including all full members of the OECD (N = 31); cross-country means.

Turnout in Percent

Source: Database „Elections, Parties, Governments" of the Research Unit „Democracy" at the Social Science Research Center Berlin (WZB).

Effective Democracy Index for the Balcans

	Democratic Rights Index (DRI)	Rule of Law Index (RLI)	**Effective Democracy Index (EDI)**
Albania	66.66	.197	13.13
BiH	58.33	.328	19.13
Croatia	83.33	.891	74.25
Kosovo	25	.084	2.1
FYR Macedonia	66.66	.592	39.46
Montenegro	66.66	.576	38.40
Serbia	75	.384	28.8

* The methodology follows Welzel and Alexander (2008) and is described in Appendix 1. The EDI is at a minimum 0 when either democratic rights or the rule of law are absent. Conversely, the EDI is at a maximum of 100 when democratic rights are both fully present as well as made effective by an operational rule of law.

Welzel, Christian and Alexander, Amy C. (2008), "Measuring effective democracy: the human empowerment approach", *World Values Research*, Volume 1, Number 1, pp.: 1-34.

$$DRI = (12 - ((PRR+CLR) - 2))/12$$

DRI: Democratic Rights Index
PRR: Freedom House political rights rating (1 to 7, 1 is widest political rights)
CLR: Freedom House civil liberties rating (1 to 7, 1 is widest civil liberties)

$$RLI = (COS - LOS) / (HOS - LOS)$$

RLI: Rule of Law Index
COS: Country's observed score
LOS: Lowest ever observed score
HOS: Highest ever observed score