

## 5 Conclusion

In this paper we claimed that quality and extent of political discourse play a significant role in regard to the well-functioning of democratic political institutions and that discourse ensures constitutional checks and balances become binding restrictions. We attempted to related the role of political discourse to political competition, and eventually to corruption—understood as the lack of political competition. In the empirical analysis we used data from the Eurobarometer and the World Value Survey to assess whether discourse—and thus indirectly competition—and corruption show a systematic relationship. The results regarding political discourse and corruption are mixed. While we found supportive evidence for the claim that political discourse induces political competition, the inverse relationship between political discourse and corruption remains ambiguous.

The idea that an intense political discourse translates into less corruption could not be verified with this regression setting. However, the levels of discussing politics in selected European countries show statistically significant differences. Nevertheless, based on our findings it appears to be difficult to measure political discourse by just a handful of survey questions and establish a relationship between political discourse and corruption. We think that other factors not being captured by the surveys such as the geopolitical situation or the stage of the process of democratization might influence corruption as well. The performed ordered probit estimation revealed the significant effects we hoped to discover and indicates that the dependent variable 'discussing political matters' captures more than just random differences. The regression also supports the idea that the intensity of discussing politics is strongly correlated with a higher level of education.

However, we believe that the connection between political discourse and political competition is much stronger than traditional models of competition account for. From the presented roles and implications of political discourse we conclude that a diverse discourse creates incentives for citizens to engage in politics and get informed, strengthens democracy, and reduces information inequality. Moreover these mechanisms should encourage power diffusion in democratic organized institutions and make sure that constitutional checks and balances limit political extremism. Finally, the determinants of political discourse along with a successful implementation of the mechanisms above promotes transparency, efficiency, equality and thus fosters an intense and fair political competition.

Even though this paper does not suggest that corruption enters a systematic relationship with the chosen group of political discourse variables, single indicators such as following political news in daily newspapers or GDP may have some explanatory power. In this respect, we would like our empirical analysis to be recognized as a first step towards the interesting, but complex field of the interaction between political discourse, competition, and corruption.