

The Influence of Small States on the Institutional Structure of The European Union

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Over the years the institutional structure of European Union (EU) has caused considerable debate and at times tension between the member states. This has been the case ever since the first steps were taken in the institutional building of the Union in the early 1950s. Historically the member states have rarely clashed on the basis of their size in the institutional debate. During the most recent treaty negotiations, however, a number of indicators have emerged suggesting a major cleavage between the large and small member states over institutional issues. Hence, it is interesting to observe how the position of the small member states has been affected by the development of the institutional structure and how the small states themselves have managed to influence this process.

The aim of this article is to explore the influence of small states on the development of the institutional structure of the EU. In order to shed light on this matter, two case studies will be examined. Firstly, the process leading up to the Treaty of Nice and, secondly, the debate surrounding the Constitutional Treaty. The larger states, particularly Germany and France, are often said to dominate the integration process. Therefore, our concern is to analyse the ability of small states to influence treaty negotiations and the institutional modifications that are agreed to during these negotiations.

It is important, however, to begin by examining how the concept of 'small state' is defined with respect to the configuration of the EU and how we can examine the influence of states within an international institute like the Union by applying the small-state literature.

Size of States in the Union: Structural and perceptual considerations

Theoretical perspectives still differ in their view on how the term 'small' should be defined when applied to the size of states. However, most of them name population as the most important variable in categorizing states according to size. The 'small state' category includes states with up to 40 million inhabitants, all depending on where the line is drawn between it and the 'medium size' or 'large' category. The other three most commonly used variables in defining the size of states are territorial size, size of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and military capacity.

The EU member states have taken account of the number of inhabitants in determining 'the strength' of states within the institutional structure of the Union. Number of votes in the Council of Ministers and number of members in the European Parliament have been based on population figures for each and every state although the less-populated states have, proportionately, been over represented. The size of the Commissioner has also taken account of what have traditionally been regarded as the 'large states' and the 'small states'. All states that are said to belong to the 'large state group' had two Commissioners while states in 'the small state group' have only one Commissioner each. (This changed according to the Treaty of Nice, see discussion below).

In the early days of small-state studies in the 1960s and 1970s, scholars were pre-occupied with the concepts of vulnerability and capacity, particularly in the process of decolonization. The ability of small states to function independently in the international system was frequently questioned because they were thought to be vulnerable to political and economic pressure. Small states were seen as having limited diplomatic power and military strength and, consequently, as being unable to defend themselves against their larger neighbours. Thus, they had little international power and were seen as reactive in the international system, in distinction to the proactive nature of large states. The economic viability of small states was also questioned, as they were thought to be economically vulnerable, in every respect (for a detailed discussion, see Griffiths, 2004). This claim has now been swept away, since many small states have done much better

economically than their larger neighbours. For instance, small states in terms of population size (including the Nordic states, the Benelux states, Austria and Switzerland) have fared better, economically, than the four largest states

of the EU, i.e. Germany, France, Britain and Italy (Magnússon, 2004). On the other hand, small states are still seen as being highly vulnerable in terms of their small economies. In addition, political vulnerability, along with strategic and 'perceptual' vulnerability, continues to influence states' domestic and international activities.

In defining the size of states and their potential power it is necessary to consider the international environment. For instance, Handel (1981) argues that structural factors, such as geographical location (e.g. being in an area of great-power interests), international institutions (e.g. providing a shield against aggressive players) and inter-state relations (i.e. whether these are characterised by peace or conflict), have traditionally been seen as determining the fate of small states and their ability to function independently in the international arena. Policy-makers in small states will take these structural factors into consideration when deciding on a foreign policy to pursue. Hence, the international environment is a key determinant of whether or not a particular state can be regarded as small or large.

This paper uses the four traditional variables (population, territory, GDP and military)¹ along with 'national administrative capacity' to define the size of states in the EU. These variables provide concrete measures to define the size of states in the Union, as table 1 shows. The capacity of national administrations of member states is a decisive factor in determining their ability to defend their interests abroad and influence decision-making in institutions like the EU. This is particularly the case with respect to the capabilities of foreign services (for instance, see East, 1975, Väyrynen, 1971). The ability of small national administrations to work within the EU has often been put in doubt and the EU placed considerable emphasis on the need for states that entered the Union in 2004 to have appropriate administrative capacity (see for instance Commission of the European Communities, 2000). The success or failure of states within the Union may have as much to do with the administrative capacity and a skilful and efficient administration as it has to do with number of votes in the Council or number of Commissioners (Thorhallsson, 2000 and 2004). One way to determine the capacity of a national administration is to look at the size of its foreign service in terms of number of officials.

¹ Scholars have made a number of attempts to combine these variables in order to define the size of states and their action-capacity (Jalan, 1982; Damijan, 1997; Castello et al., 1997; Croudace, 2002).

However, this paper also recognises that a conceptual framework, intending to define the size of a state and the consequences for its international activity, needs to take the international structural and conceptual factors into account. Let us observe, for instance, a conceptual framework containing six categories with regard to the size of states, (Thorhallsson, forthcoming): 1) fixed size (population and territory); 2) sovereignty size (whether the state can maintain effective sovereignty on its territory, its ability to maintain a minimum state structure and presence at an international level); 3) political size (military and administrative capabilities and the degree of domestic cohesion, combined with the degree to which the state maintains an external united front); 4) economic size (GDP, market size and development success); 5) perceptual size (how domestic and external actors regard the state); 6) preference size (ambitions and prioritisations of the governing elite and its ideas about the international system). Previous attempts to move away from the traditional variables include Vayrynen's (1971) criteria for evaluating the size of a state in terms of objective and subjective measurements, together with exogenous and endogenous measurements, and Katzenstein's (1985) domestic economic and political characterization of small states.

Thus, objective factors influence perceptions of the size of states and their overall action capacity. These factors have to be combined with a careful examination of the views of political elites and other relevant domestic and international actors. However, it is not the intention of this paper to analyse the overall influence of small states in the EU but, rather, the aim is to analyse the impact of small states on the institutional structure of the Union in two treaty negotiations.

Table 1 indicates the size of states according to the four traditional and measurable variables along with administrative capacity (capacity of foreign services). A state is considered small or large, depending, respectively, on whether its number of inhabitants is below 17 million or 38 million and above, according to its territorial size, GDP, military expenditure and the number of people working in its foreign service, with only few exceptions. According to these figures the large states are considered to be Germany, France, the United Kingdom, Italy, Spain and Poland. The rest of the member states (19 states altogether) are regarded to belong to the small state category.

Table 1. Member States of the European Union: Size Index

States	Population (in millions: July 2005 (Estimate))	Surface area (in thousands of km ²)	GDP (in billions of euros: 2004)	Number of people working in the foreign service (April 2001)*	Military expenditure (\$: 2004)**
<i>Small States:</i>					
Malta	0.398	0.3	4.1	256	36.1
Luxembourg	0.468	3	25.6	206	244
Cyprus	0.780	9	12.4	231	203
Estonia	1.333	45	9.0	479	181
Slovenia	2.011	20	25.9	451	465
Latvia	2.290	65	11.0	455	204
Lithuania	3.596	65	17.9	440	336
Ireland	4.015	70	146.2	820	1,010
Finland	5.223	339	149.7	1,642	2,077
Denmark	5.432	43	194.4	1,663	3,228
Slovak Republic	5.431	49	33.1	931	585
Austria	8.184	84	237.0	1,397	1,925
Sweden	9.002	450	279.0	1,500	5,439
Hungary	10.01	93	80.8	1,923 ^A	1,485
Czech Republic	10.24	79	86.2	2,165	1,741
Belgium	10.36	31	283.7	2,103	4,398
Portugal	10.57	92	135.0	2,038	3,115
Greece	10.67	132	165.2	1,810	7,120 ^B
Netherlands	16.41	34	466.3	3,050	8,407
<i>Large States:</i>					
Poland	38.64	324	195.2	2,730	4,149
Spain	40.34	507	837.5	2,619	9,565
Italy	58.10	302	1,351.3	4,688	27,759
United Kingdom	60.44	245	1,715.8	5,500	47,401
France	60.66	552	1,648.4	9,800	46,174
Germany	82.43	357	2,207.2	6,515	33,888

*Excluding personnel employed locally by missions abroad.

**Figures are in millions US dollars at constant 2003 prices and exchange rates. The figures from; Luxembourg, Sweden, Hungary, the Netherlands, France and Germany are estimated.

B: 2003.

Sources: Population figures: the CIA World Fact Book (2005). Available online: <http://cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/index.html> (Accessed 20 July 2005). GDP: Eurostat (2005). Available online: <http://eurostat.ec.eu.int/conn/eurostat> (Accessed 20 July 2005). Surface area: Institut national d'études démographiques, The population of the world (2003) (ed.) by Pilson G. in Population & Societies (monthly newsletter), No. 392, July-August 2003, France. Institut national d'études démographiques. Number of people working in the foreign service: the Foreign Ministry in each country. Military expenditure: data from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), (2005). Available online: http://first.sipri.org/non_first/result_milex.php (Accessed 20 July 2005).

The ability of small states to influence the institutional structure

The debate at Nice

The aim of the Nice Treaty was to prepare the Union for its fifth (and most extensive) enlargement. Therefore the negotiations touched on politically sensitive issues concerning the position and power of member states in the Union of the future. Two issues caused considerable tensions, and at times bitter conflict, between the small and large states throughout the negotiations process: firstly, the future size of the Commission College and, secondly, the re-weighting of votes in the Council and the forming of a qualified majority (Galloway, 2001). Because most of the accession states were small the large states were nervous that their position in the Union of the future would diminish (Archer and Nugent, 2002). Therefore the large states were determined to make sure their position was secured during the negotiation, especially in light of the fact that they would be losing 'their' second Commissioner in order to facilitate enlargement.

As it turned out the issue of the Commission caused the biggest problems during the debate producing two opposing camps of small states versus large. All the large states proposed to establish a Commission with a set number of Commissioners in the College that would be fewer than the member states in an enlarged Union. The small however feared that this would pave the way for an institutional structure dominated by the large. Thus they published a counter-proposal stipulating that the Commission would consist of one Commissioner from each member state, despite the forthcoming increase in number of member states (SEC 1834/2, 2000). To the large states this was unacceptable as they felt the effectiveness of the

Commission would suffer. Gradually the more federally inclined small states (especially the Benelux) began to share the view of the large states (Legge, 2002; Galloway, 2002). Nevertheless, during the final days of the Nice Intergovernmental Conference (IGC) a consensus was reached between the large states and most of the small states that constituted a short-term victory for the small states. According to the Treaty, the Commission would consist of members from all member states until their number would reach 27. After that a set number of Commissioners would be established that would be smaller than the total number of member states. The right to nominate a Commissioner, however, would rotate between member states equally and thus affect small and large states alike (Nugent, 2003; Sbragia, 2002; Legge, 2002). On the other hand, it could be argued that, the compromise was a typical 'Euro fudge' solution where the small and large states met each other half way. The solution was based on the consensus culture of the Union indicating the necessity to reach a compromise, in order to avoid failure, where all states get at least part of what they asked for to be able to advocate a favourable deal back home. Later, however, this arrangement has been criticized by some, pointing out the danger that the largest states will be without a Commissioner for an entire term of five years, thus seriously undermining the legitimacy of the institution. This would indicate that the compromise benefited the small over the large (see for example, Norman, 2003a).

The second issue that caused ructions between the large and small states was that of the re-weighting of votes in the Council for a Union of 27 member states. It was clear that the votes were disproportionately skewed towards the small states; in EU 15 the ten small states had 39 votes in the Council or 45 per cent, however their total share of the entire EU population was only 21 per cent (Galloway, 2001). This situation the large states wanted to change. They were, however, not very successful in their mission as the votes continue to be considerably skewed towards small states. Thus in the Treaty of Nice, for EU 27, the 21 small states were allocated 51 per cent of the votes in the Council despite comprising only 30 per cent of the total population (Galloway, 2001; Galloway, 2002; Treaty of Nice, 2001).

As for the forming of a qualified majority the large states did better. The definition of a qualified majority according to the treaty was threefold. Firstly, the threshold of votes to form a qualified majority was raised from 71.26 per cent to 73.4 per cent for EU 27, with the blocking minority comprising 26 per cent of the votes (91 votes out of 345) (Treaty of Nice 2001). Secondly it was decided, following pressure from Germany, that a

qualified majority must also consist of member states comprising 62 per cent of the total EU population and that member states may “request verification” that this is the case (Treaty of Nice, 2001). These two amendments clearly benefit the more populated states, with greater individual voting strength in the Council. The small states had expressed their concerns that the principle of the equality of EU member states was being overlooked as a qualified majority could be reached with fewer than half of the members of the Council after the re-weighting of votes. Therefore, all the small states (apart from Sweden and Belgium) called for a clause to be added to the Treaty stipulating that a qualified majority would also have to be cast by the majority of member states. The largest states (Germany, France, the UK and Italy) resisted at first but finally gave way (Tsibellis and Yataganas, 2002). This was an especially important condition for the least populous member states (Westlake and Galloway, 2004: 248). Thus the third part of the qualified majority definition protects the interests of the small. To conclude, the bargaining between the small states, on the one hand, and the large states, on the other, was intense at times but the strong tradition of reaching a consensus at the end of negotiations lead the way towards the compromise.

The constitutional debate

Even before the Nice IGC was concluded many European leaders began expressing their views that, in order to function well in an enlarged Union, the institutional structure would have to be modified more thoroughly and reduced in complexity. This debate continued after the end of the Nice Summit and was dominated by the large states. During the summer of 2000 Germany’s Foreign minister, Joschka Fischer and Jacques Chirac, the French President, put forward their ideas of a common constitution and an open forum, or convention, to discuss the future development of the Union (Fischer, 2000; Norman, 2003b). During the autumn of 2000 Tony Blair added his input, stressing the importance of streamlining the institutions (Blair, 2000).

The Convention on the future of Europe commenced in February 2002. For the first few months the debate continued to be dominated by the large states. During the ‘listening phase’ in the summer of 2002 the British Prime Minister along with the leaders of Spain and France put forward the idea of a long-term chair of the European Council with considerable powers, instead of the system of rotating presidencies. This proposal was later supported by the other large states. The small, however, strongly opposed this proposal as they felt that this would reduce considerably the influence of the small states.

within the Union. They also expressed their view that the small states had always managed the rotating presidency well and that it served to bring the EU closer to its people, which was a principal goal of the Convention. (Magnette and Nicolaïdis, 2003; Norman, 2003b). The issue of the European Council president along with the planned reduction of the size of the Commission College caused much tension between the large and small states throughout the constitutional debate.

At the beginning of the institutional debate of the Convention in January 2003 France and Germany expressed their views on how to reform the institutions. Their proposals officially introduced to the Convention the idea of a long-term chair, or president, of the European Council, elected by qualified majority voting (QMV) for a term of two-and-a-half years, renewable once (CONV 489/03). The president would have considerable powers and the role of the European Council in general would be enhanced. The small states feared that this could undermine the Commission and disrupt the community decision-making procedure and the equality of member states. Thus, they gradually formed an alliance, dubbed the ‘Friends of the community method’ that held a number of meetings and issued joint statements and proposals. This alliance was at times extensive and influential but it was never universal, with Denmark, Sweden and the Benelux frequently staying away (see for example Norman, 2003b).

The main concerns of the small states were to retain the system of equal rotation of the presidency and ensure that every member state would keep the right to nominate a Commissioner. Although unsuccessful in convincing other members to scrap the idea of a European Council president, the small states did manage to reduce his/her powers significantly, so much that the president would in fact have less power and influence than the leader of the country holding the rotating presidency under the current system. Some fear that this could have dire consequences for the effective management of the European Council and the Union as a whole (Ludlow, 2003; Ludlow, 2004). As for the Commission the small states did not manage to prevent the College from being reduced (the small states were not united in this demand anyway). However, during the June 2004 IGC, just before the final draft of the Constitutional Treaty was completed, the small states did manage to ensure that the first Commission that would be appointed under the Constitution (at the time this referred to the 2009-2014 Commission) would consist of Commissioners from all member states. After that Commissioners would come from two-thirds of the member states, rotating between them on an equal basis (Ludlow, 2004).

It is worth noting that during the Convention the small states were plagued with unsympathetic leadership (especially from the Frenchman Valéry Giscard d'Estaing), as in fact they were during the latter half of the Nice negotiations (incidentally also from the French). This served to increase the tensions between the large and small states even further. Moreover, it is worth noting that even after the fifth enlargement, that involved mostly small states, the 19 small members only account for 25 per cent of the total population of EU 25 and 22 per cent of its GDP.

Conclusion

The negotiations leading to the Nice and the Constitutional Treaties indicate that although the large states are the driving force during treaty negotiations, the small states do manage to exert influence. The large states set the agenda and the small states had little influence when it came to agenda setting in the debates. The large states also managed to push through the most fundamental of the institutional modifications. This was particularly the case when the large states were united in their demand for institutional changes. However, when it came to the 'fine tuning' of the institutional structure the small states were able to amend the initial institutional proposals considerably. They did not manage to block proposal from the large states but, for instance, succeeded in curbing the power of the European Council President and securing that majority of member states are needed for QMV in the Council. The general trend, therefore, both at the Nice IGC and during the constitutional debate was that the large states provided the driving force towards amendments to the original treaties but the small states nevertheless managed to secure their position. Furthermore, the informal norms of consensus have dictated that member states settle their differences and form a common position before a decision is made.

The original structure of the institutional framework of the Union created in the 1950s provided a shield for the small member states. The larger members had greater capacity, in every respect, than the small states but the vulnerability of the small states was reduced because of the pre-arranged institutional agreement. A consensus culture was both part of the deal and developed further as both camps, the small and large, regarded it beneficial for their ability to defend their interests.

The larger states have increasingly challenged previous institutional settlements in order to gain greater influence in the decision-making processes.

However, the original institutional set up still provides the small states with a shield from the gradually more aggressive players and the consensus culture continues to form states' relations in the institutional debate. Thus, Handel's claims about the necessity of studying the structural factors when determining the potential power of states internationally, are valuable. On the other hand, there is a need to consider objective factors such as 'perceptual size' (how domestic and external actors regard the role and influence of the state in question) and 'preference size' (ambitions and prioritisations of the governing elite and its ideas about the international system) in greater detail (see detailed discussion in Thorhallsson, forthcoming). For instance, we need to answer questions such as; whether leading politicians in small states can, to some extent, select the size of their country by decisions about its international activity and to what extent pro-European views of the governing elite may affect where small state's stand in EU negotiations.

Small states continue to be vulnerable to pressure from larger players, as the small-state literature established in its early days shows, but favourable structural factors such as the institutional structure of the EU and norms of how decisions are reached provides small states with potential influence. The small states managed to curtail the most radical proposals during the treaty negotiations which aimed to increase the power of the large states at the expense of others. The structural setting of the Union, with its consensus culture, benefits the small states in this respect and gives them the chance to amend unfavourable proposals.

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Kjósendur á vergangi?

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Flokkshollusta (*party identification*) hefur verið bykilhugtak í kosningrafansóknunum í tæplega hálfu öld eða frá því að hinn svokallaði Michigan-hópur (kenndur við Michigan háskólan) gaf út bókina *The American Voter* árið 1960. Bókin hafði viðteik áhrif á hugmyndir manna og umfjöllunum kjósendur og kosningahegðun. Vinsældur kennungatíðindi má eflaus tilgreja til fíjótrar umreðu um hana, hversu mikil skýringagildi hún hefur fyrir kosningahegðun og stöðugleika hennar til lengri tíma (Jenssen, 1999). Flokkshollusta hefur ekki aðeins verið talin felast í stuðningi við einstaka flokka og starfsssemi þeirra heldur einnig í stuðningi við flokkakerfið í heild sinni. Flokkshollusta hefur því gegnt lykillutverki í lýðræðisískjum með því að vera grunnur að pólitískri vitund kjósandans, auðveldað kjósandanum að mynda sér skoðanir a pólitískum atburðum, stjórnálamönnum og málendum sem eru uppi í samfélaginu hverju sinni, virkja þáttöku í kosningabaráttu og kosningum og viðhalda stöðugleika í flokkakerfinu (Norris, 1999). Undanfarna áratugi hafa kosningaránnsóknir á Vesturlöndum sýnt að dregið hefur úr flokkshollustu og kjósendur eru líklegri en aður til að skipta um flokk milli kosninga. Þetta hefur beint síðum fraðimanna að flokkshollustukenningunu og hvort hún eigi síður við nú (Dalton, 2002).

Kenningin um flokkshollustu leggur áherslu á einstakkinginn og tengsl hans við stjórnmálaflokk. Hún gerir ráð fyrir að kosningahegðun ráðist af viðhorftum til þriggja þáttu stjórnmála: frambjóðenda, stjórnmalastefnu og sambandsstjórnmálaflokk og ákveðinna þjóðfélagsþópa. Allir þessir þættir hafa áhrif á kosningahegðun til skamns tíma en svo fer kjósandinum að samsama sig þeim flokki sem hann kýs og trúá því að viðkomandi flokkr sé besti fulltrúi sinn og síns þjóðfélagsþóps. Þegar ný málendum eða deljur koma upp í þjóðfélagini styttr kjósandin sér oft leið og notar kennimeiki (*cues*) frá floknum sínum til að mynda sér skoðun og lækkar þannig upplýsinga-

kostnað sinn verulega. Kenningin getir þannig ráð fyrir að flokkar geti haft móandi áhrif á skóðanir kjósenda sина. Með tímanum myndar kjósandinn tengsl við flokkinn sem stykkast með aldritnum og erfið er að rjúfa. Ekkí er gert ráð fyrir að aldur sem slíkut hafi áhrif á flokkshollustu heldur fjöldi samfleyritta kosninga sem kjósandinn kys sama flokk. (Harrop og Miller, 1987). Hér erfir verður þó talað um þetta samband sem áhrif aldurs á flokkshollustu til einföldunat.

Þar sem flokkshollusta hefur verið álitin lykilatriði í fjölmörgun þáttum sem viðkemur pólitískri hegðun kjósenda kom það fræðimönnum nokkuð á óvart þegar fyrst varð vart við að tryggðarbönd kjósenda við stjórnmálflokkta virtust vera að trosna. Fyrstu viðbendingar um breyningar komu fram í sveiflukendara gengi stjórnmálflokkka milli kosninga og í kjölfarið sýndu kosningarárannsóknir að flokkshollusta fór minnkandi í flestum vestraenum ríkjum (Dalton, 2002).

Hnignun flokkshollustu

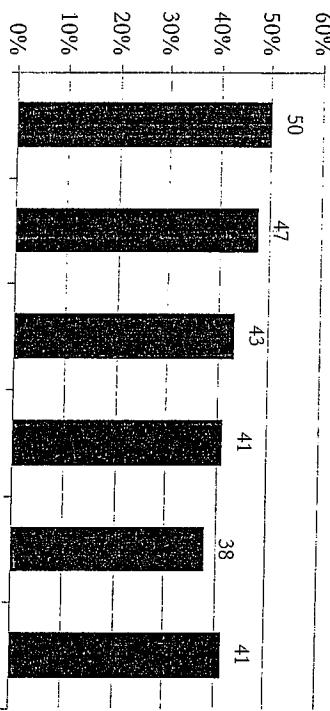
flókkshollustu. Sumar halda því fram að breytingarnar hafi átt sér stað vegna þess að ljósvalamiðjar veru orðnir megin uppsprettta polítskra upplýsinga kjosenda í stað stjórnálflokkka aður. Aðrat halda því fram að stjórnálflokkur vestrauna tilkjá, þar með talið stjórnálflokkar, hafi ekki staðið undir kröfum borgaranna um aukna velsæld. Þó geta viðsælustu kenningarnar ráð fyrir að kjosendur hafi að einhværu leyti breyst, að nýjar kynslóðir kjosenda séu betur menntaðar, hafi meiri aðgang að upplýsingum og eigi auðveldara kennimerti stjórnálflokkta til að mynda sér skoðanir á maléfnunum llöandi stundar. Ronald Inglehart (1997) og Russel J. Dalton (2003) eru meðal þeirra sem hafa fjallað um þessar breytingu og kalla hana „virkjun vitnumannana“ (*cognitive mobilization*) og tengja hana við minnkandi flokkahollustu. Þeir telja að þessar nýju kynslóðir kjosenda séu ekki síður áhugasaman og virkar í stjórnálflokkum en þær eldri. Stjórnálfapátttaka yngri kynslóða fari frekar fram í ymsum hagsmunahópum en stjórnálflokkum og vilji til óhefðbundinrar þátttöku hafi aukist til muna. Með óhefðbundinni þátttöku er átt við t.d. mótnaði, ólögmað verkföll eða það að skrifa undir áskoranir til stjórnvalda. Þetta telur Dalton benda til þess að yngri kynslóðir láti sér ekki nægja að kjósa á nokkurtra ára fresti heldur hafi fundið þátttöku sinni nýjan farweg.

Flokkshollusta á Íslandi

Olafr Þ. Harðason hefur gert kosningarannsóknir á Íslandi í kjölfar allra alþingiskosninga síðan 1983 eða sex sinnum. Í þeim hafa kjosendur verið spurnir hvort þeir séu stuðningsmenn flokka og hví eru til mælingar á flokkshollstu Íslenskra kjósenda sem ná yfir 20 ára tímabil. Ólafur (1995) telur að flokkshollusta hafi talsvert skýringargildi fyrir kosningahegðun íslenskra kjósenda þrátt fyrir að hún sé minni hér á landi en t.d. í Danmörku og Svíþjóð.

Eins og sjá má á mynd 1 fækkar stuðningsmönnum flokka jafnt og þétt en árið 1983 er helmingur kjósenda stuðningsmenn ákvæðinna stjórnmalflokkka en þetta hlutfall fer niður fyrir 40% árið 1999. Mynd 1 sýnir að flokkshollusta hefut minnkað nokkuð á Íslandi á síðustu tveimur áratugum og þróunin því verið svipuð hér og á örum Vesturlöndum.

Hnigrun flokkshollustu hefur komið fram í auknu flokkaflakki kjósenda sem getur haft þær afleiðingar að fylgi flokka sveiflast mikið milli kosninga og nýr flokkar náð umtalsverðum árangri (sbr. velgengni ýmissa græningaflokka) og rótgrónir flokkar jafnvel hoffið af sjónarsviðnum. Eins og komið hefur fram hafa kenningar um flokkshollustu gert ráð fyrir að hún tengist aldri þ.e. að hollusta aukist eftir því sem kiósandinn eldist. Kenningar um hnigrandi flokkshollustu gera hins vegar ráð fyrir að þetta myrnstur sé ekki tengt aldri heldur kynslóðamun. Þ.e. að nýjar kynslóðir kjósenda myndi síður tengsl við stjórnmálflokkka heldur en þær eldi og að þessi tengsl muni haldast veik þrátt fyrir að kjósendurnir eldist. Þessar kenningar ganga gegn hvor annari og geta haft ólikar afleiðingar í för með sér fyrir flokkakerfi og þróun þeirra. Í þessari rannsókn er ætlunin að skoða hvort að það megi skyra minnkandi flokkshollustu á Íslandi með kenningum um hnigrun flokks-hollustu og sett fram sí tilgáta að kynslóðabil sé til staðar meðal íslenskra kjósenda þannig að yngri kynslóðir séu síður flokkhollar en þær eldir.

Kjórendur á vergangi?

Mynd 1. Þróun flokkshollustu íslenskra kjósenda 1983 – 2003 (hlutfall stuðningsmanna stjórnálflokkka).

Sankvæmt kenningu höfunda *The American Voter* eykst flokkshollusta eftir fjölda kosninga sem kjósandinn hefur sama stutt flokk og eftir því sem flokkshollusta eykst er kjósandinn óflugt til að skipta um flokk á milli kosninga. Sem slíkt er þetta ekki afleiðing þess að eldast heldur frekar spurning um pólitískan þroska. Engu að síður má kalla þetta áhrif aldurs (*age effect*). Sankvæmt kenninguinni ætti því fylgni flokkshollustu og aldurs að veta stöðug ef flokkshollusta er ekki að taka almennum breytingum í samfélagnu. Þetta samband gefur riðlast og flokkshollusta minnkað tíma-bundið vegna stórvöðburða á stjórnunálasviðinu eins og klofnings flokka (sbr. klofning Borgarflokkssins frá Sjálfstæðisflokknum árið 1987) eða ef meiri-háttar breyting verðout á flokkakerfinu (t.d. sameining fögurra flokka undir meirkjum Samfylkingar árið 1999). Sankvæmt kenninguinni ættu slík tíma-bundin áhrif að ganga til baka þegar frá líður og flokkshollusta að komast í fyrra horf (Jenssen, 1999).

Tengsl aldurs og flokkshollustu má auðveldlega sjá í töflu 1 (meðalölin má einnig lesa sem hlutfall stuðningsmanna) sem sýnir flokkshollustu hjá almursflokkum eða 18 til 25 ára, 26 til 45 ára og 46 ára og eldri. Þessi aldursskipting er valin þar sem Converse (1976), einn af höfundunum *The American Voter*, heldur því fram að samband aldurs og flokkshollusta sé ekki líulegt, heldur styrkist flokkshollusta mest snaemna á lífsleiðinni en

styrkingin minnki eftir því sem fólk eldist. Eins og sjá má í töfluni eru eldri kjósendur fírekat stuðningsmenn flokka en þeir yngri. Mestur er mununinn á elstu og yngstu kjósendunum árið 1983 en minnstur 1991 og 2003. Flokks-

hollusta yngstu kjósendanna sveiflast mest á milli meelinga, eykst á milli kosninganna 1983 og 1987 en minnkar svo í næstu þremur kosningunum en eykst aftur 2003. En rétt er að hafa það í huga að í hvenni meelingu er þessi hópur kjósenda nánast nýt.

Tafla 1. Aldur og flokkshollusta (Meðaltal - stuðningsmenn flokka fá gildið 1 en aðrir 0).

	1983	1987	1991	1995	1999	2003
18-25 ára	0,34	0,40	0,36	0,30	0,27	0,37
26-45 ára	0,47	0,41	0,39	0,35	0,33	0,33
46-82 ára	0,61	0,54	0,45	0,48	0,43	0,46

f meginráttum virðist taflan styðja klassísku kenninguunum að flokkshollusta aukist með aldritinum. Afur á móti vekur það athygli að flokkshollusta virðist alment veta að minnka milli kosninga hjá tveimur elstu hópunum ef frá er talið árið 2003 (liklegt er að þar spili inn í tímabundin áhrif vegna mikilli breytinga á flokkakerfinu 1999). Þetta útlokar því ekki að kynslóðamunur sé á flokkshollustu þ.e. að flokkshollusta aldurshóppanna minni þegar nýjar kynslóðir (með minni flokkshollustu) koma inn í hópana en eldi kynslóðir með (meiri flokkshollustu) hverfa.

Tafla 2. Fæðingarár (kynslóð) og flokkshollusta (Meðaltal - stuðningsmenn flokka fá gildið 1 en aðrir 0).

	1983	1987	1991	1995	1999	2003
1980-1985	-	-	-	-	0,25	0,35
1970-1979	-	-	0,35	0,30	0,27	0,32
1960-1969	0,35	0,40	0,37	0,35	0,33	0,34
1950-1959	0,44	0,40	0,39	0,34	0,36	0,40
1940-1949	0,46	0,44	0,39	0,48	0,41	0,49
1930-1939	0,59	0,53	0,43	0,40	0,44	0,46
1920-1929	0,60	0,54	0,48	0,56	0,52	0,58
1910-1919	0,56	0,56	0,59	0,57	-	-
1900-1909	0,77	0,65	-	-	-	-

Í töflu 2 er þessi kynslóðamunur augljós og nánast límalegur þannig að þeir sem eru fæddir fyrir að síðustu öld hafa meiri flokkshollustu en þeir sem eru fæddir seina. Sankvæmt klássísku kenninguinni ætti flokkshollusta einstakra kynslóða að aukast við hverjar kosningar. En í töflu 2 má sjá að

hún er nokkuð stöðug og virðist frekar vera minnka þó að það sé ekki eitahlítt og í lítu meili.

Begar að fjallað er um kynslóðamun er alltaf vandanál hvernig eigi að greina á milli áhrifa kynslóðamunar, aldurs og tímabundinna áhrifa. Tafla 2 sýnir að fæðingarár eða kynslóð virðast hafa talverð tengsl við flokshollustu og því getui verið að það séu eingöngu þau tengsl sem koma fram milli aldurs og flokshollustu í töflu 1. Einnig er erfitt að meta tímabundin áhrif sem koma fram vegna einhverja atburða eða breytinga sem verða á stjórnunálasviðinu. Töflurnar geta því verið að lýsa öllum þessum þremur atriðum sem nefnd hafa verið til sögunnar og geta haft áhrif á flokshollusta.

Samspláh trifabáttá á flokkshollustu

þeim sem eru fæddir á milli 1923 og 1963 er skipting í flokka ekki eins augljós. Sagt er að folk mótið helst af uppvaxtaránum sínum og gerð samfélagsins á hvejum tíma hafi mikil áhrif á þá mórun og því vaxi upp kynslóði: sem búa að sameiginlegri reynslu og hafi svipaða sýn á samfélagið (Inglehart, 1997). Því var af ráðið að búa til tvö hópa einstaklinga sem alast upp á ólikum tímabilum í stjórnmálasögu landsins. Annars vegar þá sem fæddir eru á milli 1923 og 1944 sem er kynslóð sem elst upp við stéttastjórnar kreuðuára. Hins vegar þá sem eru fæddir á milli 1945 og 1962, þekkja Ísland ekki öðruvísi en sem fullvalda ríki og ólust upp við að baráttan milli austur og vesturs endurhómaði allti stjórnmálaþróunum, á felurndi;

etu vigtuð þannig að tannsóknar hafa jafn vægi eða þannig að fjöldi svarenda fyrir hvert ár er sá sami (heildarfjöldi svarenda er þó ekki breytt, N=8679). Notast er við aðlitarfsgreiningu (*blockwise multiple logistic regression*) og eru ahrifapætir settir inn í skrefum.

Tafla 3. Líkut á flokkshollustu þeir sem eru stuðningsmenn flokka fá gildið en aðrir gildið 0.

LOGISTIC REGRESSION									
	1. Likan			2. Likan			3. Likan		
	B	(se)	OR	B	(se)	OR	B	(se)	OR
Fasti	0,01	0,05	-	-0,30	0,06	-	-0,04	0,10	
Kosningar (samanþ.)									
1983	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	1
1987	-0,18 *	0,07	0,84	-0,18 *	0,07	0,83	-0,13	0,08	0,88
1991	-0,39 ***	0,07	0,68	-0,39 ***	0,08	0,67	-0,29 ***	0,08	0,75
1995	-0,45 ***	0,08	0,64	-0,46 ***	0,08	0,63	-0,31 ***	0,08	0,73
1999	-0,58 ***	0,08	0,56	-0,60 ***	0,08	0,55	-0,40 ***	0,09	0,67
2003	-0,45 ***	0,07	0,64	-0,48 ***	0,08	0,62	-0,25 **	0,09	0,78
Aldur (samanþ.)									
18-25 ára									
26-45 ára									
46-82 ára									
Kynslóð (fræðingar)									
1901-1922									
(samanþ.)									
1923-1944									
1945-1963									
1964-1985									
<hr/>									
-2 Log likelihood I.P.									
Fasti	118,6,9			5			p<0,001		
Kosningar	117,36,3								
kosningar, aldur	11596,2			2			p<0,001		
kosningar, aldur, fræðingarár	11557,0			3			p<0,001		

Fyrst er kosningarárt sett inn í greininguna (1983 notað sem samanburðarárat) og því næst aldur (18-25 ára notaður sem samanburðaróptur) sem fulltrúi klassísku kennningarinnar um flokkskhollustu. Að lokum er kynslóð sett inn til að skoða hvort kynslóðarmunur sé til staðar óháð aldri og kossingárt eins og kenningar um hnjarnandi flokkskhollustu öðra ræð fari.

Kjósendur á vergangi?

Hér er sannanbuðarhópurinn þeir einstaklingar sem eru fæddir árið 1923 til 1944 því þeir sem eru fæddir fyrir eiga ekki fulltrúa í öllum sex rannsóknunum. Niðurstöðurnar má síða í töflu 3.

Niðurstöður fyrsta líkansins þar sem kosningarár er inni sýnir að flokkshollustu hefur farið minnkandi frá 1983 og stuðningsmönnum flokka flækkar blufallslega. Í öðru líkani má sjá að aldur bætir marktekt við skýringagildi líkansins. Eftir því sem fólk eldist þeim mun meiti virðist flokkshollustan veta óhað kosningaári og líkanið styður því klassískar kenningar um flokkshollustu þ.e. að hún aukist með aldrinum. Þegar álitum kynslóða er bætt inn í aðhvattsgreininguna batnar enn skýringargildi líkansins marktekt og myndin breytist nokkuð (sjá 3. líkan). Þeir sem eru fæddir á árunum 1901 til 1922 meiri flokkshollustu en viðmiðunathóputinn sem fæddur er á árunum 1923 til 1944. Aftur á móti hafa þeir sem eru fæddir seinna minni flokkshollustu en viðmiðunathóputinn. Áhrif kosningaárs minnkat nokkuð þegar kynslóðir eru settar inn í líkanið en storu freittunar eru þær að áhrif aldurs minnta verulega. Þetta bendir til þess að flokkshollustu íslenskra kjósenda megi frekar skýra með kynslóð kjósandans en með aldri hans og að kynslóðarmunur sé á flokkshollustu. Þeir sem eru fæddir fyrir á síðustu öld eru líklegri til að vera stuðningsmenn stjórnmálflokska en þeir sem eru fæddir seinna á öldinni. Þessar niðurstöður styðja kenningar um hnignandi flokkshollustu og þá tilgátu sem sett var fram í þessari rannsókn að kynslóðarmunur sé á flokkshollustu þannig að yngri kynslóðir íslenskra kjósenda tilteinki sér síður flokkshollustu en þær eldri. Þó virðist að flokkshollusta aukist eittkvæð með aldrinum en líklegt er að áhrif aldurs á flokkshollustu sé ofmetin í kenningum Michigan -hópsins.

Lokaorð

Kenningar um flokkshollustu hafa verið vinsælar í rannsóknum í stjórnmálafræði og þótt hafa nokkuð hlutverk þegar á að skýra kosningahægðun. Klassískar kenningin gerir ráð fyrir að kjósandinn myndi tengsl við stjórnmálaflokk snemma á lífsleiðinni og flokkuinn sem verður fyrir valinu næðst oftast en ekki af því félagslega umhverfi sem kjósandinn elst upp í. Þessi tengsl styrkjast svo með árunum og kjósandinn notar tengslin til að spara sér upplýsingakostnað. Á seinni árum hafa komið fram kenningar um hnignun flokkshollustu en þær gera ráð fyrir að með auðveldari aðgangi að upplýsingum og aukinni getu kjósenda til að vinna úr þeim (meiri mentun) þurfi kjósendur síður að reiða sig á stjórnmálaflokk til að gera upp hug sín.

Yngri og upplýstari kynslóðir muni því ekki tileinka sér flokkshollustu í sama mæli og þær eldri.

Sú tilgáta var sett fram í þessari rannsókn að kynslóðabil sé á flokkshollustu íslenskra kjósenda og kenningar um hnignandi flokkshollustu eigi því betur við en klassískar kenningin. Niðurstöður rannsóknarinnar suðdu þá tilgátu að kynslóðabil væti til staðar og að kenningar um hnignandi flokkshollustu ættu betur við íslenska kjósendur en klassískar kenningin.

Tengsl kjósenda og stjórnmálaflokk hafa verið álitin gegna mikilvægu hlutverki í móun pólitískrar vitundar og hafa mikil áhrif á kosningahægðun. Þegar þessi tengsl riðlast er ljóst að það hefur talverð áhrif á stjórnmál. Flokkshollusta hefur hvatt til þáttroku í kosningum og kosningabaráttu. Dregið hefur úr kosningabáttóku viða á Vesturlöndum svo ekki sér fyrir endann á. Litil þátttaka til lengri tíma getur grafið undan trúvelðugleika stjórnmálanu. Þeir kjósendur sem taka þátt gera seinna upp hug sinn og eru líklegri til að skipta um flokk milli kosninga. Fyrir stjórnmálaflokk hafur þetta þær afleiðingar að fylgi þeira getur verið mjög breyilegt og úsilt kosninga sveitflukendai. Kosningabaráttu fer að skipta meira málum fyrir gengi stjórnmálaflokska og úsilt kosninga. Eins er ekki útilokað að gamlið og grónir flokkar hverfi að svíðinu og nýjun vaxi ásmegin. Flokkakerfið getur þannig tekið varanlegum breytingum.

EKKI ER ÖLKLEGT AÐ VIÐ SÉUM ÞEGAR FARIÐ AÐ SJÁ ÞESSUM BREYTINGUM STAÐ HÉR Á LANDI. Kosningabáttaka hefur teyndar minnkað óverulega en á undanförtnum árum hafa stjórnmálaflokkar ekki getað gengið að fylgi sínu vísu og nýjir flokkar náið nokkrum árangri.

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