

**Review on:**

**Emilija Tudzarovska Gjorgjievska**  
**New understanding of EU legitimacy and anti-corruption**  
The role of the representative democracies

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Corruption and anti-corruption represent important topic that has been discussed for a long time and it is highly probable that it will remain important research topic for next decades. Simultaneously, we can find hundred and hundred monographs, scientific articles dealing with this topic. It is important to say that author of the Thesis has found important and original approach to her research with capacity to bring new findings. According the author the study „*aims to provide a new facet of the conditions under which national parliaments in the CEE countries pursue legitimation strategies in the area of anti-corruption and provide for the consolidation of democracies*” (p.8).

The study brings a new logic of understanding of corruption, using two concepts of corruption the legislative corruption, (Kaufmann,2005; Kurer, 2005) and corruption as a social trap or lack of social trust (Rothstein, 2011). The author takes into consideration state transformation under the process of Europeanization and the gradual hollowness of democracies. The term of hollowed democracies seems to be important in author’s approach and is mostly (not exclusively) inked to unaccountable use of power that forms the detachment between citizens and their societies - hollowed representative democracies.

Another specification of understanding of the terms deals with two ways how the corruption is used in this Thesis. The author decided to use two concepts of corruption in her research: the ,legislative corruption’, (Kaufmann, 2005; Kurer, 2005) and corruption as a social trap or lack of social trust (Rothstein, 2011).

The main research question asks: *How the process of Europeanization has affected the democratic conditions under which states pursue legitimation strategies (through the national parliaments), in tackling corruptive practices?*

And hypotheses to verify reads:

*(H): The ‘hollowness’ of representative democracies does not allow for taking control over corruption/legislative corruption.*

There are added three sub-hypothesis.

*(H1): Set of internal and external factors – historical trajectories, internal party democracy and the EU technocratic approach in solving the crisis – affects the actors' capacities (collective and individual) to pursue hollowed legitimation through national parliaments and created opportunities, rather than constrains for (legislative) corruption;*

*(H2): The formal approach in exercising democratic accountability (oversight) over the work of the regulatory bodies by the national legislative does not allow for closing the social gaps and opportunities for corruption;*

*(H3): The hollowness of democratic representation does not allow for breaking the patterns of social traps and pursuing the successful implementation of anti-corruption strategies.*

This research argues that the national parliaments, political parties and elected members of parliaments can play essential roles in pursuing effective anti-corruption strategies and, as such, can provide for indirect democratic legitimation, both on national and EU level. The approach based on the concepts of legitimacy, accountability, oversight, enable the author to search for deeper context including political culture, social trust. The main subject of her research are the national parliaments that are crucial in constructing effective horizontal accountability and the source of legitimacy of political power and in some sense, can reflect the interaction between the national parliaments and EU anti-corruption policy.

Formal structure of the thesis is well organized, theoretical framework and conceptualization formed the strong base for research. The choice of qualitative research methodology was appropriate; the author uses comparative method based on three case studies, where theoretical and empirical analysis is complemented with conducting open face-to-face semi-structured interviews (n 30).

The author has chosen three countries for comparison: Slovenia, Croatia, Macedonia and the choice is well justified. All of them were former members of Yugoslavia, that brought some specific historical legacy and could influence political culture mainly in some tradition of decision-making and principles of oversight. On the other hand, the three countries have different level and history of its relations with European Union; Slovenia being member since the first wave of enlargement, Croatia since 2007 and Macedonia did not start the process of accession when the research took place (started only in March 2020).

The Thesis are based on relevant sources; the list of references incorporate huge amount of literature and other sources as documents, reports, etc. The ability to use the scientific apparatus is professional (references, etc.), and the scientific quality of the study is increased by Annexes including also the example of interview protocol.

**General remarks:**

As was mentioned above, the formal structure of the Thesis is logical, nevertheless the reading and understanding of text is not easy. The research question, hypotheses, and sub-hypothesis (see above) reflect the very broad research approach, that upset the compactness and consistence of the study. Multidimensionality of the text on the one hand brings interesting reflections and sidelights, on the other hand it complicates the tracing of the main line of research.

**Partial remarks:**

There could be done deeper proof-reading, there are some errors in the final text, see i.e. (p.27) *“As Johan P. Olsen has argued, governing through institutions is The translation of the citizens will through institutions, also serve for reaching higher costs of societal morality or imposing a moral duty for compliance with institutional norms and duties (Olsen, 2010). As Johan P. Olsen has argued, governing through institutions is the ability for achieving...”*

**Conclusion:**

Regardless of critical remarks mentioned above I recommend these Thesis to be defended before the Committee for defence. The Thesis are based on serious own research, bring new findings and inspiration for further research of the phenomenon of corruption.

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