



Nonprofit-government relations: The public policy and advocacy perspectives

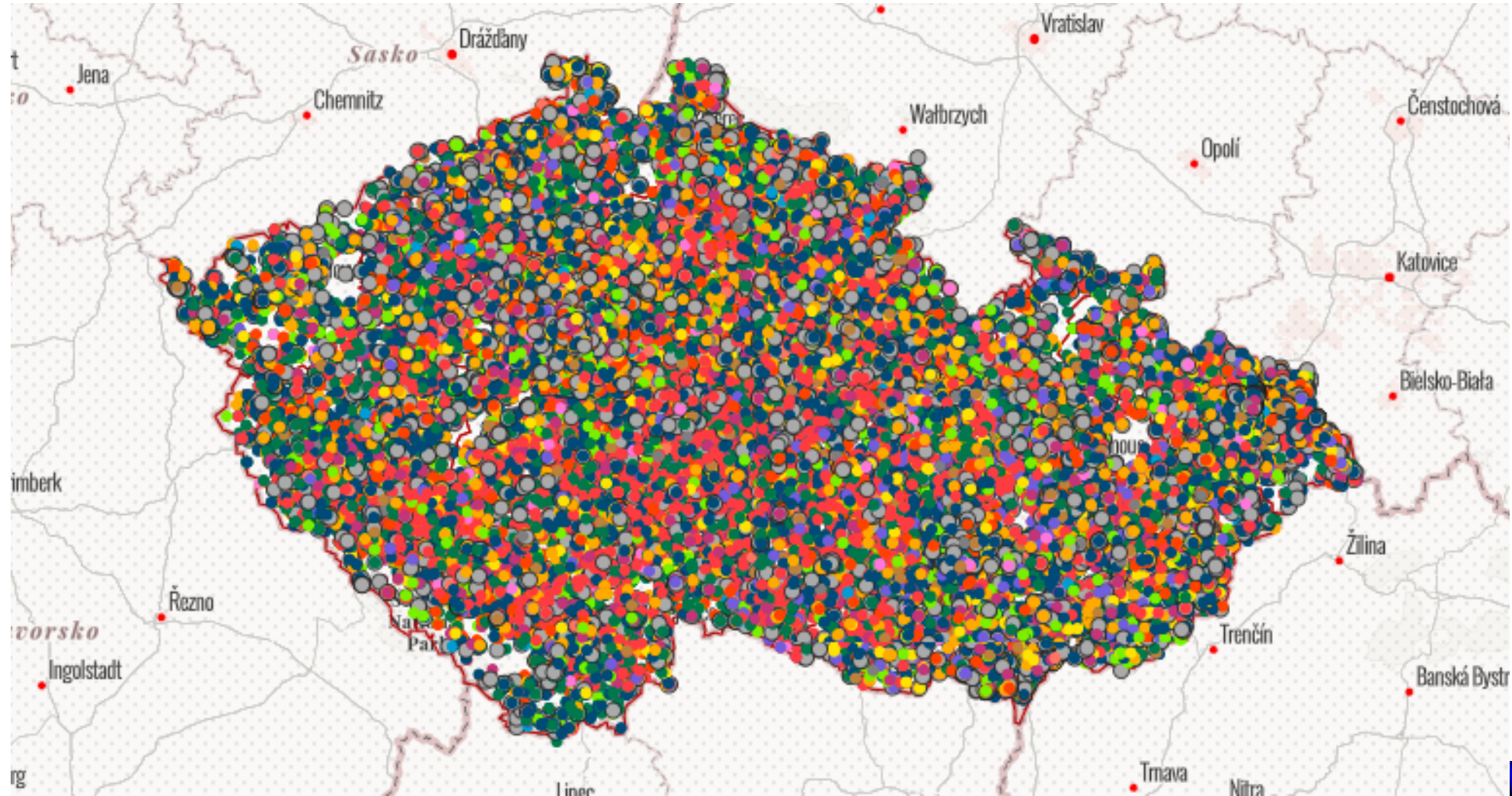
Content

- Roles of CSOs
- Government, Advocacy and Civil Society: Overview of the Government-Nonprofit Relations
- Public policy perspective
- Advocacy perspective

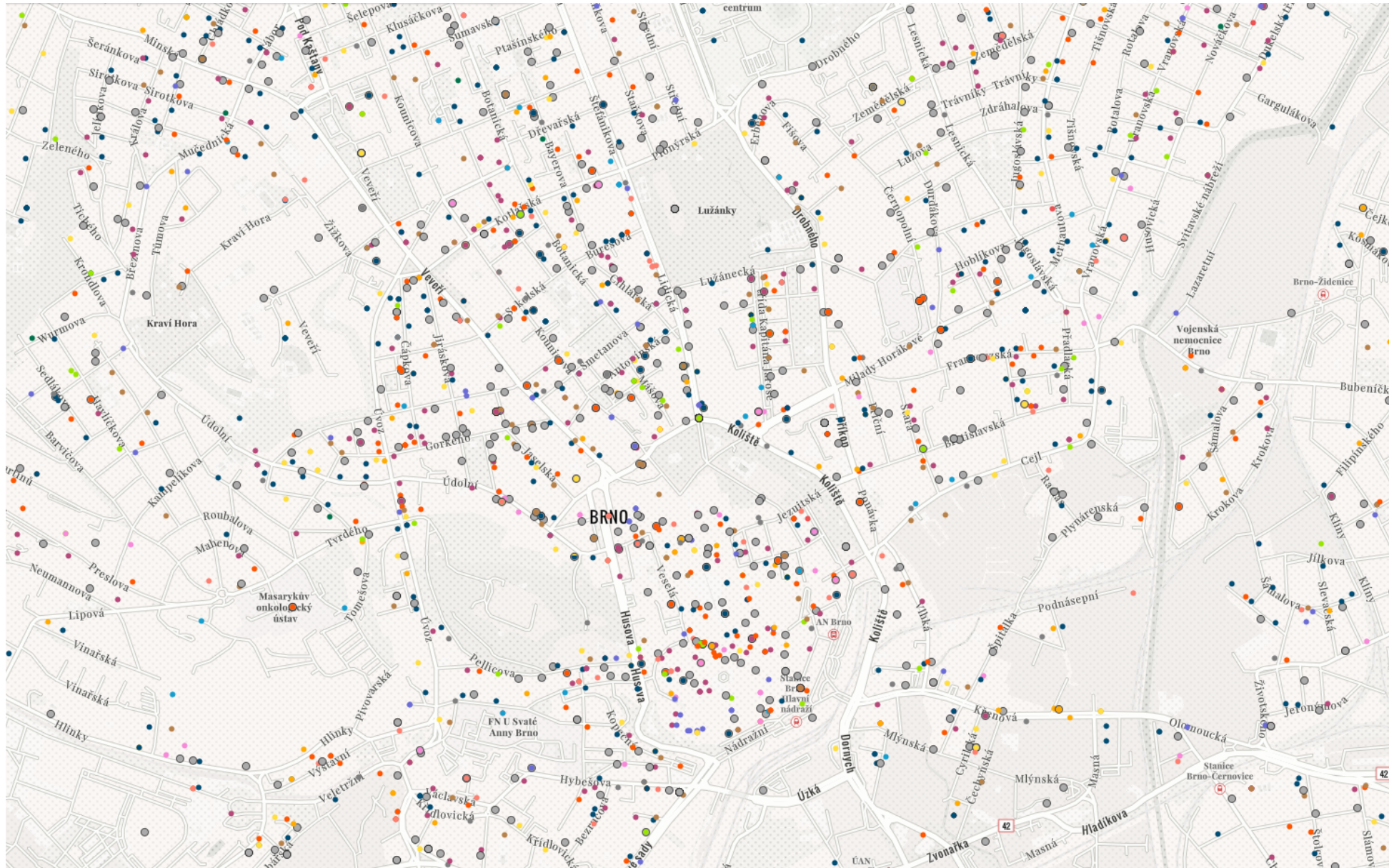
Civil society organizations

- Nonprofit organizations (NPOs): organizations that are privately incorporated, but serve some public purpose (social responsibility)
- Social movement organizations
- Interest groups, labour unions, professional chambers, ...
- Separate from the state and the market

Nonprofit organizations in CZ



NPO in Brno



What are the roles of NPOs?

- *Social capital* (“the features of social organization, such as *networks, norms, and trusts*, that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit”)
- *Economic role*
- *Religious role*
- *Service*
- *Policy* (e.g. Implementing public policies)
- *Advocacy* (e.g. Building up civic/civil society. Central to prosperous and successful democracies)
- ...Significant actors at global level (international perspective)

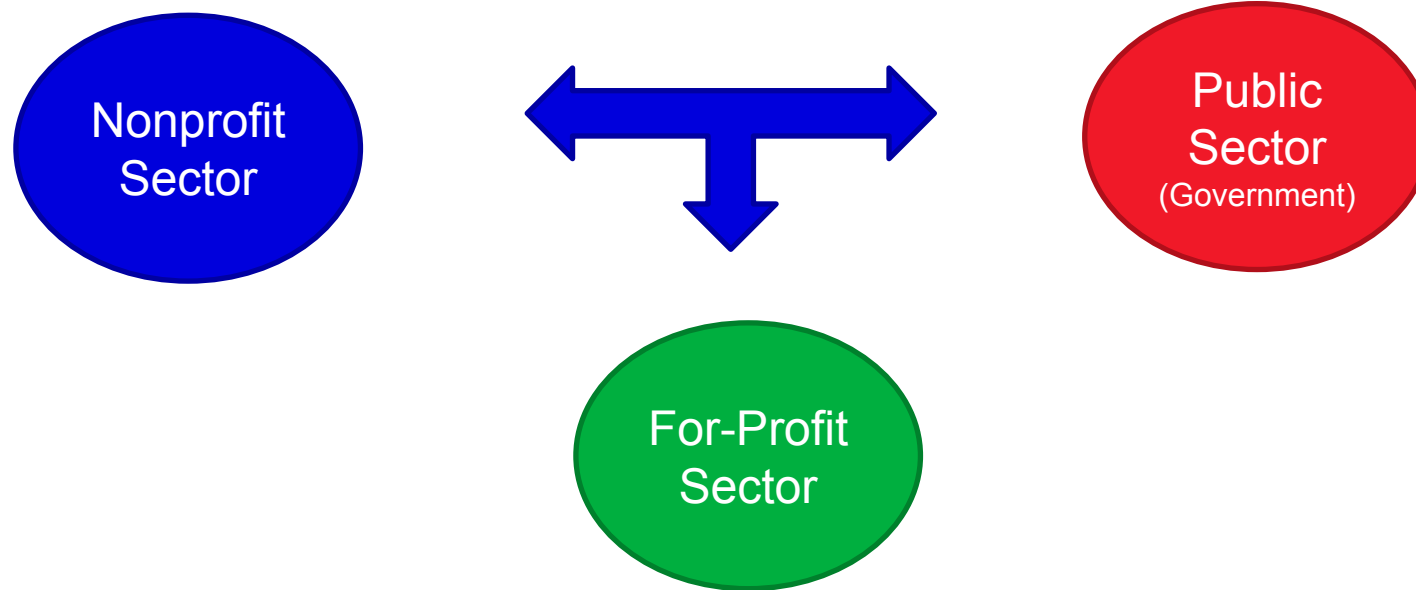
NPOs and government relations: Overview

- Very complex relationship based on different aspects: funding, tax policy and regulations towards NPOs, direct government support, non-monetary support, involvement in policy and advocacy activities, etc.
- Legal perspective
- **Public policy perspective**
- **Advocacy perspective**

Public policy perspective

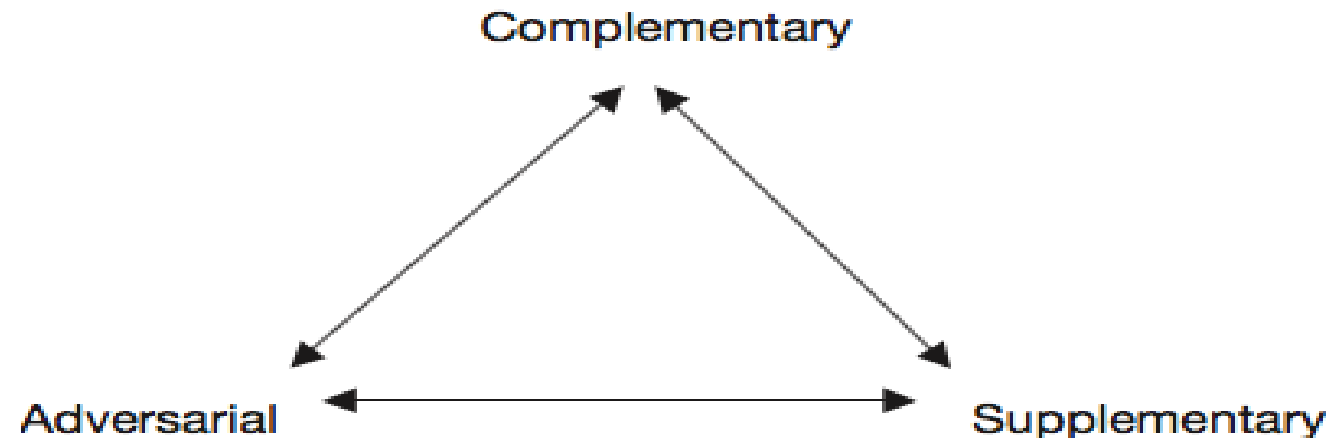
- Involvement of NPO in policy-making
- One of principal functions of NP sector, major contribution to society, promoting common good
- Pressuring government to respond to disadvantaged groups
- Theoretical models: based on the character of relationship
Weisbrod, 1988; Douglas, 1987; Salamon, 1995, 2002; Young, 2000; Najam, 2000

What is the character of relationship?



- Substitute and supplement (Weisbrod, 1988; Douglas, 1987)
- Complement (Salamon, 1995, 2002)
- Adversary

A triangular model: Young (2000)



Four Cs model of government–nonprofit relations: Najam (2000)

		Goals	
		Similar	Dissimilar
Means	Similar	Cooperation	Co-optation
	Dissimilar	Complementarity	Confrontation

Source: Najam 2000. © John Wiley & Sons Inc. Used with permission.

Why should NPO participate in policies and policy-making?

Involvement of interest groups

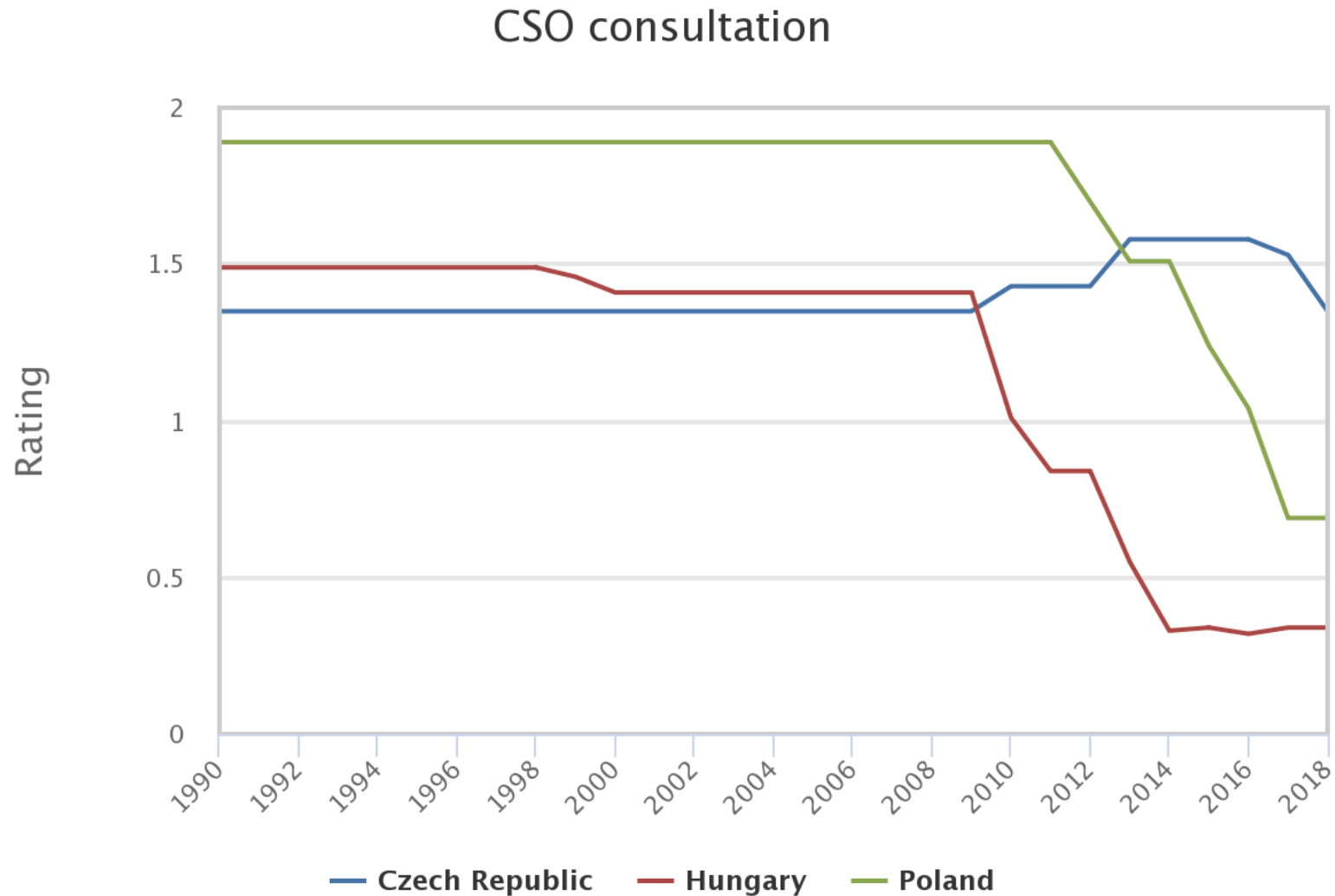
Pros/benefits:

- Strengthens representation
- Public debate encouragement
- Expanding the space for political participation
- Barriers to abuse of power
- Ensuring political stability

Cons/critique:

- Lobbying = "buying" political influence
- Consolidating political inequality
- Failure to contribute to political integration
- Exercising Illegitimate power
- Tendency to "secrecy" in politics

Are major civil society organizations (CSOs) routinely consulted by policymakers on policies relevant to their members?



Advocacy perspective

- NPO's crucial civic function
- Goal: To influence government decisions; to shape the policies of private institutions and corporations; or to encourage political participation
- 1) NPOs mediate and directly/indirectly activate and facilitate participation – by providing structures and networks
- 2) NPOs engage in public-interest advocacy activities
- To “correct imbalanced political representation by ensuring that a broader set of interests are voiced” (Jenkins, 2006)

Reasons to advocate

- **Focusing public attention** on key social problems and solutions
- Increasing the **base of knowledge** on which innovative policy is formed
- Policymakers need **expertise**
- Ensuring access for **new and unheard voices**
- **Fostering governmental accountability** to citizens
- **Promoting democratic values** (freedom of expression, pluralism, ...)
- Giving citizens a personal sense of **civic skills** in the democratic process (can **make a difference**, can change laws)
- The views of **local nonprofits** are important

Social movement theory argument

- Two sectors are deeply intertwined, but conflictual relationship with government
- 1) first with private concerns, private action (informal, no legal status)
- 2) As momentum builds, the movement may evolve into formal organizations (become more institutionalized)
- 3) Ultimately, successful SMOs may influence government policy – by translating private concerns into public issues

SMOs and government

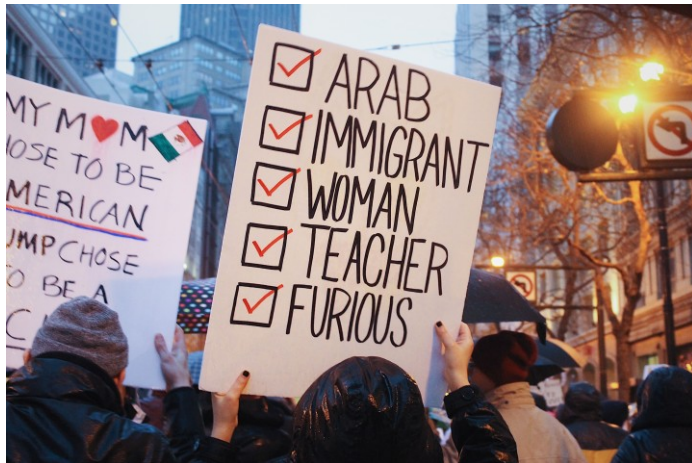
- Basically a cycle:
 - Initial social movement translate public concerns via formal legal entities
 - NPO influence government policy
 - Government responds:
 - by directly addressing the issue
 - or funds nonprofits
 - Nonprofits in turn address these public concerns
 - And nonprofits adjust their behavior to reflect public policy and government priorities
 - Tries to influence again
- Examples of such successful movements?



CSOs during migration crisis

- Refugees welcome movement
- Appeal for humanity (*Výzva k ľudskosti*) (Slovakia)
- Global Migration Journey: #sharethejourney
- ...



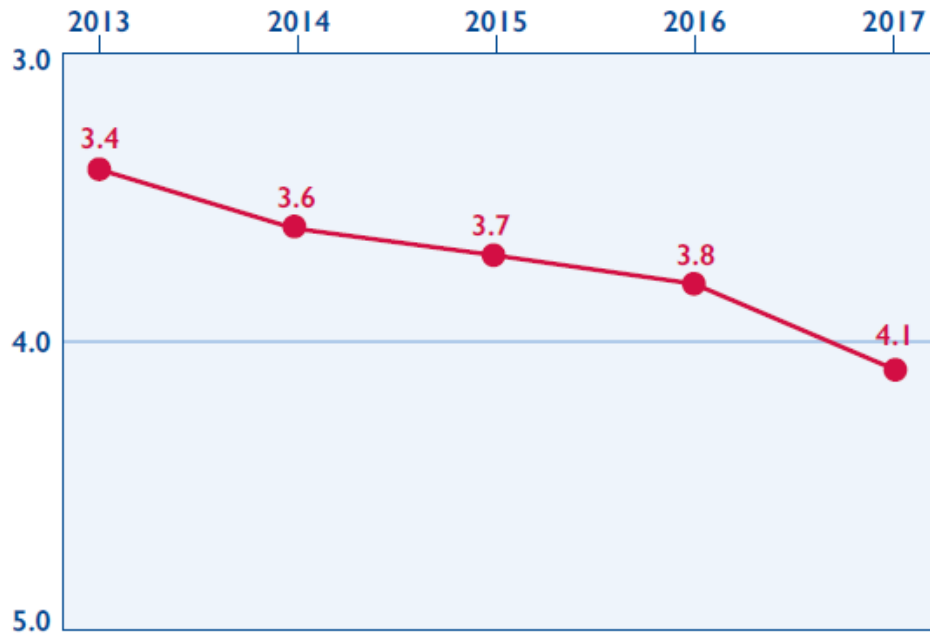


Challenges for (some) CSOs' activities

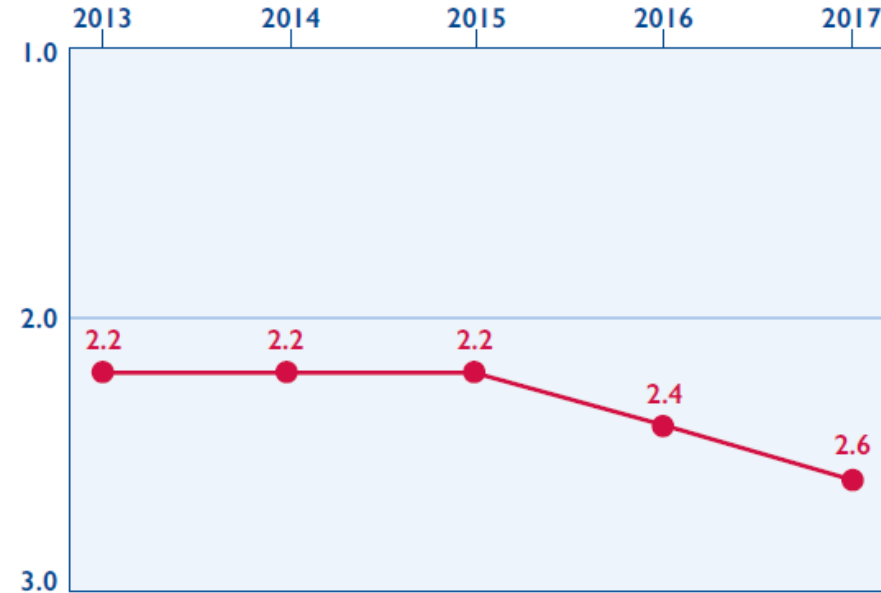
- Negative framing of civil society organizations and NPOs (mostly dealing with human rights or minority issues) by political elites
- Worsening public image (mostly Central and Eastern Europe)
- „Agents of neomarxims“ and liberalism (populist discourse)
- Tools of foreign interests (Soros and „his plan“) – e.g. CEU Uni
- In Czech context: „ngo-ism“ (Václav Klaus)
- Declining civic engagement

Public image of CSOs

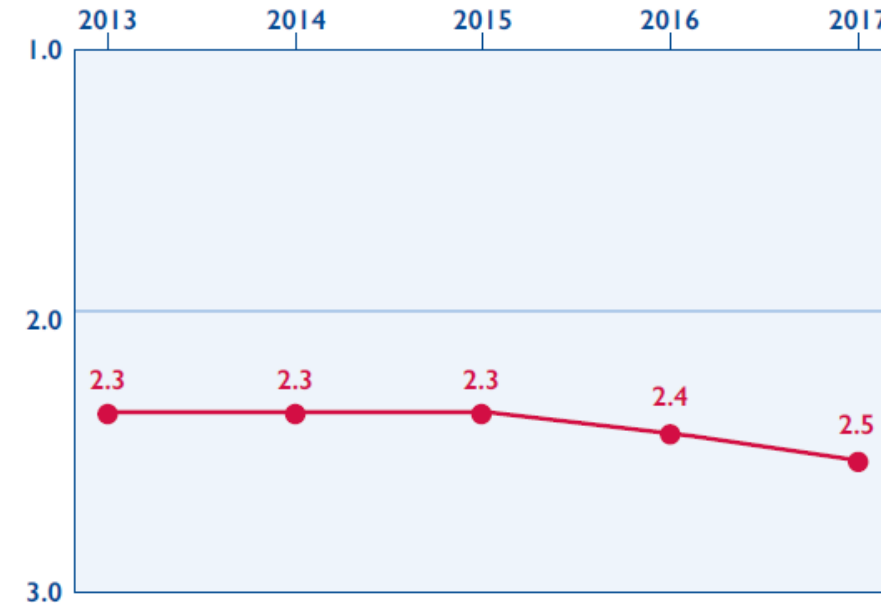
PUBLIC IMAGE IN HUNGARY



PUBLIC IMAGE IN POLAND

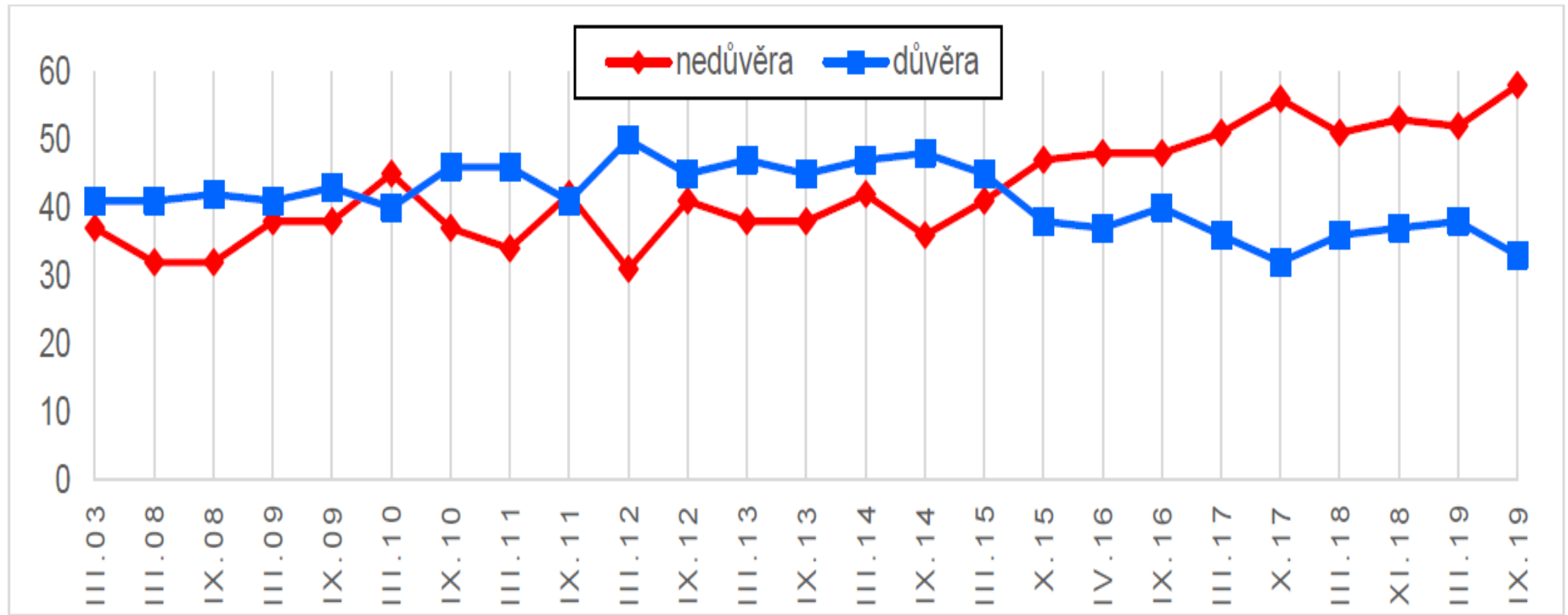


PUBLIC IMAGE IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC



Source: 2017 CSO Sustainability Index

Trust in NPOs (CZE)



NPOs and CSOs responses

- Have had to become more sophisticated
- Created more complex organizational structures
- Taken advantage of new technologies – Internet activism fundamentally altered civic participation and advocacy
- Invested in effective research
- Increasingly turned to collaborations, including some with business organizations

Citizen Lobbying: How Your Skills Can Fix Democracy

By Alberto Alemanno (at TEDxBrussels)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WqNf2OPdu8c>

Going the Digital Route

By Marci Harris, a former congressional staffer, founded Popvox, a non-partisan platform to engage digitally with Congress

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5aKyYR-iWpc>

Advocacy Through Social Media: Why Trending Topics Matter

By Karen McAlister (at TEDxUTA)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o4sGLLaLq-Q>

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Thank you for your attention