

**THE EAST CENTRAL EUROPEAN
PARTY SYSTEMS**

**THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMPETITIVE POLITICS
IN A COMPARATIVE POLITICS PERSPECTIVE**

SUBMITTED BY

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ABSTRACT

The thesis approaches the development, stability and change of party systems in Hungary, Poland and the Czech and Slovak Republics since the collapse of communism from a comparative politics perspective, thereby raising questions about whether party systems have developed, about the peculiarity of these systems and about the factors that drive party system development and change. The analysis of East Central European party systems therefore invites questions about party systems theory in general, hypothesising that parties are becoming increasingly independent of extra-parliamentary constraints. Applied to East Central Europe, this suggests that party system development has been driven by the parties, principally their strategic choices under conditions of economic and political transition. Nationalism provides a further dimension without which post-communist party competition and coalition building cannot be fully understood. The comparative politics analysis of the four East Central European party systems warrants a three-level set of conclusions. First, the Lipset-Rokkan cleavage model is re-worked, with particular focus on the definition and structure of cleavages (including non-structural cleavages) and the context in which they are translated in to political competition; the newly negotiated rules of the game; the comparatively weak links between voters and parties; the organisation and structure of the parties; and most significantly, party strategy as the key driver behind party system development, stability and change. Second, come the 1997/98 series of elections, the four party systems had developed from anarchic competition to party systems characterised by a degree of stability and predictability in terms of party competition and co-operation. Third, and finally, the project concludes that party system change and stability is driven primarily by the political parties. If comparative West European politics is influencing analyses of East Central European party systems, the East Central European experience has prompted re-working of comparative party system theory. And the parties have stolen the show.

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**MAIN PARTIES, ELECTIONS AND GOVERNMENT COALITIONS AT A GLANCE, EAST
CENTRAL EUROPE 1989-1999**

Governing parties in **bold**

Non-coalition parties that support the government underlined

“A:B” indicates party A becoming party B; “A:B,C” indicates party A becoming parties B and C

| POLAND | 1989 Election | 1991 Election | 1991-1993 | 1993 Election | 1997 Election |
|----------------------|---------------------------------------|--|--|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| National right | Solidarity: PC, ZChN KPN | PC <u>ZChN</u> KPN | PC ZChN KPN RdR | BBWR KPN | AWS ROP |
| Liberal right | Solidarity: ROAD | UD KLD PPPP | UD KLD PPPP | UD (+ KLD + PPPP): UW | UW |
| Formerly communist | SLD PSL | SLD <u>PSL</u> | SLD <u>PSL</u> | SLD PSL | SLD PSL |
| Other Polish parties | Solidarity: UP, PSL-PL | Solidarity <u>UP</u> <u>PSL-PL</u> | <u>Solidarity</u> UP PL | UP | |

| HUNGARY | 1989/1990 | 1990 Election | 1992 -1994 | 1994 Election | 1998 Election |
|------------------|-------------------------|--|---|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| National right | MDF KNDP FKgP | MDF KNDP FKgP | MDF MIEP KNDP FKgP (split) | MDF MIEP KNDP FKgP | MDF MIEP FKgP |
| Liberal | Fidesz SzDSz | Fidesz SzDSz | Fidesz SzDSz | Fidesz SzDSz | Fidesz SzDSz |
| Reform communist | MSzP | MSzP | MSzP | MSzP | MSzP |

| CZECH REPUBLIC | 1989/1990 | 1990 Election | 1992 Election | 1996 Election | 1998 | 1998 Election |
|----------------|-----------|--|--|--|--|--------------------------|
| Liberal right | OF | OF: ODS, KDS, ODA, OH KDU-CSL | ODS + KDS KDU-CSL ODA | ODS KDU-CSL ODA | ODS <u>KDU-CSL</u> <u>US</u> | ODS KDU-CSL US |
| Soc Dem | CSSD | CSSD | CSSD | CSSD | <u>CSSD</u> | CSSD |
| Ex-communist | KSC | KSCM | LB | KSCM | KSCM | KSCM |
| Other parties | | HSD-SMS | HSD-SMS LSU SPR-RSC | SPR-RSC | SPR-RSC | SPR-RSC |

| SLOVAKIA | 1989/1990 | 1990 Election | 1992 | 1992 Election | 1994 | 1994 Election | 1998 Election |
|------------------|-----------|-------------------------|-------------------------|---------------|---|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Right | VPN | VPN | HzDS | HzDS | HzDS DEUS ADSR NDS-NA | HzDS DU (++++?) | HzDS SOP |
| Liberal right | KDH | KDH DS | KDH <u>DS</u> | KDH | KDH | KDH | SDK (KDH + DU + DS) |
| Reform communist | KSC | KSC | SDL | <u>SDL</u> | SDL | SV | SDL |
| Other parties | SNS | SNS | SNS | <u>SNS</u> | SNS | <u>SNS</u> <u>ZRS</u> | SNS |
| Hungarians | MK | MK | <u>MK</u> | MK | <u>MK</u> | MK | SMK |

| |
|-----------------------------------|
| ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS |
|-----------------------------------|

| | |
|------------|---|
| AC Milan | Milan Football Club, Italy |
| ADSR | Alliance of Democrats (Aliancia demokratov), Slovakia, split from HzDS, joined DU |
| AN | National Alliance (Alleanza Nazionale), Italy, formerly MSI |
| AWS | Solidarity Electoral Action (Akcja Wyborcza Solidarnosc), Poland |
| BBWR | Anti-party Bloc for Reform (Bezpartyjny Blok Wspierania Reform), Poland, Pilsudski's Nonpartisan Bloc for Cooperation with the Government (Bezpartyjny Blok Wspolpracy z Rzadem) bore the same abbreviation in inter-war Poland |
| BRD | Federal Republic of Germany |
| C | Centre Party (Centrepatriet), Sweden |
| CDU | Christian Democratic Union (Christlich-Demokratische Union), Germany |
| CMWC | Connected minimal winning coalitions |
| CSCE | Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe |
| CSSD | Czech Social Democratic Party (Ceska strana socialne demokraticka) |
| CTK | Czech News Agency (Ceska tiskova kancelao) |
| DC | Christian Democrats (Democrazia Cristiana), Italy |
| DDR | German Democratic Republic |
| DEUS | Democratic Union of Slovakia (Demokraticka unia Slovenska) initially the Alternative for Political Realism (breakaway from HzDS), later DU |
| DNA | Norwegian Labour Party (Det Norske Arbeiderparti) |
| DS | Democratic Party (Democraticka Strana), Slovakia, part of the SDK |
| DS | Democratic Left (Democratichi di Sinistra), Italy, see PDS |
| DU | Democratic Union (Demokraticka unia), Slovakia, part of the SDK, founded by ex-HzDS members (DEUS and ADSR) |
| EC | European Community |
| Egyutteles | Coexistence (Spoluzitie), past of SMK |
| ELDR | European Liberal Democratic and Reform Parties |
| EP | European Parliament |
| EU | European Union |
| Fidesz | Alliance of Young Democrats (Fiatal Demokraták Szövetsége), Hungary, name changed in 1995 to Fidesz-MPP, Alliance of Young Democrats - Hungarian Citizen's Party (Fiatal Demokraták Szövetsége - Magyar Polgari Part) |
| FF | Fianna Fail ('warriors of destiny'), Ireland |

| | |
|---------|---|
| FG | Fine Gael ('family-group of the Gaels'), Cumann na nGaedheal ('the club of the Gaels') before the 1933 merger with the Centre Party |
| FI | Forza Italia, sometimes translated as 'Go for it, Italy' (a football chant) |
| FKgP | Independent Smallholder's Party (Fuggetlen Kisgazda Part), Hungary |
| FrP | Progress Party (Fremskrittspartiet), Norway |
| H | Conservative Party (Hoyre), Norway |
| HSD-SMS | Movement for Moravia and Silesia (Hnutí za samosprávnou demokracii Moravy a Slezska), Czech, split into HSMS-MNSJ (Movement for Self-Governing Moravia and Silesia – Moravian National Unification), CMSS (Czech-Moravian Party of the Centre) and MNS-HSMF (Moravian National Party – Movement of Moravian-Silesian Unification) |
| HzDS | Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (Hnutie za demokraticke Slovensko) |
| IMF | International Monetary Fund |
| KDH | Christian Democratic Movement (Kresťanské demokratické hnutie), Slovakia, part of the SDK |
| KDS | Christian Democrat Party (Křesťanskodemokratická strana), Czech, merged with ODS |
| KDU-CSL | Christian Democratic Union-Czechoslovak People's Party (Křesťanská a demokratická unie - Československá strana lidová), Czech |
| KDNP | Christian Democratic People's Party (Keresztény Demokrata Néppárt), Hungary |
| KLD | Liberal Democratic Congress (Kongres Liberalno Demokratyczny), Poland, merged into UW |
| KPN | Confederation for and Independent Poland, (Konfederacja Polski Niepodległej) |
| KrF | Christian People's Party, also translated as Christian Democratic Party (Kristelig Folkeparti), Norway |
| KSC | Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (Komunistická strana Československa) |
| KSCM | Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia (Komunistická strana Čech a Moravy), Czech |
| LN | Northern League, (Lega Nord), Italy |
| LSU | Liberal and Social Union (Liberalně sociální unie), Czech, combines the Farmers' party, the Green Party and the Czech Socialist Party |
| MDF | Hungarian Democratic Forum (Magyar Demokrata Forum) |
| MDNP | Hungarian Democratic People's Party (Magyar Demokrata Néppárt), split from MDF |
| MIEP | Party of Hungarian Truth and Life (Magyar Igazság és Élet Pártja) |
| MK | Hungarian Coalition (Magyar Koalíció), Slovakia, see SMK |
| MKDH | Hungarian Christian Democratic Movement (Madarske křesťanské demokratické hnutie), part of SMK |

| | |
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| MOS | Hungarian Civic Movement (Madarska obcianska strana, MOS), part of SMK |
| MSI | Italian Social Movement (Movimento Sociale Italiano), changed into the National Alliance, AN (Alleanza Nazionale) |
| MSZOSZ | National Federation of Hungarian Trade Unions (Magyar Szakszervezetek Országos Szövetsége) |
| MSzP | Hungarian Socialist Party (Magyar Socialista Part) |
| MWC | Minimal winning coalitions |
| NATO | North Atlantic Treaty Organisation |
| ND | New Democracy (Nea Demokratia), Greece |
| NDS-NA | Democratic Party – New Alternative (Narodno-demokraticka strana – National-democratic), Slovakia, breakaway from SNS, joined DU |
| NyD | New Democracy (Ny Demokrati), Sweden |
| ODA | Civic Democratic Alliance (Obcanska demokraticka alianca), Czech |
| ODS | Civic Democratic Party (Obcanska demokraticka strana), Czech |
| ODU | Civic Democratic Party (Obcianska demokraticka unia), Slovak, metamorphosed to SKD (Strana konservativnych demokratov, Slovak Conservative party) and merged with DS |
| OF | Civic Forum (Obcanske forum), Czech |
| OH | Civic Movement (Obcanske hnuti), renamed Free Democrats (Svobodni demokrate), merged into SD-SLNS, Czech |
| Ojczyzna | Polish National “Fatherland” Alliance (Polskie Stronnictwo Narodowe “Ojczyzna”), led by ZChN (Christian National Union) in 1993 election |
| OPZZ | All-Poland Trade Union Alliance (Ogolnopolskie Porozumienie Związków Zawodowych) |
| OSCE | Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe |
| PASOK | Pan-Hellenic Socialist Movement (Panellino Socialistike Kinima), Greece |
| PC | Centre Alliance (Porozumienie Centrum), Poland, ran in 1991 as POC (Porozumienie Obywatelskie Centrum), Civic Alliance Centre |
| PCF | French Communist Party (Parti Communiste Français) |
| PCI | Italian Communist Party (Partito Comunista Italiana) |
| PDS | Democratic Party of the Left (Partito Democratico della Sinistra), Italy, renamed DS, Democratic Left (Democratici di Sinistra) |
| PL | Peasant Alliance (Porozumienie Ludowe), formerly PSL-PL |
| POC | Civic Alliance Centre (Porozumienie Obywatelskie Centrum), Poland, see PC |

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| PPG | The Polish Economic Programme (Polski Program Gospodarczy), a faction of the PPPP, joined KLD |
| PPPP | Polish Beer Lovers' Party (Polska Partia Przyjaciół Piwa), merged into UW |
| PR | Proportional Representation |
| PSI | Italian Socialist Party (Partito Socialista Italiana) |
| PSL | Polish Peasant Party (Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe) |
| PSL-PL | Polish Peasant Party – Peasant Alliance (Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe – Porozumienie Ludowe), name simplified to PL when SLCh (Peasant Christian Party, Stronnictwo Ludowo-Chrześcijańskie) split off |
| PvdA | Labour Party (Partij van de Arbeid), Netherlands |
| RdR | Movement for the Republic (ruch dla Rzeczypospolitej), Poland, split from PC |
| RFE/RL | Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty |
| ROAD | Citizens' Movement for Democratic Action, Poland, faction of Solidarity, transformed into UD |
| ROP | Movement for Poland's Reconstruction (Ruch Odbudowy Polski), by RdR leader Olszewski |
| SD-LSNS | Free Democrats - Liberal [Social National] Party (Vobodní Demokrate - Liberalní Strana Národní Socialní), Czech, a merger of the LSU and OH |
| SDK | Slovak Democratic Coalition (Slovenska demokraticka koalícia), comprises DU, DS, KDĽ, SDSS, SZS |
| SDL | Party of the Democratic Left (Strana demokratickej ľavice), Slovakia, part of SV for the 1994 elections |
| SDSS | Social Democratic Party of Slovakia (Socialno-demokratika strana Slovenska), part of SV for the 1994 elections |
| SdRP | Social Democracy for the Republic of Poland (Socjaldemokracja Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej), part of the SLD |
| SFIO | French Socialist Party (Section Française de l'Internationale Ouvrière) |
| SKL | Conservatives People's Party (Stronnictwo Konserwatywno - Ludowe), Poland |
| SLD | Alliance of the Democratic Left (Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej), Poland, comprises the SdRP |
| SMK | Hungarian Coalition Party (Strana maďarskej koalície), formerly MK, Slovakia, comprises Együttélés, MKĽH, MOS |
| SNS | Slovak National Party (Slovenska národná strana) |
| SOP | Party of Civil Understanding (Strana občianskeho porozumenia), Slovakia |
| Sp | Centre Party (Senterpartiet), Norway |
| SPD | Social Democrats (Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands), Germany |

| | |
|---------|---|
| SPR-RSC | Assembly for the Republic - Czechoslovak Republican Party (Sdruzeni pro republiku- Republikanska strana Ceskoslovenska), Czech |
| STV | Single Transferable Vote |
| SV | Common Choice (Spolocna volba), Slovakia, comprised the SDL and SDSS |
| SWB | BBC Summary of World Broadcasts |
| SzDSz | Alliance of Free Democrats (Szabad Demokraták Szövetsége), Hungary |
| SZS | Green Party of Slovakia (Strana zelených Slovenska), part of the SDK |
| UD | Democratic Union, (Unia Demokratyczna), Poland, merged into UW |
| UP | Labour Union (Unia Pracy), Poland |
| US | Freedom Union (Unie Svobody), Czech |
| UW | Freedom Union (Unia Wolności), Poland, merger between DU, KLD, PPPP |
| VPN | Public Against Violence (Verejnost proti násiliu), Slovakia, split into HzDs, MOS and ODU |
| VVD | Liberals (Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie), Netherlands |
| WAK | Catholic Electoral Action (Wyborcza Akcja Katolicka), Poland, ZChN (Christian National Union) in 1993 election |
| Z | Progress Party (Fremskridtspartiet), Denmark |
| ZChN | Christian National Union (Zjednoczenie Chrześcijańsko Narodowe) |
| ZRS | Association of Slovak Workers (Združenie robotníkov slovenska) |

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

“In Poland it took ten years, in Hungary ten months, in East Germany ten days: perhaps in Czechoslovakia it will take ten days!”

- Timothy Garton Ash, Prague, 23 November 1989 ('Day Seven')

The ‘negotiated revolutions’ of 1989 in East Central Europe – Hungary, Poland and Czechoslovakia – set the scene for the successful transition from communism towards liberal democracy in the region. General agreement by all major players on the new rules of the game meant rapid consolidation of new institutions, with democracy soon becoming “the only game in town”.¹ However, even if the new political systems incorporated the institutional features of West European liberal democracies, the development of party competition has been more problematic.² It has been subject to a series of constraints that differ considerably from those of early Twentieth Century West European politics. Yet the party system remains the cornerstone of representative liberal democracy. The new rules of the game centre on uncertainty of outcome, i.e., ‘institutionalised uncertainty’, and this in turn is based on political (and economic) competition.³ Hence the focus on the locus of political competition, the party system.

The rupture with four decades of communism and the wholesale adoption of liberal democratic institutions warrant analysis of post-communist East Central Europe in terms of theories developed for analysis of West European liberal democracies. A primary aim of this thesis is therefore to approach post-communist politics through a comparative (West European) framework, taking Lipset & Rokkan’s “cleavage model”

¹ G. Di Palma, *To Craft Democracies: An Essay on Democratic Transitions*, (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1990) advocates this minimalist definition of ‘consolidation’, coining the ‘only game in town’ phrase.

² G. Smith stressed party formation as the key potential problem in 1991. G. Smith, “Transitions to Liberal Democracy”, in S. Whitefield (ed.), *The New Institutional Architecture of Eastern Europe*, (Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1993), delivered as a lecture at the School of Slavonic and East European Studies, University of London, spring 1991.

³ The relationship between economics and politics is contentious, but Przewoski’s focus on institutionalisation of uncertainty provides a key that links these elements. This matter is dealt with in chapter seven, below. See A. Przewoski, *Democracy and the Market: Political and Economic Reforms in Eastern Europe and Latin America*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1991).

of party systems development as a starting point.⁴ Theories developed for analysis of West European party systems can be applied to East Central European politics, though not without some major analysis of the implicit and explicit assumptions behind these theories. The aim is therefore twofold: first, a comparative analysis of the East Central European party systems, and second, a reappraisal of theories of party system stability and change in the light of developments in East Central European politics. In other words, the re-working of party system theory required for analysis of East Central European politics should permit a more comprehensive analysis also of West European politics. This is particularly relevant to new West European party systems such as post-Junta Greece and major party system change, e.g., leading to the ‘new’ Italian party system of the ‘Second Republic’. However, it should also throw some light upon party systems that have been considered ‘difficult’ in terms of comparative politics, notably that of the Irish Free State and the Republic. In the words of Peter Mair, “it is only by comparing established party systems with those which are still in their infancy that we can really begin to understand the freezing process.”⁵

The second part of this project applies this theoretical framework to post-communist East Central Europe. However, this is done on a comparative basis, not by way of in depth country-by-country analyses. The aim is to offer a coherent account of the development of post-communist party systems, based on a rational choice approach to party systems theory. Though in-depth country analyses would contribute further to understanding of these party systems, the main point here is comparative analysis rather than merely an explanation of their peculiarities in a country-specific context. Three main questions emerge: first, whether party systems have developed in the four cases; second, how far these systems are peculiar; and third, what are the factors which have shaped this development of party systems.

One subsidiary thread that runs through the entire argument is peculiar to East Central Europe, at least compared with much of West European politics: nationalism. More

⁴ S. M. Lipset & S. Rokkan, “Cleavage Structures, Party Systems and Voter Alignments: an Introduction”, in S. M. Lipset & S. Rokkan (eds.), *Party Systems and Voter Alignments*, (New York, The Free Press, 1967).

⁵ P. Mair, *Party System Change: Approaches and Interpretations*, (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1997), p. ix.

specifically, competing 'ethnic' and 'liberal' approaches to political questions raised by nationalism have been translated into political competition. Given the role of nationalism in Nineteenth and Twentieth Century East Central European politics, a second-order aim is an analysis of the role of nationalism in post-communist political competition. Nationalism, or rather competing approaches to political questions linked to nationalism, is therefore central to the peculiarities of post-communist politics.⁶ However, nationalism may be considered as a cleavage, derived from the process of state-building and related to regime change. To the extent that it is derived from the lack of congruence between state and national boundaries this is more than a centre-periphery cleavage. Whereas a centre – periphery cleavage may raise questions about distribution of power within a state, nationalism questions the legitimacy of the boundaries of the state (and therefore the regime's legitimacy). Yet this far from peculiar to East Central Europe. The questions related to the role of nationalism or regime change in party competition are particularly relevant to party systems that reflect divisions over regime change across Western Europe, again notably the Irish, Greek and Italian party systems.

Though the East Central European cases alone warrant re-appraisal of comparative politics approaches to party system development, stability and change, the apparent triumph of liberal democracy across the globe at the close of the Twentieth Century lends further legitimacy and urgency to the question of how far party systems theory can be applied outside its West European core area. Even if the 'End of History' has ushered in an era in which liberal democracy is the dominant normative model for politics, questions still remain concerning whether the new regimes qualify as liberal democracies, let alone stable liberal democracies.⁷ And party systems are central to representative liberal democracy, at least once the institutional questions have been solved through adoption of new rules of the game. Liberal democracy is about political competition constrained by an agreed set of rules, and the party system is the locus of this competition.

⁶ G. Schopflin, *Politics in Eastern Europe: 1945-1992*, (Oxford, Blackwell, 1993), p. 277-279, 297-299.

⁷ F. Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*, (London, Hamish Hamilton, 1992); G. Smith, "Transitions to Liberal Democracy"; J.J. Linz & A. Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation*, (Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996).

THE SCOPE

Though much of the argument may be applicable to post-communist Eastern Europe⁸ in general (or even beyond), there is a case for focusing on Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic and Slovakia in particular. All the post-communist (or post-totalitarian) states shared a common starting point, communist regimes, and a common catalyst, Gorbachev's 'Sinatra doctrine'.⁹ They can therefore be said to have formed a fourth wave of democratisation in Europe.¹⁰ In contrast to previous transitions to democracy, which involved only political change, both political and economic system change was called for in 1989. Moreover, the states in question faced potential territorial or nationalist disputes, which made for a 'triple transition' featuring political, economic and national dimensions.¹¹ Yet, if the fourth wave links all post-communist states, the four East Central European stand cases out in terms of the negotiated nature of the revolution. The Polish and Hungarian cases represent textbook examples of negotiated transition by way of regime – opposition pacts, and the Czecho-Slovak arrangements in 1989-92 were described as "thoroughly consociational" by Lijphart himself (though in this case the communists capitulated, rather than negotiate the transition).¹² This is not the case to the same extent for the remaining post-communist cases.

Furthermore, a case has been made for approaching East Central Europe, or even Eastern Europe as a whole, as one area in terms of its political history. Schopflin situates the Eastern European long-term political tradition between that of Western Europe and Russia, and this has implications in terms of "the conception, generation,

⁸ This term refers to the four East Central European states plus the former Yugoslavia, Romania, Bulgaria, Albania and the Baltic states.

⁹ A term devised by Gorbachev's spokesman, G. Gerasimov. C. Binns, in conversation.

¹⁰ A term adopted from S. Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* (Norman, University of Oklahoma Press, 1991).

¹¹ C. Offe "Capitalism by Democratic Design? Democratic Theory Facing the Triple Transition in East-Central Europe", *Social Research*, 58:4 (1991), 865-892.

¹² A. Lijphart, "Democratisation and Constitutional Choice in Czecho-Slovakia, Hungary and Poland 1989-91", *Journal of Theoretical Politics*, 4:2 (1992), 207-223. This study is based on the model set out by S. Rokkan, *Citizens, Elections, Parties: Approaches to the Comparative Study of the Process of Development*, (Oslo, Universitetsforlaget, 1970). This can also be found in A. Lijphart & B. Crawford, "Explaining Political and Economic Change in Post-Communist Eastern Europe: Old Legacies, New Institutions, hegemonic Norms, and International Pressures", *Comparative Political Studies*, 28:2 (1995), 171-199, p.198.

legitimation and exercise of power.”¹³ The region did not share fully the West European concepts of separation of state and church, of church and scientific learning, or political and economic power and contractual relationships. The result was a greater, or more dominant, role for the state. But within Eastern Europe, a ‘fault line’ runs (or at least once ran) between the Catholic lands of Austria-Hungary and the Orthodox or Muslim territories sometimes under the rule of the Ottoman Empire. Szucs has East Central Europe combining “‘Eastern European’ conditions [...] with defective ‘western-like’ structures”, and Schopflin argues that the state was less dominant under the Hapsburgs and more so under the Ottomans.¹⁴ In any case, the post-war ‘people’s democracies’ reinforced and developed Eastern Europe’s status as a single region, if only as ‘Soviet-occupied Europe’. Likewise, the ‘people’s democracies’ entered the post-communist era at the same time, driven by a single set of events (predicated on Gorbachev’s policy), and therefore shared a common starting point. By 1990 they all featured nascent party systems, through a development from conglomerate opposition parties (or ‘fronts’) toward political parties. However, after this point, the East Central and South East European cases diverge.

Apart from keeping the number of cases manageable, there are few good reasons for excluding East Germany, the Balkan and Baltic states from this project. i) The ex-DDR is excluded because it was absorbed wholesale by the BRD, thus more or less adopting the latter’s party system; ii) Romania and Bulgaria did not go through the complete and negotiated revolution comparable to the (then) other three cases in 1989: in both cases the old regime – opposition cleavage continued to dominate politics well into the 1990s, up to and including their respective 1996 and 1997 elections; iii) exclusion of the former Yugoslavia from comparative projects is frequently justified in terms of its civil wars. This project is no exception. However, Slovenia could have been included. Arguably, little would be gained by including this case, which has been subject to rather *sui generis* external factors, including the Yugoslav wars; iv) among the USSR’s successor states, the Baltic Republics provide most relevant cases. However, the Russian minority questions and the proximity of Russia has proved problematic in terms of party politics

¹³ Schopflin, *Politics in Eastern Europe*, p.6.

¹⁴ J. Szücs, “Three Historical Regions in Europe”, in J. Keane (ed.), *Civil Society and the State*, (London, Verso, 1988), p.322; Schopflin, “*Politics in Eastern Europe*”, p.11.

and government – opposition relations (the governments have been plagued by the ‘Russian question’ and their failure to resolve it).¹⁵

Hence the focus on Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Slovakia, hereafter collectively referred to as East Central Europe. These four states are considered an ‘area’, set aside from West European ‘areas’ by their common communist experience, and from other former communist ‘areas’ by their ‘western’ heritage and the nature of the transition from communism. Nevertheless, reference will be made to developments in other post-communist states where appropriate, and the comparative analysis draws heavily on past and present West European politics.

CONTEXT: THE ACADEMIC LITERATURE

The 1989 revolutions in Eastern Europe prompted a major effort of adjustment on the part of the western academic community, opening the way for a rapidly expanding literature on comparative transitions, country specific studies of post-communist politics and comparative edited volumes.¹⁶ However, the effort to adapt and apply theories developed in West European politics to the region has been more limited, despite a number of outstanding early contributions.¹⁷ This project represents an effort to redress this balance, by offering a comprehensive and systematic analysis of post-communist

¹⁵ A. Lieven, *The Baltic Revolution: Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania and the Path to Independence*, (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1993).

¹⁶ K. Dawisha & B. Parrott, *The Consolidation of Democracy in East-Central Europe*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1997); A. Przeworski *Democracy and the Market*; Linz & Stepan *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation*; K. Von Beyme, *Transition to Democracy in Eastern Europe*, (London, Macmillan Press, 1996); A. Bozoki, A. Korosenyi, & G. Schopflin (eds.), *Post-Communist Transition: Emerging Pluralism in Hungary*, (London, Pinter Publishers, 1992); and Schopflin, *Politics in Eastern Europe*; S. White, J. Batt & P.G. Lewis (eds.), *Developments in East European Politics*, (Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1993); G. Pridham & P. G. Lewis (eds.), *Stabilising Fragile Democracies: Comparing New Party System in Southern and Eastern Europe*, (London, Routledge, 1996); A. Lijphart & C. H. Waisman (eds.), *Institutional Design in New Democracies: Eastern Europe and Latin America*, (Boulder, Westview Press, 1996).

¹⁷ G. Smith, “Transitions to Liberal Democracy”; Lijphart, “Democratisation and Constitutional Choice...”; H. Kitschelt, “The Formation of Party Systems in East Central Europe”, *Politics and Society*, 20:1 (1992), 7-50; G. Evans & S. Whitefield, “Identifying the Bases of Party Competition in Eastern Europe”, *British Journal of Political Studies*, 23 (1993), 521-548; and more recently, P. Mair, “What is Different about Post-Communist Party Systems?”, *Studies in Public Policy No. 259*, (University of Strathclyde, 1996), also as chapter eight in Mair, *Party System Change*.

party systems in terms of West European party systems theory.

Moreover, much country-specific and general literature on post-communism focuses on the peculiarities and uniqueness of the case(s) at hand. Though this represents an essential contribution to the overall literature on post-communism, the result has sometimes been problematic in terms of theory. For example, the idea of the supposed existence of a vast ‘social democratic constituency’ in East Central Europe was not necessarily vindicated by the former communists’ victories in Poland, Hungary and Lithuania.¹⁸ The present rational-choice based approach to party systems theory and East Central European politics sets out to address this problem and offer a coherent account of post-communist party competition.

The second major problem in East Central European politics, the role of nationalism, has been subject to relatively close scrutiny. However, with one or two exceptions, the literature has centred on potential nationalist conflict rather than the impact of nationalist questions on political competition in the new liberal democracies. Two major efforts stand out from this generalisation: George Schöpflin and Arend Lijphart have both addressed the problems of nationalism with reference to inter-party politics.¹⁹ This project aims to develop this further, based on the centrality of inter-ethnic and nationalist questions to post-communist party competition. While the salience of nationalism may be obvious in the Czecho-Slovak case, it is also relevant in the more homogeneous cases (Poland and Hungary) because of minorities living in neighbouring states or questions about the nature of the state and citizenship.

Finally, this project is set in the context of West European party systems theory. Lipset & Rokkan’s 1967 article set off a debate on the ‘freezing hypothesis’ and party system development and change. The period of increasing volatility in the 1970s and the return to stability in the late 1980s prompted a wide debate on the subject, a literature which

¹⁸ I. Selényi & S. Selényi, “The Vacuum in Hungarian Politics: Class and Parties”, *New Left Review*, 187 (1991), 121-137; N. Sitter, “I vincitori sono degli sconfitti?”/“Are Winners Losers?”, *Acque e Terre*, No. 1, 1997.

¹⁹ Lijphart, “Democratisation and Constitutional Choice...”, Schopflin, *Politics in Eastern Europe*; G. Schopflin, “From Communism to Democracy in Hungary”, in Bozoki, Korosenyi, & Schopflin (eds.), *Post-Communist Transition: Emerging Pluralism in Hungary*.

has expanded to include a focus on parties as organisations that adapt to changes in the political system.²⁰ This project represents an effort to examine the theory from a rational choice perspective, considering the assumptions and premises inherent in much of this work. Moreover, the aim is to deal with the emergence of party systems as well as their further development. A comprehensive analysis of party systems theory in the context of a study of post-communist party systems should generate theoretical conclusions pertinent to party systems theory in general. Each of these points will be developed further in the theoretical chapters.

HYPOTHESES

The outline of the key aims and the context of the present project set out above has set the scene for three main hypotheses.

First, theories of party systems have (naturally) centred on West European politics, but application of these theories to post-communist East Central Europe should reveal assumptions and premises that must be amended in the light of new contexts. This is also relevant to the development of West European party systems in the 1990s, particularly new systems such as that of the Italian ‘Second Republic’. The Lipset-Rokkan model provides a starting point, but it is specific to a given time and place – early Twentieth Century Western Europe.²¹ Application to East Central Europe requires a re-working of the model, based on analysis of the nature and structure of cleavages, the role of institutions, the link between parties and voters and the significance of party organisation and party strategy.

²⁰ P. Mair (ed.), *The West European Party System*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1990); H. Daalder & P. Mair (eds.), *Western European Party Systems: Continuity and Change*, (London, Sage Publications, 1983); G. Smith, “A Systems Perspective on Party System Change”, *Journal of Theoretical Politics*, 1:3 (1989), 349-363; S. Bartolini & P. Mair, *Identity, Competition, and Electoral Availability: the Stabilization of European Electorates 1885-1985*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990); M. N. Franklin, H. Valen & T.T. Mackie (eds.), *Electoral Change: Responses to Evolving Social and Attitudinal Structures in Western Countries*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); R. Katz & P. Mair, “Changing Models of Party Organisation and Party Democracy: The Emergence of the Cartel Party”, *Party Politics*, 1:1 (1995), 5-28.

²¹ Lipset & Rokkan, “Cleavage Structures, Party Systems and Voter Alignments.

Second, theories developed for comparative analysis of West European politics are relevant to East Central European party systems. The East Central European countries are not so peculiar as to invalidate comparative research. In fact, comparative analysis explains the development of post-communist party systems. The hypothesis is that the development of these systems can be explained in terms of the key actors concerned (the party leaderships) and the dynamic development of their strategies under conditions of economic transition and potentially salient nationalist questions. Taking a rational choice view, this suggests that a Lipset-Rokkan type 'freezing' of post-communist party systems can be expected as inter-party relationships are consolidated. However, nationalism provides for a difference from some of the West European cases, inasmuch as 'national' or 'Christian national' democracy has played a role in East Central Europe that is analogous to that played by Christian democracy in West European politics. The dynamics of post-communist party competition and coalition-building cannot be fully understood without reference to this dimension.

Third, party strategy is increasingly important. The hypothesis suggests that party system change and stability is driven primarily by the political parties, and that party competition therefore takes centre stage in party system theory. This applies not only to East Central Europe, but also to West European party systems. Developments in post-Communist East Central Europe are no merely re-runs of the development West European party systems, but reflect changes in the conditions that characterised Lipset & Rokkan's core cases. The re-working of the Lipset-Rokkan model, with an increased focus on the role of the parties, provides a framework for analysis of West European politics that suggests conclusions which are compatible with developments in party competition and party systems in the 1980s and 1990s.

THE KEY CONCEPT: WHAT IS A PARTY SYSTEM?

“And what is a party system?” In 1966 Gordon Smith’s reply emphasised the *party* element of party systems, focusing on the requirements that the parties control the government and a fluid relationship should exist between parties and the state.²² “The existence of a bona fide party system depends on these two fundamental requirements: power of the parties over fundamental decision-making and the absence of a ‘fixed identity’ between state and party.” However, this approach focuses primarily on the *party* and less on the *system*. Yet a *party system* can be understood to include not only the party or parties as key elements in the *political system*, but also on the extent to which the parties in question form a *system*. Or even a *single system*. And a system suggests a degree of stability and predictability, or ‘patterned interactions’ between parties.²³ Thus, a collection of parties is distinguished from a system in which the parties interact with each other in a stable and predictable way and develop both institutions and strategies in response to challenges from their opponents.

Any set of elements existing in a common context can be said to form a ‘system’ inasmuch as they must exert some influence upon each other (as per laws of physics), even if this is minimal. Nevertheless, the notion of a party system suggests something about the interaction between the component parties, an element that has been neglected in some of the literature on party systems theory. Though much has been written about the development of party strategies and party competition, particularly centring on the ‘catch-all’ parties, less has been written on the relationship between party competition and party system change and stability.²⁴

Two recent developments have highlighted the importance of focus on the development

²² G. Smith, “What is a Party System?”, *Parliamentary Affairs*, 19:3 (1966), 351-362.

²³ Mair, *Party System Change*, 191-192; G. Sartori, *Parties and Party Systems: A Framework for Analysis* (New York, Cambridge University Press, 1976), p.43.

²⁴ G. Smith addressed this point in later work, including G. Smith, “Western European Party Systems: On the trail of a Typology”, *West European Politics*, 2:1 (1979), 128-143, and M. Maor & G. Smith, “Government-Opposition Relationships as a Systemic Property: A Theoretical Framework”, *ECPR Joint Session of Workshops*, Leiden April 1993. Peter Mair addresses it in *Party System Change*.

of party systems in terms of inter-party competition: the increasing power of the European Parliament and the development of party systems in formerly communist states in Eastern Europe and Russia. In these cases there can be no doubt that party systems exist in terms of a minimalist definition centring on the existence of a collection of parties that exert at least some power or influence over decision-making. But they are more problematic as far as competition is concerned. It is therefore not surprising that a recent Russian definition of party systems includes not only the relationship between parties and the state, but also “the nature of the interaction between political parties” and their relationship with “other organisations under their patronage which serve as a mass base and source of renewal of both party ranks and cadres”.²⁵ Both are weak, if not missing, in Russia (and, to a lesser extent, in the European Parliament). The relationship between the parties is developing only slowly, and that between parties and extra-parliamentary organisations barely at all. If a party system requires inter-party competition and mutual adjustment of party strategies, it may be premature to describe either the Russian Duma or the European Parliament in terms of fully developed party systems.

Factors such as the number of parties, their size and nature, ideological distance and relationship to social cleavages may, to borrow G. Smith’s words, certainly “help us understand the nature of party systems: they are not suitable criteria for deciding whether a system exists”.²⁶ Nevertheless, there is a case for including inter-party relationships as a defining property of party systems, or at least fully developed party systems. Starting from Dahl’s work on government-opposition relationships,²⁷ Maor & Smith set out four principal levels and dimensions of party interaction which make up government – opposition relationships that are considered a systemic property:²⁸

²⁵ Tu. I. Aver’yanov (ed.), *Politologiya - entsiklopedicheskii slovar’* (Politology - an Encyclopaedic Dictionary), (Moscow, Izd. Moskovskogo Kommercheskogo Universiteta, 1993), “Party system”, p.234-5. Translation by C. Binns, May 1997.

²⁶ G. Smith “What is a Party System?”, p.362. Here Smith’s reference to ‘factors’ and ‘criteria’ is specifically to the number of parties, their size and the type of state within which they operate, but the point is valid for later factors including volatility, ideology and de-/re-alignment.

²⁷ R. Dahl (ed.), *Political Opposition in Western Democracies*, (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1966).

²⁸ Maor & G. Smith, “Government-Opposition Relationships as a Systemic Property”.

Levels of interaction:

- Electoral
- parliamentary
- intra-coalition
- inter-party

Dimensions of interaction:

- left – right
- new politics – old politics
- EC integration
- ‘maverick issues’

In the context of the debate on party system stability, Sartori argues that the party systems should be understood as an independent variable, but this is based on inter-party competition and collusion.²⁹ A party system is “the system of interactions resulting from inter-party competition”.³⁰ Maor & Smith see the “‘system’ itself not as an actor but [as] dependent on the interaction of parties”.³¹ “A party system involves the totality of relationships of parties one with another...”.³² What then if there is only limited party interaction?

The question may not have been particularly significant in West European politics, where universal male suffrage and the development of party systems were inextricably linked to alliances, negotiation and competition between new and old parties.³³ This provided the basis for Lipset & Rokkan’s analysis of West European party systems.³⁴ Yet stability and change in West European party systems can be analysed in terms of changes in party strategies, notably the development of catch-all and ‘cartel’ parties.³⁵ Even if the ideological or policy difference between parties may have declined, this does not mean that competition, let alone interaction, has been limited.

²⁹ G. Sartori, “The Sociology of Parties: A Critical Review”, in O. Stammer (ed.), *Party Systems, Party Organisations, and the Politics of New Masses*, (Berlin, Free University of Berlin, 1968); P. Mair, “E. E. Schattschneider’s The Semi-Sovereign People”, *Political Studies*, 45 (1997), 957-954.

³⁰ Sartori *Parties and Party Systems*, p.44.

³¹ Maor & G. Smith, “Government-Opposition Relationships as a Systemic Property: A Theoretical Framework”, p.5.

³² Smith, “A Systems Perspective on Party System Change”, p.349.

³³ G. Luebbert, *Liberalism, Fascism or Social Democracy: Social Classes and the Political Origins of Regimes in Interwar Europe*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1991); Lijphart, “Democratisation and Constitutional Choice...”.

³⁴ Lipset & Rokkan, “Cleavage Structures, Party Systems and Voter Alignments”.

³⁵ O. Kirchheimer, “The Transformation of West European Party Systems”, in J. LaPalombara & M. Weiner (eds.), *Political Parties and Political Development*, (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1966); Katz & Mair “Changing Models of Party Organisation and Party Democracy”.

In contrast, the creation of the Russian parliament and the EP preceded that of their party systems. Hence the '*emergence*' rather than *existence* of a party systems. In both cases the levels of interaction are institutional and national (EC) or personal (Russia) rather than confined to the four levels, let alone the four dimensions, cited above. If *party system* is taken to imply systematic interaction between the parties, then 1989-90 East Central Europe can at best be described as featuring 'emerging' or 'nascent' party systems. The 'parties' competing in Poland and Czechoslovakia in 1989-90 were better described as proto-parties or conglomerate parties than western-style political parties, and the governments were better analysed in terms of individual members of the governments than in terms of party government. Only in Hungary did the MDF and Fidesz constitute more than broad opposition movements, and 1989-90 saw mutual adjustment of the MDF, SzDSz and Fidesz, and even the MSzP's strategies.³⁶

Yet within half a decade all four states featured well-developed party systems. The period covered by the first parliaments (and in the Polish case also the second) featured both polarisation and the development of party strategies, in addition to the development of party organisations. By the time of the 1992 elections in Czechoslovakia two distinct party systems had emerged in the state's two constituent republics. The focus on the relationship between the parties and inter-party competition is crucial to this observation. The Slovak nationalist parties, in particular, operated primarily with respect to their 'national' competitors and against the federation as such, rather than as part of a single federal party system.

In the four cases the development of party competition during the first parliaments centred on all Maor & Smith's four levels of interaction. In Czecho-slovakia the 'hyphen debate' over the republic's name illustrated the duality of the system, elections were fought at the republican level and the two governments faced very different oppositions. The 1991 Polish elections saw the opposition parties competing on platforms explicitly critical of the government's performance, and in the run-up to the 1993 elections systematic competition and co-operation between potential coalition parties developed. Introduction of a 5% threshold for parliamentary representation

³⁶ A full list of all abbreviations is provided on pages 7-11.

contributed to a degree of ‘freezing’ of the party system. Only Hungary featured a full set of parties by the first election (1990), a party system which has proved remarkably stable for a new democracy. Yet until well into the first parliaments even Hungary’s parties were better described as ‘milieu’ groups of like-minded politicians than fully developed parties.³⁷

Hence the argument that the definition of a fully developed party system must include not only the existence of a number of parties and party control over or influence on governmental decision making, but also an element of inter-party competition. In short:

- Without a number of parties there can be no party *system*, a one-party system is an oxymoron. A political system featuring one party is possible, but this is not a party system since a system, by definition, requires more than one component. ‘One-party system’ is thus short for a one-party political system, and not the contradictory ‘one-party party system’.
- Without a degree of party control over governmental decision making the parties are relegated to being mere appendages of the state or the ruler. Should parties cease to control (even indirectly) aspects of decision making, the “‘party state’ ceases to exist: the parties remain merely as a shell”.³⁸ In this case the party system is both redundant and meaningless, unless there is a prospect of parties regaining control over power.
- The development of cartel parties has made Smith’s point about the relationship between the parties and the state more complicated, though separation of the two remains necessary.
- Inter-party competition is a crucial element of a party system (of course this makes the first point redundant, as inter-party competition requires more than one party). A fully developed system requires a degree of systematic, stable and predictable

³⁷ G. G. Markus, “Parties, Camps and Cleavages in Post-Communist Hungary: Is the Weakness of Social Democratic Forces Systemic?”, (manuscript, 1992).

³⁸ G. Smith, “What is a Party System?”, p.361.

- interaction between the component parties. Where a competitive relationship between parties (and government and opposition) is lacking, the party system must be qualified as 'emerging' or 'nascent'. It does not inevitably develop into a fully developed party system.

This argument suggests that a party system can be less than fully developed. Several factors may make for a 'nascent' party system rather than a fully developed and integrated system.

- A party system may consist of several 'sub-systems' that are more significant than the system as a whole, i.e., the system is not fully integrated, and the sub-systems are dominant. Examples include the European Parliament and the Czechoslovak party system 1990-92.
- The party system and parliament may not be the key location of political conflict. In other words, non-party or extra-parliamentary competition may be more significant than inter-party competition. Both Russian and EC politics have been more concerned with inter-institutional and national/personal competition than inter-party competition.
- Inter-party competition may take second place to intra-party competition. The early stages of the East Central European party systems were dominated by the development of parties rather than competition between these parties.
- Inter-party competition and co-operation may be highly unstable, i.e., the relationship between the parties could be fluid. This has been the case in some of the East Central European party systems, notably the Hungarian.

Any of these developments can affect fully developed party systems, threatening the system or at least the electoral prospects of 'dysfunctional' parties. For example, the Belgian party system has been under pressure from the development of two sub-systems. The 'clean hands' scandals in Italy took political competition beyond the party

system temporarily in 1990-92. Disproportionate intra-party competition contributed the British Labour Party's dysfunctional strategy following their 1979 defeat, and something similar could be happening to the Conservative Party in the context of divisions over European integration.

Therefore, this definition of party systems in terms of the integrity of the system, the relationship between the party system and the state, and stable inter-party competition provides the context for analysis of the development of East Central European post-communist party systems as well as a framework for considering potential pressure on a fully developed party system. Given this potential for instability, the term 'nascent' party system is preferable to 'developing' or 'emerging' party systems as far as Russia and the European Parliament is concerned. This avoids the certainty of outcome suggested by development theory. The term 'nascent' will be used in the analysis of East Central European party systems as well, though it will be argued that by 1998 Hungary, Poland and the Czech and Slovak republics had achieved more or less fully developed party systems.

DISCLAIMER

Before proceeding to the theoretical approach, sources and the outline of the thesis, a disclaimer is warranted. The above discussion should have made it clear that this project is primarily concerned with: i) theories of party system development; ii) the East Central European party systems (which make up an essential component of liberal democracy); and within this context: iii) the dynamics of party competition; and iv) the role of nationalism.

By extension, there are several things that this project is not about, notwithstanding the fact that they warrant closer study in their own right. First, it is not an empirical study of all the parties that make up the East Central European party systems, or even a complete study of all party strategies. Some literature on this is beginning to emerge, though on a case by case basis. There is evidently ample scope for comparative studies that focus on,

e.g., the agrarian parties. The present project aims to provide a theoretical framework for analysis.

Second, it does not constitute an evaluation of transitions to democracy or theories of transition, let alone a study of the 1989 revolutions. Linz & Stepan have provided a comprehensive comparative framework for the study of regime change, transition and consolidation, and Garton-Ash an authoritative account of the events of 1989.³⁹ The four cases were chosen partly because of the relative success of their transition to liberal democracy, which was arguably consolidated by the time the communist parties accepted defeat and all major new players accepted the legitimacy of the new rules of the game.

Third, by extension, this project is not concerned with the development of the institutions of liberal democracy except insofar as this has a direct bearing on the party systems. This is perhaps the most contentious exclusion, as institutional arrangements such as electoral systems, the rule of law and free media are crucial to political competition in liberal democracies. The matter has however been expertly dealt with by Lijphart.⁴⁰

Finally, in the context of nationalism and politics, this project does not offer a general theory of nationalism. The focus is on the role of issues raised by nationalism in party politics, in other words problems related to the lack of congruence between national and political boundaries in East Central Europe. Within this more limited context, one or two theoretical conclusions may be offered.

ON INSTITUTIONS

The exclusion of institutions is easily the most potentially controversial point, as a considerable body of literature addresses the impact of institutions on politics in general and on party system change and stability in particular. New institutionalists and

³⁹ Linz & Stepan *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation*; T. Garton-Ash, *We the People*, (Cambridge, Granta Books, 1990).

⁴⁰ Lijphart, "Democratisation and Constitutional Choice..."; see also D. Olson & P. Norton (eds.), *The New Parliaments of Central and Eastern Europe*, (London, Frank Cass, 1996).

historical institutionalists focus on the extent to which institutions (rules of the game and ideas) can obscure efforts to achieve rational change and how they affect the trajectories of change.⁴¹ There are even some studies of the impact of institutions on public policy developments in East Central Europe.⁴² However, as far as the development of party systems is concerned, the initial period is characterised by institutional flux rather than stability. The new rules of the game enjoy legitimacy precisely because they are the result of negotiations between the main protagonists on the political scene, i.e., the political (proto-)parties. Hence the introduction of PR electoral systems across Western Europe as part of the democratisation process, as the conservative and liberal parties sought to limit any potential manufactured majority the socialist parties might be accorded under a plurality electoral system and the social democrat parties sought to guarantee their parliamentary presence.⁴³ The same applies to East Central Europe.⁴⁴ Institutions such as electoral systems are therefore dependent rather than independent variables during the early phases of party system development. Unless these institutions have been imposed from the outside, they therefore reflect the party system (or political constellations) rather than shape it. Only once the new system has been established and party systems have emerged do institutions affect party systems, e.g., in the form of barriers to entry. In short, they contribute to party system freezing rather than shape the party systems.⁴⁵ This point is taken up in the second section of Chapter Three, below.

⁴¹ J. G. March & J. P. Olsen, *Rediscovering Institutions: The Organizational Basis of Politics*, (New York, The Free Press, 1989); K. Thelen & S. Steinmo, "Historical Institutionalism in Comparative Politics", in S. Steinmo, K. Thelen & F. Longstreth (eds.), *Structuring Politics: Historical Institutionalism in Comparative Analysis*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1992).

⁴² S. Hanson, "The Leninist Legacy and Institutional Change", *Comparative Political Studies* 28:2 (1995), 306-314; B. Geddes, "A Comparative Perspective on the Leninist Legacy in Eastern Europe", *Comparative Political Studies*, 28:2 (1995), 239-274, and E. Commisso, "Legacies of the Past or New Institutions? The Struggle over Restitution in Hungary", *Comparative Political studies*, 28:2 (1995), 200-238.

⁴³ Rokkan, *Citizens, Elections, Parties*; A. Lijphart, *The Politics of Accommodation: Pluralism and Democracy in the Netherlands*, (Berkeley, University of California Press, 2nd ed. 1975).

⁴⁴ Lijphart, "Democratisation and Constitutional Choice...".

⁴⁵ Bartolini & Mair, *Identity, Competition, and Electoral Availability*.

METHODOLOGY & SOURCES

THE COMPARATIVE APPROACH

The thesis draws on the advantages of a comparative approach to East Central European politics. It is based on the argument that a comparative approach is qualitatively different from an empirical examination of each of the cases, and analysis of party systems benefits from a theoretical and a comparative approach. Despite the legacy of the communist regimes, it will be argued that the East Central European states can be analysed in terms of theories developed for liberal democracy. Given the negotiated nature of the transitions and all major actors' acceptance of the new rules of the game, consolidation of the new democracies was relatively swift.⁴⁶ Therefore there is a case for analysing developments in these states in terms of theories developed for analysis of liberal democracies, thus providing an account of developments in post-communist East Central Europe that is not based on culture or unique conditions.

Though a number of factors contributing to the development of party system in each of the four cases may well be *sui generis*, these will be analysed through a comparative framework. Moreover, it will be argued that the key factors in the development of party systems are not peculiar to each state, but are related either to the specific nature of transition from communism or can be understood in broader theoretical terms. For example, the propensity of post-communist electorates to vote against the incumbent could be explained in terms of each specific historical case. But a comparative rational choice approach focusing on problems of economic transition, low party identification and retrospective voting provides a different explanation, and one that does not depend on the 'peculiarities of post-communism'. It also forces rethinking of the incumbency advantage sometimes observed in West European politics.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Di Palma, *To Craft Democracies*; Przeworski, *Democracy and the Market*. A similar definition is adopted by Linz & Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation*, p.3.

⁴⁷ See, e.g., R. Rose & T. Mackie, "Incumbency in Government: Asset or Liability?", in Daalder & Mair (eds.), *Western European Party Systems*, p. 115. E.g., in the Netherlands, a 10-seat 'prime minister's bonus' in elections has been usual since 1977 for the party that furnished the incumbent prime minister (M. Van Hulst, London, 2 May 1997).

PARTY SYSTEMS THEORY AND RATIONAL CHOICE

Party systems theory rests on three main pillars: theories of political parties and party ideology, theories of voting behaviour, and theories of party strategies and party competition. In the context of parties and ideology and voting behaviour there has been a conflict between rational choice approaches stressing the autonomy of actors and sociological approaches focusing on the social phenomena that shape politics.⁴⁸ Even a number of theories of party competition have been based on sociological phenomena, notably Inglehart's theories of post-materialism and party system change and Pedersen's explanations of party system change in the 1970s.⁴⁹ On the other hand, even Lipset & Rokkan's 'sociological' approach has been praised for the extent to which it focused on party strategies and parties as rational actors, and the volatility expected in the 1970s did not materialise.⁵⁰

In fact, looking at parties and party systems in terms of rational choice under given constraints overcomes several of these problems. The party systems debate moved into the 1990s with the debate between Bartolini & Mair's focus on party system stability and Franklin, Mackie and Valen's focus on electoral change.⁵¹ Rational choice theory offers one possible reconciliation of these alternative arguments, based on political parties as rational actors which act under certain constraints such as electoral change. Even if electoral change is related to changes in parties' electoral strategies a rational choice analysis permits a dynamic relationship between voters and parties. And this

⁴⁸ Alan Ware offers a slightly different but basically similar breakdown, based on sociological, institutional and competition-based explanations of parties and party systems. Within each of these approaches parties and party systems can be considered more or less responsive to change in the factors that created them. A. Ware, *Political Parties and Party Systems*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1996), p.8.

⁴⁹ R. Inglehart, *The Silent Revolution: Changing Values and Political Styles Among Western Publics*, (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1977); M. N. Pedersen, "Changing Patterns of Electoral Volatility in European Party Systems; 1948-1977: Explorations in Explanation", in Daalder & Mair (eds.), *Western European Party Systems*.

⁵⁰ Respectively, Sartori 'The Sociology of Parties'; Bartolini & Mair, *Identity, Competition, and Electoral Availability*.

⁵¹ Bartolini & Mair, *Identity, Competition, and Electoral Availability*; Franklin, Valen & Mackie (eds.), *Electoral Change*.

takes place within a wider institutional and social context. In other words, a rational actor-based approach provides room for institutional and sociological factors, but these are understood as constraints under which parties, voters and even party systems act and develop. This accounts for the continuing relevance of the left-right dimension despite changes in West European party programmes, as the main parties attempt to maintain the dominance of left-right competition in the name of self-preservation.⁵² The long term stability of West European party systems is thus explained in terms of parties as rational actors, whether from a 1960s or a 1990s perspective.⁵³

Given the weakness, or at least fluidity, of institutional and sociological factors under the condition of post-communism, the rational choice approach becomes all the more relevant. If West European politics has left considerable scope for party strategy, the post-communist scene is more or less dominated by it. Not only is the rational choice approach necessary to reconcile the findings of the major studies on West European politics cited above, but it offers a coherent explanation of the development of East Central European parties in a comparative context. The key arguments featured in this thesis are therefore based on rational choice under a series of constraints, some of which are related to the ‘condition of post-communism’.⁵⁴ If anything, post-communist party leaderships have enjoyed considerably more freedom than many of their western counterparts. The history of East Central European party systems is that of their development of party strategies at electoral and parliamentary level, a development which has been constrained by a number of factors relevant to party systems theory and which has taken these systems from nascent to fully developed party systems.

⁵² On left – right competition, I. Budge, D. Robinson & D. Hearl, *Ideology, Strategy and Party Change: Spatial Analyses of Post-War Election Programmes in 19 Democracies*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1987).

⁵³ Sartori, “The Sociology of Parties: A Critical Review”; G. Smith, “A Systems Perspective on Party System Change”.

⁵⁴ The term and concept is from Schopflin, *Politics in Eastern Europe*, Chapter 10.

SOURCES

Choice and availability of sources remains a key question for the political scientist engaged in comparative research. Key questions include the degree to which local language sources are required and the role of mass media as a source.

- The thesis is essentially theoretical in orientation, which means that theoretical work remains part of the source material and that this remains relevant throughout the thesis rather than merely for the theoretical chapters.
- The thesis is essentially comparative, it is not an empirical investigation. Language constraints mean that only a limited number of sources in original Hungarian, Polish, Czech or Slovak languages have been used, though original material in translated and/or reported form has been used. Though this might constitute a significant problem for in-depth qualitative empirical research, this research is carried out on the assumption that this will be more than compensated for by the theoretical and comparative approach.
- Much of the empirical evidence is quantitative rather than qualitative. Two chapters are concerned primarily with quantitative data such as election results, opinion polls and survey data (often published in German) and the rise and fall of coalitions.
- As far as qualitative sources are concerned, post-communist East Central European politics offer some potential problems, and Chapter Seven focuses on party alignments, clearly a matter of qualitative judgement. The transition from communism has involved a remarkable degree of consensus on political system change and the desired goal of a free market economy. Ideological debate has been limited at best, with most party manifestos expressing commitment to the free market. Furthermore, on key issues such as nationalism, programmatic consensus often covers over divisions in terms of policy that are evident in speeches, legislation and the use of myths in electoral appeal. This question is addressed in more detail in

Chapter Seven. Suffice it to point out that the analysis is based primarily on statements by parties or party leaders as reported in the media, journalists' and commentators' observations and actual policies and voted on or carried out. English and German language summaries and translations, such as BBC's Summary of World Broadcasts, RFE/RL and Deutsche Welle Monitor-Dienst have proved particularly useful in this context.

THESIS STRUCTURE AND CHAPTER OUTLINE

The key to this thesis is comparative politics and theories of party system development, and Lipset & Rokkan's 'freezing hypothesis' remains the most influential theory of party system development and change, or rather lack of change. The subsequent debate on party system change and stability brings theories of party system development up to date. However, less has been written on the emergence of party systems after the 'classic' period around the end of WW I discussed by Lipset & Rokkan. It will be argued that the Lipset-Rokkan model featured a series of assumptions about party competition, party structure and electorates, and that these were specific to the context of West European politics in the early Twentieth Century. Though the Lipset-Rokkan model provides a useful starting point, it must be amended if it is to be applied to post-communist politics. The structure of the thesis reflects this argument, with a first section focusing on theory and theoretical arguments, a briefer second section focusing on comparative historical developments and the role of nationalism in East Central European politics in particular, and a third and more substantial section focusing on post-communist politics in East Central Europe.

SECTION ONE features two predominantly theoretical chapters. Chapter Two addresses party systems theory, including the development and change of party systems and party strategies. In this context theories of transition to democracy and political system change are reviewed critically, with a view to comments on the peculiarities and comparative features of the transition from communism in East Central Europe. Finally, this sets the scene for questions concerning the emergence and development of party

systems in Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic and Slovakia. Chapter Three proceeds to an analysis of the Lipset-Rokkan model and its potential application to East Central Europe. First, state-building and nationalism have proved more problematic impediments to liberal parliamentary democracy in this region than in West European politics, at least as far as Lipset & Rokkan's core cases are concerned. Second, voter alignments are considerably more fluid under the condition of post-communism than was the case in early Twentieth Century Western Europe. Third, the West European political parties have developed considerably, and the new parties in either part of Europe have relatively little in common with the mass or 'wing' parties that dominate the Lipset-Rokkan model. Finally, and this is the core of a rational choice based approach, party strategy is crucial. Each of these factors must therefore be considered in analyses of post-communist East Central European politics.

SECTION TWO contains only one chapter, Chapter Four, devoted to a brief historical analysis. Party systems do not develop in a vacuum, even when they emerge after four decades of communism. Given the focus on state-building developed in Chapter Three, the historical analysis is primarily concerned with the development of party systems and party competition in the context of nationalism and democratisation. This will be developed further in Chapter Seven on post-communist party alignments.

SECTION THREE focuses on developments since 1989, and features four chapters: Chapters Five to Eight. Chapter Five takes a rational choice approach to voters, elections and the development of party identification under the condition of post-communism. A combination of anti-incumbency voting, low party identification and problems of economic transition provide constraints for post-communist governments – they tend not to get re-elected. The new parties operate under conditions of considerable volatility, but party leaderships are relatively free from constraints imposed by members or extra-parliamentary organisations. Chapter Six considers the role of party organisation, again concluding that the party leadership enjoys considerable freedom of action in most cases. Populist parties, liberal elitist parties, social democrat parties and agrarian/peasant parties are compared, and though no form of organisation has proved superior, some forms of party organisation are more volatile and thus entail both

advantages and great risk. The most substantial chapter of the section, Chapter Seven, analyses the post-communist party systems in terms of party alignments. Though inter-party competition in East Central Europe can be analysed in terms of economic and non-economic factors in a two-dimensional grid borrowed from analyses of West European politics, there are considerable advantages in incorporating issues derived from nationalism into the analysis. Again the analysis is based on rational choice theory, with a view to the subsequent chapter. Chapter Eight draws conclusions in terms of party competition and coalition strategies, explaining developments in post-communist politics in terms of the development of party systems and rational choice under the constraints considered above. This chapter serves as the main conclusion on the development of post-communist party systems.

THE CONCLUSION focuses on party systems theory in the context of post-communism. Developments in post-communist East Central Europe have warranted analysis and re-evaluation of several premises and assumptions upon which theories of party system development and change rest. However, these theoretical conclusions are not limited to East Central European politics, but have implications for analyses of late Twentieth Century West European politics. The Italian second republic is the best case in point, analysis of its new party system requires similar theoretical considerations in terms of voters, parties, party alignments and party strategies. Therefore, though 'the East Central European party system' might in fact exist, it has very much in common with several countries otherwise classified as part of 'the West European party system'.

CHAPTER TWO

APPROACHES TO POST-COMMUNIST POLITICS IN EAST CENTRAL EUROPE

"Eastern Europe ... Central Europe ... Europe"

- *Daedalus*, title of the Winter 1990 volume

PARTY SYSTEMS THEORY: DEVELOPMENT AND CHANGE

Party systems theory is based on three main pillars: parties as rational actors; the link between sociology and politics, including theories of voting behaviour; and patterns of inter-party competition. The nature of the party system, and of party system change, is therefore generally explained in terms of its component parts (the parties); sociological and other external constraints (cleavages); and patterns of inter-party competition (which can be shaped by changes in the rules of the game, i.e., the institutions). This distinction is reflected in three main works on party system stability and change, published in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Budge, Robinson & Hearl focus on changing party strategy; Mackie & Valen and Franklin on social change and its impact on party competition; and Bartolini & Mair on institutional and bloc stability.¹

The debate over party system change and stability is therefore fought at three levels. First, parties are the main components of a party system, even if the system is more than the mere sum of its components. These can be understood primarily as office-seekers,² or, alternatively, as representatives of social groups or ideological families, or reflecting

¹ I. Budge, D. Robinson & D. Hearl, *Ideology, Strategy and Party Change: Spatial Analyses of Post-War Election Programmes in 19 Democracies*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1987); S. Bartolini & P. Mair, *Identity, Competition, and Electoral Availability: the Stabilization of European Electorates 1885-1985*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990); M. N. Franklin, H. Valen & T.T. Mackie (eds.), *Electoral Change: Responses to Evolving Social and Attitudinal Structures in Western Countries* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1992). Mair notes a similar division, before proceeding to caution against excessive focus on electoral change, P. Mair, "Party Politics in Contemporary Europe: A Challenge to Party?", *West European Politics*, 7:4 (1984), 170-184.

² A. Downs, *An Economic Theory of Democracy*, (New York, Harper & Row, 1957); and elitist theories, e.g., R. Michels, *Political Parties: A Sociological Study of the Oligarchical Tendencies of Modern Democracy*, (New York, Dover, 1959); J. A. Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy*, (London, G. Allen & Unwin, 1943).

cleavages.³ In either case, changes in party organisation and party strategy are linked to party system change – either precipitating it or responding to it. Sartori’s approach to parties as agents that *translate* cleavages into political competition combines the two roles of the party, office seeker and interest-representative, while allowing the party to remain an independent variable.⁴ This approach to parties as rational actors that operate within given parameters helps resolve the question of whether parties shape voters’ preferences and drive politics, or whether they primarily respond to external factors. Parties make a strategic choice whether to persuade voters through ideology or interest-specific appeal, or to adopt a catch-all strategy. In other words, parties can be interpreted as more or less independent agents attempting to persuade voters to vote for them (preference shapers), or as more responsive to changes in parameters (accommodating voters’ preferences). Variations in dependence have been explained with reference to several factors, including reliance on external organisations, availability of resources, ideological commitment and organisation, or type of party.⁵

Second, party systems development and change directly reflect the strategic choices made by parties. The nature of competition is an integral element of the party system.⁶ The rules of the game, as negotiated by the parties at some point during the last century and a half, and the development of institutions of party competition shape the development of the party system. If one form of party organisation proves superior, the pressure is on the rival parties to adopt this form, or better still, an improved form of organisation and strategy.⁷

³ K. von Beyme, *Political Parties in Western Democracies*, (Aldersgot, Gower, 1985); Duverger, *Political Parties: Their Organisation and Activity in the Modern State*, (London, Methuen, 1954); S. M. Lipset & S. Rokkan, “Cleavage Structures, Party Systems and Voter Alignments: an Introduction”, in S. M. Lipset & S. Rokkan (eds.), *Party Systems and Voter Alignments*, (New York, The Free Press, 1967); Budge et al., *Ideology, Strategy and Party Change*.

⁴ G. Sartori, “The Sociology of Parties: A Critical Review”, in O. Stammer (ed.), *Party Systems, Party Organisations, and the Politics of New Masses*, (Berlin, Free University of Berlin, 1968).

⁵ A. Panebianco, *Modelli di partito: Organizzazione e potere nei partiti politici*, (1980), translated as A. Panebianco, *Political Parties: Organisation and Power*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1988); P. Dunleavy, *Democracy, Bureaucracy and Public Choice: Economic Explanations in Political Science*, (London, Harvester, 1991); O. Kirchheimer, “The Transformation of West European Party Systems”, in J. LaPalombara & M. Weiner (eds.), *Political Parties and Political Development*, (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1966); Duverger, *Political Parties*; D. Epstein, *Political Parties in Western Democracies*, (London, Pall Mall Press, 1967).

⁶ G. Sartori, *Parties and Party Systems*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1976).

⁷ Kirchheimer, “The Transformation of West European Party Systems”; Duverger, *Political Parties*; Epstein, *Political Parties in Western Democracies*.

Third, the relationship between sociological factors and party systems remains contentious. Even if one were to accept, provisionally, that voters are the driving force and parties primarily respond to voters' demands, the extent to which cleavages affect voting is highly contentious. Down's rational voter acts more or less completely independently of social cleavages, whereas party identification approaches usually draw on cleavages.⁸ Moreover, a considerable degree of party identification has been explained in rational choice terms, as a voter's iterated rational analysis of parties at subsequent elections may lead to party identification as a short-cut to future elections.⁹

This debate is to a large extent about structure and agency, with political sociologists stressing structure, institutionalists stressing the rules of the game, and rational choice theorists focusing on agency. Each can and does focus more or less on the parties, party competition and the extent to which voters shape the party system. Lipset & Rokkan's framework for analysis combines actor-based theories with structural constraints. Parties are agents that translate cleavages into political competition, and the resulting party system depends on the alliances offered and accepted. Cleavages, institutions and the closure of electoral space provide structural constraints on party competition, i.e., parameters within which parties must work. In the Lipset-Rokkan schema the agents' freedom of action is severely constrained, but the role of parties as translators of structure into politics is crucial.

This combination of structure and agency characterises most of the literature on post-communist politics. The structure – institution – agency debate remains within each of the three main approaches, which comprise i) **transition theories**, influenced by previous comparative work on transitions in Southern Europe and Latin America; ii) approaches that stress the specific nature of East Central Europe or each individual case study that can, for the want of a better term, be called **East Central European**

⁸ R. Rose & D. W. Urwin, "Persistence and Change in Western Party Systems since 1945", *Political Studies*, 18:3 (1970), 387-319; Franklin, Mackie & Valen (eds.), *Electoral Change*; P. Dunleavy & C. Husbands, *British Democracy at the Crossroads: Voting and Party Competition in the 1980s*, (London, Allen & Unwin, 1985), on changing patterns and definitions of class voting, from class defined by production cleavages to consumption-based definitions.

⁹ M. P. Fiorina, *Retrospective Voting in American National Elections*, (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1981).

exceptionalism; and iii) comparative approaches that analyse post-communist East Central European developments in terms of theories developed in the field of **comparative West European or US politics**. The main characteristics of the three approaches, as applied to East Central Europe, are set out in table 2.1, below. A fourth approach builds on the **International Relations literature**. Though the primary focus here is domestic politics, international relations provide ‘super-rules’ within which the domestic games are played and external actors who influence processes of party system development.

Theories of transition and consolidation focus primarily on the paths of liberalisation and democratisation, particularly on negotiated transitions from authoritarianism to (liberal) democracy. The most influential work in this strand is the four-volume O’Donnell, Schmitter & Whitehead project, which has since been updated to incorporate and explain the transitions from communism in East Central Europe.¹⁰ These approaches focus primarily on the old regime, the paths of transition and viability of negotiated pacts, and the relative strength of the old regime’s institutions and civil society. Alternatively, Di Palma and Przeworski’s approaches owe more to rational choice and game theory, as they focus primarily on the legitimacy of the new system in the eyes of the main actors.¹¹ Consolidation of democracy is achieved with the adoption of a new set of rules of the game, accepted by all major players.

However, more can be learned from previous waves of democratisation in Europe than theories of democratisation based on a comparison between southern Europe and Latin

¹⁰ G. O’Donnell, P. Schmitter & L. Whitehead (eds.), *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Prospects for Democracy in Latin America and Southern Europe*, (Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986); in particular volume IV, published as G. O’Donnell & P. Schmitter, *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Democracies*, (Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986); G. Pridham & P. G. Lewis (eds.), *Stabilising Fragile Democracies: Comparing New Party Systems in Southern and Eastern Europe*, (London, Routledge, 1996); P. G. Lewis, “Democratisation in Eastern Europe”, *Coexistence*, 27 (1990), 245-67; A. Agh, “The Transition to Democracy in East Central Europe: A Comparative View”, *Journal of Public Policy*, 11 (1991), 133-151; G. Ekiert, “Democratisation Processes in East Central Europe: A Theoretical Reconsideration”, *British Journal of Political Science*, 21 (1991), 285-313; A. Agh, “The ‘Comparative Revolution’ and the Transition in Central and Southern Europe”, *Journal of Theoretical Politics*, 5 (1993), 231-252; J. J. Linz & A. Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe*, (Baltimore, John Hopkins University Press, 1996).

¹¹ A. Przeworski, *Democracy and the Market: Political and Economic Reforms in Eastern Europe and Latin America*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1991); G. Di Palma, “To Craft Democracies: An Essay on Democratic Transitions”, (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1990).

America alone. The democratisation process in Europe in the run-up to and aftermath of World War One provides examples of transitions leading to the consolidation of liberal, social democratic, fascist regimes as well as 'traditional dictatorships'. Luebbert holds that this can be explained primarily in terms of alliances offered and accepted by the main parties, though the viability of such alliances depended on structural constraints.¹² Rokkan's work on democratisation is in the same vein, and, like Luebbert's is directly linked to the party systems in the new democracies.¹³

Offe's "triple revolution" stresses the special character of the 1989 transitions, which sets the transitions from communism apart from earlier waves not only in terms of economic transition but also due to the process of state-building.¹⁴ In contrast to the regime-only transitions in Southern Europe and Latin America, these transitions also feature change of the economic system and challenges to national boundaries. Moreover, they all move toward the same end, liberal democracy and the free market (at least nominally, given the lack of normative alternatives). Likewise, Fukuyama's "end of history" thesis holds that the collapse of communism saw the end of ideological struggle between alternative models.¹⁵ The 1989 transitions lacked ideological alternatives to liberal democracy, leaving it (or a bastardised version) dominant by default. To be sure, Western pressure, the prospect of the EU and NATO membership, and IMF involvement in economic transitions reinforce this outcome in most cases.

The transition theory approach is challenged and rejected by a series of approaches that share a common focus on **East Central European exceptionalism**. Briefly, the transitions from communism in East Central Europe are considered more or less *sui generis*, and are therefore not directly comparable to previous waves of transitions, whether West European, South European or Latin American. First, the historical East

¹² G. Luebbert, *Liberalism, Fascism or Social Democracy: Social Classes and the Political Origins of Regimes in Interwar Europe*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1991).

¹³ S. Rokkan, *Citizens, Elections, Parties: Approaches to the Comparative Study of the Processes of Development*, (Oslo, Universitetsforlaget, 1970).

¹⁴ C. Offe, "Capitalism by Democratic Design? Democratic Theory Facing the Triple Transition in East-Central Europe", in G. Lengyl, C. Offe & J. Tholen (eds.), *Economic Institution, Actors and Attitudes: East Central Europe in Transition*, (Budapest/Bremen, Working Papers, 1992); C. Offe "Capitalism by Democratic Design? Democratic Theory Facing the Triple Transition in East-Central Europe", *Social Research*, 58:4 (1991), 865-892.

¹⁵ F. Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*, (London, Hamish Hamilton, 1992).

Central European tradition emphasises the long term differences in political, institutional or sociological terms between Western and Eastern Europe, based on factors such as the strength of civil society, political traditions and etatism, or nationalism.¹⁶ Second, analyses grounded in comparative communism draw on the post-war period and the destruction of civil society, emphasising the differences between the people's democracies in Eastern Europe. Again the focus is either on the structure of civil society, on political culture and economic problems, or on the institutional legacy.¹⁷

However, neither the transition theories nor the East Central European exceptionalism approaches say much about the new regimes, i.e., the outcome of the transition. They are primarily concerned with the success of the transition process and the consolidation of democracy, and potential obstacles. While transition theory focuses on the *process* of transition, East Central European exceptionalism tends to focus on the *conditions* that inhibit or promote transition to liberal democracy. Considerably less has been written about the new regimes from a **comparative West European politics** perspective, and though this literature is growing it has tended to make crude extrapolations from West European politics.¹⁸ Nevertheless, a few efforts stand out. Gordon Smith's approach to

¹⁶ Respectively, J. Szucs, "Three Historical Regions in Europe", in J. Keane (ed.), *Civil Society and the State*, (London, Verso, 1988); G. Schopflin, *Politics in Eastern Europe: 1945-1992*, (Oxford, Blackwell, 1993); E. Gellner, "Nationalism and Politics in Eastern Europe", *New Left Review*, 189 (1991), 127-134; H. Kohn, *The Idea of Nationalism: A Study in its Origins and Background*, (New York, The Macmillan Company, 1944), J. Plamenatz, "Two Types of Nationalism", in E. Kamenka (ed.), *Nationalism: The Nature and Evolution of an Idea*, (London, Edward Arnold, 1976).

¹⁷ Respectively, J. L. Curry, "Pluralism in East Central Europe: Not Will it Last, but What is it?", *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, 26:4 (1993), 446-461; S. Hanson, "The Leninist Legacy and Institutional Change", *Comparative Political Studies* 28:2, (1995), 306-314; B. Geddes, "A Comparative Perspective on the Leninist Legacy in Eastern Europe", *Comparative Political Studies* 28:2 (1995), 239-274, and E. Comisso, "Legacies of the Past or New Institutions? The Struggle over Restitution in Hungary", *Comparative Political studies*, 28:2 (1995), 200-238.

¹⁸ I. Selenyi & S. Selenyi, "The Vacuum in Hungarian Politics: Class and Parties", *New Left Review*, 187 (1991), 121-137; R. Rose, "Mobilizing Demobilized Voters in Post-Communist Societies", *Party Politics*, 1:4 (1996), 549-563; K. von Beyme, "L'europeizzazione dell'Europa occidentale", in M. Calise (ed.), *Come cambiano i partiti*, (Bologna, Il Mulino, 1992); K. von Beyme, *Systemwechsel in Osteuropa*, (Frankfurt-am-Main, Suhrkamp, 1994). Even Korosenyi borders on committing this fallacy on an exploratory level, though he warns against it as he does so, A. Korosenyi, "Revival of the Past or a New Beginning? The Nature of Post-Communist Politics", in A. Bozoki, A. Korosenyi, & G. Schopflin (eds.), *Post-Communist Transition: Emerging Pluralism in Hungary*, (London, Pinter Publishers, 1992). Rivera's test of the Lipset-Rokkan model falls into this category, S. W. Rivera, "Historical Cleavages or Transition Mode: Influences on the Emerging Party Systems in Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia", *Party Politics*, 2:2 (1996), 177-208.

post-communist democracy draws on the comparative West European politics literature, posing questions about parties as well as electorates and institutional arrangements.¹⁹ Peter Mair shares this comparative politics approach, as East Central Europe is analysed in the context of factors that shape party system stability and change in Western Europe.²⁰ Kitschelt's focus on the legacy of communism in terms of actors' resources draws on rational choice analysis on the part of voters and party elites, while leaving room for institutional manipulation. The contrast with West European party competition is based on differences in the relationship between political and economic liberalism.²¹ Relying less on sociological factors than Kitschelt does, Lijphart nevertheless takes a similar approach. Drawing on Rokkan's work, he analyses the institutional frameworks set up in Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia in terms of early Twentieth Century West European developments.²²

Though the **International Relations literature** has not had much of an impact on party system analysis, the international system provides the wider context within which democratisation and party system development is located. Some of the transition theory literature has emphasised the extent to which the end of the Cold War has affected political developments in East Central Europe. The competition between communism and fascism that provided alternatives to liberal democracy in the inter-war period (and, after the war, between communism and liberalism) has been replaced by a liberal democratic consensus, if not the 'end of history'.²³ Though little literature has been dedicated exclusively to the impact of external forces on party system development, the role of Moscow in directing West European communist parties and Washington's involvement in post-war Italian politics has been discussed extensively.²⁴ Tsebelis' work

¹⁹ G. Smith, "Transitions to Liberal Democracy", in S. Whitefield (ed.), *The New Institutional Architecture of Eastern Europe*, (Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1993). Also as paper presented at the School of Slavonic and East European Studies, University of London, 1991.

²⁰ P. Mair, "What is Different about Post-Communist Party Systems?", *Studies in Public Policy No. 259*, (University of Strathclyde, 1996).

²¹ H. Kitschelt, "The Formation of Party Systems in East Central Europe", *Politics and Society* 20:1 (1992), 7-50.

²² A. Lijphart, "Democratisation and Constitutional Choice in Czecho-Slovakia, Hungary and Poland 1989-91", *Journal of Theoretical Politics*, 4:2 (1992), 207-223.

²³ Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*.

²⁴ D. Mack Smith, *Modern Italy: A Political History* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1997), p.448, 460-461; G. Smith, *Politics in Western Europe: A Comparative Analysis*, (Aldershot, Gower, 1989), 176-182.

on 'nested games', i.e., games in party politics at several levels, can therefore be extended to include supra-national games.²⁵ Moreover, the literature on the mutual impact of European Union and Member State systems, i.e., 'policy syncretism', could be extended to suggest that supranational parties in the EU have an impact on national party systems.²⁶ In post-communist East Central Europe, this has pulled all party systems in one direction, towards general acceptance of liberal democracy and the free market as normative models.

²⁵ G. Tsebelis, *Nested Games: Rational Choice in Comparative Politics*, (Berkeley, California University Press, 1990).

²⁶ S. Eyre & N. Sitter, "From PTT to NRA: Towards a New Regulatory Regime?", in K. A. Eliassen & M. Sjovaag (eds.), *European Telecommunications Liberalisation: Too Good to be True?*, (London, Routledge, 1999); J. Gaffney (ed.), *Political Parties and the European Union*, (London, Routledge, 1996).

Table 2.1 Approaches to analysis of post-communist politics in East Central Europe.

| MAIN FOCUS OF THE APPROACHES: | (RATIONAL) ACTOR ELEMENT (AGENCY) | INSTITUTIONAL ELEMENTS (INSTITUTIONS) | STRUCTURAL ELEMENTS (STRUCTURE) |
|---|---|---|--|
| TRANSITION THEORIES Transition Democratisation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> rational actors negotiated outcomes leadership control actors' acceptance of new rules alliances offered and accepted | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the path of transition viability of pacts the role of the military new rules of the game, and their legitimacy uncertainty competition or restricted competition | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the strength of civil society structural prerequisites for liberal democracy economic structure multi-ethnic states irredentism |
| EAST CENTRAL EUROPEAN EXCEPTIONALISM Long term 1945-89 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> historical institutionalism limits rational choice and/or shapes preferences. the left is discredited inexperienced elites politics conducted in absolute terms choices affect which legacies are important | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> institutional legacy of communism national divisions and a weak state-system etatism: the strong state vs. civil society precarious liberal democratic institutions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> weak civil society is the legacy of communism and/or pre-communist era historical cleavages ethnic divisions irredentism political culture |
| COMPARATIVE WEST EUROPEAN POLITICS Party system development Stability vs. Change | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> rational actor assumptions: office seekers or policy makers alliances and coalitions economic policy seen as the priority parties and party organisation: change and adaptation parties preserve the party system challenges to the status quo and responses | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> new rules of the game negotiated by rational actors barriers to new parties: thresholds to competition party competition: adversarial, polarised or consensual (consociational) institutional freezing and stability (inertia) agenda setting and maintenance of left - right competition | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> cleavages cleavage structures re- and de-alignment left - right dimension actors' resources |
| INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS Big power/super-powers influence European integration | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> impact of West European and US ideology impact of the supranational system on domestic systems (syncretism) nested (multi-level) games | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> international relations institutionalism impact on domestic policy, of the IMF and the European Union impact of security arrangements (OSCE, NATO, CE etc.) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the 'end of history' means there are no alternative models to liberal democracy end of the Cold War East Central Europe between (free from) Russia and Germany; Russian and the west |

THEORIES OF TRANSITION AND SYSTEM CHANGE:

TRANSITION THEORY

As a separate field within political science, transition theory owes its existence to comparative studies of transitions in Latin America and Southern Europe in the 1970s. Together with Rustow's theoretical model for transitions to democracy, the most influential work on transitions has been the four-volume O'Donnell, Schmitter & Whitehead project on *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Prospects for Democracy in Latin America and Southern Europe*.²⁷ Their main conclusions centre on liberalisation, the paths from authoritarianism, the viability of pacts, and on the role of civil society and state institutions. Transition theory therefore deliberately departs from the sociological or political culture explanations advanced previously to account for democratisation and/or the failure of democracy, replacing functionalist approaches concerned with long-term socio-economic developments and modernisation with genetic approaches that stress the scope for political choice.²⁸

The process of transition and the legacy of the previous regime are therefore seen as crucial variables that affect the development of new institutions. As the new rules of the game are negotiated "institutional stability thus becomes an integral part of party

²⁷ O'Donnell, Schmitter & Whitehead (eds.), *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule*. Rustow's work straddles the border between transitions theory and studies of 'first transitions', D. A. Rustow, "Transitions to Democracy: Toward a Dynamic Model", *Comparative Politics*, 3 (1970), 337-363. Two useful compilations are G. Pridham (ed.), *The New Mediterranean Democracies: Regime Transition in Spain, Greece and Portugal*, (London, Cass, 1984); G. Pridham (ed.), *Transitions to Democracy: Comparative Perspectives from Southern Europe, Latin America and Eastern Europe*, (Aldershot, Dartmouth, 1995).

²⁸ This distinction is made in G. Pridham, "Political Actors, Linkages and Interactions: Democratic Consolidation in Southern Europe", *West European Politics*, 13 (1990), 103-117, p.107; G. Pridham & P. G. Lewis, "Introduction: Stabilising Fragile Democracies and Party System Development", in Pridham & Lewis (eds.), *Stabilising Fragile Democracies*, p.4. On political culture see, G. Almond & S. Verba, *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations*, (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1963); on modernisation see S. Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies*, (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1968); S. Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*, (Norman, University of Oklahoma Press, 1991); B. Moore, *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World*, (London, Allen Lane, Penguin Press, 1967).

competition.”²⁹ Party competition is to some extent about maintaining and modifying the new rules of the game. The problem of applying transition theory to Southern Europe is that it does not explain the differences in transition. Though the outcome was similar in all three cases inasmuch as liberal democratic regimes were installed and survived, the three paths of transition differed considerably. In Spain regime reformists and the King acted while the rest of the state’s institutions stood aside (except for the 1981 attempted military coup), in Portugal the regime was overthrown by state actors (the younger officers), while in Greece the military (as a state institution) transferred power from the military regime to civilians.³⁰

More significantly, transition theory says little or nothing about the emergent party systems, despite the integral role of parties to the transition and consolidation process.³¹ In other words, the development of South European party systems cannot be explained in terms of transition theory, even if the path of transition clearly affects it, and neither can party system stability. The response on the part of country specialists has been to explain each party system in terms of *sui generis* factors, without a theoretical framework. The new parties are understood in terms of their past, e.g., New Democracy and PASOK failed to modernise, holding on to old clientelistic practices rather than developing into modern catch-all or mass parties respectively.³²

Transition theory’s focus on the path of transition to democracy is, therefore, more useful in terms of institution-building than for party system formation.³³ It is more of a tool for classification of cases of transitions, and for identifying the obstacles to the

²⁹ Y. Papadopoulos, “Parties, the State and Society in Greece: Continuity within Change”, *West European Politics*, 12:2 (1989), 55-71, p.64; G. T. Mavrogordatos, “The Greek Party System: A Case of ‘Limited but Polarised Pluralism?’”, *West European Politics*, 7:4 (1984), 156-169.

³⁰ Hence Fishman argues the need to distinguish between state and regime. R. M. Fishman, “Rethinking State and Regime: Southern Europe’s Transitions to Democracy”, *World Politics*, 42 (1990), 422-440.

³¹ E.g., K. Medhurst, “Spain’s Evolutionary Pathway from Dictatorship to Democracy” in Pridham (ed.), *The New Mediterranean Democracies*; P. N. Diamandouros, “Transition to and Consolidation of, Democratic Politics in Greece, 1974-1983: A Tentative Assessment”, in Pridham (ed.), *The New Mediterranean Democracies*.

³² C. Lyrintzis, “Political Parties in Post-Junta Greece: A Case of ‘Bureaucratic Clientelism?’”, *West European Politics*, 7:2 (1984), 99-118. On the Iberian cases, see J. R. Lewis & A. M. Williams, “Social Cleavages and Electoral Performance: The Social Basis for Portuguese Political Parties, 1976-83”, and M. Caciagli, “Spain: Parties and the Party System in Transition”, both in Pridham (ed.), *The New Mediterranean Democracies*.

³³ A. Lijphart, “The Southern European Examples of Democratization: Six lessons for Latin America”, *Government and Opposition*, 25 (1990), 68-84.

establishment of liberal democracy.³⁴ The negotiations during the period of transition, between the old regime and the opposition in Hungary and Poland, and the two constituent republics in the Czecho-Slovak case, provide part of the context in which party systems developed. Rustow's assertion that "national unity is [...] a background condition in the sense that it must precede all the other phases of democratisation but that otherwise its timing is irrelevant" may hold for the prospects for *transition towards democracy*.³⁵ The impact of national divisions on party systems in Finland, Greece and Ireland indicates that this assertion does not hold for the *development of party systems*. Though cleavages and the timing of their politicisation might not determine the outcome of transitions, they certainly provide parameters within which party competition takes place.

DEMOCRATISATION AND CONSOLIDATION

Though transition theory attaches considerable weight to the main actors' strategies, much of this is abandoned in the work on the consolidation of democracy. As they move to analyse consolidation, even authors who focus more or less exclusively on actors in transitions shift their attention toward structural factors and country-specific conditions. However, a 'minimalist' approach provides an alternative that focuses on acceptance of the newly negotiated rules of the game and the players' incentives to comply with these. Both strands permit conclusions about the emergence of party systems, though neither tends actually to draw them. In fact, parties and party systems are usually considered as variables that affect the process of consolidation, rather than as affected by it. Exceptions to this rule include analyses of the relationship between parties and the new rules of the game.

Liphart's focus on institution-building as the crucial element of transition is echoed in minimalist approaches to consolidation, which investigate the development of new institutions and major players' acceptance of the rules of the game in Portugal, Spain

³⁴ A case in point is T. L. Karl & P. C. Schmitter, "Modes of Transition in Latin America, Southern and Eastern Europe", *International Social Science Journal*, 128 (1991), 269-284, where successful transition is considered less probable in Eastern Europe; and more optimistically, with the benefit of some hindsight, Linz & Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation*.

³⁵ Rustow, "Transitions to Democracy", p.351.

and Greece.³⁶ The crucial point is that though institutions may contribute to the freezing of political alternatives and the party system, they are designed by the actors involved in building the new regime and therefore *reflect* the nascent party systems rather than *shape* them.³⁷ The exception would be cases in which external powers determine the institutional set-up, e.g., in both halves of Germany after WW II. This has not been the case in Southern or East Central Europe, even if external influence cannot be denied.

One problem in transition theory lies in comparing transitions in which the key pacts between the major players are rapidly agreed and there is no effective resistance to the new regime and cases in which an institution like the military retains a degree of control and the pacts are far less certain. Hence the consolidation literature's concern with the stabilisation of 'fragile democracies' and potential disruption of the democratisation process. The 'minimalist' approach owes much to Di Palma and Przeworski, both of whom stress the legitimacy of the new rules of the game in the eyes of the players that may disrupt the game.³⁸ These are actor-based models, in Przeworski's case based on rational choice analysis and game theory linking the economic and democratic transitions. In contrast to the minimalist approach and the actor-orientation found in the transition literature, 'maximalist' approaches to consolidation stress structural factors.³⁹ Social and historical cleavages, clientelist practices, and the strength of civil society all shape the prospects for consolidation, even if "the primary (but by no means exclusive) determinant of consolidation of democracy (and type of ensuing democracy) is the mode of transition."⁴⁰ The minimalist approaches are directly applicable to post-communist East Central Europe inasmuch as the four cases featured near total acceptance of the new rules of the game. Of course this sets the scene for the development of party systems, but it says little about the emerging party systems (though one may infer from Przeworski that economic questions will assume a high priority). The maximalist

³⁶ G. Di Palma, "Government Performance: An Issue and Three Cases in Search of a Theory", *West European Politics*, 7 (1984), 172-187.

³⁷ Bartolini & Mair, *Identity, Competition, and Electoral Availability*; Lijphart, "Democratisation and Constitutional Choice..."; Rokkan, *Citizens, Elections, Parties*.

³⁸ The term is Di Palma's, *To Craft Democracies*; Przeworski, *Democracy and the Market*.

³⁹ This is the case even where they are transition theorists, e.g. G. Pridham, "Political Actors, Linkages and Interactions: Democratic Consolidation in Southern Europe", *West European Politics*, 13 (1990), 103-117.

⁴⁰ P. C. Schmitter, "The Consolidation of Political Democracies: Processes, Rhythms, Sequences and Types", in Pridham (ed.) *Transitions to Democracy*, p. 567.

literature says even less, treating the parties and their relationship with the state and society as crucial variables in explaining consolidation.⁴¹ Where parties and party systems are the main subject of research, they are considered from the same perspective as consolidation and as influenced by the same structural factors.⁴²

Analyses of transitions to full democracy in early Twentieth Century Western Europe point to the significance of negotiated settlements by political parties (domestic, within states), whether in the Netherlands (1917), Sweden (1907) or on a comparative basis.⁴³ These analyses stress the link between democratisation (introduction of the universal male franchise) and proportional representation electoral systems, as all parties to negotiations take cautious approaches and protect themselves from worst-case scenarios by opting for PR. Lipset & Rokkan's thresholds to political participation are thus lowered, legitimising opposition, providing full political rights, easing the procedure for new parties to gain representation while providing an institutional check on majority (or plurality) power. New rules of the game are designed, which entail uncertainty of outcome but clear legal constraints on the limits of majority power. In this schema alliances and bargaining provide the key to democratisation, even if the parties act under structural constraints.⁴⁴ In other words, parties act under constraints, their action is not wholly determined by them. The new institutions reflect the party system, inasmuch as they are the product of negotiated transition. The main problem in terms of East Central Europe is that the regime change was not driven primarily by domestic political parties, and to the extent that it was, these were conglomerate opposition movements.

⁴¹ P. C. Schmitter, "The Consolidation of Democracy and Representation of Social Groups", *American Behavioural Scientist*, 35 (1992), 422-449; Pridham, "Political Actors, Linkages and Interactions"; and G. Pridham (ed), *Securing Democracy: Political Parties and Democratic Consolidation in Southern Europe*, (London, Published for Centre for Mediterranean Studies by Routledge, 1990).

⁴² Papadoupoulos, "Parties, the State and Society in Greece"; Pridham & Lewis (eds.), *Stabilising Fragile Democracies*.

⁴³ A. Lijphart, *The Politics of Accommodation: Pluralism and Democracy in the Netherlands*, (Berkeley, University of California Press, 2nd ed. 1975); Rustow, "Transitions to Democracy"; Rokkan, *Citizens, Elections, Parties*.

⁴⁴ Luebbert, *Liberalism, Fascism, or Social Democracy*.

THE END OF HISTORY? ECONOMIC AND NATIONAL TRANSITIONS AFTER THE COLD WAR

The East Central European transitions stand out from earlier waves of transition not only because they form part of a given area, but also due to their common starting point and the timing of this 'fourth wave'. To be sure, the 'one area' thesis has been disputed.⁴⁵ Yet despite their internal differences, all the post-communist cases share the combination of political and economic system change. Differences between communist economies pale before the comparison with the market-based economies that they have made models for economic transition. However, the transitions from communism faced no contests about the goal, which was capitalist liberal democracy (however ill-defined). Though interpretations of this concept might differ, liberal democracy was universally accepted as the prescriptive model. Fukuyama's 'end of history' point is thus well taken. Though conflict may continue, it will not be over major ideological alternatives. If the need for economic transition complicated the democratisation projects, then the 'end of history' removed competing and potentially destabilising ideological alternatives. The East Central European cases also differ considerably from previous non-European transitions because proximity to West European markets is a significant factor in institutional change in East Central Europe.⁴⁶ The post-war and 1970s West European waves of democratisation demonstrated this effect, directly through occupation in Germany and Italy and thorough EC membership in the Mediterranean cases.

Offe coined the term 'triple transition' to distinguish the transition from communism from previous transitions not only in terms of economic transition but also in terms of state-building. Hence the problems of comparative work on transitions. Given the task of economic system change and the problems of ethnic minorities and territorial integrity, "the suggestive temptation to add a fourth group to these [Italy, Japan and West Germany; the South European cases; and the South American transitions] – i.e. that of the Central and East European states – and to analyze them with the proven instruments supplied by this tradition turns out, however, to be unsuitable and

⁴⁵ Special issue on "Eastern Europe ... Central Europe ... Europe", *Daedalus*, 119:1 (Winter 1990).

⁴⁶ Hanson, "The Leninist Legacy and Institutional Change".

misleading.”⁴⁷ Linz & Stepan’s attempt to deal with this problem represents a major development in transition theory. They rightly point out that most of the literature on nationalism is not concerned primarily with the links between democracy and nationalism, but then proceed to consider this primarily as a question of territorial integrity. In inter-war Eastern Europe, the “priority given to nation-building in the state contributed to democratic instability, crisis, and sometimes demise in later decades of the state itself.”⁴⁸ Other theories of nationalism suggest that the phenomenon might be more complicated.⁴⁹ Translated into political competition, the principle that the world is divided into nations and that each nation should have its own state amounts to more than conflict between states.⁵⁰ Divisions within states, between parties holding different views on the implications of multi-ethnic states, can and do affect political competition.

The debate on consociationalism and democratic stability in Western Europe illustrates the point, i.e., the potential danger of majority abuse of power in key areas such as education policy, media control, appointments to state institutions, and through indirect discrimination or, in economic terms, biased land and voucher distribution.⁵¹ To be sure, as the problems of the Northern Irish peace process illustrate, the consociational approach depends on a degree of consensus on borders (or at least willingness to postpone the question). Ethnicity may therefore be a more serious problem than religious divisions (which frequently come equipped with hierarchical organisations) for the politics of accommodation.⁵² Nevertheless, this suggests that nationalism is not a specifically East Central European problem. Though it is invoked to explain and justify

⁴⁷ C. Offe, “Capitalism by Democratic Design? Democratic Theory Facing the Triple Transition in East-Central Europe”, *Social Research*, 58:4 (1991), 865-892, p.868.

⁴⁸ Linz & Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation*, p. 24.

⁴⁹ G. Schopflin, “Nationalism and Ethnicity in Europe, East and West”, in C. Kupchan (ed.), *Nationalism and Nationalities in the New Europe* (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1995); G. Schopflin, “Ethnic Minorities in Central and Eastern Europe: Analyses and Solutions”, (manuscript, 1996); G. Schopflin, “From Communism to Democracy in Hungary”, in Bozoki, Korosenyi, & Schopflin (eds.), *Post-Communist Transition*; see also J. Szacki, *Liberalism after Communism*, (Budapest, Central European University Press, 1994).

⁵⁰ Gellner’s definition, E. Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, (Oxford, Blackwell, 1983), p.1.

⁵¹ This is derived partly from McGarry & O’Leary’s analysis of Northern Ireland and efforts to reach power-sharing arrangements. J. McGarry & B. O’Leary, *Explaining Northern Ireland: Broken Images*, (Oxford, Blackwell, 1995).

⁵² B. Barry, “Political Accommodation and Consociational Democracy”, *British Journal of Political Science*, 5 (1975), 477-505; H. Daalder, “The Consociational Democracy Theme”, *World Politics*, 26 (1974), 604-621.

East Central European exceptionalism, there is no shortage of nationalist cleavages or issues in West European politics. In other words, the nationalist dimension complicates the application of transition theory, and warrants focus on the impact of national questions on political competition. The case for exceptionalism is considered below.

EAST CENTRAL EUROPEAN EXCEPTIONALISM

The comparative presumptions that characterise transition theory are challenged and rejected by analysts focusing on the exceptional characteristics of democratisation in East Central Europe. Offe's triple revolution argument merely asserts that the transitions from post-communism are different from previous waves, not that comparative analysis is therefore futile. However, there is no shortage of analysts of East Central European history and politics who argue that, for one reason or another, this is an exceptional region that cannot be approached on a comparative basis. Or rather, comparisons are warranted only within the region. The specific characteristics of each state are more significant than their similarities with other cases outside this particular region.

This series of arguments can, for the sake of simplicity, be collectively filed under the heading 'East Central European exceptionalism'. The two main sub-groups reflect pre-occupation with long-term political and structural factors on the one hand, and the effects of four decades of communist rule on the other. In both cases, the arguments are grounded in culture as well as structure and institutions. One or two approaches are even actor-oriented. Long-term factors are divided into three categories: i) approaches to nationalism, ii) the relationship between state and civil society, and iii) political competition. Comparative communism has produced a series of works on the conditions of post-communism based on the legacy of communism, again a question approaches from structural, institutional and actor-based approaches.

TWO NATIONALISMS

The French revolution is sometimes seen as the starting point in the development of nationalism as a political movement. This starting point draws attention to the link between national identity and politics, i.e., the political aspects of nationalism (political power is justified in the name of the citizens, or the nation). However, though nationalism can be defined as a political doctrine (which holds that the world is divided into nations and that each nation has the right to its own state), nations are based on ethnic identity to some extent.⁵³ In other words, the nation is a concept that rests on both political and sociological bases.⁵⁴ However, a considerable share of analysts of nationalism argue that there is a substantial difference between nationalism in Western and Eastern Europe in terms of their bases in citizenship and ethnicity, to the extent that they must be considered East Central European exceptionalists.

Though the logical consequences of such arguments range from nationalism as a factor that must be taken into account to fully fledged pessimism concerning the prospects for democracy under 'nasty' variations of nationalism, these approaches share a common presumption that East Central Europe is different. The dichotomy has been referred to in terms of eastern (organic) and western (voluntarist) nationalism, territorial and ethnic/cultural varieties, and based on the contrast between German and French nationalism.⁵⁵ The arguments can be derived from structural as well as actor-based interpretations of nationalism. Distinctions have been based on the existence of a French state and the need to build a German *Reich* (and hence on the needs to build states in Eastern Europe); on the difference between bourgeois nationalism (Czech) and its aristocratic counterparts (Hungary, Poland); and whether a national 'high culture'

⁵³ In A. Smith's words, the ethnies, A. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nation*, (Oxford, Blackwell, 1986).

⁵⁴ This argument is developed in Schopflin, "Ethnic Minorities in Central and Eastern Europe: Analyses and Solutions".

⁵⁵ Respectively, Kohn, *The Idea of Nationalism*, echoed by Plamenatz, "Two Types of Nationalism"; A. D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*; K. R. Minogue, *Nationalism*, (London, B. T. Batsford, 1967), and R. Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany*, (Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1992).

existed.⁵⁶ Kohn mixed philosophy and structure, with political developments dependent on whether the organisation of the state preceded the development of nationalism as a political phenomenon.⁵⁷ More actor-oriented analyses emphasise the role of nationalism within political parties, notably the tension between nationalism and liberalism.⁵⁸ In this context, ethnic groups are easy targets for political mobilisation.⁵⁹ Whether structural or actor-based approaches are taken, the common conclusion is that the relevance of national questions during the process of democratisation had a major impact on political competition. Hence a series of questions have been raised as to whether 1989 heralded a 'return to the past' given the relevance of long-term historical factors.⁶⁰

However, the 'two nationalisms' argument is more relevant to political competition than to classification of nations. Most cases of nationalism feature a combination of ethnic and political elements, but the movements that invoke nationalism in the process of state-building (even in the same case) do not necessarily share a common approach. The competition between Pilsudski and Dmowski over the nature of post-WW I Poland is a case in point: Dmowski's right focused on a concept of nationhood closely linked to Catholicism and assimilation or expulsion of minorities, Pilsudski's left on the old commonwealth-model based on a multi-ethnic, federal state.⁶¹ The question facing comparative analysts is, therefore, whether national questions and regime support can be considered a cleavage on a par with Lipset & Rokkan's four cleavages. Daalder suggested as much one year before the Lipset-Rokkan volume was published, adding

⁵⁶ Respectively, Plamenatz, "Two Types of Nationalism"; P. F. Sugar, "External and Domestic Roots of Eastern European Nationalism" in P. F. Sugar & I. Lederer (eds.), *Nationalism in Eastern Europe*, (University of Washington Press, Seattle, 1969); Gellner, "Nationalism and Politics in Eastern Europe".

⁵⁷ Kohn, *The Idea of Nationalism*; a similar historical approach can be found in A. W. Orridge, "Varieties of Nationalism", in L. Tivey (ed.), *The Nation State: The Formation of Modern Politics*, (Oxford, Robertson, 1981).

⁵⁸ H. Seton-Watson, *The East European Revolution*, 3rd Ed. (London, Methuen, 1956); Schopflin, *Politics in Eastern Europe*; Szacki, *Liberalism after Communism*.

⁵⁹ A. Lijphart & B. Crawford, "Explaining Political and Economic Change in Post-Communist Eastern Europe", *Comparative Political Studies*, 28:2 (1995), 171-199, p.188; A. Breton (ed.), *Nationalism and Rationality*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1995); Tsebelis, *Nested Games*.

⁶⁰ J. Rotschild, *Return to Diversity: A Political History of East Central Europe since World War I*, (New York, Oxford University Press, 1989); B. Lomax, "Hungary" and J. Eyal, "Romania", in S. Whitefield (ed.), *The New Institutional Architecture of Eastern Europe*, (Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1993); Korosenyi, "Revival of the Past or a New Beginning?".

⁶¹ J. Rothschild, *East Central Europe between the Two World Wars*, (Seattle, University of Washington Press, 1974), p.31-47.

that these might reflect elite conflict rather than social divisions.⁶² This may well be more significant than Lipset & Rokkan's centre-periphery cleavage, as indicated by the Irish case where the centre (Westminster) – periphery (Irish nationalism) division is about regime-support and state-building.⁶³ Similar points have been developed in other cases, such as Greece, where, true to Lipset & Rokkan, “notwithstanding changes in modes of party organisation and party labels, the three political families generated from the two major cleavages which marked modern Greek history [the ‘national schism’ and the civil war] show a remarkable persistence.”⁶⁴

From an exceptionalist point of view, the new Greek party system is a “spectacular confirmation of the historic tripolar structure which has been the single most stable element the Greek political landscape since the beginning of this century,” and “it is also doubtful whether an analysis of the formation and consolidation of party systems can benefit from the accumulated, if not cumulative, research on system change.”⁶⁵ In other words, the party system rooted in the civil war and the national schism is unique, or at least exceptional. The same argument has been advanced concerning the peculiarities of Irish politics.⁶⁶ This suggests that East Central Europe is hardly unique, even if, like in several West European cases, competing approaches to nationalist questions have been translated into party competition and prompted some analysts to argue that it is *sui generis*. Nationalism may be relevant to party competition, but the ‘two nationalisms’ do not so much make this region (or Greece or Ireland) exceptional as indicate a possible cleavage that can be translated into party competition.

⁶² H. Daalder, “Parties, Elites and Political Developments in Western Europe”, in LaPalombara & Weiner (eds.), *Political Parties and Political Development*, p.67-68.

⁶³ R. Sinnott, “Interpretations of the Irish Party System”, *European Journal of Political Research*, 12:3 (1984), 289-307. This is not uncontroversial, T. Garvin, *The Evolution of Irish Nationalist Politics*, (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1981); R. K. Carty, *Party and the Parish Pump: Electoral Politics in Ireland*, (Waterloo, Ontario, Wilfrid Laurier Press, 1981).

⁶⁴ Papadopoulos, “Parties, the State and Society in Greece”, p.58.

⁶⁵ Mavrogordatos, “The Greek Party System”, p.168 and 156 respectively.

⁶⁶ J. Whyte, “Ireland: Politics Without Social Bases”, in R. Rose (ed.), *Electoral Behavior: A Comparative Handbook*, (New York, Free Press, 1974); Garvin, *The Evolution of Irish Nationalist Politics*.

BACKWARDNESS (MESO-STRUCTURES)

The significance of national questions for inter-war East Central European politics was undeniable, and Linz & Stepan's point that this contributed to the collapse of the inter-war regimes is well taken. However, East Central European exceptionalism is not based exclusively on the national question, but also on the structure of civil society, backwardness, agrarian politics and the limited success of liberalism. Szucs stresses the long-term weakness of civil society and the limited potential for liberal democracy, a point taken up by Schopflin in terms of limited institutions available to resist the state, and Luebbert by way of limited class politics during the inter-war years.⁶⁷ This leads to the difference between interest-based agrarian politics (Scandinavia, Czech lands) and populist peasantism (Eastern Europe), a strategic choice by parties that is shaped by agrarian structures.⁶⁸ However, the presence of both stands within parties like the Norwegian Agrarian/Centre party indicated that this dichotomy may apply to options of party strategy rather than regional differences. To be sure, a structuralist approach would suggest that in any case communist modernisation removed the basis for populism where agriculture was collectivised.⁶⁹ The point could equally be applied to social structures or ideology. Here the inter-war legacy includes the development of liberalism in East Central Europe in the context of traditional conservatism and Catholic politics, both of which challenged liberalism's focus on the individual over the community and considered rights in collective, not individual, terms.⁷⁰ The communist regimes perpetuated this development, limiting the pressure on conservatism to develop into a market-oriented ideology and contributing further to coining rights in collective terms.

⁶⁷ Szücs, "Three Historical Regions in Europe"; Schopflin, *Politics in Eastern Europe*; Luebbert, *Liberalism, Fascism or Social Democracy*.

⁶⁸ M. Canovan, *Populism* (New York, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1981); D. Urwin, *From Ploughshare to Ballot Box: the Politics of Agrarian Defence in Europe*, (Oslo, Universitetsforlaget, 1980).

⁶⁹ J. Held, "Antecedents", in J. Held (ed.), *Populism in Eastern Europe: Racism, Nationalism, and Society*, (East European Monographs, Boulder, distributed by Columbia University Press, New York, 1996).

⁷⁰ Szacki, *Liberalism after Communism*.

THE LEGACY OF COMMUNISM AND THE CONDITIONS OF POST-COMMUNISM

Comparative analyses of communism offer further versions of East Central European exceptionalism. The ‘legacy of communism’ debate reflects the broader structure – agency debate, and the importance of the impact of structural and political factors is contentious.⁷¹ Sociological or structural accounts of East Central European exceptionalism draw on the destruction of pre-communist civil society, the legacy of communist modernisation and the structures that the post-communist states inherited. “Missing middle” approaches focus on “the *absence* of stable social cleavages or any *mezzo*-structures based upon them,” i.e., post-communist politics takes place more or less in a vacuum.⁷² Gellner’s assertion that the prominence of nationalism in Russian politics “is based on the importance of high culture in, precisely, a structureless mass society” could presumably be extended to East Central European (if modified).⁷³ In the absence of social cleavages upon which to base competition, parties revert to appeals based on nationalism, traditional values of populism, or to competition based on the pace of dismantling the communist political and economic system, allegedly rendering the Lipset-Rokkan model inapplicable.⁷⁴ These analyses are supported by the observed weakness of organised interests, notably trade unions, due to communist destruction of civil society.⁷⁵

Modernisation theory offers a similar approach, with collectivisation and Stalinist modernisation destroying the agrarian structures that formed a significant part of the basis for pre-communist party competition.⁷⁶ Even if the modernisation angle is played down, East Central European societies undeniably went through considerable change

⁷¹ Hanson, “The Leninist Legacy and Institutional Change”, suggests that the ideological and institutional legacy of Leninism should be overcome quickly, but the cultural and socio-economic legacy could be more enduring.

⁷² G. Evans & S. Whitefield, “Identifying the Bases of Party Competition in Eastern Europe”, *British Journal of Political Science*, 23 (1993), 521-548, p.528.

⁷³ E. Gellner, “Nationalism in the Vacuum”, in A. Motyl (ed.), *Thinking Theoretically about Soviet Nationalities: History and Comparison in the Study of the USSR*, (New York, Columbia University Press, 1992), p. 249.

⁷⁴ Rivera, “Historical Cleavages or Transition Mode”.

⁷⁵ Cf. the special issue on pluralism in East Central Europe, *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, 26:4, (1993).

⁷⁶ The general theory is developed in Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies*.

under communism.⁷⁷ This allows for class-based analysis derived from the structure of communist society, which form the context for post-communist political competition.⁷⁸ However, the result may be convergence with the West European politics rather than East Central European exceptionalism, at least if a considerable social democratic constituency is identified.⁷⁹

Nevertheless, the structural legacy of communism need not be as direct as the above approaches suggest. The structures inherited from communism provide the parameters within which party competition develops. If political competition centres alternatively on social-economic issues, valence issues or ethnic divisions, this provides three distinct patterns of party competition derived from social structures.⁸⁰ Taking this approach, the development of socio-economic party competition depends on the prospects for successful economic transition, which in turn depends on ethnic homogeneity and low relative and absolute deprivation. Alternatively, a less structuralist version sees the resources with which actors enter post-communist political games as important parameters, which means that East Central European politics is different from, but still comparable to, West European politics. This leaves considerable room for rational choice and strategic decisions on the part of actors, and is comparable to West European politics.⁸¹ Finally, Geddes stresses the weak link between interest groups and parties and the rapid democratisation process, leading to weak party loyalties. However, in this case even new institutions with shallow roots structure political behaviour. In other words, the legacy depends on new institutions and party strategies, and the new institutions reflect institution-builders' preferences.⁸²

⁷⁷ For an analysis of the effects of Stalinist modernisation see F. Fejto, *A History of the People's Democracies: Eastern Europe since Stalin*, (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1974); R. Bova, "Political Dynamics of the Post-Communist Transition: A Comparative Perspective", *World Politics*, 44:1 (1991), 113-138.

⁷⁸ The classic text is M. Djilas, *The New Class: An Analysis of the Communist System*, (New York, Praeger, 1957).

⁷⁹ Kolosi et al. analyse post-communist political developments, concluding that a large social democratic constituency is present in Hungary, T. Kolosi, I. Selenyi, S. Selenyi, & B. Western, "The Making of Political Fields in Post-Communist Transition (Dynamics of class and Party in Hungarian Politics, 1989-90)," in Bozoki, Korosenyi & Schopflin (eds.), *Post-Communist Transition*; I. Selenyi & S. Selenyi, "The Vacuum in Hungarian Politics: Class and Parties".

⁸⁰ Evans & Whitefield, "Identifying the Bases of Party Competition in Eastern Europe".

⁸¹ Kitschelt, "The Formation of Party Systems in East Central Europe".

⁸² Geddes, "A Comparative Perspective on the Leninist Legacy in Eastern Europe".

If communist modernisation destroyed the social bases of inter-war political competition (or what was left by it after WW II),⁸³ the communist political system eliminated the old institutions. In contrast to the pluralist institutions set up in 1989-90, “it was [the] extensive and highly centralized state that constituted the real Leninist legacy...”⁸⁴ But the relevance of this legacy depends on political strategies and institutional choices. One case study concludes that the communist legacy’s effect on politics depends on actors and their policy stances.⁸⁵ Moreover, there is considerable evidence that the framers of post-communist institutions looked not only to Western Europe but also back to the inter-war period for guidance.⁸⁶ “The choice of institutions, the particular economic circumstances, and the norms that emerged dominant after the fall of Communist regimes all worked to determine which legacies would become politically relevant.”⁸⁷ This reflects actor and strategy oriented analyses of transition theory and rational choice analysis, and thus rejects East Central European exceptionalism.⁸⁸

Though the institutional legacy of communism may depend on post-communist institutional and political choices, the legacy of communist political practices is, by several accounts, more threatening to new democracies. At a basic level, political culture analyses stress the extent to which East Central Europe lacks the political culture required in a liberal democracy, at least in the Slovak case.⁸⁹ Though surveys reveal low trust in democratic institutions and low confidence in parties, this is not a unique East Central European phenomenon.⁹⁰ Commenting on the political culture debate in

⁸³ Schopflin argues that the war amounted to a revolution in political and social terms, Schöpflin, *Politics in Eastern Europe*.

⁸⁴ Commisso, “Legacies of the Past or new Institutions?”, p.235.

⁸⁵ Land restitution in Hungary depended on former owners’ appeal to both the privatising *gesellschaft* camp and the traditionalist *gemeinschaft* camp, and the elites’ political ambitions to accommodate these ‘median voters’. Commisso, “Legacies of the Past or new Institutions?”.

⁸⁶ Lijphart, “Democratisation and Constitutional Choice...”.

⁸⁷ Lijphart & Crawford, “Explaining Political and Economic Change in Post-Communist Eastern Europe”, p.176.

⁸⁸ B. Geddes, “Initiation of New Democratic Institutions in Eastern Europe and Latin America”, in A. Lijphart & C. H. Waisman (eds.), *Institutional Design in New Democracies: Eastern Europe and Latin America*, (Boulder, Westview Press, 1996).

⁸⁹ M. Carpenter, “Slovakia and the Triumph of Nationalist Populism”, *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, 30:2 (1997), 205-220. This analysis uses the framework developed in Almond & Verba, *The Civic Culture*.

⁹⁰ A comprehensive set of data can be found in P. Gerlich, F. Plasser, P. A. Ulram (eds.), *Regimewechsel: Demokratisierung und Politische Kultur in Ost-Mitteleuropa*, (Wien, Bohlau, 1992). On Spain, see Caciagli, “Spain: Parties and Party System in the Transition”.

comparative communist studies, McAuley has pointed out the inconsistency in deriving current political culture from past beliefs (political culture), while deriving the latter from that period's political practices.⁹¹ Post-war democratisation in Italy and Germany illustrates the point, a supportive political culture developed gradually, with the former regime (and the DDR 'counter-regime') providing negative reinforcement. The French process was even slower, and the Fourth Republic can be considered a transitional regime.⁹²

Nevertheless, the new East Central European democracies undeniably lack recent experience in liberal democratic politics. Across the board, this is a matter of technocratic approaches to politics that entail a lack of trust in pragmatism.⁹³ Communism reinforced and elaborated political rights formulated in collectivist (class, ethnicity) rather than individual terms.⁹⁴ Even if the East Central European regimes abandoned monolithic communism after Stalin's death, opposition was conducted in terms of absolute right (civil society) and wrong (the communist state) rather than pragmatism and pluralism.⁹⁵ "The category of civil society, central in the self-understanding of the actors in the drama of the 'end of communism', seems suddenly more problematic after the events of 1989."⁹⁶ Moreover, politics was discredited under communism, leading to mistrust and disapproval of politics *per se*, and a "retreat from politics into the private sphere" since "citizens cannot affect law making, but they can live around the law to protect their lives."⁹⁷

Therefore, even if the political culture approach is not accepted, post-communist political parties entered the new games with some political baggage. But is this

⁹¹ M. McAuley, "Political Culture and Communist Politics: One Step Forward, Two Steps Back", in A. Brown (ed.), *Political Culture and Communist Studies*, (Basingstoke, Macmillan in association with St. Anthony's College, Oxford, 1984).

⁹² G. Smith, *Politics in Western Europe*, p.7.

⁹³ J. Batt, *East Central Europe from Reform to Transformation*, (London, Pinter Publishers, 1991), p.45.

⁹⁴ R. L. Tokes, "Human Rights and Political Change in Eastern Europe", in R. L. Tokes (ed.), *Opposition in Eastern Europe*, (Baltimore, Md, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979), p.9.

⁹⁵ This was of course a deliberate strategy, see e.g. V. Havel, "The Power of the Powerless" in J. Vladislav (ed.), *Vaclav Havel, or, Living in Truth: Twenty-Two Essays Published on the Occasion of the Award of the Erasmus Prize to Vaclav Havel*, (London, Faber, 1987).

⁹⁶ A. Arato, "Civil Society in the Emerging Democracies: Poland and Hungary", in M. L. Nugent, *From Leninism to Freedom: The Challenges of Democratization*, (Boulder, Westview Press, 1992).

⁹⁷ Curry, "Pluralism in East Central Europe", p.450 and 457; see also Batt, *East Central Europe from Reform to Transformation*, p.47ff.

sufficient to warrant exceptionalism? The reformed communists suffered from discrediting of the left, but the Spanish and Greek right suffered similar problems with their involvement with the non-democratic regimes, and the losers of the Finnish and Irish civil wars were excluded from parliamentary politics for some time. More problematically, the right in East Central Europe failed to develop into a modern free-market oriented right, and therefore focused on its inter-war ideological roots.⁹⁸ Similar points have been made about Karamanlis' failure to turn New Democracy into a modern West European right-wing party.⁹⁹ Though exceptionalist arguments draw attention to several difficulties inherent in the transition from communism in East Central Europe, these are not necessarily unique to the region.

DOES EAST CENTRAL EUROPEAN EXCEPTIONALISM MATTER?

As East Central European exceptionalism is based on the full range of approaches, there is little consensus on its impact on the post-communist party systems. At the sociological or structural level, several approaches suggest that the new party systems should be shaped by long or medium term historical factors. In a weaker form the exceptionalist approach suggests that the actors on the post-communist scene are affected by the resources with which they enter the post-communist games, which are determined partly by their position under the previous regime. This provides the link between legacies and rational choice, with room for institutional manipulation. East Central European and West European party competition is based on different links between political and economic uncertainty.¹⁰⁰ At the institutional level Lijphart & Crawford focus on constraints and incentives that shape choices. Liberal norms set the parameters for political debate and participation, international pressure supports the liberalisation process, and new institutions provide for political and economic

⁹⁸ Schopflin, *Politics in Eastern Europe*, p.292-299.

⁹⁹ Mavrogordatos, "The Greek Party System"; Lyrantzis, "Political Parties in Post-Junta Greece. On the Irish debate, see M. Laver, "Are Irish Parties Peculiar", *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 79 (1992), 359-381.

¹⁰⁰ Kitschelt, "The Formation of Party Systems in East Central Europe". This model has since been complicated by the introduction of ethnicity, H. Kitschelt, "Formation of Party Cleavage in Post-Communist Democracies: Theoretical Propositions", *Party Politics*, 1:4 (1995), 447-472.

competition.¹⁰¹ New institutions are the product of negotiation between the major players, and are therefore not (yet) independent variables derived from legacy alone.

As far as East Central Europe is concerned, the exceptionalist approaches warrant questions concerning the *sui generis* nature of each specific case: first whether the factors that led to exceptionalism are common to the four East Central European cases; and second, whether the factors that engender exceptionalism are in fact comparable to factors that shaped the development of West European party systems. A series of factors contribute to the suggestion that East Central Europe represents a specific area: i) the common starting point derived from their communist experience; ii) their common history as Soviet satellite states and the common catalyst, the ‘Sinatra Doctrine’; and iii) the problems of economic as well as political transition (with national questions in some cases). Nevertheless, East Central European exceptionalism can be approached within a comparative framework, drawing on the West European party systems literature. Several of the exceptionalist arguments apply equally well to Irish and Finnish democratisation in the inter-war period, and to the 1970s transitions to democracy in Greece, Portugal and Spain. Transition theory draws attention to the importance of institutions and the process of negotiating new rules of the game, processes that are very comparable with West European and Latin American cases.¹⁰²

In short, theories of transition and exceptionalism provide indications of the parameters within which East Central European post-communist party systems have developed. The East Central European and several West European cases appear exceptional only inasmuch as they do not share all the conditions that characterised the development of fully fledged liberal democracy in the core West European cases. However, rather than making it necessary to reject West European models, this suggests that the assumptions inherent in such models must be reconsidered if they are to be applied outside the core West European cases. This also applies to inter-war Ireland and Finland, to Greece, Portugal and Spain in the 1970s and Italy in the 1990s.

¹⁰¹ Lijphart & Crawford, “Explaining Political and Economic Change in Post-Communist Eastern Europe”.

¹⁰² Lijphart & Waisman (eds.), *Institutional Design in New Democracies*.

PARTY SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT AND CHANGE

Despite the Lipset & Rokkan model's reputation as the most frequently quoted piece on party system development, it has not been applied widely to post-communist East Central Europe. Given that the model in its original form is of limited use to East Central Europe, this is perhaps not surprising. Rivera rejects its applicability to East Central Europe without any adaptation of the model, while Korosenyi modifies it somewhat, suggesting that 1989-90 might prove the point of freezing.¹⁰³ However, both transition theory and the literature on exceptionalism suggest that theories of comparative West European politics should not be applied to East Central Europe without reassessment of the assumptions upon which the models are based. Yet the similarity in the structure – institutions – agency debates suggest that the challenges to West European models can be incorporated into those very models, probably with implications for comparative West European politics.

Though it is often presented as a sociological approach due to its focus on cleavages, the Lipset-Rokkan model was quickly praised for its focus on actors that *translate* cleavages into party competition. In fact Lipset & Rokkan's approach leaves considerable room for alliances between parties or political groups. A similar combination of structure and agency can be found in Luebbert's account of the development of liberal, social democratic and fascist regimes in inter-war Europe, which includes Eastern Europe's 'traditional dictatorships'.¹⁰⁴ Lijphart's assessment of Rokkan's work similarly stresses the importance of negotiation between the parties as far as institutional change is concerned.¹⁰⁵ Hence the importance of the Lipset-Rokkan model lies in combining political and sociological approaches.¹⁰⁶ In other words, the key to party system formation is actor-based as well as structural: rational action on the part of parties subject to a series of conditions and constraints. If these constraints were so

¹⁰³ Rivera, "Historical Cleavages or Transition Mode"; Korosenyi, "Revival of the Past or a New Beginning?"

¹⁰⁴ Luebbert, *Liberalism, Fascism, or Social Democracy*.

¹⁰⁵ Lijphart, "Democratisation and Constitutional Choice...". He refers to Rokkan, *Citizens, Elections, Parties*.

¹⁰⁶ Sartori, "The Sociology of Parties".

significant during the early Twentieth Century as to make the Lipset-Rokkan model predominantly 'sociological', or cleavage-driven, that does not necessarily imply that the same is the case in the late Twentieth Century.

Lipset & Rokkan make two major assertions, one concerning the development of party systems as cleavages are translated into politics, and the other suggesting that party systems freeze after the initial period of party system development. The perceived increase in party system volatility since the 1960s prompted a major debate about the validity of the Lipset-Rokkan model, but one that has centred on the freezing hypothesis rather than their model of party system development. This has been driven by perceived increases in electoral and party system volatility, in turn driven either by social change or party strategies and the dynamics of party competition.

SOCIOLOGICAL FOCUS – DE-ALIGNMENT AND RE-ALIGNMENT

Society-driven or structural approaches to party system volatility differ as to whether i) cleavages and social structures are becoming less salient and political competition is therefore more issue-oriented, or ii) new cleavages or social divisions are replacing the cleavages that shaped West European party systems. In both cases it is assumed that party system volatility is caused by electoral volatility, which in turn reflects social change, and that electoral stability is evidence of party system stability. However, systems featuring a high number of parties or changes in the number of parties may be more prone to electoral volatility.¹⁰⁷ To be sure, several case studies of electoral and party system change combine de-alignment and re-alignment, with one possibly leading to the other.¹⁰⁸

The de-alignment thesis challenges the continued relevance of cleavages. If Rose &

¹⁰⁷ M. N. Pedersen "Changing Patterns of Electoral Volatility in European Party Systems; 1948-1977: Explorations in Explanation", in H. Daalder & P. Mair (eds.), *Western European Party Systems: Continuity & Change* (London, Sage, 1983). Bartolini & Mair find that the number of parties account for some 8% of total variance in volatility, Bartolini & Mair, *Identity, Competition, and Electoral Availability*, p.135.

¹⁰⁸ This is the case in most of the case studies in R. J. Dalton, S. C. Flanagan & P. A. Beck (eds.), *Electoral Change in Advanced Industrial Democracies: Realignment or Dealignment?*, (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1984).

Urwin's studies of electoral volatility and parties' social cohesion confirmed the freezing hypothesis, data from the 1970s indicated that "European party systems cannot now be regarded as inherently stable structures."¹⁰⁹ Electoral alignments were "decomposing", as were the party systems.¹¹⁰ The trend toward instability was confirmed, again based on electoral change, in the 1980s.¹¹¹ Yet the increased volatility in the 1970s did not reveal stable patterns of system change, possibly because the system format affects volatility.¹¹² De-alignment approaches thus suggest that "the decline of cleavage politics means that electorates are free to react to completely unexpected developments..." and "the most salient feature of the political landscape that emerges with the end of cleavage politics is precisely the fact that it has no clear universal features."¹¹³

De-alignment may in turn lead to re-alignment. The processes may be "concurrent and even complementary".¹¹⁴ As the cleavages discussed by Lipset & Rokkan become less salient, a "silent revolution" enhanced the salience of post-materialist cleavages.¹¹⁵ Surveys of green politics and protest or new populist voting lends some support this thesis, given the success of the German Greens, Swedish New Democracy and Italian

¹⁰⁹ M. Maguire, "Is There Still Persistence? Electoral Change in Western Europe, 1948-1979", in Daalder & Mair (eds.), *Western European Party Systems*, p.92; Rose & Urwin, "Persistence and Change in Western Party Systems since 1945"; R. Rose & D. Urwin, "Social Cohesion, Political Parties and Strains in Regimes", *Comparative Political Studies*, 2:1 (1969), 7-50.

¹¹⁰ R. J. Dalton, P. A. Beck & S. C. Flanagan, "Electoral Change in Advanced Industrial Societies", in Dalton, Flanagan & Beck (eds.), *Electoral Change in Advanced Industrial Democracies*, p. 8.

¹¹¹ Franklin, Valen & Mackie (eds.), *Electoral Change*.

¹¹² M. Pedersen, "The Changing Dynamics of European Party Systems: Changing Patterns of Electoral Volatility", *European Journal of Political Research*, 7 (1979), 1-26.

¹¹³ C. van der Eijk, M. Franklin, T. Mackie & H. Valen, "Cleavages, Conflict Resolution and Democracy", in Franklin, Valen & Mackie (eds.), *Electoral Change*, p. 430. The authors conclude that "it may well turn out that in coming years the newly democratising countries of central Europe will provide the best laboratories within which to further investigate the nature of forces that govern electoral change," p.431.

¹¹⁴ So concludes a major volume investigating the matter. R J. Dalton, S. C. Flanagan & P. A. Beck, "Political Forces and Partisan Change", in Dalton, Flanagan & Beck (eds.) *Electoral Change in Advanced Industrial Democracies*, p.474.

¹¹⁵ R. Inglehart, "The Silent Revolution in Europe: Intergenerational Change in Post-Industrial Societies", *American Political Science Review*, 65 (1971), 991-1017; R. Inglehart *The Silent Revolution: Changing Values and Political Styles Among Western Publics* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1977); R. Inglehart, "The Changing Structure of Political Cleavages in Western Society", in Dalton, Flanagan & Beck (eds.) *Electoral Change in Advanced Industrial Democracies*; R. Inglehart, *Culture Shifts*, (Princeton N.J., Princeton University Press).

Northern League.¹¹⁶ Kitschelt challenges and modifies the re-alignment thesis, arguing a “joint transformation of economic and non-economic political preferences and interests,” which is insufficient to predict the nature of party systems.¹¹⁷ Dunleavy & Husbands offer a related model, suggesting that voting is influenced by a series of factors that warrant new definition of class in terms of, e.g., consumption of public and private services.¹¹⁸ In neither case do these changes necessarily lead to party system instability, because parties may adapt to electoral change.

FOCUS ON THE PARTY: STRATEGY AND ORGANISATION

The analyses of Kitschelt and Dunleavy & Husbands suggest that social change need not lead to party system change, leaving parties as the main instigators of system change. Party-driven change was suggested in early works on contagion from the left and right respectively, i.e., the suggestion that social democrat or American-style parties would prove organisationally superior.¹¹⁹ Kirchheimer’s catch-all party thus abandons ideology and sectional appeal in favour of a catch-all strategy. Once one party adopts this strategy its main rival is compelled to follow suit, leading to a party-driven shift away from cleavage-based political competition.¹²⁰ Though this need not lead to party system change, but rather contributes to maintaining system through adaptation, it offers an account of the decreasing salience of cleavages in terms of party strategy rather than social structures. At one point, Lijphart found this in the breakdown of consociationalism in the Netherlands, as the Democrats’66 challenged the consensus and PvdA (Labour) responded by moving left, the denominational parties merged and consociational practices declined. He has since argued that this analysis exaggerated

¹¹⁶ D. Richardson & C. Rootes (eds.), *The Green Challenge: The Development of Green Parties in Europe*, (London, Routledge, 1995); P. Taggart, “New Populist Parties in Western Europe”, *West European Politics*, 18:1 (1995), 34-51.

¹¹⁷ H. Kitschelt, “A Silent Revolution in Europe”, J. Hayward & C. Page (eds.), *Governing the New Europe*, (Cambridge, Polity Press, 1995), p.129 and 133; H. Kitschelt, *The Transformation of European Social Democracy*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1994), chapter 4.

¹¹⁸ Dunleavy & Husbands, *British Democracy at the Crossroads*.

¹¹⁹ Duverger, *Political Parties*; Epstein, *Political Parties in Western Democracies*.

¹²⁰ Kirchheimer, “The Transformation of West European Party Systems”.

party system change.¹²¹ Though the catch-all thesis has been disputed, it prompted increased focus on party strategy.¹²² More pessimistically, as far as parties are concerned, Panebianco's analysis forecast the declining importance of parties, an argument since rebutted by Katz & Mair.¹²³

EXPLAINING PARTY SYSTEM STABILITY

Party-driven approaches to de-alignment offer an explanation of system freezing, something which Lipset & Rokkan did not offer but Sartori extracted from their account.¹²⁴ If parties are rational actors, they should be expected to contrive to maintain a party system that they dominate. Therefore, due to parties' adaptive ability, cleavage change need not lead to party system change.¹²⁵ Parties set the political agenda, and "the definition of the alternatives is the supreme instrument of power."¹²⁶ Acting as a cartel, the main parties thus maintain the main lines of competition, contributing to party system stability. Mainstream parties adoption of environment agendas in West European politics lends support to this thesis, even if maverick issues such as regionalism or European integration may (temporarily?) upset the left-right dichotomy in Norway (1993) or Italy (1990s).

A sociological interpretation of the Lipset-Rokkan model suggests that no major changes can be expected unless a major 'revolution' occurs and new cleavages become relevant (the re-alignment thesis, above). However, the crucial factor in their account is the introduction of the full franchise, and closing down of electoral space following full

¹²¹ Lijphart, *The Politics of Accommodation*; A. Lijphart, "From the Politics of Accommodation to Adversarial Politics in the Netherlands: A Reassessment", *West European Politics* 12:1 (1989), 139-153.

¹²² S. B. Wolinetz, "The Transformation of Western European Party Systems Revisited", *West European Politics*, 2:1 (1979), 4-28; K. Dittrich, "Testing the Catch-All Thesis: Some Difficulties and Possibilities", in Daalder & Mair (eds.), *Western European Party Systems*.

¹²³ R. Katz & P. Mair, "Party Organizations: From Civil society to the State", in R. Katz & P. Mair (eds.), *How Parties Organize: Change and Adaptation in Party Organizations in Western Democracies*, (London, Sage Books, 1994); Panebianco, *Modelli di Partito*. A similar decline-of-party thesis, complementing de-alignment, is suggested in Dalton et al., "Political Forces and Partisan Change."

¹²⁴ Sartori, "The Sociology of Parties".

¹²⁵ G. Smith, "A System Perspective on Party System Change", *Journal of Theoretical Politics*, 1:3 (1989), 349-363; M. Maor & G. Smith, "On the Structuring of Party Competition: The Impact of Maverick Issues", (manuscript, The European Institute, LSE, 1993).

electoral mobilisation.¹²⁷ This is accompanied by a process of institutional freezing, i.e., the influence of formative factors that shape a party system decreases as institutions come of age. Party systems freeze partly due to institutionalisation, and institutional change affects volatility, processes that do not depend on frozen sets of cleavages or political alternatives. Evidence for stability is found in the decline of electoral volatility since the inter-war period, in line with Lipset & Rokkan's hypothesis. Bartolini & Mair find little evidence for the alleged increases in volatility since 1966, and though inter-bloc (class) volatility has increased moderately, this is less than a third of total volatility. These data offer confirmation of the freezing hypothesis as far as class cleavage is concerned: voters change party allegiance, but not as far as class cleavage is concerned.¹²⁸ Similar conclusions about the persistence of left – right competition is found through analyses of party programmes.¹²⁹

In short, party system stability is explained in terms of parties' adaptation. Institutional stability and the parties' interest in maintaining left – right competition offer an explanation of party system stability, the evidence of social change notwithstanding.¹³⁰ Most new issues are aligned to the prevalent left – right dimensions, which fits Kitschelt's observations that change at the electoral level has not led to major changes within the main left and right camps, though some new parties have emerged.¹³¹ Notably, Italian party system changes in the 1990s cannot be explained by demand side accounts (voters' preferences) so much as by supply side (what parties offer).¹³²

¹²⁶ E. E. Schattschneider, *The Semi-Sovereign People: A Realist's View of Democracy in America*, (New York, Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1960), p.68.

¹²⁷ This point is developed in Bartolini & Mair, *Identity, Competition, and Electoral Availability*; and P. Mair, *Party System Change: Approaches and Interpretations* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1997).

¹²⁸ Bartolini & Mair, *Identity, Competition, and Electoral Availability*; Mair, *Party System Change*, chapter 4.

¹²⁹ Budge et al, *Ideology, Strategy and Party Change*.

¹³⁰ On electoral system change and stability, see A. Lijphart, *Electoral Systems and Party Systems: A Study of Twenty-Seven Democracies, 1945-1990*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1994).

¹³¹ H. Kitschelt, "European Party Systems: Continuity and Change", in M. Rhodes, P. Heywood & V. Wright (eds.), *Developments in West European Politics*, (Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1997).

¹³² R. D'Alimonte & S. Bartolini, "'Electoral Transition' and Party System Change in Italy", *West European Politics*, 20:1 (1997), 110-134.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND PARTY SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT

Several analyses of post-communist politics acknowledge the significance of the international dimension. Transition theorists have taken this factor on board, as one among many. A number of international relations analyses of inter-war Europe have pointed to the role of international relations in undermining the prospects for democracy.¹³³ Hitler and Stalin, or fascism and Communism, are considered the twin-nemeses of East Central European democracy between the Wars. And Stalin and his successors continued to offer, or rather impose, an alternative to liberal democracy. Conversely, the collapse of these two models removed normative challenges to liberal democracy. The Helsinki Final Act, the CSCE and the OSCE have provided a climate in which border change is unacceptable in theory, thus defusing some ethnic tension. Practically all parties in East Central Europe adhere to these principles. In terms of structural elements, the international context is therefore far more conducive to consolidation of democracy in the 1990s than it was between the Wars, let alone after WW II.

The international relations literature is rich on the subject of institutionalism, i.e., how international institutions shape governments' action. Future expectations of co-operation may prompt governments to take moderate stands, expecting their partners to reciprocate. Hence, for example, Germany and France's support of the UK in the Falklands War.¹³⁴ A study of British, France and American responses to economic crises in the 1970s and 1980s and domestic pressure for protectionism concluded that international institutions shaped their responses to the extent that they maintained free trade.¹³⁵ While attempts to bind states together in the League of Nations failed, post-war efforts have yielded better results. For example, NATO's key task was frequently

¹³³ See, e.g., E. H. Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis, 1919-1939: An Introduction to the Study of International Relations*, (London, Macmillan, 1939).

¹³⁴ S. Stavridis & E. Regelsberger, "The Converging National Reactions (I): The Big States – France and Germany", in S. Stavridis & C. Hill (eds.), *Domestic Sources of Foreign Policy: West European Reactions to the Falklands Conflict*, (Washington DC, Berg, 1996).

¹³⁵ H. Milner, "Maintaining International Commitments in Trade Policy", in Rockman & Weaver (eds.), *Do Institutions Matter? Government Capabilities in the United States and Abroad*, (Washington DC, The Brookings Institution, 1993).

described, only half in jest, as ‘keeping the Russians out, the Americans in and the Germans down.’ On the domestic scene, international institutions have been credited with contributing to stabilisation of democracy in Spain, Portugal and Greece after the transition to democracy in the 1970s. In Southern Europe, “international conditions made it possible for civilian governments to direct the military away from domestic politics. NATO, for instance provided an opportunity to redirect military missions to external professional concerns.”¹³⁶ Prospects of EC membership and economic growth depended on maintaining liberal democratic regimes, as prospective EU and NATO membership does for East Central Europe today. International institutions thus contribute to shaping domestic institutions, political as well as economic and military.

The impact of external factors on party system development has been covered in several country studies, but not on a comparative basis. The best documented West European case is immediate post-war Italy, where the DC and PCI found considerable direct support from Washington and Moscow respectively.¹³⁷ More indirectly, US and British influence was undeniably found in the Norwegian Labour Party through the part of the leadership that spent the war abroad, which prevailed over more neutralist elements.¹³⁸ Tsebelis’ ‘nested games’ approach provides a framework for analysis of these factors inasmuch as he suggests that games take place at several different levels and that analysis of a single level only is unlikely to provide sufficient.¹³⁹ The international system and foreign actors (parties) may influence domestic parties and party system development. At the party level, Gaffney’s edited volume examines the impact of EU politics on domestic political parties. The contributors find considerable evidence that domestic party competition has been shaped by EU politics and policy.¹⁴⁰ The term ‘policy syncretism’ has been coined to describe the mutual adjustments found in national and EU policies in more problematic areas of the Single Market (utilities, e.g., electricity, gas, telecommunications), involving a degree of adaptation where necessary

¹³⁶ F. Aguero, “Toward Civilian Supremacy in South America”, in L. Diamond, M. F. Plattner, Y. Chu & H. Tien (eds.), *Consolidating the Third Wave Democracies: Themes and Perspectives*, (Baltimore, Johns Hopkins, 1997), p.198.

¹³⁷ Mack Smith, *Modern Italy*, p. 460-461; G. Smith, *Politics in Western Europe*, p. 176-182.

¹³⁸ H. Lie (Labour General Secretary), *Skjebneaar: 1945-50*, (Oslo, Tiden, 1985).

¹³⁹ Tsebelis *Nested Games*.

¹⁴⁰ Gaffney (ed.), *Political Parties and the European Union*.

but maintaining differences when possible.¹⁴¹ A similar term could be applied to party system analysis, notwithstanding important differences, particularly in the liberal camp (which have become more important as the EP's power has grown).¹⁴²

EAST CENTRAL EUROPE IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE: TOWARDS A RATIONAL CHOICE-BASED APPROACH TO PARTY SYSTEMS THEORY.

Three main comparative West European politics approaches to East Central Europe warrant particular attention since they apply comparative West European politics to the region and investigate some of the problems associated with developing liberal democracy in the area and party competition in particular. G. Smith's West European politics approach focuses on the constraints on party formation and party competition in East Central Europe, in particular the move to catch-all type parties without going through a mass party stage.¹⁴³ Lijphart's analysis of the development of political institutions in the four cases takes a similar approach, drawing on Rokkan's work on democratisation in Western Europe.¹⁴⁴ Mair's *ex-adverso* extrapolation of basic characteristics of post-communist party systems based on the comparative party politics literature developed for West European politics draws attention to crucial differences in patterns of electorates, parties and party competition, as well as the process of democratisation.¹⁴⁵ The present work is very much based on Lijphart's premises of negotiated transition and the arguments of G. Smith and Mair that East Central European party systems should be analysed in terms of party systems theory, i.e. comparative West European politics. Party systems theory provides a theoretical framework, but the implicit and explicit assumptions in much of the West European politics literature must be reconsidered if it is to be applied to East Central Europe. One compelling example is Kitschelt's analysis of actors' and groups' preferences in the light of the uncertainties that accompany political and economic transition. However, as

¹⁴¹ Eyre & Sitter, "From PTT to NRA".

¹⁴² S. Hix & C. Lord, *Political Parties in the European Union*, (Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1997); Interviews with ELDR and LI sources during 1998

¹⁴³ G. Smith, "Transitions to Liberal Democracy".

¹⁴⁴ Lijphart, "Democratisation and Constitutional Choice..."; Rokkan, *Citizens, Elections, Parties*.

¹⁴⁵ Mair, "What is Different about Post-Communist Party Systems?".

he later pointed out, this analysis did not factor in the role of nationalism in East Central Europe.¹⁴⁶

The challenge to analysts of post-communist East Central European politics is to develop a framework for analysis that incorporates the relevant developments in transition theory and comparative West European politics and country-specific studies. The major features of the three sets of approaches are set out in table 2.1, where the columns divide the actor-oriented, institutional and structure-driven approaches, and the rows separate transition theory, East Central European exceptionalism, comparative West European politics and the IR literature.

All four broad approaches considered so far allow for political parties as the driving force, even if the extent to which parties are free rationally to pursue their interest is contentious. Given the extent of change in East Central Europe in 1989, summed up in Offe's 'triple revolution', it is reasonable to suspect that the parties have been subject to fewer constraints than in almost any previous period in Twentieth Century Europe. Hence the focus on parties as rational actors, and as the key drivers of party system development and change. However, the literature on transition theory and East Central European exceptionalism draws attention to major structural and institutional factors that constrain any rational actor's choice, and the IR literature suggests that these may be external as well as domestic. The implicit distinction between structure and institutions employed here differentiates between macro structures (e.g., class structure) and middle level institutions (rules of the game), and is hardly controversial.¹⁴⁷ Institutions are designed, whereas structures are larger-scale phenomena that may perhaps be shaped but can hardly be designed (though communist regimes did fundamentally change class structures, if not always as intended). The distinction matters in the East Central European context since there was considerable room for institutional choice and design in 1989-90 as far the rules of the political game are concerned. Institutions provide constraints, but institutional design reflects political

¹⁴⁶ Kitschelt, "Formation of Party Cleavage in Post-Communist Democracies"; Kitschelt, "Formation of Party Cleavage in Post-Communist Democracies".

¹⁴⁷ For a fuller discussion of this definition see K. Thelen & S. Steinmo, "Historical Institutionalism in Comparative Politics", in S. Steinmo, K. Thelen & F. Longstreth (eds.), *Structuring Politics: Historical Institutionalism in Comparative Analysis*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1992).

forces' preferences and success in negotiations. But they also reflect the wider 'victory' of liberal democracy as *the* normative model, and West European influence on economic and political institutional design.

RATIONAL CHOICE UNDER CONSTRAINTS

The focus on rational choice under constraints, a theme developed in the historical institutionalism literature, is of particular relevance to party system development because parties carry considerable historical and ideological baggage which is clearly evident in their ideological appeal, attachment to international party groups, and in the very names chosen by the new parties. Without going so far as to suggest that "institutions play a much greater role in shaping politics, and political history more generally, than suggested by a narrow rational choice model,"¹⁴⁸ the constraints that institutions impose on rational action are recognised.

To be sure, the link between rational choice and new institutionalism is considerable. New institutionalists note that it "is implicit but crucial in this and most other conceptions of historical institutionalism that institutions constrain and refract politics but they are never the sole 'cause' of outcomes."¹⁴⁹ The key differences in the two approaches are the extent to which preferences are taken as fixed or shaped by institutions in a historical perspective and the extent to which actors satisfy rather than maximise preferences. However, some rational choice literature explicitly stresses the extent to which electoral preferences may be shaped by political parties, or by games played in related arenas.¹⁵⁰ Similarly, particularly in terms of voting behaviour, where the costs and risks are too small to warrant costly cost-benefit analysis, satisfaction rather than maximisation may be the order of the day. Iterated choice limits the incentive to repeat full cost-benefit analysis in each instant, whether this is a short-cut to voting by way of party identification or a renewal of interest group membership.¹⁵¹ In

¹⁴⁸ Thelen & Steinmo, "Historical Institutionalism in Comparative Politics", p.7.

¹⁴⁹ Thelen & Steinmo, "Historical Institutionalism in Comparative Politics", p.3.

¹⁵⁰ Dunleavy, *Democracy, Bureaucracy and Public Choice*; Tsebelis *Nested Games*.

¹⁵¹ Fiorina, *Retrospective Voting in American National Elections* on party identification; Dunleavy, *Democracy, Bureaucracy and Public Choice*, Chapter Three on reconstructing the theory of groups.

other words, rational choice takes place under a series of constraints, several of which are set out in the historical institutionalist literature. However, the uniqueness of historical institutionalism can be exaggerated: its difference from aspects of rational choice theory is one of degree. Some of its exponents recognise this fact, or at least the two approaches' common background as challenges to structuralist, functionalist and behaviouralist theories.¹⁵²

Transition theory's focus on actors' strategies and the development and consolidation of new institutions is thus combined with the historical institutionalist's focus on the medium and long term constraints that limit the parties' freedom of action. Pierson combines March & Olsen's analysis of the effect of institutions upon actors with change over time. Though institutions have been set up by rational actors, they may have unintended consequences, in Pierson's case the member states' limited control over the development of the EC. This approach "cuts across the usual sharp distinction between rational choice and nonrational choice work, drawing instead on research within both traditions that emphasizes the significance of the historical process."¹⁵³ In European integration theory, as in transition theory, the actors take centre stage. Nevertheless, their freedom of action is constrained not only by institutions, but also by structures that provide parameters within which they act.

Pure rational choice can, therefore, be considered an ideal-type approach, but in each case rational action is constrained by institutions, and/or structures. Empirical evidence can test when a specific rational choice thesis applies, i.e., when conditions hold and how accurate it is. This is a matter of testing applicability rather than the 'truth' of the theory. The aim is to offer realistic and coherent explanations of phenomena, not 100% predictability. Falsification may in fact show that, for some reason, a theory does not apply, possibly due to external constraints. The theory itself, however, is not necessarily falsified unless it is proved inconsistent.¹⁵⁴ For example, rational choice theory's

¹⁵² Thelen & Steinmo. "Historical Institutionalism in Comparative Politics".

¹⁵³ P. Pierson, "The Path to European Integration: A Historical Institutional Analysis", *Comparative Political Studies*, 29:2, (1996), 123-163, p.131; J. G. March & J. P. Olsen, *Rediscovering Institutions: The Organizational Basis of Politics*, (New York, Free Press, 1989).

¹⁵⁴ J. Friedman, "Economic Approaches to Politics", in J. Friedman (ed.), *The Rational Choice Controversy*, (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1996).

suggestion that voters should not vote due to cost exceeding potential benefits is not proved 'untrue' by high voter turn-out, but it is clear that other factors influence the decision to vote. However, it may be proved to be less applicable than a similar theory that interprets voting as a case of low-cost insurance. Moreover, it forces focus on the question of why people vote, which is not solved by any rival theory.¹⁵⁵

Four major points are worth noting before proceeding towards a framework for analysis of post-communist party systems. First, institutions such as electoral systems presented relatively limited constraints in the early period, as they were the product of negotiation between the main actors rather than imposed externally (in contrast to, e.g. in the BRD). Over time, however, institutions contribute to freezing of the political system to the extent that they are difficult to change. Second, historical institutionalism suggests that ideology and patterns of political competition are relevant. Though parties may enjoy considerable freedom in their choice of legacy on which to focus, these legacies may nevertheless be significant. Third, the East Central European regime changes featured a 'triple revolution' in political, economic and national terms. All of these changes represent potential bases for political competition. Fourth, and finally, the EU, NATO, OSCE and the IMF have provided a set of 'super-rules', which is very difficult to change and has considerable influence on domestic policy. This has provided an explicit international institutional framework, and influenced domestic institutional norms. It therefore contributed to the parameters within which party systems develop. However, in East Central Europe, international institutions have all pulled in the same direction, towards consolidation of West European-type liberal democracy and acceptance of the 'free market' as a normative model.

¹⁵⁵ D. Chong, "Rational Choice Theory's Mysterious Rivals", in Friedman (ed.), *The Rational Choice Controversy*.

TOWARDS A FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYSIS OF EAST CENTRAL EUROPEAN POST-COMMUNIST PARTY SYSTEMS

Rational choice provides a link between competing explanations of party system development and change, but only if political parties are understood as independent actors and the constraints under which they operate are recognised and factored into the account. Sociological factors and institutional arrangements provide parameters and constraints, which can and do change. If party systems remain more or less frozen even as social structures change, a significant part of the explanation is sought in their continuous pursuit of power and organisational survival. However, the East Central European scene in 1989-90 featured not merely party system change, but also regime changes that have been described as revolutionary. In Lipset & Rokkan's schema, 1989 can be interpreted as a 'revolutionary juncture' with all the potential impact on politics that the national and industrial revolutions had.

Mair's approach to party systems and party system change comes close to this type of actor-based analysis.¹⁵⁶ Political parties are the main drivers of party system change, or rather, lack thereof. But 'dysfunctional' parties that do not pursue vote maximisation or office do occur, and are explained by Tsebelis in terms of, e.g., intra-party struggles that may lead parties to engage in apparently suicidal behaviour. Tsebelis' analysis of the UK Labour party's divisions in the early 1980s could hold for the current Conservative Party.¹⁵⁷ The literature on West European party systems has been developed in a specific context, centred on the existence of mass parties of the left (in the early Twentieth Century) that were important players in the extension of democracy. Since the Lipset-Rokkan model lies at the base of much of the later work on party systems, and takes on board most of the assumptions made in West European party theories at the time (such as Duverger's mass parties of the left), this model will be taken as a starting point. It is based on a series of functionalist assumptions and parameters which will be challenged, but also to a considerable extent on rational choice type bargaining between old and new regimes which is compatible with the actor-based bias in the current approach. The

¹⁵⁶ Mair, *Party System Change*.

¹⁵⁷ Tsebelis, *Nested games*.

implicit and explicit underlying assumptions of Lipset & Rokkan's schema require further analysis in the light of developments in the latter half of the Twentieth Century and the condition of post-communism. This is the subject of the next chapter. This in turn warrants development towards a more rational actor based model for party system formation, but one which takes account of institutional and social constraints. Though the current project is primarily concerned with East Central Europe in the 1990s, several of the points should be of considerable relevance to party system change in late Twentieth Century Western Europe.

CHAPTER THREE

PARTY SYSTEMS:

DEVELOPMENT, STABILITY AND CHANGE

“The [West European] party systems of the 1960’s reflect, with few but significant exceptions, the cleavage structures of the 1920’s.”

- Seymour Martin Lipset & Stein Rokkan, 1967

Given the hypothesis that the East Central European party systems are comparable to their West European counterparts, Lipset & Rokkan’s analysis of development of party systems in Western Europe provides the starting point for the analysis of East Central European Party systems.¹ However, two of the main pillars of their argument, the development of party systems and the freezing of party alternatives, warrant specific attention in the light of the East Central European conditions of post-communism. As the model is revisited with the benefit of hindsight, the role of cleavages (in the traditional sense of the term) is played down. Because many of Lipset & Rokkan’s assumptions were time and place specific, and do not hold for East Central Europe, the model must be expanded if it is to provide a framework for analysis of post-communist party systems.

First, Lipset & Rokkan’s ‘cleavage model’ is based on a number of explicit assumptions, of which their set of four lines of cleavage is the most significant. Rather than attempting a general definition of cleavages, Lipset & Rokkan derive the cleavages on which the model is based from Talcott Parsons’ fourfold classification of the functions of social systems. However, this gives rise to neglect one dimension, regime change, which is of particular importance in East Central Europe. A revision of the concept of ‘cleavage’ is therefore warranted. Moreover, the model is based on a number

¹S. M. Lipset & S. Rokkan, “Cleavage Structures, Party Systems, and Voter Alignments: and Introduction”, in S. M. Lipset & S. Rokkan (eds.), *Party Systems and Voter Alignments: Cross-National Perspectives*, (London, The Free Press, 1967), p.50.

of explicit assumptions concerning the nature of and salience of political issues, which are specific to a given time and space. For example, the worker – owner cleavage takes on tremendous importance to the extent that it provides similarities across all (or most) West European systems. This is related directly to the way in which thresholds to democratisation were lowered in Western Europe.

Second, the analysis is based on several implicit assumptions, most of which do not apply to East Central Europe in the inter-war period, let alone to the condition of post-communism. It relies heavily on the emergence of mass parties of the left, and the response by the old non-socialist parties to this challenge. As Lipset & Rokkan emphasise in their analysis of reduction of thresholds to participation, this response took the form of lowering barriers to political competition. But it also had consequences for the development of political parties as organisations. Parties are, at least partly, organisations that aggregate interests and build alliances between different interests. A number of alternative strategies were available to party leaders, both in terms of mobilisation of support and offers of political alliances, and their choices shaped the party system. The model assumes specific forms of political competition, or patterns of party competition. This raises a number of questions concerning the conditions of post-communism, particularly in terms of party organisation, aggregation of interests, alliance-building and party strategy.

However, it is the freezing hypothesis rather than the cleavage model that has been the subject of most academic debate. And though this project concerns the *development* of party systems in East Central Europe, the ‘freezing’ debate is relevant in more than one way. In its own right the freezing hypothesis is relevant inasmuch as the development of party systems takes on far greater significance if the party systems can be expected to undergo some degree of freezing. However, the freezing debate is also significant inasmuch as it points to the factors which affect the development (or lack thereof) of party systems and shape their trajectories, as well as indicating the potential for party system stability and change.

A MODEL OF PARTY SYSTEMS DEVELOPMENT

The Lipset –Rokkan model of party system development suggests that the differences between West European party systems derive from a series of strategic decisions made by the non-socialist parties in the long-term or immediate run-up to the extension of the franchise (ca. 1918-20). These differences are explained in terms of the choices made by the “central core of cooperating ‘nation-builders’ controlling major elements of the machinery of the ‘state’”.² Their commitments to the reformation or counter-reformation (alliance with the national Church, with the Catholic Church, or opting for a secular state) and to urban or rural interests form the basis for Lipset & Rokkan’s eight-fold typology of political oppositions (and hence party systems). This typology assumes a few limits to the options open to the periphery/opposition: i) if the centre allies with a national church, the opposition will focus on religious dissent; ii) if this leaves a strong Catholic minority the opposition will be split into secular, Catholics and/or dissident parties; iii) the opposition cannot unite Catholicism and urban forces, or secularism and rural forces.

² Lipset & Rokkan, “Cleavage Structures, Party Systems, and Voter Alignments”, p.36.

Table 3.1 Lipset & Rokkan’s eight-fold typology.³

| | Central core of nation-builders’ alliance on the religious front | Nat.-builder’s economic alliance | Examples of nation-builders | Periphery or opposition’s response | Examples of opposition |
|----------|---|---|------------------------------------|---|--|
| 1 | National church dominant (i.e. allied with the state) | Rural: landed interests | Britain: Conservative | Dissident religious, urban | Britain: Liberal |
| 2 | National church dominant | Urban: commercial and industrial | Scandinavia: Conservative | Dissident religious, rural | Scandinavia: Liberal or ‘old’ left. |
| 3 | National church dominant, Catholic strong minority | Rural | Prussia/Reich: Conservative | Secular, urban vs. Catholic | Prussia/Reich: Liberals vs. Centre (Cath.) |
| 4 | National church dominant, Catholic strong minority | Urban | Netherlands: Liberal | Dissident relig., rural vs. Catholic, rural | Netherlands: Three relig. parties |
| 5 | Secular state against Catholic Church | Rural | Spain: Liberal | Urban vs. Catholic | Spain: Catalans vs. Carlists |
| 6 | Secular state against Catholic Church | Urban | France, Italy: Radicals, Liberals | Catholic, rural | France, Italy: Conservative Catholics |
| 7 | State allied with Catholic Church | Rural | Austria: Catholics | Secular, urban | Austria: Liberals, Pan-Germans |
| 8 | State allied with Catholic Church | Urban | Belgium: Catholics vs. Liberals | Rural | Belgium: Flemish separatists |

Lipset & Rokkan chose not to incorporate their fourth dimension, the owner – worker cleavage, into this model on the grounds that the first three cleavages account for the variance among party systems, while the fourth cleavage made them increasingly similar. Mass parties of the left appeared (almost) everywhere across Western Europe, the key question would be their strength and cohesiveness, not their presence. Lipset & Rokkan suggest that working class movements were more united in the Protestant north (types 1 – 4), and in the Catholic cases where state and Church had been allies in the nation-building process (7 and 8), while they were more divided where the state and Church had been in conflict (5 and 6).⁴ Luebbert offers a variation on this theme, suggesting that the outcome in terms of inter-war regimes depended on whether the liberal left offered the emerging socialist left ‘lib-lab’ pacts, and the extent to which these were accepted. In table 3.2 below, Spain appears twice as a borderline case,

³ Modified from Lipset & Rokkan, “Cleavage Structures, Party Systems, and Voter Alignments”, p.37.

⁴ Lipset & Rokkan, “Cleavage Structures, Party Systems, and Voter Alignments”, p.46-50.

because it corresponds partly to both the Fascist and traditional dictatorship ideal types. Belgium and the Netherlands do not appear as they do not fit the ideal-types because the dominance of the confessional parties kept the socialist left out of office without recourse to fascism or liberalism (interestingly, this work contains no reference to Lijphart's work on power-sharing/consociationalism).⁵

Table 3.2 Luebbert's political alliances, party competition and inter-war regimes.⁶

| The 'old left' up to WW I. | Relationship with new left before WW I | Post-WW I party competition | Outcome (ideal types, cases are close approximations) |
|---|--|---|---|
| Liberals strong, pre-war hegemony. Rise of socialism not feared. | Lib-Lab pact | Pluralist trade union left vs. centre-right. Liberalism (if not liberal parties) hegemonic. | Liberal democracy: Britain, France, Switzerland |
| Liberals weak, divided over cleavages, feared rise of socialists. | No co-operation, new and old left break with each other. | Left organises agrarian workers, vs. fascist response on the right. | Fascism: Italy, Germany, Spain |
| Liberals weak, divided over cleavages, feared rise of socialists. | No co-operation, new and old left break with each other. | Socialist left allies with farmers, vs. conservative urban right. | Social democracy: Scandinavia, Czechoslovakia |
| Liberals weak due to multiple cleavages and 'backwardness' (i.e. industry). | Both liberal and socialist left weak. | Limited competition, not much based on ideology (other than nationalism). | Traditional dictatorship: Spain, East Central Europe. |

It is tempting to extrapolate a similar typology of post-communist party systems, based on the 'triple revolutions' of 1989-90. In this case, the three critical junctures would be the political transition, the economic transition and the new government's commitment to civic or ethnic nationalism. In table 3.3, the first column indicates whether the first post-communist government was formed by the former opposition or the former communists, and whether these 'parties' were oriented primarily towards a secular state in both religious and ethnic terms. The terms 'civic nationalism' and 'secular state' are used to indicate this stance, while 'ethnic' indicates a focus on the ethnic dimensions of nationhood, usually invoking pre-communist history (these points are developed further in Chapter Seven). The second column indicates these governments' commitments to

⁵ A. Lijphart, *The Politics of Accommodation: Pluralism and Democracy in the Netherlands*, (Berkeley, University of California Press, 2nd ed. 1975); A. Lijphart, *Democracy in Plural Societies: A Comparative Exploration*, (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1977).

⁶ Based on G. Luebbert, *Liberalism, Fascism or Social Democracy: Social Classes and the Political Origins of Regimes in Interwar Europe*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1991).

radical or moderate economic reform, and the third column cites a number of examples that approach these ideal types. Inevitably the examples are rough approximations, and some cases even appear as examples of two ideal types. The fourth column suggests the response of the main one or two opposition groups, first to the government and then to each other. In types 1 – 4, the reform communists (RC) react as much to the opposition as to the government, though they have tended to be divided into two camps on economic reform. Again the examples are approximations, and do not correspond to the ideal types in all respects. Extremist nationalists have been left out of this model, as they have occurred more or less across the board, and national minorities have been included where relevant (i.e., where minorities exist and at least one significant party invokes ethnic nationalism). The empty ‘examples’ boxes in type 2 indicate the problem of combining liberalism and slow economic change.

Table 3.3 A possible post-communist East Central European eight-fold typology.⁷ (Reform communists are abbreviated to RC in the fourth column.)

| | First Governments in 1989-91 | Govnt's economic strategy | Examples (approx.) of first governments | Periphery or opposition's response | Examples of opposition, later in gov't |
|----------|--|-------------------------------------|---|--|--|
| 1 | Former opposition, commitment to secular state (civic nationalism) | Fast pace of reform (shock therapy) | Poland: Liberal (dominant) wing of Solidarity, later UD, KLD. | Nationalist, moderate vs. RC, fast vs. RC, slow | Poland: (KPN), AWS vs. SLD, PSL |
| 2 | Former opposition, commitment to secular state (civic nationalism) | Moderate pace of reform | | Nationalist, fast vs. RC, fast vs. RC, slow | |
| 3 | Former opposition nationalist posture (ethnic nationalism) | Fast | Czech lands: Klaus' OF/ODS Czechoslovakia: OF (Klaus) | Civic, moderate vs. RC, slow vs. minority | Czech lands: OH vs. CSSD vs. KSCM Cz/Sl: Meciar |
| 4 | Former opposition nationalist posture (ethnic nationalism) | Moderate | Hungary, Slovakia: MDF, KDNP, FKgP Meciar's HzDS Croatia: Tudjman | Civic, fast vs. RC, fast vs. RC, slow vs. minority | Hungary/Slov. Liberals vs. MSzP/SDL vs. ZRS |
| 5 | Former Communist commitment to secular state (civic nationalism) | Fast | Bulgaria: Bulgarian Socialist Party | Nationalist, moderate vs. minority | Bulgaria: Conservatives vs. Turkish minority |
| 6 | Former Communist commitment to secular state (civic nationalism) | Moderate | Gorbachev's USSR: Reformists within the Yugoslav communist party | Civic, fast vs. nationalist, slow | USSR, Yugo.: Liberals, vs. nationalists vs. hard-line communists |
| 7 | Former Communist nationalist posture (ethnic nationalism) | Fast | Romania: National Salvation Front | Civic, slow vs. minority | Romania: opposition vs. Hungarian minority |
| 8 | Former Communist nationalist posture (ethnic nationalism) | Moderate | Serbia: Milosevic | Civic, fast vs. minority | Serbia, Croatia: opposition |

Interesting as table 3.3 might be, it opens almost as many questions as it answers. The correlation between the examples and the ideal types is far less convincing than in Lipset & Rokkan's case, in several cases because of the heterogeneous nature of the conglomerate parties that entered office with the transition from communism. In the Czech, Slovak and Polish cases only the dominant factions within the government fit the ideal types, and strains in the conglomerate parties soon led to formal divisions. Second, in types 5 – 8, the real-life continuity between communists and the reform communists is blurred (internal reformers took over the Party), and their economic

⁷ Inspired by Lipset & Rokkan, "Cleavage Structures, Party Systems, and Voter Alignments", p.37.

strategy is elusive at best. Even in the East Central European cases, several dissidents had a communist past. Third, party strategies were developed partly on an ad hoc basis, and the rapid pace of change makes the government – opposition dichotomies less reliable. In cases 1 – 4, this means that the reform communists developed both types of economic strategy, usually manifest in internal party divisions. Fourth, on more specific points, for example to account for the success of the non-communist CSSD in terms of Klaus' (moderate) leaning toward ethnic nationalism seems controversial at best and ridiculous at worst, even if it suggests something about the CSSD's development as an opposition party. Finally, the consistent anti-incumbency trend in post-communist elections meant that new parties have entered the government with almost every election, again inhibiting stable, dichotomous relationships. The 'first governments' category hardly invokes the stability and preponderance of Lipset & Rokkan's 'nation-building core'.

Though this eight-fold typology brings out some (logical) differences in the post-communist party systems of Eastern Europe, it clearly leaves much to be desired as far as East Central Europe is concerned. It would even be possible to proceed along Luebbert's lines to predict the prospects for stable liberal democracy, based, for example, on the extent to which national cleavages divide the non-socialist camp or whether the politics of economic transition is relevant to most voters. An analysis along these lines suggested better prospects for the East Central Europe cases than their eastern and south-eastern neighbours.⁸ However, a comparative analysis of the four East Central Europe cases warrant, closer analysis of the Lipset-Rokkan model, and re-appraisal of its assumptions in the light of the conditions of post-communism. The starting point is the cleavages upon which the model is built, and the subsequent areas of investigation include its explicit and implicit assumptions.

⁸ G. Evans & S. Whitefield, "Identifying the Bases of Party Competition in Eastern Europe", *British Journal of Political Science*, 23 (1993), 521-548.

CLEAVAGES AND FUNCTIONAL ASSUMPTIONS – REDEFINING THE CONCEPT

Though the Lipset-Rokkan model of party system formation was developed with reference to Western Europe as a whole, it has an in-built bias towards the northern monarchies bordering on the Atlantic, Norway in particular. Application of the model to the Mediterranean states and peripheral states like Finland or Ireland is more problematic, particularly in the light of territorial change and civil war. Sinnott argues that the model can only be applied to Ireland if the state is considered part of a wider political system including the UK (taking 1918 as the starting point), and Mair emphasises the role of the parties in affecting change *and* stability in the Irish party system.⁹ Several analysts of the Irish party system have argued that the 1918 election and the quest for independence shaped the system irrevocably, or simply that the cleavage model does not apply to the Irish case.¹⁰ The relevance of the Russian revolution to the Finnish civil war and subsequent party system developments is less contentious, but equally cogent.¹¹ Analyses of the new Greek, Portuguese and Spanish party systems that emerged in the 1970s, a decade after the Lipset-Rokkan model was published, invited questions about the extent to which the model applied in a late

⁹ R. Sinnott, "Interpretations of the Irish Party System", *European Journal of Political Research*, 12:3 (1984), 289-307; P. Mair, *The Changing Irish Party System: Organisation, Ideology and Electoral Competition*, (London, Pinter, 1987); P. Mair, "Explaining the Absence of Class Politics in Ireland", in J. H. Goldthorpe & C. T. Whelan (eds.), *The Development of Industrial Society in Ireland*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1992); B. Kissane, "The Not-So Amazing Case of Irish Democracy", *Irish Political Studies*, 10 (1995), 43-68.

¹⁰ T. Garvin, "Political Cleavages, Party Politics and Urbanization in Ireland: The Case of the Periphery-Dominated Centre", *European Journal of Political Research*, 2 (1974), 307-27; B. Farrell, "Labour and the Irish Party System: A Suggested Approach to Analysis", *Economic and Social Review*, 1 (1970), 477-502; R. K. Carty, *Parties and Parish Pump: Electoral Politics in Ireland*, (Waterloo, Ontario, Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1981).

¹¹ E. Allardt & P. Pesonen, "Cleavages in Finnish Politics", in Lipset & Rokkan (eds.), *Party Systems and Voter Alignments*; R. Alapuro, "Finland: An Interface Periphery", in S. Rokkan & D. Urwin (eds.), *The Politics of Territorial Identity: Studies in European Regionalism*, (London, Sage Publications, 1982), and J. Mylly, "The Emergence of the Finnish Multi-Party System: A Comparison with Developments in Scandinavia, 1870-1920", in J. Mylly & R. M. Berry (eds.), *Political Parties in Finland: Essays in History and Politics*, (Turku, Grafia Oy, 1984); R. Sankiahio, "Cleavages and Party System Dimensions", in S. Borg & R. Sankiahio (eds.), *The Finnish Voter*, (Tampere, Painomainen Oy, 1995).

Twentieth Century context.¹² So did the changing Italian party system in the 1990s.¹³ Application of the model to East Central Europe merely multiplies these problems.

Though the Lipset-Rokkan model has been hailed as going beyond the 'sociology of politics' due to its focus on the question of how cleavages are translated into political competition, the model remains sociological in its reliance on cleavages.¹⁴ The question is whether these cleavages can be used to analyse developments outside the core states on which the Lipset-Rokkan analysis is based. For example, an application of the Lipset-Rokkan schema to the European Community political system would require focusing on a new centre – periphery cleavage: integration vs. national sovereignty. Like Lipset & Rokkan's cleavages, this is derived from a specific critical junction or revolutionary event: supranational integration.¹⁵ Similarly, application of the Lipset-Rokkan schema to post-communist East Central Europe would warrant focusing on new critical junctions: the political and economic transitions from communism. This raises questions concerning the nature of the cleavages on which the model is based.

Lipset and Rokkan focus on four critical lines of cleavage:¹⁶

Two of these cleavages are direct products of what we might call the *National Revolution*: the conflict between *the central nation-building culture* and the increasing resistance of the ethnically, linguistically, or religiously distinct *subject populations* in the provinces and peripheries [...and second...] the conflict between the centralizing, standardizing, and mobilizing *Nation State* and the historically established corporate privileges of the *Church* [...].

¹² M. Caciagli, "Spain: Parties and Party System in the Transition", and J. R. Lewis & A. M. Williams, "Social Cleavages and Electoral Performance: The Social Basis of Portuguese Political Parties, 1976-83", both in G. Pridham (ed.), *The New Mediterranean Democracies: Regime Transition in Spain, Greece and Portugal* (London, Cass, 1984); C. Lyrintzis, "Political Parties in Post-Junta Greece: A Case of 'Bureaucratic Clientelism?'" *West European Politics*, 7:2 (1984), 99-118; N. P. Diamandouros, "PASOK and State-Society Relations in Post-Authoritarian Greece (1974-1988)", in S. Vryonis Jr, *Greece on the Road to Democracy: Form the Junta to PASOK 1974-1986*, (New Rochelle, NY, Astride D. Caratzas, 1991); G. Pridham, "Political Actors, Linkages and Interactions: Democratic Consolidation in Southern Europe", *West European Politics*, 13 (1990), 103-117.

¹³ E.g., S. Parker, "Electoral Reform and Political Change in Italy, 1991-1994", in S. Gundle & S. Parker (eds.), *The New Italian Republic: From the Fall of the Berlin Wall to Berlusconi*, (London, Routledge, 1996).

¹⁴ G. Sartori, "The Sociology of Parties: A Critical Review", in O. Stammer (ed.), *Party Systems, Party Organisations, and the Politics of New Masses*, (Berlin, Free University of Berlin, 1968).

¹⁵ S. Hix, "The Study of the European Community: The Challenge to European Politics", *West European Politics*, 17:1 (1994), 13-44.

¹⁶ Lipset & Rokkan, "Cleavage Structures, Party Systems, and Voter Alignments", p.15.

Two of them are products of the *Industrial Revolution*: the conflict between the *landed interests* and the rising class of *industrial entrepreneurs* [...and...] the conflict between *owners and employers* on the one side and *tenants, laborers, and workers* on the other [...].

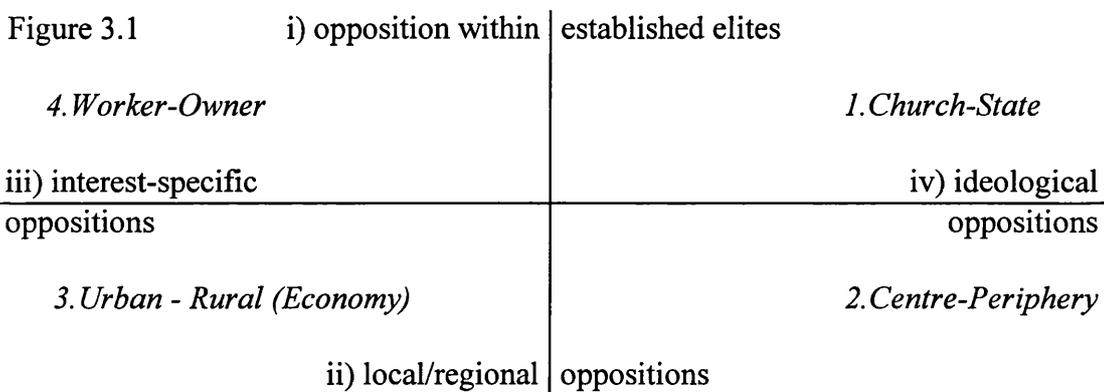
By extension, it is tempting to suggest that the revolutions of 1989 produced two lines of cleavage: one centring on the question of *political regime change*, the other on the *economic transition*. Both pit defenders of the status quo or advocates of slow and limited reforms against advocates of rapid and extensive transition.

Though there is much to be said for this, it constitutes only half the story. A cursory examination of inter-war East Central Europe reveals that the Lipset-Rokkan schema cannot be applied so readily. In inter-war Slovakia, more than half the electorate voted for parties that were normally excluded from the governing 'Petka', i.e., for parties in opposition to the Czech-dominated government. The Pilsudski – Dmowski dispute centred on the proper reach of the Polish 'nation-state'. Aspects of Hungarian inter-war politics reflected pre-war divisions over acceptance of the *Ausgleich* (the Austro-Hungarian constitutional compromise of 1867 which created the dual monarchy) and the monarchy. Issues arising from nation-building and regime change featured prominently in the East Central European regimes. Hence the question of how 'cleavage' can be defined, a question Lipset & Rokkan carefully avoided. This, in turn, begs a question concerning whether *regime change* itself should be considered on a par with Lipset & Rokkan's cleavages, or even as more significant than these.

Lipset & Rokkan's starting point is a review of a range of "*logically possible strains and oppositions*" based on Talcott Parsons' functions of social systems.¹⁷ From this a two dimensional space is derived, within which cleavages are located: i) oppositions within the central elite, as opposed to ii) oppositions between the centre and the periphery; and iii) conflicts based on interest concerning the allocation of resources, as opposed to iv) religious or ideological oppositions. The first and second fall along a territorial dimension (vertical, *y*-axis), i.e., centre vs. periphery and within-centre conflicts. The third and fourth represent a functional dimension (horizontal, *x*-axis), i.e., ideological or

¹⁷ Lipset & Rokkan, "Cleavage Structures, Party Systems, and Voter Alignments", p.6. The approach is based on Parsons' pattern variables and general functional problems faced by any social system. See e.g. T. Parsons & N.J. Smelser, *Economy & Society* (London, Routledge, 1956).

interest-specific conflict.¹⁸ Parsons' dichotomies are thus transformed to a grid, within which conflicts or cleavages are located. From this it is but a short step to their four cleavages. Each revolution generated cleavages along both the territorial dimension and the functional dimension. The national revolution generated territorial cleavages between centre and periphery (2), and functional cleavages between state and church (1). Similarly, the industrial revolution led to territorial cleavages between landed and urban interests (3), as well as functional class cleavages between owners and employees (4).



However, though it purports to be a *general theory*, the Parsons schema has been open to criticism, some of which is relevant to Lipset & Rokkan's thesis. Questions have been raised concerning the exhaustive nature of Parsons' categories, and whether they can be considered fundamental. One answer holds that the schema ignores strains or tensions deriving from changes in the rules of the game, or changes of players, which go beyond mere adaptive questions. Black therefore criticises Parsons' schema as static, or equilibrium-based.¹⁹ It is not equipped to deal with major changes in the system as such, whether in the shape of internal or external shocks. By definition, these kinds of problems play a crucial role in transitions to democracy by way of revolution or regime collapse (as opposed to gradual change within stable borders). A similar critique could be derived from the international relations debate surrounding neo-functionalist theories of European integration. The key shortcoming of neo-functionalist analysis of the

¹⁸ Lipset & Rokkan, "Cleavage Structures, Party Systems, and Voter Alignments", p. 10-11.
¹⁹ M. Black, "Some Questions about Parsons' Theories" in M. Black (ed.), *The Social Theories of Talcott Parsons*, (Englewood Cliffs, NJ, Prentice-Hall, 1961).

European Community lies in its blindness to actors, economic conditions, and external developments.²⁰ Focusing on the dynamic of integration, the neo-functionalists failed to address potential economic and political shocks to the system, whether derived from domestic or international politics. These include, e.g., the Euro-sceptic strands in Scandinavian and British domestic politics, the various rounds of enlargement of the EC/EU and German unification. Though Lipset & Rokkan focus on the role of actors and the extent to which their strategic choices shape party systems, their model does not take account of political conflicts over the size and shape of the state and/or regime, some of which are driven by external shocks. As in the case of European integration, these shocks may take the form of political system change, economic system change, or changes in the shape and size of the system (i.e., the state). In other words, regime change need not be merely a political phenomenon, but may also entail economic changes and/or changes to the shape and scope of the state. Indeed, given the significance of stability in terms of borders, even *expansion* (acquisition) of territory can be considered a 'state failure' (and therefore state change).²¹

Lipset & Rokkan recognise that “[f]unctional oppositions can only develop after some initial consolidation of the national territory.”²² Hence the relevance of the process of state-building in terms of territorial secession or unification, a process which in East Central Europe differed considerably from the West European ‘norm’. As the Irish case illustrates, application of the Lipset-Rokkan model entails answering the question of what political unit it should be applied to. The division over acceptance of the 1921 Treaty can be interpreted as a centre – periphery cleavage within the UK (then including Ireland), which divided the two camps within Sinn Fein. In other words, *regime change* represented a separate line of ‘strain and opposition’. Analogously, the inter-war East Central European states emerged from collapsing empires, prompting the question of the relevance of regime change on top of the centralising and secularising national revolution. In fact, no European state other than Switzerland has escaped some kind of

²⁰ S. George, *Politics and Policy in the European Community*, (Oxford, Clarendon, 1985).

²¹ G. Schopflin, “Yugoslavia: State Construction and State Failure”, in S. Bianchini & G. Schopflin, *State Building in the Balkans: the Dilemmas on the Eve of the 21st Century*, (Ravenna, Longo, forthcoming).

²² Lipset & Rokkan, “Cleavage Structures, Party Systems, and Voter Alignments”, p. 13.

state failure in terms of loss or acquisition of territory, foreign conquest, loss of empire or complete disappearance.²³ Regime change, therefore, represents a potential division along which political competition may be structured. Even British politics saw the Irish question shape Liberal – Conservative competition around the turn of the century. Hence the question: can regime change be considered a cleavage?

REGIME CHANGE AS A CLEAVAGE

At this point a more general definition of cleavages is called for, i.e., what exactly does the concept imply? Most definitions of cleavages are linked to one of the three categories discussed by Rae & Taylor: i) *ascriptive or 'trait'* cleavages, based on objective criteria; ii) *attitudinal or 'opinion'* cleavages, based on values or ideology; and iii) *behavioural or 'act'* cleavages based on action or membership of organisations.²⁴ The question has been whether cleavages are derived primarily from social structures, as the first type of cleavage would suggest, or whether political organisation is more significant. Bartolini & Mair define cleavages as including three elements, each of which is related to one of Rae & Taylor's categories of cleavages. By this definition cleavages feature: i) an *empirical* element, i.e., objective social structure; ii) a *normative* element, i.e., a more subjective dimension based on values and beliefs; and iii) an *organisational or behavioural* element, i.e., the expression of the cleavage in terms of action or organisation.²⁵ In other words, cleavages are based on social structures, but these must be translated into political competition, or at least a degree of organisation, before the term cleavage can be applied to politics. Political and institutional aspects of social stratification are pertinent, not merely stratification per se. "In sum, a cleavage has to be considered primarily as a *form of closure of social relationships*."²⁶

²³ Schopflin, "Yugoslavia: State Construction and State Failure".

²⁴ D. W. Rae & M. Taylor, *The Analysis of Political Cleavages*, (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1970), p.1.

²⁵ S. Bartolini & P. Mair, *Identity, Competition, and Electoral Availability: the Stabilization of European Electorates 1885-1985*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990), p.213ff.

²⁶ Bartolini & Mair, *Identity, Competition, and Electoral Availability*, p.216.

On the Bartolini & Mair definition *regime change* does not qualify as a cleavage inasmuch as it lacks the empirical element, or social stratification. This is not to say that regime change may not be linked to a specific cleavage. It usually is. Nevertheless, regime change *per se* might generate opposition or conflict. If this were the case, the conflict would feature two of the three elements associated with cleavages, i.e., a *normative element* and *political organisation*. This is precisely what happened in several European states towards the end of the Nineteenth Century and during the early Twentieth Century, whether the states gained independence from the UK and Sweden or from the Russian and Central European empires. The process of regime change carries the potential for divisions between advocates of compromise with the old regime and advocates of more radical change. The division between supporters of the 1867 *Ausgleich* and revisionists (and nationalists calling for complete Hungarian independence) is perhaps the best case in point, though the Irish Civil War illustrates a similar division over the acceptability of compromise in the quest for independence.

There is no *a priori* reason why such a ‘quasi-cleavage’ should not have as strong an influence on party system formation as a ‘genuine’ cleavage, provided that the strength of values and organisation compensate for the lack of empirical basis. In fact, there are grounds for expecting regime change to be *more* salient than cleavages that are not directly related to it, at least temporarily. If the rules of the game remain open to debate, this debate could be expected to take on a high degree of salience given the long-term implications of institutional arrangements. Moreover, a number of authors have identified regime change as a cleavage, or at least as a central political dimension or line of division.²⁷ In the Italian case, Sartori emphasises that “the cleavage between the four pro-system parties and the half-way parties; [and] the cleavage between the half-way parties and the anti-system parties” make up two of the four relevant cleavages.²⁸ Reviewing the Lipset-Rokkan model, he focuses on the question of how “conflicts and cleavages” are translated into party competition, and goes on to argue that an

²⁷ H. Daalder, “Parties, Elites, and Political Developments in Western Europe”, in J. LaPalombara & M. Weiner (eds.), *Political Parties and Political Development*, (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1966); A. Lijphart, *Democracies: Patterns of Majoritarian and Consensus Government in Twenty-One Countries*, (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1984).

²⁸ G. Sartori, “European Political Parties: The Case of Polarized Pluralism”, in LaPalombara & Weiner (eds.), *Political Parties and Political Development*, p.149.

“advantage of this approach is that it gives equal attention to *any kind* of conflict or cleavage.”²⁹ Finland provides further evidence that ‘non-structural’ cleavages, in this case over foreign policy, may shape party systems.³⁰ Carty similarly argues that the Irish constitutional cleavage was elite-driven (though Sinnott disagrees).³¹ This has led analysts of party competition to play down the socio-economic element of cleavages, e.g., Dahl’s analysis of cleavages in US politics focuses on “political attitudes and actions”, and their link to political loyalties.³² Zuckerman’s analysis of the literature on cleavages supports the notion of non-structural cleavages, thus suggesting that the term should not be limited to divisions that feature a structural or objective element.³³ In other words, the *empirical* element of a cleavage is not considered a necessary condition. If this possibility of playing down the importance of the empirical element is accepted, then regime change qualifies as a ‘cleavage’. The Irish, Finnish and Italian cases suggest that there is a strong case for doing this.

The point concerning the salience of divisions over regime change is readily reinforced with reference to rational choice analysis. In *game theory* terms, liberal democracies feature two levels of games: games about policy and games about institutions (i.e. the rules of the policy-games). Given the durability and significance of the rules of the game, or constitutional arrangements, these can be expected to take precedence over policy games.³⁴ Until the rules of the game have been established, the struggle to lay down such rules dominates. In inter-war Hungary, Ireland and Finland this was resolved only through civil war. By extension, a regime can be considered as *consolidated* once the new rules of the game have been accepted by the major players.³⁵ Hence the

²⁹ Sartori, “The Sociology of Parties”, p.18-19, emphasis in original.

³⁰ Allardt & Pesonen, “Cleavages in Finnish Politics”.

³¹ Carty, *Parties and Parish Pump*; Sinnott, “Interpretations of the Irish party System”.

³² R. Dahl, “The American Oppositions: Affirmation and Denial”, in R. Dahl (ed.), *Political Oppositions in Western Democracies*, (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1966), p.48ff.

³³ A. Zuckerman, “Political Cleavage: A Conceptual and Theoretical Analysis”, *British Journal of Political Science*, 5:2 (1975), 321-248.

³⁴ See e.g. G. Tsebelis, *Nested Games: Rational Choice in Comparative Politics*, (Berkeley, CA, University of California Press, 1990), Chapter Four on games about institutions and the significance of uncertainty. Games about rules of the game (i.e. institutions) will be referred to as ‘macro-games’.

³⁵ G. Di Palma, “Parliaments, Consolidation, Institutionalization: A Minimalist View”, in U. Liebert & M. Cotta (eds.), *Parliaments and Democratic Consolidation in Southern Europe*, (Pinter Publishers, 1990).

significance of *reforma pactada*, or negotiated transition.³⁶ The nature of transition can matter, to the extent that a negotiated settlement promotes rapid consolidation if all major political forces accept the new rules of the game. By and large this fits developments in Poland and Hungary 1989-90.³⁷ Though the outgoing regime had less of a say in the Czecho-Slovak transition, the 1990-1992 constitution represented a negotiated settlement between Czechs and Slovaks. In contrast, the inter-war regimes hardly represented a similar *reforma pactada*.

The same point is reflected in coalition-building, where the West European experience suggests that regime change or a threat to the regime takes precedence over other issues. A study of coalition-building in twenty states indicates a hierarchy of party preferences: i) to conserve democracy if it is under threat; ii) to deal with policies related to socialist – bourgeois differences if there is no regime threat; and iii) to pursue group-related preferences if neither of the above issues is salient.³⁸ Extending the argument to party system formation, regime change can be expected to be more salient than ‘real’ cleavages, at least during the transitional phase. In the case of the Irish Free State and the Italian ‘First Republic’, this was projected into long-term party competition.

The idea of regime change as a cleavage can, therefore, be derived from the comparative politics literature, game theory and rational choice analysis, and an empirical survey of coalitions in Western Europe. Yet, in most West European states the process of democratisation, i.e., extension of the franchise, did not generate an independent cleavage. Not only were party systems firmly established at the eve of the introduction of universal suffrage, but the extension of the franchise was generally part of a package of constitutional reform including proportional representation. In the face of the rise of mass parties of the left and pressure for franchise reform, PR was a rational strategy for limiting the impact of new left-wing votes, particularly considering divisions within the non-socialist camp. New or modified rules of the game were thus

³⁶ G. O'Donnell, P. C. Schmitter & L. Whitehead, (eds.), *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Prospects for Democracy*, (Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986).

³⁷ A. Lijphart, “Democratisation and Constitutional Choice in Czecho-Slovakia, Hungary and Poland 1989-91”, *Journal of Theoretical Politics*, 42:2 (1992), 207 - 223.

³⁸ I. Budge & H. Keman, *Parties and Democracy: Coalition Formation and Government Functioning in Twenty States*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1990), p.34.

established by explicit or tacit negotiation over a relatively brief period of time.³⁹ Under these conditions issues generated by democratisation (regime change) did not have a major impact on party system formation for three reasons: i) there was no question of wholesale regime change; ii) the major players were already established along the four cleavage lines; and iii) questions relating to the new rules of the game were settled before they could influence the party system. In fact, the pressure for a change of rules was expressed by the existing parties, i.e., extension of the franchise followed pressure from the liberal and socialist left. The same can hardly be said for inter-war East Central Europe, or even West European cases such as Ireland.

In East Central Europe, as in some Western Europe cases, divisions that were caused or triggered by specific political events – not ‘divisions along natural lines’ – had a considerable formative impact on party systems. Rational choice analysis and comparative West European politics suggest that these should be treated as cleavages. They were generated by the same type of ‘revolutionary events’ or ‘critical junctures’ as Lipset & Rokkan’s cleavages, even if they are not necessarily based on ‘natural lines of division’. Though this violates the dictionary definition as ‘divisions based on natural lines’, it is in line with theory, comparative politics practice and empirical observation. This distinction between the classic (sociology-based) use of the concept and the wider usage in comparative politics is significant, because if cleavages are not necessarily based on ‘objective’ social divisions they may not provide for the kind of link between voters and parties that the worker – owner division did. This definition of cleavage therefore warrants analysis of the implications of ‘non-social’ cleavages’ lack of basis in objective or natural divisions. Hereafter, the term cleavages will be used here in the new, wider sense, i.e., including major potentially party system shaping divisions that feature the ‘subjective’ and ‘organisational’ elements of Bartolini & Mair’s analysis, but not necessarily the ‘objective’ elements.

³⁹ Lijphart, “Democratisation and Constitutional Choice...”; S. Rokkan, *Citizens, Elections, Parties: Approaches to the Comparative Study of the Process of Development*, (Oslo, Universitetsforlaget, 1970).

THE EXPLICIT AND IMPLICIT ASSUMPTIONS OF THE LIPSET-ROKKAN APPROACH

The Lipset-Rokkan scheme is about more than cleavages. In the authors' words, "cleavages do not translate themselves into party oppositions as a matter of course."⁴⁰ Hence their focus on "conditions for the expression of protest and the representation of interest in each society."⁴¹ The process of democratisation involves lowering several thresholds, the net result of which is to allow the opposition entry into the political game. And this process involves a number of strategic decisions on the part of the old regime and the emerging opposition during the process of democratisation. Hence the O'Donnell & Schmitter volume's focus on the process of regime change rather than on cleavages.⁴² The Southern European and Latin American transitions took place under conditions which differed significantly from those of the Lipset-Rokkan processes of democratisation, and therefore the model has rarely been applied to them. A similar argument could be made for East Central Europe. Nevertheless, an analysis of the assumptions made by Lipset & Rokkan allows for sufficient re-working and expansion of the model to provide a framework for analysis of post-communist party systems in East Central Europe. Lipset & Rokkan's approach is based on assumptions concerning the process of democratisation, which are related to the historical context in which the process took place, namely the emergence of socialist mass movements. These warrant closer examination.

THRESHOLDS AND LEGITIMACY

Lipset & Rokkan focus on four thresholds, which when lowered lead to gradual incorporation of the opposition into the game of parliamentary politics. The first two thresholds, the legitimacy of protest and the protesters' status as citizens with full political rights, were the main elements in the process of democratisation, i.e.

⁴⁰ Lipset & Rokkan, "Cleavage Structures, Party Systems, and Voter Alignments", p.26.

⁴¹ Lipset & Rokkan, "Cleavage Structures, Party Systems, and Voter Alignments", p.26.

⁴² O'Donnell, Schmitter & Whitehead, (eds.), *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule*.

introduction of the full franchise. However, although the first tended to precede the second in Western Europe, as the authors assume, this has not always been the case elsewhere. *De jure* political citizenship does not necessarily imply *de facto* legitimacy of opposition, as the communist regimes made a point of illustrating. And they were by no means the only ones. Inter-War Hungary's compromise allowing Socialists organisation and political activity in urban centres, but not in the countryside, is a case in point. *De jure* political citizenship went hand in hand with *de facto* limits to political activity through abolition of the secret ballot in rural constituencies.⁴³

Second, the authors focus on two thresholds related to the electoral system, namely the ease with which new parties can gain representation and the existence of built-in checks on majority power. However, these are not necessarily independent variables, since the choice of electoral systems depends to no small extent on party strategies.⁴⁴ Though this assertion generally holds for much of Western Europe, institutional choice in the context of regime change may be limited by externally imposed parameters. The Irish Free State's STV electoral system is a case in point. Though first Cumann na nGaedheal and then Fianna Fail pushed towards a more majoritarian system, neither was in a position to abolish STV (which was part of the Treaty deal to protect the Protestant minority in 1921). In post-war Germany, the electoral systems were initially decided by the four occupying powers, though the Americans and the French left it up to the *Länder*. The West German system was a product of *Länder* negotiation and US, French and British influence, and has survived with minor changes.⁴⁵ Similarly, neither of the Czech or Slovak Republics has abolished the PR systems introduced as part of the 1990-92 power-sharing arrangement, though Meciar tried.

Though legal thresholds might be reduced rapidly, as was the case in post-communist East Central Europe, this does not necessarily imply that the main parties accept the legitimacy of their opponents (which is not the same as the legitimacy of the rules of the

⁴³ Rothschild describes this as virtually amounting to bribery of the left, which abstained from political activity in rural constituencies, where the secret ballot had been abolished in 1920, J. Rothschild, *East Central Europe between the Two World Wars*, (Seattle, University of Washington Press, 1974), p.160.

⁴⁴ Lipset & Rokkan, "Cleavage Structures, Party Systems, and Voter Alignments", p.30.

⁴⁵ G. K Roberts, "The Federal Republic of Germany", in S. E. Finer (ed.), *Adversary Politics and Electoral Reform*, (London, Anthony Wigram, 1975).

game). Institutions may not always reflect the complete political reality, in terms of political competition, even if they are the product of negotiation. Hence the need to consider assumptions made about party strategy, the class basis of politics, voters and party identification and party organisation, and the extent to which these assumptions are problematic given the conditions of post-communism.

PARTY STRATEGY

The Lipset-Rokkan analysis includes three more or less explicit assumptions. First, it assumes a rational choice approach to party strategy on the part of the major parties. This assumption is made in the context of mini-max strategy, limitation of the possible maximum damage under conditions of uncertainty. In other words, parties pursue a strategy of survival in the face of an uncertain threat, each party focusing on gaining or maintaining a presence in the parliamentary arena. It is assumed that the old parties recognise the legitimacy of the new opposition, or at least its potential success, and react by letting the opposition enter the game of parliamentary politics.⁴⁶ The model is based on developments in a number of logical steps, the first of which is the development of an entrenched conflict, normally the class conflict. This is followed by *de facto* recognition of the conflict, and thence its legitimacy. Finally, political rights are extended to the opposition, a development that might include restructuring of institutions (e.g., the electoral system). In other words, all major forces accept parliament as the key arena for political competition. Democratisation is the result of pressure by entrenched political forces and the old regime's response, a situation in which much will depend on party strategies towards offers and acceptance of alliances. Lipset & Rokkan focus on the central nation building elites' commitments on the religious and economic fronts, i.e., respectively to a secular state or a church on the first front, and to urban or landed interests on the second. This by and large determines the peripheries' choice of alliances.⁴⁷ Alliances and coalition-building are the tools of the trade, leading to democratisation in the form of *reforma pactada*.

⁴⁶ Rokkan elaborated on this theme in Rokkan, *Citizens, Elections, Parties*.

⁴⁷ Lipset & Rokkan, "Cleavage Structures, Party Systems, and Voter Alignments", p.36-37.

BARGAINING: CLASS-BASED INTERESTS

Second, the Lipset-Rokkan approach assumes that the process of democratisation is by and large a product of the pressure generated by the industrial revolution, or more precisely the rise of working class mass movements. Moreover, the assumption is that these movements pursue an evolutionary rather than revolutionary strategy. A similar point was made by Rustow: the “dynamic process of integration is set off by a prolonged and inconclusive political struggle. To give it these qualities, the protagonists must represent well entrenched forces (typically social classes)...”⁴⁸ What Rustow makes explicit, national unity, remains implicit in the Lipset-Rokkan model as the authors avoid cases in which democratisation is closely associated with national independence, or regime change. “This excludes situations of latent secession, as in the late Hapsburg and Ottoman Empires...”⁴⁹ By extension, democratisation by way of regime change in 1989-90 must also be ‘excluded’ from Rustow and Lipset & Rokkan’s models. Marxist theories of the state generally hold that class conflict is the most basic conflict, and that inter-ethnic or religious conflict deflects attention from this.⁵⁰ However, the overall European experience indicates that the opposite is the case. Conflict over bargainable issues within an established polity provides scope for bargaining over distribution within commonly accepted rules of the game, whereas conflict over identity or morality, let alone over national borders, is far less conducive to stability.⁵¹ The Lipset-Rokkan scheme assumes that the class conflict is the driving force behind democratisation, even if “[t]he decisive contrast among the party systems had emerged before the entry of the working class parties into the political arena.”⁵²

⁴⁸ D. Rustow, “Transitions to Democracy: Toward a Dynamic Model”, *Comparative Politics*, 3 (1970), 337-63, p.352.

⁴⁹ Rustow, “Transitions to Democracy”, p.351.

⁵⁰ R. Kieve, “Pillars of Sand: A Marxist Critique of Consociational Democracy in the Netherlands”, *Comparative Politics*, 13:3 (1981), 313-337.

⁵¹ Lijphart, *Democracy in Plural Societies*; G. Schopflin, *Politics in Eastern Europe: 1945-1992*, (Oxford, Blackwell, 1993); G. Schopflin, “From Communism to Democracy in Hungary”, in A. Bozóki, A. Korosenyi, & G. Schopflin (eds.), *Post-Communist Transition: Emerging Pluralism in Hungary*, (London, Pinter Publishers, 1992); A. Arato, “Civil Society in the Emerging Democracies: Poland and Hungary”, in M. L. Nugent, *From Leninism to Freedom: The Challenges of Democratization*, (Boulder, Westview Press, 1992).

⁵² Lipset & S. Rokkan, “Cleavage Structures, Party Systems, and Voter Alignments”, p.35.

This factor facilitated the step-by-step process of democratisation as set out by Rustow and Lipset & Rokkan. The established parties' response to the socialist challenge became a key factor shaping party systems, or in Luebbert's analysis, the very regimes.⁵³ However, the East Central European regimes, inter-war as well as post-communist, were hardly the result of a democratisation process ushered in by the liberal or socialist left, let alone organised interests. Hence the call for analysis of alternative strategies and alliances, partly due to the lack of an overwhelming class base for political competition.

PARTIES AND VOTERS: PARTY IDENTIFICATION

Third, the cleavages or divisions which provided the basis for democratisation affect the relationship between the electorate and the new elites, or parties. The left-wing parties which played an integral role in the 'first wave' democratisation process in Western Europe were not merely based on a social cleavage, but also aggregate organised interests. The labour and social democrat parties developed in close association with the trade union movement, if not as their political wings.⁵⁴ In several states, especially the Netherlands and Belgium, their competitors relied on the second major extra-parliamentary reservoir of organised power, the Church. The parties of the left, and several of their right wing counterparts, thus relied on a strong and well-structured relationship between voters and party, fostered through trade unions and churches. Hence the description of Dutch society as 'pillarised'.⁵⁵ The inter-war West European party systems in Lipset & Rokkan's core cases featured a high degree of party identification on the part of voters courtesy of the relationship between parties and

⁵³ Luebbert, *Liberalism, Fascism or Social Democracy*.

⁵⁴ A comprehensive comparative account can be found in D. Sassoon, *One Hundred Years of Socialism*, (London, Tauris, 1996).

⁵⁵ Hence the debate on consociationalism in the Netherlands, A. Lijphart, *The Politics of Accommodation: Pluralism and Democracy in the Netherlands*, (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1968); H. Daalder, "The Consociational Democracy Theme", *World Politics*, 26:4 (1974), 604-621; S. M. Halpern, "The Disorderly Universe of Consociational Democracy", *West European Politics*, 9:2 (1986), 181-197; H. J. G. A. van Mierlo, "Depillarisation and the Decline of Consociationalism in the Netherlands", *West European Politics*, 9:1 (1986), 97-119; A. Lijphart, "From the Politics of Accommodation to Adversarial Politics in the Netherlands: A Reassessment", *West European Politics*, 12:1 (1989), 139-153.

extra-parliamentary organisations. But these links were not reproduced in East Central Europe in 1989. Though dissident organisations made for a degree of organised interests, these conglomerate organisations were directed against the regime. Campaigns were dominated by moral arguments about absolute right and wrong. Though an effective instrument against a totalitarian regime, this hardly constitutes an ideal basis for interests-based political competition.⁵⁶

PARTY ORGANISATION

Fourth, and finally, the model features assumptions concerning the type of parties that operated and developed during the process of democratisation. In Lipset & Rokkan's own terms, the result of gradual reduction of thresholds is strong and durable parties "firmly entrenched in inherited social structures and [that] could not be dislodged through changes in the rules of the game."⁵⁷ Though a number of these parties were formed prior to the final extension of the franchise, they developed considerably during the mass politics era. Given the rise of well-organised mass parties on the left, the non-socialist parties had little choice but to respond in kind. The result was a dynamic development, where cadre parties respond to the rise of the mass party by recruiting mass membership in an attempt to take advantage of the resources that this entails.⁵⁸ Hence the development of mass parties across the political spectrum, with strategies focusing on mobilisation of mass support and taking advantage of their supply of party workers. In this scenario, political parties represent a link between civil society and the state, at times to the extent that they seek "increasing influence over all spheres of the individual's [or party member's] daily life."⁵⁹ 'Parties of integration' therefore represent a class or pillar of society, based on one or more cleavages. However, post-

⁵⁶ This point is developed in G. Schopflin, "Postcommunism: The Problems of Democratic Construction", *Daedalus*, 123:3 (1994), 127-141.

⁵⁷ Lipset & Rokkan, "Cleavage Structures, Party Systems, and Voter Alignments", p.34.

⁵⁸ M. Duverger, *Political Parties: Their Organisation and Activity in the Modern State*, (London, Methuen & Co, 1954), Chapter Two.

⁵⁹ S. Neumann, "The Party of Democratic Integration", in P. Mair (ed.), *West European Politics*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1990), p.47. Excerpted from "Towards a Comparative Study of Political Parties", in S. Neumann (ed.), *Modern Political Parties: Approaches to Comparative Politics*, (Chicago, Chicago University Press, 1956).

war West European politics has seen a shift to the more autonomous catch-all party, or even the professional cartel party which acts as a broker between the state (of which it forms part) and civil society.⁶⁰ Once again Lipset & Rokkan's assumption hardly holds for inter-war East Central Europe, let alone the condition of post-communism. The post-communist parties have far more in common with the West European catch-all party than with the mass parties associated with the process of democratisation.⁶¹ Katz & Mair's cartel parties and Paul Taggart's 'new populist' parties provide even closer parallels to some of the new post-communist parties.⁶²

Given the prevalence of mass parties in West European politics between the turn of the century and the 1960s, and the links between these parties and organised interests reflecting 'objective' or structural cleavages, it is no surprise that the Lipset-Rokkan model should focus on cleavages in this sense. However, the mass party was specific to a given time and place, early Twentieth Century Western Europe, and was directly linked to the salience of the owner – worker cleavage. This in turn is linked to legitimacy, party strategy, and the scope for interest-based bargaining. However, this need not suggest that the same should hold outside the core West European cases. The interest-based mass party is but one option. While the mass party invites attention to 'structural' cleavages, the extent to which parties do not or cannot adopt the mass model warrants extending the focus to include 'non-structural' cleavages. This opens potential challenges to the other assumptions inherent in the Lipset-Rokkan model as well.

⁶⁰ O. Kirchheimer, "The Transformation of West European Party Systems", in LaPalombara & Weiner (eds.), *Political Parties and Political Development*; R. Katz & P. Mair, "Changing Models of Party Organisation and Party Democracy: The Emergence of the Cartel Party", *Party Politics*, 1:1 (1995), 5-28.

⁶¹ G. Smith, "Transitions to Liberal Democracy", in S. Whitefield (ed.), *The New Institutional Architecture of Eastern Europe* (Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1993).

⁶² P. Taggart, "New Populist Parties in Western Europe", *West European Politics*, 18:1 (1995), 34-51.

THE PROBLEMS OF POST-COMMUNISM

These more or less explicit assumptions of the Lipset-Rokkan approach have a few implications for post-communist party systems formation which suggest that party strategy, party organisation and the parties' links with civil society warrant further examination. First, the question of the primacy of cleavages based on bargainable questions (distribution of resources) as opposed to value-based cleavages is particularly relevant to post-communism. The West European left-wing parties' focus on redistribution of wealth stands in considerable contrast to the moral dimension of political competition sometimes seen under the condition of post-communism. Judy Batt refers to a

general mistrust and rejection not just of formal organization but of power itself, reflecting profound disillusion and scepticism of politics as a morally corrupt, dirty business to be shunned by respectable, decent people. This also affects attitudes to pluralism and opposition. People seem to expect the national unity achieved at the climax of the struggle to end communist rule to continue in post-communist politics, and thus seem neither to understand nor to approve the bi-party or multi-party competition evolving from within the new political leadership.⁶³

The second point follows directly from this, namely the relevance of cleavages to political competition. Whereas early Twentieth Century mass parties in Western Europe (at least on the left) enjoyed a degree of external institutional support, the same cannot be said of most post-communist parties' links with extra-parliamentary organisations. Across East Central Europe, the parties of the 1990s have generally been born of schisms within the opposition movements or former communist parties since the collapse of communism. Therefore, the emerging parties represented movements rather than specific social interests or deep social cleavages. The emergence of agrarian parties notwithstanding, few post-communist parties represent specific interest groups or even an aggregation thereof.

⁶³ J. Batt, *East Central Europe from Reform to Transformation*, (London, Royal Institute of International Affairs, Pinter Publishers, 1991), p.47.

Third, rational choice theory suggests that party strategies should be examined.⁶⁴ Given the consensus on the need for some degree of market-oriented reform, do parties seek to influence policy or to achieve a dominant position in the political market? Walesa's U-turns on the Polish economic transition indicate that the latter is not out of the question. The brief 'rise' and fall of Walesa's BBWR is a case in point, a vehicle designed to enhance his support rather than influence policy.⁶⁵ The closest post-communist parallel to the policy-oriented Scandinavian liberal and/or agrarian coalitions with labour parties has been the coalitions between reformed communists and agrarians (Poland) and the former liberal opposition (Hungary).

Fourth, Katz & Mair's points on the development of political parties' structure and relationship with the state are relevant to the post-communist scene. If the post-communist parties fit this picture better than that of the mass party, it has implications for the development of party systems. Organisationally, cartel or 'new populist' parties entail more freedom for the party leadership than a catch-all party, let alone a mass party. A more professional party, less dependent on links with civil society and more a representative of the state, would provide more room for leadership manoeuvre, less constrained by cleavages. Where the mass party remains more captive to its members, catch-all, cartel and 'new populist' parties leave the party leadership less constrained, but also more vulnerable to leadership struggles.

Though the Lipset-Rokkan model provides a useful starting point, it can, therefore, by no means be applied wholesale to East Central Europe. But a review of the model's assumptions highlights areas for further investigation in post-communist East Central Europe. The nature of the relevant cleavages is but one of these, as party system formation in East Central Europe has taken place under conditions that differ considerably from those of mainstream West European politics. Three factors stand out:

⁶⁴ E.g., P. Dunleavy, *Democracy, Bureaucracy & Public Choice*, (Exeter, Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991). Dittrich comes to a similar conclusion by examining the notion of the catch-all party, K. Dittrich, "Testing the Catch-All Thesis: Some Difficulties and Possibilities", in H. Daalder & P. Mair (eds.), *Western European Party Systems: Continuity and Change*, (London, Sage Publications, 1983).

⁶⁵ L. Vinton, "Correcting Pilsudski: Walesa's Nonparty Bloc to Support Reform", *RFE/RL Research Report*, 2:35 (3 September 1993)

the relationship between party politics and civil society, party strategies, and the very nature of the political parties. All this points towards one conclusion: post-communist party systems have developed and are being shaped under conditions that place considerably fewer constraints on the party leadership, whether in the shape of cleavages or organisations. Hence the importance of party strategies, and parties' responses to competing parties' strategies.

But is this uniquely East Central European or post-communist? Not necessarily. The Lipset-Rokkan framework is based on assumptions concerning the nature of parties and their relationship with each other and civil society. Hence its relevance to the Scandinavian and Dutch cases, which featured mass parties, democratisation by way of negotiation, prominent left-wing mass parties and coalition governments. However, party system formation under different conditions, whether secession (Ireland) or regime change (Greece), renders the original model less useful. The advent of the Italian 'Second Republic' is an example where the Lipset-Rokkan model is of little use as far as the post-1992 Italian party system is concerned. The implications of this re-evaluation of the principles and assumptions on which the Lipset-Rokkan model is based are, therefore, not limited to post-communist East Central Europe. Lipset & Rokkan's model presents a framework for party system formation in several north-west European states in a given historical context. But this context no longer holds for East Central Europe, and never fully held outside a few central cases even in Western Europe.

Though the dynamics of party system development set out in the cleavage model (based on translation of cleavages into politics and on patterns of competition, alliance-building and opposition) are important, its assumptions about cleavages, parties and political competition must be revised. The functional approach to cleavages is rejected in favour a wider definition that allows inclusion of 'non-structural cleavages.' Using Bartolini and Mair's terms, this entails the *normative element* and *organisation*. Though an *empirical* element may be found, it is not necessary since the two other aspects of a cleavage can exist without 'objective' divisions. The new cleavage model is therefore expanded to include analysis of politicisation of cleavages in the wider sense, and

analysis of institutions, of the relationship between voters and parties, of party organisations, and of party strategy and patterns of political competition. Institutional constraints are considered below, in the last section of this chapter, and then through the remaining chapters where relevant. One chapter is dedicated to each of the other aspects of this model: voters and elections, party organisation, party alignments and party competition.

THE FREEZING HYPOTHESIS AND CONTROVERSY

Lipset & Rokkan's 'freezing hypothesis' (or rather observation) has generated a considerable amount of debate on the dynamics of party system development. Paradoxically, the freezing hypothesis was put forward at the dawn of an era of increasing electoral volatility and party system change. Over the next decade the Dutch and Belgian party systems went through important mergers and splits respectively, and Denmark and Norway experienced a burst of electoral volatility associated with the divisive issue of European integration. Hence the extensive debate on the merit of the freezing hypothesis. However, in the long run West European party systems have featured a considerable degree of stability, particularly in terms of blocs of parties rather than individual parties.⁶⁶

The post-war West European experience suggests that once party systems have emerged and the process of franchise extension is complete, the further development of party systems is subject to significant constraints. Only in exceptional circumstances have party systems undergone substantial change over a short period of time, and even then the change has turned out less be less significant in the long term. The Danish and Dutch changes in the 1970s have since been recognised as less dramatic than was argued at the time.⁶⁷ The Italian 'Second Republic' is perhaps the best, if not the only, case of major party system change in post-war Western Europe (excluding, of course,

⁶⁶ Bartolini & Mair, *Identity, Competition, and Electoral Availability*.

⁶⁷ On the Netherlands see Lijphart, *The Politics of Accommodation*; on Denmark, see O. Borre, "Denmark", in M. Franklin, T. Mackie, & H. Valen (eds.), *Electoral Change: Responses to Evolving Social and Attitudinal Structures in Western Countries*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1992).

the transitions to democracy in Spain, Portugal and Greece).⁶⁸ Despite evidence of secularisation and de-alignment, party system change has been limited. If the freezing process is due to institutional factors and party strategies rather than the strength of certain historical cleavages, then the implications for the process of party system development and change in post-communist East Central Europe include a potential for freezing.

Lipset & Rokkan's arguments focus on the prevailing strength of the parties that entrenched themselves before the final extension of the franchise, and the "narrowing of the 'support market' brought about through the growth of mass parties during this final thrust toward full-suffrage democracy [which] clearly left very few openings for new movements."⁶⁹ The parties that emerged during the process of democratisation and were fully functioning by the time of franchise extension 'crowded out' potential new parties, which was possible due to the strong ties between voters and the mass parties that had developed by the time of the post-WW I wave of democratisation. By the 1920s 'electoral space' had thus narrowed considerably, i.e., floating voters were in short supply. In the Lipset-Rokkan schema cleavage structure is therefore a major factor in the freezing process, though political parties are recognised as the agents promoting the freezing. Yet this is only part of the equation which leads to freezing. Frozen party systems have occurred in cases where the party system did not reflect the strength of parties that were entrenched before the final extension of the franchise. For example, the Irish party system was formed around a specific issue, acceptance of the 1921 Treaty, but has survived in a more or less 'frozen' form.⁷⁰ This case alone would suggest that the freezing process can be explained by other means. Two approaches, focusing on rational choice and institutional constraints respectively, constitute complementary rather than alternative explanations for the persistence of 'freezing'.

⁶⁸ Gundle & Parker (eds.), *The New Italian Republic*.

⁶⁹ Lipset & Rokkan, "Cleavage Structures, Party Systems, and Voter Alignments", p.51.

⁷⁰ See Mair, *The Changing Irish Party System*; Sinnott, "Interpretations of the Irish Party System".

RATIONAL CHOICE AND PARTY STRATEGY

An actor-oriented approach to the development of party systems throws considerable light on the interests and strategies pursued by the main actors, the political parties. Sartori considers the freezing process a stage of 'structural consolidation', suggesting that "the 1920 freezing of party systems and alignments is intriguing only as long as we persist in understanding party systems as dependent variables. It is not intriguing, however, if we realise that a freezed party system is simply a party system that intervenes in the political process as an independent *system of channelment*, propelled and maintained by its own laws and inertia."⁷¹ In other words the party system, once developed, contributes to its own perpetuation. It is not merely the result of other forces, but an independent factor contributing to its own stability. The party system is by and large the product of the *interaction* between parties.⁷² Hence the question of how parties can shape party systems, either individually by shaping voters' preferences or collectively by reinforcing the salience of certain issues and attempting to keep 'maverick issues' off the electoral agenda.⁷³ The referendum has proved a particularly useful device for the latter, e.g., the left in Norway, Sweden and the UK has at different times used referendums on EC/EU membership to reduce the impact of internal schism. In Schattschneider's words, "the definition of the alternatives is the supreme instrument of power."⁷⁴

The freezing process can, therefore, be understood in terms of manipulation of political agendas and alternatives. Once the division between the main political camps has been consolidated in the shape of a 'left – right' dimension, possibly incorporating a range of issues, new parties and movements are obliged to position themselves along this

⁷¹ Sartori, "The Sociology of Parties", p. 21, emphasis in original.

⁷² G. Smith, "What is a Party System?", *Parliamentary Affairs*, 19:3 (1966), 351-362; G. Smith, "Western European Party Systems: On the Trail of a Typology", *West European Politics*, 2:1 (1979), 128-143.

⁷³ Dunleavy, *Democracy, Bureaucracy & Public Choice*; M. Maor & G. Smith, "On the Structuring of Party Competition: The Impact of Maverick Issues", (manuscript, The European Institute, LSE, 1993); M. Maor & G. Smith, "Government-Opposition Relationships as a Systemic Property: A Theoretical Framework", *ECPR Joint Session of Workshops*, Leiden April 1993; S. Bartolini, "Electoral Competition: Analytical Dimensions and Empirical Problems", *EUI Working Paper*, SPS No.95/6, 1995.

⁷⁴ E. E. Schattschneider, *The Semisovereign People: A Realist's View of Democracy in America*, (New York, Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1960), p.68.

dimension. Even new parties that have focused on ‘maverick’ issues such as European integration or post-materialist values have accepted the need to adopt a position on the dominant left – right dimension. It is in the main parties’ interest to maintain the party system more or less frozen in terms of alternatives, and they have the means to pursue this. Though cleavage structures may change, this change is gradual and parties can adapt to new pressures and issues by incorporating these into the main dimension of political competition. This, more than anything, explains the fate of green parties in Scandinavia, despite their success in Sweden in the late 1980s.⁷⁵

FORMATIVE FACTORS: AN INSTITUTIONALIST APPROACH

Yet the rational actor approach does not tell the whole story. Institutions do matter. Political outcomes reflect more than the distribution of preferences and resources: institutions impose an element of order and continuity, even if they are subject to change. Moreover, they contribute to the shaping of preferences and resources of actors.⁷⁶ In terms of party system development and change, the parties that prosper under certain institutional rules are unlikely to promote institutional change. Once a given set of institutions has been established, this contributes to system stability.

Analysing the freezing of party systems, Bartolini & Mair suggest that systemic factors become increasingly important in *relative* terms, as the impact of “factors associated with the process of the formation of party systems – for example enfranchisement, electoral growth of new parties, *institutional change*, and so on – will tend to wane away”.⁷⁷ In other words, party systems become more stable when institutional change declines, or the rules of the game have been developed. Institutional flux is associated with the development of party systems, and institutional stability contributes to party

⁷⁵ M. Bennulf, “Sweden: The Rise and Fall of Miljöpartiet De Gröna”, in D. Richardson & C. Rootes (eds.), *The Green Challenge: The Development of Green Parties in Europe*, (London, Routledge, 1995); O. Knutsen, “The Materialist/Post-Materialist Value Dimension as a Party Cleavage in the Nordic Countries”, *West European Politics*, 13 (1990), 258-273.

⁷⁶ J. G. March & J. P. Olsen, *Rediscovering Institutions: The Organizational Basis for Politics*, (New York, Free Press, 1989).

⁷⁷ Bartolini & Mair, *Identity, Competition, and Electoral Availability*, p. 137, emphasis added.

system stability and vice versa. Italian politics since 1989 is a perfect example. The collapse of the party system prompted changes in the rules of the game, which have in turn influenced the relationship between the parties. The result has been the most comprehensive party system change in post-war West European politics. By extension, both the new Italian and the post-communist party systems should feature a considerable degree of freezing once the initial period of institutional change is behind them. Di Palma's minimalist definition of regime consolidation raises a similar point, inasmuch as consolidation is defined in terms of major actors accepting the new rules of the game, which in turn suggests a degree of stability.⁷⁸

Therefore, 'party system freezing' depends on two factors. First, the strategies pursued by individual parties, in the context of the party system, shape the party system by determining the agenda and the dimensions of political competition. Second, the institutional framework (rules of the game) determined during the process of democratisation represents a constraint on party strategies. However, this constraint may include a degree of flexibility inasmuch as there is room for institutional manipulation. Though major institutional change, particularly electoral system change, has been rare since the final wave of democratisation, smaller changes have been seen across Western Europe.⁷⁹ Similarly, all four East Central European states in question have modified their electoral systems since 1990.⁸⁰

⁷⁸ Di Palma, "Parliaments, Consolidation, Institutionalization: A Minimalist View"; G. Di Palma, *To Craft Democracies*, (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1990).

⁷⁹ For an overview of electoral change in post-war Western Europe, see A. Lijphart, *Electoral Systems and Party Systems: A Study of Twenty-Seven Democracies, 1945-1990*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1994). A majority of Western Europe's states have changed their electoral systems to a minor extent since 1945. Italy and France have gone through considerable changes, and the UK Labour government is considering electoral reform.

⁸⁰ Poland adopted a 5% barrier for the 1993 election (8% for alliances or joint lists) and Hungary changed from the threshold from 4% to 5% for the 1994 election. The Czech and Slovak republics have changed their electoral laws for their upper chambers since the dissolution of the state.

THE FREEZING CONTROVERSY: PARTY STRATEGY OR SOCIAL CHANGE?

Despite the wave of literature on party system change in the two decades following the publication of Lipset & Rokkan's 'freezing hypothesis', more long term evidence suggests that party strategy and institutional stability have prevailed over social change. While the salience of cleavages has declined, this has not generated the increased volatility expected by some authors.⁸¹ Bartolini & Mair present evidence indicating that over the last century total volatility "fails to display any clear secular trend over time".⁸² Moreover, when within-bloc or cleavage volatility is considered with respect to the worker-owner cleavage in Western Europe, there is no upward trend in any of the states considered in the post-war period. This is arguably as "the most telling indication of the reality of the freezing process since it offers a direct index of cross-cleavage mobility."⁸³ Nevertheless, it is worth noting the attempts that have been made to overcome the 'freezing' of party systems.

BEYOND CLEAVAGES: THE CATCH-ALL PARTY AND DE-ALIGNMENT

The West German *Volkspartei* is the classic case featuring party strategy based on electoral appeal above and beyond cleavages. Germany's CDU is the best example, followed by the Italian DC, though Dutch 'de-pillarisation' illustrates the case as well. Based on the success of the CDU, and the SPD's subsequent conversion to *Volkspartei* status, Kirchheimer argued the case for the superiority of the 'catch-all' party in terms of organisation and party strategy.⁸⁴ The key point is that parties can, relatively successfully, seek to take politics beyond the cleavages upon which party systems are

⁸¹ R. J. Dalton, S. C. Flanagan & P. A. Beck (eds.), *Electoral Change in Advanced Industrial Democracies: Realignment or Dealignment?*, (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1984); M. Maguire, "Is There Still Persistence? Electoral Change in Western Europe, 1948-1979", in Daalder & Mair (eds.), *Western European Party Systems*; M. Pedersen, "The Changing Dynamics of European Party Systems: Changing Patterns of Electoral Volatility", *European Journal of Political Research*, 7 (1979), 1-26; S. B. Wolinetz, "The Transformation of Western European Party Systems Revisited", *West European Politics*, 2:1 (1979).

⁸² Bartolini & Mair, *Identity, Competition, and Electoral Availability*, p.119-120.

⁸³ Bartolini & Mair, *Identity, Competition, and Electoral Availability*, p.120.

⁸⁴ Kirchheimer, "The Transformation of West European Party Systems".

based. Moreover, this may prove a superior strategy, inasmuch as the opposition may have to adopt a similar catch-all strategy if it is to have any hope of electoral success.⁸⁵ Though Kirchheimer's and Epstein's theses feature elements of social change such as the declining salience of cleavages, the main focus is on party organisation and strategies. The catch-all strategy is a deliberate choice on the part of the party, or more specifically the party leadership, designed to reach a wider electorate. It is no coincidence that this strategy was adopted by the right first, in competition with 'wing-parties' on the socialist left which relied on class-based mobilisation. In this context, the labour and social democrat parties' shift towards catch-all strategies, from the SPD at Bad Godesberg in 1959 to Blair's 'New Labour' in the 1990s, represents a response to their opponents' strategies. Though Thatcher's Conservative Party can hardly be described adequately in 'catch-all' terms due to its focus on ideology, it still illustrates the impact of party strategy appealing over and above cleavage structures.⁸⁶

The fact that several other types of parties have survived does not in itself detract from the catch-all thesis, neither does electoral or party system stability.⁸⁷ Kirchheimer stressed that the catch-all thesis applies mainly to major parties.⁸⁸ The result of a catch-all strategy could be to prevent an otherwise impending loss of votes, rather than spectacular electoral growth. Though some attempts have been made to test the catch-all thesis in West European politics,⁸⁹ Dittrich concludes that "the one definite point to

⁸⁵ Kirchheimer, "The Transformation of West European Party Systems", p.188; see also Dittrich, "Testing the Catch-All Thesis"; D. Epstein, *Political Parties in Western Democracies*, (London, Pall Mall Press, 1967) similarly anticipated a shift toward US-style office-seeking parties appealing over and above cleavages.

⁸⁶ It has been argued that the Conservative - Labour division warrants a redefinition of class centring on, among other factors, the private - public divide in employment, home ownership, etc., P. Dunleavy & C. Husbands, *British Democracy at the Crossroads: Voting and Party Competition in the 1980s*, (London, George Allen & Unwin, 1985); see Dunleavy, *Democracy, Bureaucracy and Public Choice* on preference shaping along these lines of divisions. In any case, the importance of party strategy is illustrated.

⁸⁷ Ware cites non-class cleavages, new cleavages, continued reliance on ideology, and the persistence of non-catch-all parties, A. Ware, *Political Parties and Party Systems*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 226-29; A. Ware, "The Party Systems of the Established Liberal Democracies in the 1990s: Is this a Decade of Transformation?", in *Government and Opposition*, 30:3 (1995), 312-326.

⁸⁸ Kirchheimer, "The Transformation of West European Party Systems", p.55.

⁸⁹ R. Rose & D. Urwin, "Persistence and Change in Western Party Systems since 1945", *Political Studies*, 18:3 (1970), 287-319; Wolinetz, "The Transformation of Western European Party Systems Revisited"; and Maguire, "Is There Still Persistence?" found little evidence to indicate the success of catch-all parties.

emerge from this [debate on the catch-all party], is that we need to pay much more attention to the question of party strategy.”⁹⁰ And this is the key point for East Central Europe. Parties not only translate cleavages into political competition, they can also attempt to transcend cleavage-based politics. Party strategy matters. However, the conglomerate movements (or proto-parties) that emerged in Poland and Czechoslovakia in 1989 shared only some attributes of the catch-all party. They were based on unstructured or non-aligned electorates rather than the de-alignment associated with the West European catch-all party.⁹¹ Subsequent developments have depended to no small extent on party strategies, or rather, leadership strategies.

TOWARD NEW CLEAVAGES: RE-ALIGNMENT

The second major challenge to the freezing hypothesis is based on re-alignment rather than de-alignment, i.e., the salience of new cleavages rather than the declining salience of old cleavages. Inglehart has been the most prominent advocate of the notion that value-change in post-materialist society has brought forward a new, post-materialist, agenda which has had a major impact on West European politics in the form of green parties.⁹² A ‘silent revolution’ has arguably generated a new set of cleavages, expressed in the rise of green parties and some left-wing parties’ adoption of elements of the ‘green’ agenda in response to this threat. Given the central role of cleavages in the Lipset-Rokkan scheme this could imply party system change. Yet the freezing hypothesis, at least in the interpretation set out above, would suggest otherwise.

The effect on West European party systems has been mixed. Though green parties have experienced some success, particularly in Germany and in European elections, the overall effect on West European party systems has been more limited due to left wing

⁹⁰ Dittrich, “Testing the Catch-All Thesis”, p.266.

⁹¹ Smith, “Transitions to Liberal Democracy”, p.9-10.

⁹² R. Inglehart, *The Silent Revolution: Changing Values and Political Styles Among Western Publics*, (Princeton University Press, 1977); R. Inglehart, “Value Change in Industrial Societies”, *American Political Science Review*, 81:4 (1987), 1289-1303; R. Inglehart, *Modernisation and Postmodernisation: Cultural, Economic, and Political Change in 43 Societies*, (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1997), Chapter Eight.

parties' ability to absorb part of the green agenda.⁹³ Nevertheless, green parties have seen some success. They should probably be treated as 'issue-oriented parties' rather than as parties focusing on a new cleavage. In line with the rational choice notion of voters' signalling when voting for less viable parties, 'green' votes could be interpreted as a message to the major parties. In fact, the coalition behaviour of moderate greens (e.g., in Germany) indicates that greens have developed into interest-oriented parties, bargaining for influence over policy. Maor & Smith cite post-materialist issues among the new 'maverick issues' which do not fit easily into the dominant left – right dimension.⁹⁴ Nevertheless, green parties have tended to adopt positions along the left – right dimension. Kitschelt goes one step further, arguing that the 'silent revolution in Europe' has affected left – right competition inasmuch as 'post-materialist' values are associated with a left-wing socio-economic orientation.⁹⁵

Three points are significant for East Central European party system development. First, if there has in fact been a 'silent revolution', whether of Inglehart's or Kitschelt's kind, its effect on party systems in Western Europe has been limited. As an explicit challenge based on realignment according to new cleavages, the green parties have not altered party systems radically. However, as pressure groups, green parties and other 'new social movements' have influenced political competition. Green politics thus illustrate the potential power of interest-based parties rather than a case for re-alignment. Second, *pace* Kitschelt, the 'silent revolution' literature raises questions concerning non-material dimensions of politics other than religion and identity. Though non-material issues are significant in West European politics, they have been incorporated into left – right competition, linked by attitudes to government intervention and redistribution of wealth. Hence the question of the nature of the relationship between economic and non-

⁹³ E. Frankland, "Germany: The Rise, Fall and Recovery of Die Grunen"; C. Rootes, "Greens in the June 1994 Elections to the European Parliament"; both in Richardson & Rootes (eds.), *The Green Challenge*; W. Rudig, "Green Parties and the European Union", in J. Gaffney (ed.), *Political Parties and the European Union*, (London, Routledge, 1996). Inglehart himself has noted post-materialist voters' tendencies to vote for left-wing parties which absorb the post-materialist agenda R. Inglehart, *Culture Shifts*, (Princeton N.J., Princeton University Press, 1990). See also Bennulf, "Sweden: The Rise and Fall of Miljopartiet de Grona".

⁹⁴ Maor & Smith, "On the Structuring of Party Competition".

⁹⁵ H. Kitschelt, "A Silent Revolution in Europe", J. Hayward & C. Page (eds.), *Governing the New Europe*, (Cambridge, Polity Press, 1995).

material issues under post-communism, which need not follow the West European pattern. Finally, the post-materialist challenge underscores the potential for 'maverick issues' to influence party systems in the short to medium term. Though party systems may adapt and accommodate such challenges, there is some scope for short-term shocks, in this case based on alternative cleavages.

ANTI-CLEAVAGE POLITICS: 'NEW POPULISM'

If post-materialist parties challenged Western Europe's 'frozen' party systems from the left, they were by no means the only parties to do so. Though right-wing extremist parties were not new in West European politics in the 1970s, the anti-tax parties that developed in Scandinavia can be better described as neo-populist. Their anti-immigration policies notwithstanding, the Norwegian and Danish anti-tax parties focused more heavily on a 'populist' criticism of the welfare state and socialism. The term neo-populist is used to reflect their attempted appeal over and above sectional interests, based on notions of 'common sense', the 'common man' and national interests. A parallel can be drawn with anti-EC parties on the left in both countries, stressing the 'common man' against corporate interests, not unlike US Populists in the 1890s.⁹⁶ Taggart's term 'New Populism' captures the combination of the older populist appeal and the protest character of the 1970s and 1980s' 'new social movements', and "fuses the Anti-politics stance of the New Politics with the broad-based protest of the populist party."⁹⁷ Though he does not include the anti-EC socialist left parties in Scandinavia, these are at least near cousins.⁹⁸ Kitschelt reaches a similar conclusion via an alternative route, though he does not draw conclusions concerning types of parties. Whereas much of the post-materialist agenda has been linked to the left of the West European political spectrum (e.g., social and cultural minority rights, green issues), the more authoritarian elements of non-materialist issues have been addressed by a rising

⁹⁶ M. Canovan, *Populism*, (London, Junction Books, 1981).

⁹⁷ Taggart, "New Populist Parties in Western Europe, p.35.

⁹⁸ J. E. Lane, & S. Ersson, *Politics and Society in Western Europe*, (London, Sage Publications, 1991), p.106-107, note the difficulty in identifying the left socialist parties given their lack of clear-cut ideological criteria and their tendency to have split off from socialist parties. Yet precisely this lack of clear cleavage basis and the 'populist' appeal qualify them as New Populist.

'new authoritarian' right.⁹⁹ Both authors stress the neo-liberal economic appeal of the new populists or new authoritarian right, in contrast to fascist and neo-fascist parties.

New populism takes the notion of a party not based on interests or cleavages to its logical conclusion, by combining the catch-all strategy's mass appeal above cleavages and the post-materialists' focus on non-material issues. Though the Norwegian and Danish Progress Parties epitomise this approach, the phenomenon has become increasingly significant. Taggart includes, among others, *Forza Italia* and Sweden's New Democracy.¹⁰⁰ The debate as to which West European parties should be so classified is less important than the emergence of parties that deliberately aim to appeal over and above sectional interests, focusing heavily on non- or post-material values. The contrast to the catch-all strategy is clear, new populism emphasises that it is un-aligned rather than de-aligned. This point has become increasingly important with the collapse of the Italian 'First Republic' and the electoral success of Berlusconi's *Forza Italia* and Fini's *Alleanza Nazionale* in 1994. Both parties emphasised their 'new' status and accompanying lack of involvement in the bribery scandals that contributed to the fall of the Christian Democrats.¹⁰¹

Again the conclusion points to the importance of party strategy and organisation. Taggart stresses "strongly centralised structures with charismatic and personalised leadership" along with "anti-system ideology and speaking for the 'mainstream' of society" and wide constituency as central features of new populist parties.¹⁰² The Italian case suggests that the time of the mass party may be gone, given the success of the *partito azienda* (the professional, or literally the 'company', party). Or at least it

⁹⁹ Kitschelt, "A Silent Revolution in Europe", p. 136-138.

¹⁰⁰ Taggart's inclusion of the Northern League was debatable given the party's strong regional identity, but the 'post-fascist' *Alleanza Nazionale* fits the bill closely. Taggart, "New Populist Parties in Western Europe"; I. Diamanti, "The Northern League: From Regional Party to Party of Government", and C. Ruzza & O. Schmidtke, "Towards a Modern Right? *Alleanza Nazionale* and the 'Italian Revolution'", both in Gundle & Parker (eds.), *The New Italian Republic*.

¹⁰¹ M. Frei, *Italy: The Unfinished Revolution*, (London, Sinclair-Stevenson, 1996); Gundle & Parker (eds.), *The New Italian Republic*; S. Bartolini & R. D'Alimonte, "Plurality Competition and Party Realignment in Italy: The 1994 Parliamentary Elections", *EUI Working Paper*, SPS No.95/7, 1995. Both parties enjoyed considerable support in the 1994 elections, but less in the 1995 local and 1996 national elections.

¹⁰² Taggart, "New Populist Parties in Western Europe", p.43-44.

suggests that there is considerable room for parties that can be classified neither as mass nor catch-all parties, nor even as Katz & Mair's cartel parties, but rather as a new relative of the populist party. In Italy, the 1994 elections brought the right-wing new populist coalition to power. Yet two years later the formerly communist PDS led a victorious coalition in the 1996 elections, having recently adopted a catch-all type strategy. The parallels between Italy since 1992 and East Central Europe since 1989 will be developed further in the chapters below. Suffice it to note that both developments present challenges for theories of party system change and stability in Western Europe.

BEYOND THE FROZEN PARTY SYSTEM?

Judging from West European theory and practice, the brief answer to the question whether party systems development has gone beyond the limits of the freezing hypothesis must be negative. Apart from the Italian case, the post-war West European party systems have remained remarkably stable in the face of catch-all strategies, post-materialist politics and new populist challenges. Once developed, party systems have tended to remain more or less frozen. If this can be put down to institutional constraints and party strategy, there is little reason to expect that the 'freezing hypothesis' cannot eventually be applied to Italy's 'Second Republic' and the post-communist East Central European party systems. However, West European party systems have not remained completely frozen. Bartolini & Mair's distinction between total volatility and bloc volatility is particularly pertinent. Even if overall volatility is subject to temporary change, bloc volatility has declined over the twentieth century.¹⁰³ Yet there can be little doubt that several parties have changed considerably, both in terms of strategy and organisation.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰³ Bartolini & Mair, *Identity, Competition, and Electoral Availability*.

¹⁰⁴ R. Katz & P. Mair, "Party Organizations: From Civil Society to the State", in R. Katz & P. Mair (eds.), *How Parties Organize: Change and Adaptation in Party Organizations in Western Democracies*, (London, Sage Books, 1994); Katz & Mair "Changing Models of Party Organisation and Party Democracy".

A FREEZING HYPOTHESIS FOR POST-COMMUNIST EAST CENTRAL EUROPE? INSTITUTIONAL CONSTRAINTS ON PARTY SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT

By the logic set out above, any freezing of East Central European party systems depends on consolidation of the rules of the game, or institutional stability, and on the strategies pursued by the political parties. With the change from the period of transition to consolidation, both factors become increasingly strong constraints on individual parties' strategies over time. Rokkan's hypothesis concerning negotiated democratisation and constitutional choice in early Twentieth Century Western Europe is particularly relevant here, inasmuch as the transitions in East Central Europe in 1989-90 were negotiated processes.¹⁰⁵

THE NEW RULES OF THE GAME

Institution-building in post-communist East Central Europe had more in common with West European politics than inter-war East Central Europe. The difficulties faced by these new democracies in the inter-war period "resulted in theoretical orientations that look at new democracies in the twentieth century as saddled with original problems that are inherently difficult to remove."¹⁰⁶ However, the failed inter-war democracies were born out of crisis and defeat of the old order in war, "without the support and consent of the losers."¹⁰⁷ This can be contrasted to democratisation in the Atlantic and Scandinavian states, where the lowering of thresholds of representation through franchise extension was accompanied by adoption of PR electoral systems, resulting from convergence of pressures from below and from above.¹⁰⁸ The focus is thus on institutional arrangements or rules of the game that satisfied the demands of all major

¹⁰⁵ Rokkan, *Citizens, Elections, Parties*.

¹⁰⁶ Di Palma, "Parliaments, Consolidation, Institutionalization", p.33.

¹⁰⁷ Di Palma, "Parliaments, Consolidation, Institutionalization", p.33.

¹⁰⁸ Rokkan, *Citizens, Elections, Parties*, p.157.

political forces. Rokkan's suggestion that the process of negotiated democratisation is crucial to the choice of new rules of the game has since been applied to the East Central European transitions.¹⁰⁹ The crucial factor in these 'macro-games' is the *perceived* strength of the actors.¹¹⁰ Cautious assessment of their potential electoral support prompted both socialist and non-socialist negotiators in the 'first wave' of democratisation to opt for the compromise of PR electoral systems, thus minimising the danger of an opposition majority government.¹¹¹

The negotiated transitions in Poland and Hungary featured several factors similar to those stressed by Rokkan in his account of the adoption of PR in Western Europe in response to the 'first wave' of democratisation. The compromises centred on adoption of PR as a means of preventing socialist majorities as far as the established parties were concerned. Similarly, for the rising working class parties, PR was a means of securing representation. Lijphart's parallel is clear, "[f]or Rokkan's 'old-established parties' read ruling Communist parties, and for his 'rising working class' read the new democratic forces."¹¹² In 1989, as in a number of the earlier cases, the rising new parties tended to underestimate their strength, therefore pressing for PR. The same could not initially be said for the *ancien regime* parties. Before the Polish elections in 1989 they overestimated their support, though the outcome of these elections led to drastic re-evaluation of the Communists' prospects across the region. In addition, Lijphart focuses on two further elements of power-sharing: the use of bi-cameral legislatures featuring one chamber based on PR and a second chamber elected on a basis more favourable to the old parties, and semi-presidentialism as a means of separation of powers. Both institutions represent means of limiting the power of the party (or coalition) that controls the lower house, thus safeguarding the interests of both government and

¹⁰⁹ Lijphart, "Democratisation and Constitutional Choice...".

¹¹⁰ The distinction between games about the rules of the game (macro-games) and the iterated games subsequently played is worth noting. Democratic consolidation is concerned with the macro-games, i.e. the rules within which subsequent political conflict is played out. See A. Przeworski, *Democracy and the Market: Political and Economic Reforms in Eastern Europe and Latin America*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1991); Tsebelis, *Nested Games*.

¹¹¹ Four European 'waves' of democratisation are usually identified: a first wave culminating in the post-WW I adoption of the full franchise in most European states; a second wave following WW II; a third Mediterranean wave in the 1970s; and the fourth, post-communist wave.

¹¹² Lijphart, "Democratisation and Constitutional Choice...", p.209.

opposition. In both cases the original 1989 round-table compromises foresaw (tacitly) a Communist president, Jaruzelski in Poland and Pozsgay in Hungary.¹¹³

Thus, “the Polish case does not merely fit the [Rokkan] hypothesis, but provides a well-nigh perfect illustration of it.”¹¹⁴ It must, however, be considered a multi-stage process, as the electoral rules of the game were reformed extensively before each of the two subsequent elections (1991 and 1993). In 1991, with the party system still emerging, only the Democratic Union was confident enough of its electoral strength to support a German-style 5% threshold.¹¹⁵ The result was a ‘hyper-proportional’ electoral law, passed in spite of two presidential vetoes.¹¹⁶ A 5% threshold was adopted before the 1993 election, voted through with the support of all the big parties but predictably opposed by smaller ones. The shift from the Hare formula for seat allocation to the D’Hont formula favoured larger parties further.¹¹⁷

In Hungary, the electoral rules for parliament reflect a compromise that is not dissimilar to the Polish outcome. As in Poland the regime preferred competition for single constituencies, reflecting the low standing of the Party but high profile of a number of its candidates.¹¹⁸ By the same reasoning the MDF favoured a pure list PR system, and the SzDSz a mixed system. The resulting electoral system differs from the German one inasmuch as the overall system is not proportional, the ‘PR seats’ do not provide additional members with the aim of overall proportionality. Hence the parallel with the Polish bicameral system in terms of electoral compromise. The 4% threshold represented a compromise between the MSzMP’s preferred 5%, and the new parties’

¹¹³ Batt, *East Central Europe from Reform to Transformation*, p.30-36. Pozsgay never made it to the presidency due to changes in the rules for election of the president after a referendum promoted by the SzDSz and Fidesz.

¹¹⁴ Lijphart, “Democratisation and Constitutional Choice...”, p.213.

¹¹⁵ V. Zubeck, “The Fragmentation of Poland’s Political Party System”, *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, 26:1 (1993), 14-71, see p.49-52.

¹¹⁶ D. McQuaid, “The ‘War’ over the Election Law”, *Radio Free Europe: Report on Eastern Europe*, 2 August 1991; L. Vinton, “Poland’s New electoral Law: Fewer Parties, Same Impasse?”, *Radio Free Europe*, 2:28, July, 1993.

¹¹⁷ F. Millard, “The Polish Parliamentary Election of September, 1993”, *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, 27:3 (1994), 295-313, p.302.

¹¹⁸ B. Lomax, “Hungary”, in Whitefield (ed.), *The New Institutional Architecture of Eastern Europe*, p.83.

choice of 3%.¹¹⁹ In contrast to Poland in 1989-91, the Hungarian opposition was clearly divided into parties by the time of the negotiations. The threshold was raised to 5% prior to the 1994 elections.¹²⁰

The Czechoslovak transition cannot be compared with the Hungarian and Polish transitions in the sense of a negotiated settlement between regime and opposition. Coming after the Polish elections and the collapse of the Berlin wall, the 'round-table' element was absent.

[T]he communists in Czechoslovakia simply had no bargaining power at all. Negotiations in these conditions had a rather different role from those in Poland and Hungary: they were entered into in Czechoslovakia at the point at which the two sides were hardly 'interdependent', but instead the opposition, previously small and disorganized, was buttressed by the mass support of the people, whereas the Communist Party had been weakened to the point of dependence on the opposition to avoid its complete obliteration...¹²¹

However, inter-ethnic bargaining provided the negotiated element in the Czechoslovak transition. The main political actors in the constitutional game were the (Czech) Civic Forum and (Slovak) Public Against Violence rather than the *ancien regime* – opposition dichotomy predominant elsewhere. Both Rokkan and Lijphart have stressed the significance of ethnic or religious minorities in democratisation, and the adoption of PR to guarantee their political representation.¹²² Lijphart commented on the situation in 1991:

Proportionality is one of the four basic principles of consociationalism, and Czecho-Slovakia is also thoroughly consociational in the other three respects: (a) it has a power-sharing cabinet including representatives of both the Czech majority and the Slovak minority, as well as a Czech president and a Slovak prime minister; (b) it is a two-unit federal system consisting of autonomous Czech and Slovak Republics with their own governments; and (c) it has a mutual veto in the form of a concurrent majority requirement stipulating that constitutional amendments and major legislation require not only approval by extraordinary legislative majorities but also by such majorities in the upper house among Czech and Slovak representatives voting separately.¹²³

¹¹⁹ Lijphart, "Democratisation and Constitutional Choice...", p.215.

¹²⁰ *Associated Press*, "Hungarian Election Facts and Figures", 05 May 1994.

¹²¹ Batt, *East Central Europe from Reform to Transformation*, p.40.

¹²² Rokkan, *Citizens, Elections, Parties*, p.157; Lijphart, *The Politics of Accommodation*, on the Netherlands 1917.

¹²³ Lijphart, "Democratisation and Constitutional Choice...", p.217.

However, the 1990 electoral law was the product of negotiations under the pressure of the deadline of the first elections. “[T]he most obvious solution was to turn to the previous pre-communist systems for inspiration, with the understanding that this would be used for the first election, and that a full reconsideration of the electoral system would be made after the election”.¹²⁴ By the 1992 election only one major aspect of the law was changed: the threshold for coalitions was raised to 7 and 10 percent for coalitions of two or three and four or more parties respectively.¹²⁵

Though the Czecho-Slovak state collapsed at the end of 1992, both successor states have maintained the electoral system (including election of their presidents) adopted in 1990 more or less unaltered. The consociational approach to power-sharing includes one element which makes it somewhat ill-suited to the conditions of post-communism, namely the veto. Given the central position of the transition to a free market economy and the substantial changes required, the mutual veto contained a considerable danger of immobilism. Yet the failure of consociationalism in keeping the state intact obscured its success in producing a set of rules of the game acceptable to all parties. The ‘velvet divorce’ notwithstanding, both successor states’ institutions and party systems remained largely unchanged, if not ‘frozen’.

Though the initial development of party systems in post-communist East Central Europe took place in an institutional vacuum, the new institutional designs have provided parameters within which fully-fledged party systems develop. Given that the role of institutional stability and party systems’ tendency to self-perpetuation in the freezing process is based on general theory rather than arguments specific to Western Europe in the early Twentieth Century, and given the institutional stability achieved in East Central Europe by way of negotiated transitions, the East Central European party systems are developing under institutional constraints that are very similar to those that contributed to freezing of the West European party systems.

¹²⁴ J. Batt, “Czechoslovakia”, in Whitefield (eds.), *The New Institutional Architecture of Eastern Europe*, p.37.

¹²⁵ D. Olson, “Political Parties and the 1992 Election in Czechoslovakia”, *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, 26:3 (1993).

Above all, this suggests that institutional change will continue to be incremental and limited to, e.g., changes in thresholds or constituency size. Meciar's unsuccessful attempt to introduce a more majoritarian electoral system illustrates this. Any party's attempt to achieve a dominant position is tempered by the PR electoral systems. The thresholds to parliamentary representation limit not only the prospect for new parties, but also the consequences of divisions within existing parties. In several cases divisions within a parliamentary caucus have resulted in one section failing to gain representation in subsequent elections for precisely this reason. In short, though parties change, the party systems cannot be expected to change radically beyond the point of institutional freezing. The new electoral law in Poland in 1993 was probably the last step in this development of new rules of the game, though Slovakia has seen attempts to change the electoral law.

PARTY SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT: RATIONAL CHOICE UNDER SYSTEMIC CONSTRAINTS

The Lipset-Rokkan model of party system development remains a powerful analytical tool for analysis of the development of party systems, or rather, a set of party systems, that emerged under specific conditions and in a given historical context. However, if the model is to be applied to cases other than its original core states these context-specific assumptions must be reconsidered, and rejected. Not only is Lipset & Rokkan's approach based on a given set of cleavages, it also assumes highly structured links between social cleavages and politics, notably in terms of voting behaviour. However, the second, third and fourth waves of democratisation have differed considerably from the first wave discussed by Lipset & Rokkan in all these respects. Though party systems may appear to reflect similar cleavages, this does not necessarily imply the same relationship between cleavages and party systems that Lipset & Rokkan pointed to. The transition from communism generated its own new cleavages centring on regime change, and older pre-communist cleavages were revived. Moreover, even if these cleavages contributed to the development of post-communist party systems, this did not take place in the context of the strong extra-parliamentary organisations featured in Western Europe at the turn of the century. The link between organised interests and

party politics is considerably weaker, not to say absent. The same goes for the structure of post-communist parties, and for a number of parties in inter-war Europe and post-war Western Europe as well. The days of the mass party are over, but there is a considerable gap between a mass party that shifts towards catch-all status, and a new party with limited basis in cleavages.

A number of questions emerge for the analysis of the East Central European party system. The post-communist Polish, Czech, Slovak and Hungarian party systems share several attributes with their inter-war predecessors, and even their West European counterparts. There is little doubt that, at the elite level, old and new cleavages played a part in the development of these party systems. However, the leadership of the new parties have been working under considerably less constraint from external organisations than was the case during the first wave of democratisation. Or at least very different constraints. The requirements of economic transition constitute one of these new constraints, but this concerns policy rather than party system formation. A number of parties have attempted to outflank this constraint by focusing their appeal on non-economic issues, with varying degrees of success. The medium-term danger associated with this strategy is a backlash at the polls from voters casting their votes retrospectively based on the government's performance.

A comparison of the role of cleavages, in particular the owner – worker cleavages, in the first wave of democratisation and the less structured competition associated with the fall of communism suggests that the link between parties and voters should be considerably weaker in the post-communist cases. Again this suggests a wider scope for party leader freedom in the development of party strategies, and thus in party system formation. If party systems reflect cleavages, this should be due to elite divisions as much as, if not more than, social cleavages. However, the imperative of economic transition, and the recession this entailed in most cases, contributed to an anti-incumbency bias in East Central Europe. To some extent, parties in office were, therefore, likely to suffer electoral loss, giving rise to high electoral volatility.

The parties which have developed under the condition of post-communism have more in common with Western catch-all or cartel parties than the mass parties which were characteristic of the first wave. Gone are the links with extra-parliamentary organisations, save in the case of some Christian democrat parties. The left-wing parties' links with trade unions are not comparable to their counterparts in early Twentieth Century Western Europe. Parties rely less on their extra-parliamentary membership. Again this suggests wider freedom of action for party elites, whether in terms of party strategy and political appeal or by way of the splits and mergers which have characterised all four East Central European party systems to a greater or lesser degree.

This re-working of the cleavage model thus suggests considerable differences between party system formation in early Twentieth Century Western Europe and post-communist East Central Europe. Different cleavages are relevant, their degree of salience differs, as do parties and party strategies. There is more room for party strategy, as party leaders operate under fewer constraints. However, this approach also suggests a set of constraints under which this 'rational choice' takes place. If cleavages are less significant at the voter level, then there is more room for appeal based on issues, personality and populism. While this may bring considerable success at the polls, it leaves parties potentially vulnerable in the case of economic difficulties. The lack of viable alternatives to the free market thus imposes a second, more medium-term, constraint on party strategy.

An application of the freezing hypothesis to post-communist East Central Europe suggests that institutions 'froze' relatively fast by way of negotiated revolutions and post-revolution institutional settlements. With the changes to Poland's electoral law in 1993 this process of laying down new rules of the game was more or less over. Subsequent changes have not exceeded those that are normal in West European liberal democracies. Moreover, there is little reason not to expect the East Central European party systems, and the big parties in particular, to perform according to rational choice theory (and western experience) and contribute to keeping the party systems frozen by way of agenda setting and keeping maverick issues out. Hence the most significant

constrains under which party systems in East Central Europe are developing – a rapid freezing process.

CONCLUSION

Though the post-communist party systems of East Central Europe have much in common with their Western counterparts, and the Lipset-Rokkan model is therefore a useful starting point in the analysis of the development of these party systems, considerable differences remain. The need for a wider model is due to the assumptions made by Lipset & Rokkan, as their model concerns a given set of states in a specific historical context. Any application of the model to a different set of states, or in a different historical context, therefore warrants re-evaluation of these assumptions. Though the fall of communism and the development of post-communist party systems have been the occasion for this review of the model, it highlights the problems of applying the model outside its core states and historical period. Hence references will be made to West European cases for which the Lipset-Rokkan approach is problematic, notably inter-war Ireland and the Italian ‘Second Republic’.

Despite its limitations, the Lipset-Rokkan model provides a useful ‘heuristic device’ which draws attention to significant features and trends in party system development and change. It presents a powerful explanation of the development of the core West European party systems. Lipset & Rokkan’s analysis focuses on the four cleavages the clearly were predominant in the core cases, however problematic or contentious the functionalist model that they are deduces from is. Yet both the critique of functionalism and the empirical evidence suggests that regime change should also be considered a cleavage, albeit a ‘non-structural’ cleavage. Moreover, analysis of the model raises questions about the assumptions made by Lipset & Rokkan, which do not necessarily hold for east Central Europe. Though the key aspect of the model, the *translation* of cleavages into party competition, remains essential, some of the assumptions built in to the model are revised. Hence the focus on cleavages and dimensions of party competition is supplemented by focus on elections, voters and the links between voters

and parties, on party organisation, and on party strategy. This provides a re-working of the model for analysis of post-communist party systems in a comparative perspective, which also throws light back on West European party systems.

The succeeding chapters therefore focus on the main elements of this wider version of the Lipset-Rokkan model. A brief historical chapter (Four) is followed by analysis of voters and elections (Five), parties and party organisation (Six); and cleavages and dimensions of party competition (Seven). Chapter Eight focuses on party strategies and the developments of patterns of competition, toward more fully developed party systems. The focus, therefore, falls more heavily on Sartori's appraisal of the Lipset-Rokkan model, i.e., the role of political parties in translating cleavages into politics, than on cleavages. The term 'cleavage' is widened to take account of the significance of 'non-structural' cleavages. The functional approach to cleavages turns out to have been one of the weaker elements of the 'cleavage model', while the focus on parties and patterns of competition and coalition-building are the more enduring points. As Sartori argued in 1968, "[i]n the Lipset-Rokkan approach the question which *is* conducive to causal explanations and does grapple with the real problem is: how are conflicts and cleavages translated into a party system?"¹²⁶

¹²⁶ Sartori, "The Sociology of Parties", p.18, emphasis in original.

CHAPTER FOUR

DEMOCRACY DOMINANT OR DOMINANT DEMOCRACY?

THE LEGACY OF POLITICAL COMPETITION IN INTER-WAR EAST CENTRAL EUROPE IN A COMPARATIVE CONTEXT

“A spectre is haunting Eastern Europe – the spectre of liberalism”

- Jerzy Szacki, 1994

Though Havel saw 1989 as heralding the ‘return to Europe’, there can be little doubt that East Central European Twentieth Century political history has differed considerably from that of Western Europe. The inter-war democracies in East Central Europe are usually qualified by a limiting adjective, or accompanied by quotation marks. However, what Havel was suggesting was that the East Central Europe states are part and parcel of a wider European history – that these states draw not only on their specific heritage, but on European cultural and political history. In other words, the post-communist political parties were free to focus on West European liberal democratic politics, drawing on a wider historical legacy. This may, therefore, have been more of an aspiration than a statement of fact. Nevertheless, though East Central Europe embarked on post-communist politics carrying a historical legacy that sets the area apart from mainstream post-war West European politics, this condition need not be peculiar to East Central Europe. Briefly, the post-communist parties in East Central Europe have inherited a historical institutionalist legacy, including ethno-national cleavages and patterns of party competition. Yet the extent to which the new parties invoke this legacy has varied considerably.

THEMES IN COMPARATIVE EUROPEAN POLITICAL HISTORY

Four main themes run through Twentieth Century East Central European political history. First, the domination of empires and the late development of states stands in contrast to the state system that developed in Western Europe. East Central Europe saw contemporaneous processes of state-building and democratisation, which shaped party competition. This generated a number of conflicts centred on competing approaches to nationalism, not only between but also within the 'nations' of Eastern and Central Europe. These attained a high degree of salience and relevance due to the number of border changes, population shifts and minorities in the region. Second, the domination of the centre, first imperial and subsequently national, entailed a high degree of centralisation of power. This centralisation of political, military and economic power in the hands of the administrative centre does not compare with the constitutional division of power developed in West European politics separating branches of government, and cities and industry against government, and reflecting the long-running struggle between state and Church. The enduring strength of the state can be accounted for in terms of institutionalism, inasmuch as no government has had an incentive to weaken the state's control over non-state actors (civil society). Third, economic liberalism hardly developed in East Central Europe, either in the inter-war or post-war era, until it was introduced in the form of shock therapy in 1990. Finally, developments in East Central European politics have taken place within a pan-European setting, in the context of competition first between Prussian and Russian empires (with Austria-Hungary and Turkey on the sidelines), then between the USSR and Germany, and finally between the USSR and the West. In other words, East Central European politics has been subject to considerable external pressure, up to and including the influence of NATO, the EU and the IMF in the last decade of the Twentieth Century.

STATE-BUILDING, NATIONALISM AND POLITICAL COMPETITION

Though West European party competition has predominantly reflected Lipset & Rokkan's four cleavages, regime change has been recognised as relevant by several authors.¹ In East Central Europe, regime change has perhaps been the most significant cleavage. In Lipset & Rokkan's core cases the national revolution predated the industrial revolution, which meant that questions related to state-building had generally been resolved by the time full male franchise was introduced. At the very least, the introduction of the full franchise was part of a wider bargain settling questions related to state-building, e.g., in the Dutch 1917 Great Compromise. The same cannot be said for Germany and Italy until 1948, let alone for the inter-war East Central European regimes. However, the count of cases in which the questions raised by national revolutions remained unresolved by the time of the introduction of universal male suffrage also includes peripheral West European states, notably Finland, Ireland and Greece. In fact, Lipset & Rokkan's core cases are reduced to Britain, France, Switzerland, the Low Countries and parts of Scandinavia. Elsewhere in Europe, unresolved national issues influenced the development of party competition to the extent that the party systems cannot be understood unless they are considered in the light of conflicts over state-building and regime change. In fact this holds for the first Italian and French Fourth Republic as well.

Lipset & Rokkan's analysis suggests that the key to differences within West European party systems lies in developments before the emergence of mass parties of the left, an argument broadly supported by Luebbert's work.² In fact this argument can be taken one step further, suggesting that unresolved state-building or regime conflicts may inhibit the rise of mass parties on the left unless the conflict is cast in socialist – non-socialist terms. This was certainly the case in the Irish Free State, as Labour had stood aside the 1918 election.³ Where the left played a major role in regime conflicts, these conflicts centred around efforts to build socialist republics (Finland, Hungary). Hence

¹ See Chapter Three, above.

² G. Luebbert, *Liberalism, Fascism or Social Democracy*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1991).

³ R. Sinnott, "Interpretations of the Irish Party System", *European Journal of Political Research*, 12:3 (1984), 289-307, p.302.

the significance of two factors: first, the pre-socialist divisions over state-building and the extent to which these remained unresolved after Versailles, and second, the extent to which socialist or communist parties shaped conflict over state-building.

The first question draws attention to the division between liberals and conservatives over constitutional questions, including attitudes to the Austro-Hungarian *Ausgleich* of 1867, Czech and Slovak nationalism, and the different strategies adopted by Poles in the three empires. Inter-war party competition on the right reflected the extent to which these questions were left unresolved, but also the effort made to exclude the left from political power (or even party competition altogether). For example, Gratz argues that the need to exclude the anti-*Ausgleich* side from government prevented the emergence of a competitive two-party system in Hungary, but that this exclusion was no longer necessary after 1919. Batkay disagrees, arguing that Gratz exaggerated the post-WW I consensus.⁴ Finally, though WW II and the Cold War settled border questions more or less permanently, nationalism remained a powerful tool for the communist regimes as well as the opposition. The communist period may have frozen the borders and set parameters of regime change, but it hardly removed, let alone resolved, most questions related to state-building and nationalism.

Szacki goes on step further, arguing that the state-building process weakened *liberalism* in East Central Europe because a strong state was seen as a bulwark against national catastrophe (and the USSR and the Third Reich), rather than as a threat to individuals' rights.⁵ In other words, national independence takes precedence over the form of the independent regime – collective national rights over individual rights. In the Polish case, the Catholic Church's function as a national institution reinforced the collectivist challenges to liberalism, even if liberalism, Polish nationalism and the Catholic Church shared common enemies before independence. To this extent, the development of liberalism as an individual-oriented ideology was restricted or over-shadowed by the national question, not only in the East Central European cases, but also in West

⁴ G. Gratz, *A forradalmak kora; Magyarország története, 1818-1920*, (Budapest, Magyar Szemle Társaság, 1935), discussed in W. M. Batkay, *Authoritarian Politics in a Transitional State: Istvan Bethlen and the Unified Party in Hungary 1919 – 1926*, (Boulder, East European Monographs, 1982), p.96-98.

⁵ J. Szacki, *Liberalism after Communism*, (Budapest, Central European University Press, 1995), p.53.

European cases that involved efforts to extract a state from an empire, such as Nineteenth Century Finland, Ireland, Greece, and even Norway. The question is how this affects political competition once independence is achieved, whether peacefully or through civil war. Where state-building continued to dominate politics, particularly following civil war, the result was party systems that reflected regime change and efforts permanently to exclude one side from power. The relevant examples include Poland, Hungary and the Slovak lands, as well as Greece, Finland and Ireland. In contrast, state-building was resolved satisfactorily as far as the Czechs and Norwegians were concerned, leaving the party systems to develop around second-order divisions such as agrarian or workers' interests (even if some of these overlap the regime cleavage).

FEDERALISM VS. CENTRALISATION – PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY AND DEMOCRATIC CENTRALISM

During the second half of the Nineteenth and the entire Twentieth Century East Central Europe featured a paradoxical combination of administrative and political centralisation combined with repeated waves of disintegration into supposedly national units. With independence, political control may have shifted from Vienna to Prague, but within the new state the centre retained control. The same, of course, held for Poland and Hungary. Infrastructure supported these political arrangements, as the cities of East Central Europe were either administrative centres of former empires and new states, or garrison towns, but hardly comparable to the more independent trade-based cities scattered across the landscape of Western and Northern Europe.⁶ In other words, the institutional legacy of empire did not include commercial cities as a political counter-balance to the administrative centre, or constitutional arrangements that limited centralisation.

During the century leading up to the communist take-overs, administrative centralisation was accompanied by centralisation in terms of political institutions. The balance of power found in several West European states either by way of institutional

⁶ This argument is developed in J. Szucs, "Three Historical Regions in Europe: An Outline", in J. Keane (ed.), *Civil society and the State: New European Perspectives*, (London, Verso, 1988).

arrangements or coalition politics was not a prominent feature on the East Central European scene. Though separation of power or consensual politics is by no means a prerequisite for liberal democracy, as the heavily centralised British case illustrates, there is ample evidence to suggest that such features make liberal democracy more viable in states with religious or ethnic divisions.⁷ In inter-war East Central Europe, as in several West European states, centralisation contributed to exclusion of minorities from the political system, whether these were the losers of civil wars or ethnic minorities. Even within the centralised system, power was concentrated in the hands of the executive branch, to the extent that East Central European inter-war elections “reflected overall priorities [of the political class], if not always its particular preferences.”⁸ The role of elections and parliaments was, therefore, more geared toward providing post-hoc legitimisation and support for a government than to actually choosing a government. In the three East Central European cases no government fell as the result of an election between 1918 and 1989, let alone before that period!

Despite the nominal federalisation of Czechoslovakia after 1968, the communist period did little to reverse the trend toward centralisation. The considerable differences in communist party tactics and strategy notwithstanding, the 1948-53 era saw a uniform drive towards monolithic communism. Even the differences that were to grow in the three decades following Khrushchev’s secret speech, in which he attacked Stalinism and condoned ‘different roads to socialism’, did not prevent increasing centralisation in each regime (with the noteworthy exception of Yugoslavia, and limited federalisation in Czechoslovakia). The communist system granting the party a ‘leading role’ and featuring ‘democratic centralism’ within the party took centralisation of power to the extreme.

⁷ A. Lijphart, *Democracy in Plural Societies: A Comparative Exploration*, (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1977); A. Lijphart, *Democracies: Patterns of Majoritarian and Consensus Government in Twenty-One Countries*, (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1984).

⁸ J. Rothschild, *East Central Europe between the Two World Wars*, (Seattle, University of Washington Press, 1974), p.19-20.

THE POPULIST RIGHT AND THE WEAKNESS OF LIBERALISM

Despite the familiarity of the terms, conservatism and liberalism carried connotations in pre-and inter-war East Central Europe that differed considerably from their West European counterparts. Whereas the Christian democrat – liberal divisions in, e.g., the Netherlands and Belgium concerned the relationship between church and state and the extent to which the state should be secularised, the East Central European divisions reflected questions of state-building and nationalism. Liberalism in West European politics, therefore, centred on opposition to conservatism and an emphasis on individual rights, the secular state and free trade. Though liberalism may have been equally cast in terms of individual rights in East Central Europe, it was combined with nationalism against (conservative) maintenance of empires in the second half of the Nineteenth Century.⁹ In other words, liberal ideology based on the individual was combined with a political agenda based on the collective rights of the nation. Neither the liberals nor conservatives developed free-market (or Keynesian, for that matter) economics as a part of their political ideology or platform, at least not until 1989.

As in Western Europe, the liberal – conservative divisions of the mid- to late Nineteenth Century were not matters of mass politics, but rather reflected the limited franchise and competition within elites. The second key difference in East Central European (and peripheral West European) politics lies in the development of mass politics. If the rise of socialist parties mobilising industrial masses contributed to similarities across the West European party systems, the mobilisation of the agrarian masses by populist peasant or nationalist parties provide the common factor across East Central Europe and some West European peripheral cases. If the key demand in the industrial heartland of Europe was workers' rights (social, economic and political), the key demand in the countryside was land reform (or, on the part of owners, protectionism).

The agricultural population thus held one of the keys to party system formation, inasmuch as the parties for whom they voted played a substantial if not dominant role in the inter-war party systems. Luebbert has linked the success of social democracy to the

⁹ Szacki, *Liberalism after Communism*, p.53-61.

socialists' *failure* to mobilise agrarian workers, because the class was too small (Norway), or already mobilised (the Czech lands, Sweden and Denmark).¹⁰ Here the social democrat – agrarian alliances dominated politics, based on protectionism and high industrial wages. In Germany and Italy, the respective reformist and radical socialist parties took class politics to the countryside, resulting in a fascist backlash. In Hungary the agrarian Smallholders' Party was incorporated into the government or governing parties. In Poland the Piast peasant party became *the* government party until 1926. Both can safely be described as centre-right, relying on appeal to the nation and religion and governing in alliance with the Christian national right, and emphasising the community and national interest rather than agrarian interests such as land reform.¹¹

Political competition in inter-war East Central Europe, translated loosely into party competition, therefore reflected four key dimensions, which correspond loosely to the four cleavages discussed by Lipset and Rokkan.¹²

First, state-building provided questions that fed into the main dimension of competition, which centred on questions concerning the state and religion. The Pilsudski – Dmowski division is a case in point, the latter taking the more *Gemeinschaft*-oriented approach associated with the traditional right and 'ethnic' rather than 'civic' nationalism. An analogous *Gesellschaft* – *Gemeinschaft* division has been identified in Hungarian early 1920s politics, though in this case the liberal *Gesellschaft* camp was fragmented, heavily urban and elite-based, advocating free trade and looking to the West for examples.¹³ In 1920, the right took 164 seats to the liberal camp's 13, and the latter was all but dead after 1926.¹⁴ Further divisions within the centre-right included the legitimist vs. free electors question, at least until the death of Charles IV in 1922. Bethlen's failure to sustain a Unified Party in 1920-21, and his success a year later, has been attributed to the resolution of this question.¹⁵ Only within the Czech lands was this division less

¹⁰ Luebbert, *Liberalism, Fascism or Social Democracy*, p.310.

¹¹ D. W. Urwin, *From Ploughshare to Ballot Box: the Politics of Agrarian Defence in Europe*, (Oslo, Universitetsforlaget, 1980), p. 202-205, 248-249.

¹² When a centre – periphery cleavage is not cited here, it is because it is subsumed either in minority nationalism or in agrarian politics.

¹³ Z. Nagy, *The Liberal Opposition in Hungary, 1919-1945*, (Budapest, Akademiai Kiado, 1983); G. Schopflin uses the *Gesellschaft* – *Gemeinschaft* distinction in *Politics in Eastern Europe: 1945-1992*, (Oxford, Blackwell, 1993).

¹⁴ Batkay, *Authoritarian Politics...*, p.13-16.

¹⁵ Batkay, *Authoritarian politics...*, p.31-33.

prominent, partly because the dominant ethnic cleavage ran between the Czechs and the Slovak and German minorities. However, *Gemeinschaft* – *Gesellschaft* differences over the appropriate relationship between the minorities and Prague divided both the German and Slovak party systems within Czechoslovakia. In the German lands the *Kampfgesellschaft* opposed the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft* and Prague, in Slovakia Hlinka's Slovak People's Party, the Communists and Hungarian minorities did the same.¹⁶

Second, and reflecting this division, the conservative parties approached rights in collective rather than individual terms. In other words, rights were considered in the name of nation and religion, both of which were used to link people and government in collective rather than individualistic terms. Though this reflects the West European state – church cleavage discussed by Lipset & Rokkan, the church – state relationship was a minor question in East Central Europe due to the comparatively limited historical competition between the 'nation-state-builders' and the church.¹⁷ In fact, in Poland the Church was to no small extent a national institution, linking nationhood and Catholicism, against the 'alien' state or empire.¹⁸ The *Gesellschaft* – *Gemeinschaft* division thus played a role analogous to the clerical – secular cleavage in West European politics.

The third dimension, peasant populism directed against the cities (sometimes 'foreign' – read Jewish) and bourgeois commercial practices, is epitomised by movement outside the core East Central Europe cases: Stamboliski's Bulgarian Agrarian National Union. Founded in 1889 in defence of peasants against taxes, and critical of partisan politics and the central government, it focused on functional organisation of peasants to supplant political parties.¹⁹ In Poland and Hungary, however, the peasant parties were integrated into the governing parties, representing the governing elite to the voters rather than representing agrarian demands to the government. Moreover, despite the difference between Polish political populism and the Hungarian populist writers, they

¹⁶ Rothschild, *East Central Europe between the Two World Wars*, p.96-99.

¹⁷ J. Szucs, "Three Historical Regions of Europe", in J. Keane (ed.), *Civil Society and the State*, (London, Verso, 1988); Schopflin, *Politics in Eastern Europe*.

¹⁸ N. Davies, *Polish National Mythologies*, in G. Hosking & G. Schopflin (eds.), *Myths and Nationhood*, (London, Hurst & Company, 1997).

¹⁹ J. D. Bell, "Populism and Pragmatism: the BANU in Bulgarian Politics", in J. Held (ed.), *Populism in Eastern Europe: Racism, Nationalism and Society*, (Boulder, East European Monographs, 1996).

shared the ethnic nationalist, traditionalist outlook.²⁰ Only the Czech agrarian party developed into a more classic political party along the lines of the Scandinavian agrarian parties, emphasising defence of farmers' economic interests and focusing on agricultural policy rather than ideology.²¹

The final dimension was socialism vs. non-socialism. Again Czechoslovakia stands out from the rest of East Central Europe, inasmuch as it saw a red-brown coalition similar to those found in inter-war Scandinavia.²² The Hungarian left, on the other hand, not only suffered from Kaorlyi's and Kun's failures, but also from the open vote which obstructed socialist activity outside the cities. Although it took part in the 1922-23 coalition and supported Pilsudski's 1926 coup, the Polish left's opposition to the right remained overshadowed by Pilsudski in terms of both significance and impact on policy. Only in Czechoslovakia did the social democrat left play a significant role in government. Given the effect of the Russian revolution of 1917, the communist parties remained 'outsider' parties in all three states, though operating legally and polling as much as 13% of the vote in Czechoslovakia in 1925. The Hungarian communists were banned after the failure of Kun 133-day government in 1919, the Finnish communists remained illegal until 1944, and the Polish party went illegal when it refused to register in 1921 (but competed in elections through 'fronts' polling up to 2.3% in 1930). Only the Czechoslovak Communist Party remained legal throughout the inter-war years.

Part of the legacy with which East Central Europe entered the post-war era therefore centred on these four dimensions of competition. The re-establishment of party systems in the brief post-war period did little to alter this. To be sure, the political landscape had been altered radically by the war, but this did not help the development of liberalism. It practically eliminated much of the right. Even where pre-war political forces had not been wiped out by WW II and Nazi and Soviet occupation, the war constituted a revolution that led to radicalisation of expectations.²³ Moreover, the 'final solution',

²⁰ M. Lackò, "Populism in Hungary: Yesterday and Today"; P. Hanák, "The Anti-Capitalist Ideology of the Populists"; M. K. Dziewanowski, "Polish Populism", all in Held (ed.), *Populism in Eastern Europe*.

²¹ Z. Pryor, "Czechoslovak Economic Development in the Interwar Period", p.204; V. L. Beneš, "Czechoslovak Democracy and its Problems, 1918-1920", p.67-68, 89-92; both in V.S. Mamatey & R. Luza (eds.), *A History of the Czechoslovak Republic, 1918-1948*, (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1973).

²² Luebbert, *Liberalism, Fascism or Social Democracy*, p.292-294.

²³ Schopflin, *Politics in Eastern Europe*, p.68-74.

Poland's shift westwards, and the expulsion of German minorities 'simplified' the political scene further and eliminated some of the immediate nationalist questions. Nevertheless, the new party systems were dominated by the communists, the socialists and the populist (peasant) parties that joined them to make up the national coalition governments. All entertained radical programmes, and focused on collective rights. In the event, however, the development of non-communist ideology through party competition was prevented by the effective elimination of competitive elections.

Moreover, four decades of communism prevented further development of right wing thought based on individual rights or market-driven politics based on economic theory. To be sure, a 'new right' could be identified as part of the opposition to communism. Scruton argues that "thinkers living under 'real socialism have become aware not only of the two currents of thinking on the right ['free marketeers' and 'social conservatives'] but also of the tension between them."²⁴ However, his analysis reveals that the right in Hungary, Poland and Czechoslovakia focused on concrete historically given law rather than liberalism's abstract rights, on tradition and identity (Catholicism in Poland), and obligations under a moral order. The quest for 'a-political man' is therefore equated with classical British conservatism.²⁵ The result is a "New Right" that is more 'social conservative' than 'free marketeer', which praises the market as "an exercise in responsible accounting rather than as an embodiment of individual choice".²⁶ However, this 'New Right' differs considerably from individualistic liberalism. The division of the Hungarian opposition into two camps, one liberal and one more 'Christian national', was, therefore, somewhat less "peculiar" that Scruton suggests (particularly in the light of pre-war political divisions).²⁷

The populist – liberal fault-line therefore continued to run within the East Central European opposition movements. It was particularly visible in Hungary's division between the democratic and populist opposition, but less so in Czechoslovakia (partly due to the limited scope for opposition and partly due to the Czecho-Slovak question).

²⁴ R. Scruton, "The New Right in Central Europe I: Czechoslovakia", *Political Studies*, 36 (1988), 449-462, p.449; and R. Scruton, "The New Right in Central Europe II: Poland and Hungary", *Political Studies*, 36 (1988), 638-652.

²⁵ Scruton, "The New Right in Central Europe I", p.461.

²⁶ Scruton, "The New Right in Central Europe I", p.459.

²⁷ Scruton, "The New Right in Central Europe II", p.650.

Within the Polish opposition, where the KPN represented the traditionalist right, a form of 'proto-liberalism' was developed as a practical and ideological challenge to the regime.²⁸ But this did not involve the development of modern West European right-wing or liberal political thought.

The problem consists not so much in the fact that communism destroyed the influences of liberalism as an ideology in Eastern Europe, for there was not much to destroy (one can even say, paradoxically, that in spite of itself communism helped to popularize liberalism as its complete negation); rather, the problem is that communism made barren the soil on which the ideology could grow.²⁹

Moreover, the *Gesellschaft – Gemeinschaft* debate continued within the communist parties, and Tamas (then leader of the SzDSz National Committee, who described himself as 'Neo-Whig') argues that this provided one of the foundations of the post-communist party systems.

The Party eventually silenced this debate, but the schism between the advocates of "development" and the advocates of "community" remained. Here you have in a nutshell the origins of the contemporary political party structure of post-communist Eastern Europe. The dominant romantic-populist-collectivist forces are the heirs of the "community" side in the alienation debate, while the pragmatic "liberals" of today trace their ancestry to the "development" camp.³⁰

In short, the communist era contributed to preservation of the inter-war political legacy inasmuch as development of non-communist politics was severely limited. Even within the communist parties, debate partly reflected questions of state-building. Come 1989, the opposition had four legacies on which to draw: the inter-war past, the anti-communist struggle, divisions within the communist parties, and West European politics.

²⁸ Szacki, *Liberalism after Communism*; M. H. Bernhard, *The Origins of Democratisation in Poland: Workers, Intellectuals, and Opposition Politics, 1976-1980*, (Columbia, Columbia University Press, 1993).

²⁹ Szacki, *Liberalism after Communism*, p.64-65.

³⁰ G. M. Tamas, "Socialism, Capitalism and Modernity", in L. Diamond & M. F. Platter (eds.) *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy Revisited*, (Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), p.63.

EXTERNAL FORCES, INFLUENCES AND DOMESTIC CHOICE – EAST CENTRAL EUROPE BETWEEN GERMANY, RUSSIA AND THE WEST.

Perhaps more than any other area of Europe, East Central Europe has been influenced by political developments outside the region. From 1848 to 1918, domestic politics in future Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia was defined in terms of the relationship with their respective imperial centres. The national and liberal wave of revolutions in 1848-49 provided a catalyst for liberal – conservative competition over the extent to which national independence should be pursued over the next seven decades. More directly, the Prusso-Austrian War did the same for the *Ausgleich*, leading to continuous competition between pro- and anti-*Ausgleich* forces. Hungary, Poland and Czechoslovakia emerged as new states, or at least in new forms, with the Versailles settlements as a direct consequence of the defeat of the Prussian, Russian and Austro-Hungarian empires in WW I. Their post-WW II political systems were constrained, if not imposed, by the USSR. The 1975 Helsinki Agreement and the CSCE/OSCE arrangements limit border change.

While it may be obvious that East Central European borders have been shaped by Germany and Russia, the point is almost equally valid in terms of ideological developments. The influence of Russian and German populism (and later fascism) on East Central European populism is not in dispute.³¹ The local fascists and the communists borrowed heavily from the prevailing ideologies in Germany and Russia, though the opposition to communism was somewhat more complicated and considerably more home grown. The quest for a third way featured heavily in the Czech 1968 debate, even if Brezhnev's recognition that this logically implied a challenge to communism because no third way was possible may have been justified.³² In Poland, Solidarity represented (and to some extent still represents) a similar new or third way, as did (and does) Hungarian populism.

³¹ J. Held, "Antecedents", in Held (ed.), *Populism in Eastern Europe*; M. Canovan, *Populism*, (New York, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1981).

³² Schopflin, *Politics in Eastern Europe*, p.155-156.

Finally the post-communist states have been influenced, if not dominated, by West European models of political and economic liberalism since 1989. In short, East Central Europe features a range of historical, political and institutional legacies from which to chose, some of which have been borrowed from Russia, Germany or Western Europe. Yet by 1989 there were no ideological alternatives to liberal democracy and free markets. If Fukuyama may have been right in asserting that there were no alternative ideologies challenging liberal democracy, this certainly did not mean that the new political parties all looked to Western Europe for inspiration. The nature of the political system may reflect West European influence, but the nature of the party system need not follow the same path.

POLITICAL COMPETITION: DOMINANT PARTY SYSTEMS

STATE-BUILDING, REGIME CHANGE AND NATIONALISM: EXCLUDING THE LOSERS

The four themes discussed above have combined to produce a legacy that can best be described as ‘dominant democracy’ – a party or coalition achieving a dominant position that excludes the losers more or less permanently. Party system development in East Central Europe took place in a context where state-building overshadowed the industrial revolution in political importance. The governing parties had considerable centralised power at their disposal, and the regimes came under increasing pressure from their Bolshevik and Nazi neighbours. This adds up to threats to the regime or conflicts over state- and nation-building, which also the West European evidence suggest take precedence over ‘bargainable’ conflicts about (re-)distribution of income.³³ By definition, pro-regime parties cannot permit anti-regime parties to come to power without threatening the very regime about which they disagree. The (unsurprising) consequence is that conflicts over the nature of the regime are not only first-order divisions that take precedence over second-order issues such as economic policy, but also that they lead to exclusion of the losers for power, if not from politics altogether. The exclusion of losers from politics, common after civil wars, therefore characterised most of pre-and inter-war East Central Europe – *de facto* if not *de jure*.

INTER-WAR PARTY COMPETITION

Compared to their West European counterparts, the inter-war East Central European parties possessed strong means to control the political agenda, manipulate election outcomes (directly or indirectly), change the rules of electoral competition or even ban their opponents. In Hungary and Poland, the governing parties fit Panebianco’s model of endogenous parties, which developed around one leader and consequently feature

³³ I. Budge & H. Keman, *Parties and Democracy: Coalition Formation and Government Functioning in Twenty States*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1990).

weak institutionalisation.³⁴ The Hungarian and Polish parties were not mass parties in the West European sense, whether in terms of ideology or mass membership. Rather than interest-aggregation, the functions of Pilsudski's BBWR and the Unified Party were "simply to support the respective Polish and Hungarian regimes."³⁵ Arising out of disintegrating movements on the eve of independence, divided over strategy (e.g. acceptance of treaties or deals) and/or fighting communism, these parties resemble their Irish and Greek counterparts more than the mass parties of inter-war Scandinavia or the UK. Only the Czech party system institutionalised to a greater extent, and even though it was brought to an end by the Munich agreement rather than internal collapse its approach to the Slovak and German minorities hardly constitutes a model exercise in ethnic conflict resolution.³⁶ However, if the Slovak and German elements are left aside, the Czech party system developed along lines similar to those of the Norwegian and Danish party systems. They were better organised and more ideological than their Polish and Hungarian counterparts, and featured ideological or interest-oriented parties including clerical, conservative, social democrat and agrarian parties, as well as the far left and right.³⁷ Nevertheless, the political losers came to be excluded on a more or less permanent basis in all three East Central European states.

The left's effective exclusion from Hungarian politics followed the defeat of Kun's revolutionary regime in 1919. The development of Hungarian parties was limited, illustrated by the 'coffee-house' parties,³⁸ predecessors of their 1990s 'taxi party' cousins, – the entire membership fitting into the relevant establishment or vehicle. After the Unified Party was set up by a merger of the Smallholders coalition (free electors) and Christian National Union (legitimists) in 1920, no other party controlled the government until 1944. The change from Bethlen's regime to that of Gömbös was achieved through internal party politics, and whether Bethlen intended his resignation as

³⁴ On Panbianco, see Chapter Six, below; A. Panbianco, *Political Parties: Organisation and Power*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1988).

³⁵ Batkay, *Authoritarian Politics*, p.77.

³⁶ J. McGarry & B. O'Leary, "Introduction: the Macro-Political Regulation of Ethnic Conflict", in J. McGarry & B. O'Leary (eds.), *The Politics of Ethnic Conflict Regulation: Case Studies of Protracted Ethnic Conflicts*, (London, Routledge, 1993).

³⁷ Rothschild, *East Central Europe...*, p.95-98; Luebbert, *Liberalism, Fascism or Social Democracy*.

³⁸ R. J. Crampton, *Eastern Europe in the Twentieth Century*, (London, Routledge, 1994); and more humorously, J. Hasek, *The Red Commissar*, (London Abacus, 1981).

more than a formality is debated.³⁹ The 1931 election had provided Bethlen with a comfortable majority, and his subsequent resignation (accepted by Admiral Horthy, the Regent) reflected the economic crisis and divisions between the Bethlen and Horthy rather than parliamentary politics. However, the contest between right-radicals and Bethlenites continued within the government party. Bethlen's plan for developing an articulated structure for the Unified Party in 1922 had not only failed, it was not even published. The party remained centralised, interpenetrated with the state, allied with local notables and allowing its "component groups to take from its vague programme whatever happened to suit their particular interests".⁴⁰ Hence the continuity despite internal changes. Despite the formal power of the Deputies (MPs) within the party, the real power lay with the leader. "The whole function performed by elections was, indeed, not to consult the electorate but to renew, refresh and revise – possibly purge – the Parliamentary membership of the Government Party itself."⁴¹ Under Gombos the party made much of its re-naming and re-organisation in 1932,⁴² and the 1935 election replaced all but 25 of its 158 outgoing deputies.⁴³ After his death in 1936 the party (though divided internally between its conservative and right-radical wings) remained 'in control' of Hungarian politics until the German occupation in 1944. However, the Independent Smallholders Party had been reconstituted in 1930, and the parliamentary life of the opposition parties was "revitalised" during WW II.⁴⁴

The Polish case of exclusion of the opposition is more blatant, given the lack of effective political competition in after the 1926 coup despite Pilsudski's retention of the constitution until 1935. Yet the period up to 1926 saw alternation in power, with the centre-right (e.g., Witos, 1923), non-party experts (e.g., Grabski, 1923-25) and broad coalitions (e.g., Skrzynski, 1925-26) leading governments.⁴⁵ Parliamentary majorities that included the minorities and the left precludes the 'dominant democracy' label.

³⁹ C.A. Macartney, *October Fifteenth: A History of Modern Hungary 1929 – 1945*, (Edinburgh, at the University Press, 1956), p.94, argues that it was intended as a formality; I. Romsics, *Istvan Bethlen: A Great Conservative Statesman of Hungary, 1874-1946*, (Columbia University Press, 1995), disagrees, p. 295-297.

⁴⁰ Batkay, *Authoritarian Politics...*, p.24, chapter on "Organisation and Structure of the Unified Party".

⁴¹ Macartney, *October Fifteenth*, p.46.

⁴² [Party programme] 1932-35, *Drei Jahre Regierung Gombos*, (Budapest, J. Bathory-Huttner, 1935), p.20.

⁴³ Rothschild, *East Central Europe...*, p.174.

⁴⁴ Rothschild, *East Central Europe...*, p.187.

⁴⁵ Rothschild, *East Central Europe...*, p.50-52.

However, Following the coup, parliament was marginalised, yielding a “semiparliamentary style of government [...which ...] was to prove a failure by 1930” because the parliamentary majority was powerless to replace the government.⁴⁶ The creation of the Nonpartisan Bloc for Cooperation with the Government (BBWR) as Pilsudski’s supporting bloc and incarceration of opposition leaders set the scene for complete exclusion of the right, the left and the minorities. Until 1939 the regime was run first by Pilsudski and after his death in 1935 by his (less than ideologically united) heirs, to the exclusion of other parties to the extent that they boycotted the elections in 1935 and 1938.

Exclusion may have been more subtle in Czechoslovakia, but it was no less effective for that reason. Successive Czech governments ruled against the majority of Slovak and German voters’ preferences as expressed in at election time, save for the ‘bourgeois coalition’ from 1926 to 1929 (and limited continued German participation thereafter). Despite its otherwise liberal democratic credentials, the Czech Petka coalition thus rendered a majority of the Slovak and German semi-permanent excluded minorities. Given majority support for the Petka with Czechoslovakia, there was no need to exclude the minority from elections, merely from power. This exclusion of either the Slovak and German parties or the socialists means that the interpretation of the Petka as a consensual system must be challenged.⁴⁷

This suggests that the development of centralised and majoritarian government might well have led to problems in terms of ethnic conflict management even without external pressure and competing anti-liberal ideologies. At least this would follow from the consociational democracy argument about the benefits of power-sharing, in the light of the Austrian case (inter-war problems, post-war power sharing).⁴⁸ In other words, though the collapse of the East Central European inter-war regimes can be attributed to pressure from Germany and the USSR, the two expanding empires were pushing at open (or at least pretty rotten) doors inasmuch as they found willing collaborators on the

⁴⁶ Rothschild, *East Central Europe...*, p.62.

⁴⁷ Crampton, *Eastern Europe in the Twentieth Century*, interprets it as consensual, Rothschild, *East Central Europe between the Two World Wars* and Schopflin, *Politics in Eastern Europe* challenge this view, as, in fact, does Lijphart, *Democracy in Plural Societies*, p.33n.

⁴⁸ On the debate concerning consociational democracy in Austria see A. Lijphart, “Consociational Democracy”, *World Politics*, 31:2 (1969), 207-225; B. Barry, “Political Accommodation and Consociational Democracy”, *British Journal of Political Science*, 5 (1975), 477-505.

right and/or among minorities. Moreover, external pressure from Nazi Germany and the Soviet factor (anti-communism) also contributed to the crowding out of liberal or consensual politics by providing radical alternatives.

THE POST-WAR REGIMES

Though 'people's democracies' of Eastern and Central Europe epitomise exclusion of losers, and therefore require less attention here, the nature of party competition between 1944 and 1948 is more contentious. Seton-Watson's three-step model of communist take-overs which suggests a more or less uniform strategy for communist domination (genuine coalition – façade coalition – monolithic bloc) has since been supplemented by focus on the weakness of non-communist parties, radicalisation of expectations and the communists use of anti-German nationalism (and in Czechoslovakia, anti-Hungarian nationalism).⁴⁹ The immediate post-war period differed somewhat in the three cases, indicating that there may have been some scope for co-operative politics based on the anti-fascist fronts. At any rate, the 'popular front' strategy reflected a degree of consensus on radical land reform, expulsion of German minorities and centrally planned government-driven reconstruction.⁵⁰ Yet there was little or no consensus on what kind of radicalism was sought.⁵¹ Moreover, even this consensus was based on exclusion (expulsion) of some 10m Germans from Eastern Europe and on banning parties tainted with collaboration.

Of the three cases, Poland was most clearly and directly influenced by Soviet policy inasmuch as the Communist party was run by 'Moscow communists' and the government made up of communists and the exile government from London. That this co-operation was as much a product of *realpolitik* (Soviet presence and the existence of an exile government) as party strategy became evident as tension between the two groups increased. The test of their relative support over a symbolic question about abolition of the Senate in 1946 produced controversial results (i.e. alleged fraud) in

⁴⁹ H. Seton-Watson, *The East European Revolution*, 3rd Ed. (London, Methuen, 1956); Schopflin, *Politics in Eastern Europe*, p.66-74.

⁵⁰ R. Bideleux & I. Jeffries, *A History of Eastern Europe: Crisis and Change*, (London, Routledge, 1998), p.526.

⁵¹ Schopflin, *Politics in Eastern Europe*, p.70.

favour of the Communist-led bloc. Any further potential move toward cooperation between the two blocs was undermined by the 1947 elections, where failure to persuade the Peasant party to join the 'Democratic Bloc' precipitated the former's loss due to election fraud.⁵² Socialist – Communist party fusion followed in 1948. Moreover, the cooperation between the two blocs was based partly on removal of ethnic minorities (a westward shift away from the Ukrainians, the wartime 'final solution', and the expulsion of Germans), the perceived need for Soviet support for the new borders, and the anti-German role the Communists could take on.⁵³

Czechoslovakia saw a more domestically driven effort to build consensual politics, based on a more institutionalised inter-war party system and a returning government-in-exile. However, though the coalition included Slovaks and communists, it was still based on exclusion of German (expelled) and the Hungarian minorities. Moreover, the Agrarian Party was banned for collaboration in WW II, thus removing "the natural rallying point for the democratic opposition to the Marxist left" and rendering the 1946 election merely "fairly free" in Bideleux & Jeffries' analysis.⁵⁴ Nevertheless, 1946-47 saw a broad coalition government outlast its counterparts in Italy and France. Yet the prospect of losing votes in the 1948 election (as polls indicated) prompted a change in communist strategy towards a 'national list' rather than competitive elections, and a purge of the police apparatus that prompted the resignation of non-communist ministers. In Schöpflin's analysis, "[a]t least a part of the explanation of the coup in February 1948 lies in the unthinkability for the communists that they might cede power merely because the electorate had changed its mind."⁵⁵ This suggests that political cooperation was intended, at the very least, to produce a kind of 'dominant democracy'.

Hungary between 1944 and 1947 presents a more classic case of 'popular front' politics. Despite the Smallholders' absolute majority in the 1945 elections (57%), the four-party coalition with the Communists, Social Democrats and National Peasants that had been established the year before was maintained (as per pre-election agreement). In this

⁵² Crampton, *Eastern Europe in the Twentieth Century*, p.220; J. Rothschild, *Return to Diversity: A Political History of East Central Europe since World War I*, (New York, Oxford University Press, 1989), p.82-84.

⁵³ Rothschild, *Return to Diversity*, p.80-81.

⁵⁴ Bideleux & Jeffries, *A History of Eastern Europe*, p.525.

⁵⁵ Schöpflin, *Politics in Eastern Europe*, p.73-74.

former German ally, the radical right was not so much excluded as simply defeated in war and eliminated. Within the coalition, however, the Communists' post-election reassessment of strategy provided the model for 'salami tactics' – gradual elimination of opponents – starting by demanding, and getting, the interior ministry (followed by internal security).⁵⁶ Before the August 1947 election the Smallholders' secretary general Kovacs had been arrested by Soviet authorities and prime minister Nagy 'removed' whilst abroad (through incrimination in a 'foreign conspiracy').⁵⁷ Though the 1947 elections even included parties running against the coalition, competitive politics was eliminated through progressive proscription of parties and the 1949 elections featured a single 'government list'.

The post-war era was undeniably shaped by international developments to a considerable extent. However, despite the exclusion of the right and ethnic minorities, 1944-47 can be interpreted as an effort to overcome 'the politics of exclusion' on the part of the 'democratic' parties (and possibly some communists) – hence the broad alliances between the London Government and the communists in Poland, between the populist, centre-right parties, communists and Slovaks in Czechoslovakia and the national front parties in Hungary. Whether this represented a potential basis for power-sharing and consensus politics became irrelevant in the light of developments in 1947-49, which resulted in communist take-overs and regimes that took Russian influence, centralisation, and exclusion of the opposition to new extremes, and attempted to marry communism and nationalism. However, in terms of potential long-term legacies of party competition, it is the inter-war tactics that warrant more attention.

DOMINANT DEMOCRACY

Inasmuch as the inter-war party systems were based on the exclusion of losers they can be called 'dominant' party systems, i.e., one party or bloc establishes a long-term dominant position. While Sartori uses the term 'hegemonic' to describe non-competitive multi-party systems, such as communist Poland, the term dominant is employed here to

⁵⁶ Crampton, *Eastern Europe in the Twentieth Century*, p.222-223.

⁵⁷ Rothschild, *Return to Diversity*, p.100-101.

emphasise the parties or coalitions' explicit pursuit of a dominant position and the exclusion of genuine competitors.⁵⁸ This does not mean that the system is not competitive, though it implies that one party or bloc is excluded from power by design, not merely by accident. This is qualitatively different from the dictionary definition of 'hegemony', which suggests preponderance (i.e., generally out-weighting the opposition at the polls) rather than a position that excludes the opposition from power.⁵⁹ Sartori called these 'predominant party systems', though the term 'hegemonic' is preferred here to describe systems where one party or bloc normally rules, but alternation in power is expected.

The exclusion of the losers of the civil war and the schisms in Polish, Hungarian, Greek, Irish and Finnish inter-war politics was not merely the product of the hegemonic position enjoyed by the governing parties or coalitions, but also a case of deliberate strategy. The same holds for the continuous rule of the Petka in Czechoslovakia, and Italian post-war *partitocrazia*. By contrast, while the Norwegian and Swedish social democrat parties enjoyed hegemonic positions within the party systems which allowed them to control their respective governments for most of the first four decades after WW II, the political process remained consensual.⁶⁰ Moreover, alternation in power was expected, if infrequent. The dominant position, on the other hand, is based on continuous exclusion of the opposition, and secure tenure for the government. Of the civil war cases, only Ireland and Finland saw alternation in power before WW II. Finland saw the Social Democrats take office temporarily in 1926, but the main losers of the civil war, the Communists, were banned until 1944. In Ireland, first Cosgrave's Cumann na nGaedhael and after 1932 De Valera's Fianna Fail governments continued electoral strategies that provided something close to a dominant position. The same point holds for post-junta Greece, which saw a similar alternation in power in 1981. In all three cases, the long-term outcome was competition between two aspiring dominant parties, not dissimilar to post-communist party competition in East Central Europe, or even Berlusconi's *Forza Italia*'s efforts.

⁵⁸ G. Sartori, *Parties and Party Systems: A Framework for Analysis*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1976).

⁵⁹ *Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary*, 1913 Edition, defines hegemony as "leadership; preponderant influence or authority."

⁶⁰ Lijphart compared consensual with consociational democracy. Lijphart, *Democracies*; A. Lijphart, "From the Politics of Accommodation to Adversarial Politics in the Netherlands: A Reassessment", *West European Politics*, 12:1 (1989), 139-153.

But how is domination ensured? How are losers excluded from the political process? East and West European political history indicates a few possibilities, ranging from coalition politics and manipulation of the electoral system and electoral practices, to banning political opponents, and direct violence and intimidation.

The Italian first republic and the Czech Petka system represent the least illiberal means for exclusion of a minority. The exclusions of the PCI and Czechoslovakia's minorities were neither absolute (the PCI shared in the *lottizzazione* system of sharing benefits, e.g., it had 'its own' TV channel, and the 'other' Czechoslovak parties sometimes participated in the Petka), nor was it achieved through restricting electoral competition. The Italian coalition and the Petka worked by expanding coalitions as and when necessary, but without ever letting the central parties (DC, the Agrarians) lose control. The Irish, Italian, and Czechoslovak systems all relied on their respective electoral systems. The Italian PR system facilitated the 'delivery' of votes for the DC (particularly in the *Mezzogiorno* – the south),⁶¹ while progressive elimination of the larger constituencies under STV in Ireland worked against smaller parties,⁶² as did the practice of calling two successive elections within a year (when smaller parties had depleted their resources) in the Free State.⁶³ In Czechoslovakia, the PR list system and parties' power to expel MPs provided for highly proportional outcomes and considerable power vested in the central office.⁶⁴

Hungary's plurality electoral system was laid open to abuse by use of the open ballot outside larger cities, introduced by decree in 1922, and written into law in 1925. This provided "four types of pressure on the voters – administrative, social, economic and physical."⁶⁵ Since four-fifths of the seats were subject to open voting, "it [would] depend only on the self-restraint of the administration in power how big a majority in

⁶¹ S. Waters, "'Tangentopoli' and the Emergence of a New Political Order in Italy", *West European Politics*, 17:1 (1994), 169-182.

⁶² J. Coakley, "Constituency Boundary Revision and Seat Re-Distribution in the Irish Parliamentary Tradition", *Administration*, 28:3 (1980), 219-328.

⁶³ B. Kissane, "Majority Rule and the Stabilisation of Democracy in the Irish Free State", *Irish Political Studies*, 13 (1998), 1-24.

⁶⁴ Rothschild, *East Central Europe...*, p.93-94, and election results.

⁶⁵ Batkay, *Authoritarian Politics*, p.56.

the House it secured for itself.”⁶⁶ Even in the 1931 elections, held during deepening economic crisis, the Unified Party’s vote fell below the opposition only in constituencies with secret voting.⁶⁷ Despite the Unified Party’s smallholder background, the peasantry was thus kept out of the main political system. Both government and the new post-1932 opposition compared the constitution to that of the UK (including the electoral system), stressing centralisation of power in the hands of the government and regent.⁶⁸ While the 1938 electoral law introduced a mixed list and plurality system and the secret ballot, other changes made for further exclusion. Eligibility to vote required six years’ residency in the same commune, and candidates lost their deposits if they polled less than 25% of the vote (or failed to get at least one list MP elected), all of which was hardly favourable to workers (casual labour is mobile) or to independent candidates.⁶⁹

In contrast, Poland’s PR system and weak presidency led to a weak parliamentary system in 1919-26. This was hardly the model for dominant democracy, and, under the old electoral system, Pilsudski was unable to secure a majority for his BBWR in the 1928 elections, two years after his coup. He succeeded in this only in 1930, using incarceration of opposition leaders and police intervention in the elections.⁷⁰ The 1935 constitution and the electoral ordinances that followed Pilsudski’s death the same year took Poland the full step away from parliamentary politics, leading to an opposition boycott of the 1935 elections and resulting in a non-party Sejm after the dissolution of the BBWR in October 1935.⁷¹

The less constitutional, if still legal, options included banning specific political parties or arresting their leaders. The Communist parties were banned in Hungary and Poland, and perhaps more significantly given their size and following, in Finland. Less subtly, direct action was taken against political opponents: the ‘White Terror’ in Hungary at the

⁶⁶ T. Eckhart, “The Constitutional Evolution of Hungary Since the War”, *The Hungarian Quarterly*, 3:3, (1937), p.392. In 1937, Eckhart was Leader of the Opposition, and Bethlen’s former press chief. Also cited in Batkay, *Authoritarian Politics*.

⁶⁷ Romsics, *Istvan Bethlen*.

⁶⁸ Eckhart, “The Constitutional Evolution of Hungary...”, and A. Tasnadi-Nagy (then Minister of Justice), “A Thousand Years of the Hungarian Constitution”, *The Hungarian Quarterly*, 5:1, (1939).

⁶⁹ Macartney, *October Fifteenth*, p.191.

⁷⁰ Rothschild, *East Central Europe...*, p.64.

⁷¹ Rothschild, *East Central Europe...*, p.67-68.

time of 1920 elections “made nonsense of the theoretically broad suffrage.”⁷² Arrests of opposition leaders preceded the 1930 elections in Poland. More clandestinely, allegations surfaced linking senior Italian military and government figures to efforts to prevent a PCI government in Italy in the 1970s by any means necessary. The P2 masonic lodge was linked to right wing terrorism in 1980, and questions raised over terrorist use of resources from the secret *Gladio* defence organisation a decade later.⁷³

Finally, administrative centralisation goes hand in hand with dominant democracy. Federalism is, in this sense, a system of power sharing and balance of power. It is not to be found in the cases considered here (with the partial exception of Italy). Suffice it to note that in countries that feature sizeable geographically concentrated ethnic minorities, centralisation of power removes one potential means of power-sharing (local autonomy).

Across inter-war East Central Europe the results were similar. Though the methods differed, The Czechoslovak, Hungarian and Polish regimes were based on excluding the losers from power. The manifest effort on the part of one party to become the dominant force, not recognising the legitimacy of the opposition, is hardly unique to inter-war East Central European politics. Nevertheless, the period left a legacy that can hardly be described as liberal democratic or conducive to power-sharing. To the extent that the parties and ideology of this period have been invoked since 1989, this has entailed competition for dominance. By contrast, the post-war parties in Austria and Germany explicitly rejected the old form of competition, as did the Italians after 1992 (but not the Greeks after 1974). However, any East Central European effort to do the same after WW II was drowned by the communist take-overs. In 1989 the communist system of competition, or lack thereof, was rejected, but several parties looked back to the inter-war party systems for guidance.

⁷² Rothschild, *East Central Europe...*, p.153; Batkay concurs, *Authoritarian Politics...*, p.17.

⁷³ M. Frei, *Italy: The Unfinished Revolution*, (London, Sinclair-Stevenson, 1996), p. 148-151; F. Cossiga, interviewed in B. Vespa, *La Corsa: Dopo D'Alema a palazzo Chigi chi salira al Quirinale*, (Milan, Mondatori, 1998), p.7-11.

CONCLUSION – PARTIES AND IDEOLOGY: FREE TO CHOOSE

Historical institutionalism is of particular relevance to party systems, to the extent that they carry a considerable amount of ideological baggage, either imported from the west, or inherited from opposition to communism or the inter-war era. Just as the communist regimes were legitimised partly by their anti-fascist credentials, so several parties on the post-communist right are seeking legitimacy as the enemies of the communist regimes. However, the impact of West European parties and ideologies on the formation of post-communist parties is considerable. Several parties have invoked this directly, as in the ‘west of centre’ label ROAD adopted or Klaus and Orban’s association with Thatcherite economic policy. Institutionalism presents a powerful tool for explaining inertia, while historical and new institutionalism explains elements of the trajectories of change. Therefore, though historical factors may help account for some of the parties and party strategies that have emerged on the post-communist political scene, the overall picture is not one of a return to the past. Five major themes have been picked up by different ‘families’ of parties.

The weakness of **liberalism** in historical terms is counterbalanced by the powerful development of economic liberalism in West European politics, particularly since the early 1980s. The election of Thatcher in the UK, *Die Wende* in Germany in 1982 and French socialist government’s change of economic policy a year later set the scene for the Single European Act, ‘1992’ and an era of monetarism. When East Central European post-communist liberals focused on the heritage from the West and links with West European political parties, they showed that some political parties may choose to overcome the constraints of historical institutionalism. This is not to say that the west-of-centre liberal parties were guaranteed success. The problems of economic transition practically ensured that they were not. Nevertheless, the liberal parties by and large circumvented the historical institutional legacy by focusing on West European parties and ideology as a model. Klaus repeatedly stressed the need to move the Civic Forum towards a modern party “similar to West European parties” with a right-of-centre

agenda, particularly when the ODS was set up in 1991.⁷⁴ The ODA chose to focus on West European liberalism, inviting Western liberals like Genscher to their founding congress to emphasize the point.⁷⁵ Even in the Autumn of 1989, Havel and Civic Forum spoke of a 'return to Europe', rejecting the notion of a 'third road.'⁷⁶ The difference between the Western-oriented SzDSz and Fidesz on the one hand, and the populist and historical parties in Hungary on the other was well documented at an early stage.⁷⁷ In 1988, Fidesz explicitly rejected the region's historical constraints, borrowing from Western legal and political traditions and invoking Thomas Jefferson.⁷⁸ Within the MDF, the debate whether it should be a broad European-style catch-all party continued until the expulsion of Csurka in 1993.⁷⁹

The problems the reformed communist **left** faced in terms of the legacy of communism and discrediting of the left have been partly overcome by the close relationship between social democrat governments in Poland and Hungary and western institutions like the IMF, the EU and NATO. The historical legacy is far more problematic for the radical (or 'eastern') left, which is not associated with free market policies and individual rights. Like their liberal counterparts, the social democrat parties developed an ideological (or rather, non-ideological, catch-all) appeal based directly on the reputation of Social Democrats in Western Europe, from the SPD and PvdA to New Labour. The fact that this may have been a tactical as well as strategic imperative given the extent to which the left had been discredited in East Central Europe since 1968 does not detract from the parties' ability to choose the historical legacy and traditions on which to base their post-communist identity. Even the Czech communists debated whether to adopt a stance more similar to the PCF or PCI, as Weiss' SDL had done in Slovakia.⁸⁰

⁷⁴ J. Pehe, "The Civic Forum Splits into Two Groups", *RFE/RL Report on Eastern Europe*, 8 March 1991, p.13.

⁷⁵ J. Pehe, "The Realignment of Political Forces", *RFE/RL Report on Eastern Europe*, 24 May, 1991.

⁷⁶ A. Stefansen, *Folkevar i Ost*, (Oslo, Cappelen, 1990), p.221 and 167.

⁷⁷ A. Bozóki, "Post-Communist Transition: Political Tendencies in Hungary", in ", A. Bozoki, A. Korosenyi, & G. Schopflin (eds.), *Post-Communist Transition: Emerging Pluralism in Hungary*, (London, Pinter Publishers, 1992), originally written in February 1990.

⁷⁸ "Declaration of Political Principles of Fidesz", 20 November 1988, Budapest; and "Political Program of Fidesz", 2 October 1988, Budapest (<http://www.fidesz.hu/english/indexen.html>).

⁷⁹ "At HDF Congress, Antall Contains Threat from Extremist Wing", *RFE/RL Research Bulletin*, 10:4, 16 February 1993.

⁸⁰ J. Pehe, "Divisions in the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia", *RFE/RL Report on Eastern Europe*, 26 July, 1991, p.12.

In sharp contrast, historical institutionalism accounts for a significant part of the weakness of the **right** in East Central Europe inasmuch as the right's ideology and appeal remains based on religion and the traditional community, cast in terms of collective rather than individual rights – often focusing on *the nation*. This is not necessarily a peculiarly East Central European characteristic. Any conservative party that does not rely on free market economics and individualism is by and large left to appeal to religion or nation or both (the Norwegian Christian People's Party is the classic West European case). Even Western European catch-all conservative parties, which have more or less abandoned the link with religion, face questions concerning the role of the *nation* and the compatibility of collective rights and free-market economics. Part of the answer in Christian Democratic Europe has been a focus on European integration, following a long-term trend of scepticism towards the state as a political institution. By contrast, the East Central European right suffered from limited scope to develop ideology, strategy or tactics during the communist period. By definition, the conservative right could hardly draw on the legacy of the West European right inasmuch as conservatism is based on long-term continuity (the four decades of 'people's democracy' notwithstanding), whether in government or in opposition to the regime. Even post-war Italian conservatism developed only partly based on US tutelage and as much based on the *Popolari* and the Catholic Church. In other words, it is considerably more difficult to base conservatism on external traditions than it is to establish liberal and social democratic parties based on more or less coherent sets of ideology and practice developed over a century of West European politics. Yet the Czech KDU-CLS proves that it can be done, as it "builds on pre-war traditions and experience and on the experience of the Christian parties of the democratic world", invoking Western Christianity and European integration, and explicitly rejecting nationalism.⁸¹ The West European Christian democrats' focus on European integration and scepticism toward the state provided an opportunity to combine conservatism with free-market economic policy (if not precisely *laissez-faire*, at least not until the early 1980s). In East Central Europe, the etatist element inherited from the inter-war years made this considerably more problematic, even if economic and security questions made EU and NATO membership an imperative.

⁸¹ KDU-CSL, "The Principles of the Policy of the Christian and Democratic Union – Czechoslovak People's Party", undated, supplied by KDU-CSL International Office in 1997.

If conservative parties may at least look to the EU as a possible way out of the dilemma between traditional appeal and the necessary acceptance of free market policies, the **historic parties** are by definition more driven by historical institutionalism. Usually conservative or agrarian, the parties that earned the 'historic' label were constituted in 1989-91 as revivals of inter- and post-war parties. Indeed, the 'historic' label is derived precisely from the extent to which the parties choose to focus on continuity, or historical institutionalism. Their problem lies in four decades of communist 'modernisation'. Even if the direction or quality of modernisation may be controversial, its magnitude is beyond debate as far as industry and agriculture is concerned. Given this context, it can hardly be surprising that the historical parties that have seen any degree of success have been based on issues that were not resolved under communism. Where they survived, nationalism, urban – rural cleavages and religion have been politicised by the historic parties, with mixed success. National questions were frozen or recast, agriculture collectivised, and religion driven under-ground in Czechoslovakia and Hungary if not in Poland. In other words, several of the central divisions of the inter-war party systems survived to form the basis for parties that explicitly played on an historical institutionalist legacy. However, the limited electoral success of the historical parties testifies to the extent of communist modernisation. For example, there has been no successful agrarian party in former Czechoslovakia (though the KSCM performs well in agricultural regions).

West European post-war political history suggests a possible fifth category of party, into which several East Central Europe parties that may otherwise be described as conservative populist may fall. A number of new parties have emerged in Western Europe since the mid-sixties, combining populist appeal with rejection of traditional politics – the so-called protest parties. These **new populist parties** may inherit a historical legacy, but there is also a direct link to 'new politics' based on rejection of class politics. Though there may be links to inter-war populist parties, parties such as Meciar's HzDS owe less to historical legacy than to the specific nature of post-communist competition. In other words, new populism or protest parties are more defined by what they oppose or reject, than by their historical legacy. This holds even for Berlusconi's *Forza Italia* and Bossi's *Lega Nord*, both of which rejected the *partitocrazia* of the First Republic and the new social democracy found in PDS, and in the *Lega's* case also rejected Rome rule. Poland in the late 1970s and 1980s was home

to the development of an entirely *sui generis* movement in Solidarity, combining intellectual and legalistic opposition and trade union rights. Though the liberal wing provided a 'proto-liberal' legacy, new populist parties emerged from its populist wing (PC, BBWR, AWS). Parties such as KPN, founded in Poland in 1979 and invoking Pilsudski's heritage, straddle two groups by combining new populist elements and historical appeal.⁸²

In short, only part of the inter-war and communist legacy is significant as far as parties and ideology are concerned. In fact, the historical development of inter-party competition in West European politics is as relevant to the post-communist historical institutionalist inheritance as is East Central European political history. The same could, of course, be said for the relevance of *Russian* political history or historical institutionalism to the post-war East Central European regimes. The foreign heritage may have been imposed after WW II as opposed to borrowed in the post-communist era, but in either case Russian and West European institutionalism and ideology respectively influenced (if not shaped) political competition. The institutional and historical legacy in East Central European politics is, in fact, highly selective. Come 1989-90, the emerging parties in East Central Europe were remarkably free to choose their historical legacy, perhaps a paradox given their limited choice in economic policy.

Nevertheless, three main elements of historical institutionalism are of particular relevance to the development of post-communist party systems. Despite the differences within and between families of new parties, three issues could hardly be ignored. First, issues derived from the multi-ethnic nature of most East Central European states have proved persistent in East Central European politics, surviving communism as well as the transition to free market liberal democracy. Second, both the inter-war and communist legacy reinforced tendencies towards etatism, or the centralised state. In Comisso's assessment the most significant factor is the institutional legacy of communism, which leaves the need for the state to withdraw from civil society.⁸³ This is a difficult

⁸² L. Vinton, "'Outsider' Parties and the Political Process in Poland", *RFE/RL Research Report*, 3:3, 21 January, 1994, p.18.

⁸³ E. Comisso, "Legacies of the Past or new Institutions? The Struggle over Restitution in Hungary", *Comparative Political studies*, 28:2 (1995), 200-238.

proposition at the best of times, let alone during a period of transition in which the incumbent government is particularly vulnerable to criticism. Third, liberal democracy is a mechanism for resolving conflicts, and to no small extent this means conflicts concerning the distribution of resources. Economic policy is therefore a major element of party competition, a dimension that is present if not dominant in every West European party system. Yet the complete failure of the communist economic system meant that West European models were imported wholesale, leaving relatively little scope for ideological economic debate even if the pace of economic transition has been hotly contested. The legacy of domination-oriented strategies for party competition was, therefore, not necessarily mitigated by the need for bargaining over economic policy or to reach a consensus on economic reform.

If nationalism provided an integral element in the platform of the inter-war 'right' across East Central Europe, the communist period hardly eradicated nationalism or resolved inter-ethnic questions. The fact that communism and nationalism remain incompatible in theory because they are based on ultimate loyalty to class and nation respectively did not prevent a number of marriages of convenience between the two. However, in Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Poland, actual and threatened Soviet intervention in 1956, 1968 and 1980-81 made it difficult for the regimes to invoke nationalism in defence of themselves. Short of arguing that a domestic communist regime was preferable to Soviet intervention (national interest rather than nationalism), there was therefore little scope after 1968 for any of these regimes invoking anything like Ceaucescu's nationalist stance in Romania.

In the last two decades of communism, therefore, credible political appeal based on nationalism remained the privilege of the opposition in Hungary, Poland and the Czech lands. Only Slovak communists could claim to defend the national interest, leaving it vaguely defined, but pointing to the federalisation of Czechoslovakia in 1968. The result was the emergence of national 'conservative' opposition movements invoking the inter-war past, notably the MDF in Hungary and the KPN in Poland. Though border changes and population movements during and after WW II simplified the East Central European ethnic map and the Helsinki agreement ruled out border changes, the political implications of national identity remained potential sources of political competition.

However, to the extent that the inter-war legacy persists, it hardly serves as the model for peaceful management of inter-ethnic relations.

Commisso has suggested that despite the agreement on pluralist rules of the game and limited government after 1989, the real Leninist legacy was “the extensive and highly centralised state”.⁸⁴ However, this legacy is more extensive and can be traced further back than she suggests. The formal constitutions notwithstanding, inter-war East Central European government was based to a considerable extent on exclusive or dominant democracy, i.e., permanent exclusion of losers from the political process, be they national minorities or the left. Political competition under communism and the inter-war regimes was thus geared towards exclusive power rather than negotiation and coalition-building after elections. To be sure, the communist regimes’ totalitarian aspirations (at least in the Stalinist years) differed qualitatively and quantitatively from the inter-war governments’ centralised control. The point is not the similarity between the regimes, but rather that a focus on the inter-war legacy does not provide a countermeasure to the centralised state that was the legacy of Leninism.

The problems of government control over the media illustrate the point. Given the problems inherent in presiding over economic transition and recession, the temptation to exercise control over the media proved stronger than the constraints provided by the new legal regime, at least in Hungary and Slovakia. In 1992 the Slovak government halted the privatisation of the Danubaprint company, citing the need to regulate it, and in the same year friction between Meciar and the head of Slovak television caused the latter’s resignation and dismissal of the independent board supervising television.⁸⁵ This was followed by the establishment of the Meciar-sponsored Club of Journalists for a True Picture of Slovakia. Similar controversy surrounded Antall’s attempts to dismiss the heads of Hungarian Radio and Television during the 1992-93 “Media War.”⁸⁶ In Poland, the Sejm-appointed National Broadcasting Council has come under fire for censorship, particularly in the light of laws that stipulate good taste and morality in programming. Even the Czech government has suffered criticism over its handling of

⁸⁴ Commisso, “Legacies of the Past or new Institutions?”, p.235. See also Chapter Two, above.

⁸⁵ J. Obrman, “The Slovak Government versus the Media”, *RFE/RL Research Report*, 2:6, 5 February 1993.

⁸⁶ J. Pataki, “Power Struggle over Broadcasting in Hungary”, *RFE/RL Research Report*, 2;11, 12 March 1993.

the media, though this was mainly linked to privatisation.⁸⁷ This is not so much a matter of the weakness of civil society as an illustration of the tools available to a centralised government.

Finally, the communist period inevitably left a heritage of disaggregated economic interests. Given the illegitimacy of economic conflict, and the use of trade unions as ‘transmission belts’, trade unions and economic pressure groups have emerged gradually from an organisation vacuum following the collapse of communism.⁸⁸ Short of the ‘new anti-politics’ in Poland in the 1980s, which based opposition to communism on *economic* grounds, there was little development of alternative economic theories to communism.⁸⁹ Similarly, inter-war political competition provided little or no basis for economic criticism of communism. Come 1989, therefore, governments and parties faced with the economic transition looked to West European models, debating the pace of transition and the scope of welfare safety-nets rather than the goal of West European market economies and membership of the European Community. In this respect the Leninist and inter-war legacy was paradoxically an economic policy vacuum that left no viable theoretical alternatives to IMF-approved economic transition.

The combined legacy of inter-war politics and communism in East Central Europe therefore left the new post-communist parties with a wider range of historical institutional legacies from which to choose. The new liberal parties, reform communists, conservative, historic and new populist parties have drawn on a range of models of party organisation, appeal and ideology, emphasising the pre-communist past as well as West European politics. However, this choice is constrained by three key legacies – institutional centralisation that limits federalism, the economic orthodoxies of post-communist economic transition, and divisions over approaches to nationalism. Moreover, the legacy of inter-war party competition centres on efforts to achieve dominant party status. One way or another, every post-communist parliamentary party that has experienced government power (and by 1998, most had) faced not only questions derived from nationalist issues and economic transition, but also decisions as

⁸⁷ “The Media in Eastern Europe”, *RFE/RL Research Report*, 2:19, 17 May 1993.

⁸⁸ M. Waller, “Groups, Interests and Political Aggregation in East Central Europe”, *Journal of Communist Studies*, 8:1 (1992), 128-147.

⁸⁹ Szacki points to Dzielski as the leader and main exponent of this strand, Szacki, *Liberalism after Communism*.

to what strategies to adopt in terms of party competition and the exercise of central government power. The combination of radical privatisation programmes and substantial state power left considerably more discretionary power in the hands of the East Central European governments than is common in West European liberal democracy, even during Thatcher's privatisation programme in the UK. Party choice therefore matters. It determines the extent to which different legacies are important. Political parties in East Central Europe have therefore been, to a large extent, *free to choose*.

CHAPTER FIVE

VOTERS AND ELECTIONS:

THE ANTI-INCUMBENCY BIAS IN EAST CENTRAL EUROPE

"It's the economy, stupid!"

– James Carville, Clinton's Presidential Campaign, USA 1992.

The message that summed up Clinton's 1992 campaign rings true for most post-communist elections in East Central Europe too. If there is one over-riding factor that may be invoked to explain voting behaviour in post-communist states it is the economy, or rather the economic transition. Even in 1990 it was clear that traversing the 'vale of tears' through which the economic reform process was to progress would inevitably take longer than the lifetime of one parliament.¹ "Given the large number of economic and social problems each rebuilding democracy usually faces, and given the propensity of the winning party to place all of the problems on their initial agenda, it is unlikely that any governing party could achieve complete success before the second election."² This comment on West European post-authoritarian elections applies equally well, if not better, to transitions from communism. Given the tremendous tasks involved in developing a market economy in formerly communist states, it should not be surprising to find that East Central European electorates have a propensity to throw out their governments at election time. To the extent that this is in fact the case, it opens three questions that are relevant to the development of post-communist party systems. First, if voters reject the incumbent parties on the grounds of economic performance, this implies that electorates are not tied strongly to parties by way of social structures. The 'electoral market' is open, and a considerable number of voters are prepared to change

¹ R. Dahrendorf, *Reflections on the Revolution in Europe*, (London, Chatto & Windus, 1990), p.78.

² A. W. Turner, "Postauthoritarian Elections: Testing Expectations about 'First' Elections", *Comparative Political Studies*, 26:3 (1993), 330-349, p. 345.

their votes.³ If this is the case, does it mean that party systems reflect party competition rather than social differences? Second, to the extent that issue voting dominates post-communist elections (and party identification is weak), is this a temporary or permanent feature of post-communist democracy? Finally, what constraints does such anti-incumbency voting impose on the parties and the development of party systems?

ELECTORAL SPACE: ISSUE VOTING AND PARTY IDENTIFICATION

The principal difference between non-structural cleavages and Lipset & Rokkan's four cleavages derives from the latter's link to social structures. The Lipset-Rokkan model has cleavages translated into political competition, and however much translation is carried out the basis in social structures remains. Only re- or de-alignment could change this. However, if the requirement of a structural element is relaxed, cleavages no longer necessarily feature the same kind of links between social structures and party competition. Though parties may represent segments of society, they do not necessarily do so if the divisive issues on which they centre are not rooted in social divisions. This difference prompts questions about links between parties and voters, particularly the scope of 'party identification'. If the party system does not necessarily reflect social divisions, can voters be expected to be loyal to a particular party?

A second difference follows from this, inasmuch as non-structural cleavages are likely to feature weaker organisational elements than Lipset & Rokkan's cleavages. If party systems are based on long-standing socially salient divisions or cleavages (at the time of mass enfranchisement), there is a considerable chance that non-party organisations will be available to lend support to 'their' political parties. To the extent that cleavages are not based on social structure, this organisational element is likely to be weaker. This is not to suggest that such divisions do not reflect individuals' interests, but merely that these interests may well be disaggregated or unorganised. Even where social divisions lie at the heart of conflict the degree of organisation may vary. For example, divisions

³ The term is from P. Mair, "Electoral Markets and Stable States", in M. Moran & M. Wright (eds.), *The Market and the State: Studies in Interdependence*, (Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1991).

based on religion tend to feature stronger organisational support than divisions based on ethnicity, partly because most religions feature an organised hierarchy of authority and a well-developed world view.⁴ However, in East Central Europe, the very existence of pluralism or 'civil society' as a basis for political competition has been contentious.⁵

Does this mean that electoral markets in East Central Europe are considerably wider and more open than those of Western Europe? And if they are, what are the implications for post-communist political competition and the development of competitive party systems in East Central Europe? Some analysts are uncertain "whether propositions derived from studies of the more established Western Democracies can be exported to the CEE democracies [Central and Eastern Europe]," and to the extent that they can, they "suggest the possibility of considerable electoral turbulence."⁶ The cleavage model would suggest that electoral markets should be more open if the sociological dimensions of cleavages are weak. A similar answer could be derived from meso-structure analysis focusing on the 'weakness of civil society'.⁷ However, the absence of meso-structures that channel social divisions into party competition does not mean that politics cannot be based on individuals' economic interest. Kitschelt suggests a relationship between economic interests, social positions and voting behaviour in post-communist East Central Europe: bipolar competition centred on voters that stood to benefit from economic change and social mobility versus those that did not. In these terms, voters' interests were based on the skills, resources and social position they

⁴ B. Barry, "Political Accommodation and Consociational Democracy", *British Journal of Political Science*, 5 (1975), 477-505, p.502.

⁵ J. Curry, "Pluralism in East Central Europe: Not Will it Last, but What is it?", *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, 26:4 (1993), 446-461; R. J. Hill, "Democracy in Eastern Europe", in I. Budge & D. McKay (eds.), *Developing Democracy: Comparative Research in Honour of Jean Blondel*, (London, Sage, 1994); M. H. Bernhard, "Civil Society after the First Transition: Dilemmas of Post-Communist Democratisation in Poland and Beyond", *Communist and Post Communist Studies*, 29:2 (1996), 147-166.

⁶ I. Crewe, "Voters, Parties and Leaders Thirty Years On: Western Electoral Studies and the New Democracies of Eastern Europe", in Budge & McKay (eds.), *Developing Democracy*, p. 75-76.

⁷ M. Waller, "Groups, Interests and Political Aggregation in East Central Europe", *Journal of Communist Studies*, 8:1 (1992), 128-147; E. Gellner, "Nationalism in the Vacuum", in A. Motyl (ed.), *Thinking Theoretically about Soviet Nationalities: History and Comparison in the Study of the USSR*, (New York, Columbia University Press, 1992); G. Evans & S. Whitefield, "Identifying the Bases of Party Competition in Eastern Europe", *British Journal of Political Science*, 23 (1993), 521-548.

inherited from the communist regime.⁸ Analysing the social bases of party competition in Eastern Europe Whitefield & Evans conclude that

[w]here there is a socio-economic basis to party competition it will be most strongly influenced by left – right issues. Where there is an ethnic basis to party competition it will be most strongly influenced by liberal-authoritarian and national-cosmopolitan issues. Finally, in the absence of socio-economic or ethnic bases of competition, the principal issues around which parties will compete will be consensual; what will concern voters will be the ability of parties to achieve agreed-upon goals.⁹

In this analysis, competition in Poland, Hungary and the Czech republic should focus on redistributive issues, in contrast to Slovakia's focus on valence issues because of its "inevitable economic problems" and limited prospects for raising incomes and living standards.¹⁰

Even in the absence of strong extra-parliamentary organisations or social bases for political competition, parties remain vehicles of aggregation of interest, i.e., the voter votes for the party that presents the package of politics that best corresponds with his interests. In fact, to the extent that deep social cleavages do not naturally separate voters into segments and this function is not performed by non-party organisations, the parties become increasingly important as aggregators of interest. To be sure, the extent to which voters can be treated as rational consumers is contentious. The Downsian notion of a rational voter focusing on costs and benefits has been challenged on the grounds that the cost of voting exceeds the expected benefits due to the low probability that a voter's choice will affect the outcome of the election.¹¹ Efforts to deal with this problem have included attaching utility to the act of voting or contributing to maintaining democracy in action, thus departing somewhat from the interest-based decision.¹² If this were the case, voting would presumably be more significant than for whom the vote was cast. Moreover, invoking 'psychic' factors to explain turnout makes

⁸ H. Kitschelt, "The Formation of Party Systems in East Central Europe", *Politics and Society*, 20:1 (1992), 7-50; Bernhard, "Civil Society after the First Transition".

⁹ Evans & Whitefield, "Identifying the Bases of Party Competition in Eastern Europe", p.540.

¹⁰ Evans & Whitefield, "Identifying the Bases of Party Competition in Eastern Europe", p.545.

¹¹ A. Downs, *An Economic Theory of Democracy*, (New York, Harper & Row, 1957); D. Green & I. Shapiro, *Pathologies of Rational Choice Theory: A Critique of Applications in Political Science*, (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1994), Chapter Four.

¹² W. Riker & P. Ordeshook, "A Theory of the Calculus of Voting", *American Political Science Review*, 62 (1968), 25-42; D. Mueller, *Public Choice*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1989), Chapter Eighteen.

it difficult to exclude such factors when explaining how voters choose for whom to cast their ballot.¹³ However, given the low cost of voting and the high probability that each vote will not be pivotal, rational voters could be minimising their potential regret rather than maximising their possible utility.¹⁴ In other words, voting may be interpreted as a form of low-cost insurance, a guarantee that the voter's party will not fail by a small margin due to his failure to turn out in election day. In this sense the voter can, therefore, be treated as a consumer, seeking to cast his vote for the party that best represents his interest. Moreover, Dunleavy challenges the Olsonian assumption that links increased size of the electorate (or group membership) to disincentives for voter turnout. The effect of increased size on the party's (or group's) viability outweighs the reduced probability that the individual's decision will make a difference. The vote is interpreted as a resource that will be wasted if it is not used, and the opportunity to use this resource is limited.¹⁵

The role of parties as aggregators of interests invites focus on five questions relating to voter choice, party identification and post-communist voting patterns. If the voter is treated as a consumer and his main cost is information gathering, questions arise concerning sources of information and parties' potential for influencing voters' preferences.

1. To what extent do parties enjoy support from extra-parliamentary organisations? Downs suggests that voters seek short-cuts to information about parties. In West European politics these have been provided by supporting organisations, such as trade unions, which contribute to voters' identification with a particular party.
2. To what extent can voters be expected to develop party identification in the absence of membership of organisations or cleavage-based competition? As a short-cut to information voters may consider their previous choices, thus developing party identification over time. Does the structure of alternatives matter? Given the

¹³ P. Dunleavy, *Democracy, Bureaucracy and Public Choice: Economic Explanations in Political Science*, (London, Harvester, 1991), p.82.

¹⁴ J. A. Ferejohn & M. P. Fiorina, "The Paradox of Not Voting: A Decision Theoretic Analysis", *American Political Science Review*, 68 (1974), 525-536.

¹⁵ Dunleavy, *Democracy, Bureaucracy and Public Choice*, Chapters Three and Four.

nebulous nature of the ‘left – right’ line of party competition, unclear alliances and a multitude of parties means that a considerable number of voters vote for parties that fail to get representation in parliament, or are marginalised.

3. How significant is the economic transition? US case studies have indicated the primacy of retrospective voting based on economic performance, which, given the depth and duration of the recessions in East Central Europe, suggests that no government should be re-elected.¹⁶
4. Finally, if parties aggregate issues into packages which are presented to the voter at election time, is there greater scope for ‘preference shaping’ than when voters identify closely with parties? Post-communist governments have had considerable resources at their hands, which provide means by which they may attempt to mitigate the anti-incumbency effect.

The tentative answers to these questions suggest that voters are less subject to pressure from non-party organisations and that party identification may take some time to develop, particularly as ‘left – right’ alignment is problematic, which in turn means open electoral markets and considerable scope for preference shaping. The depth of the economic problems suggests that anti-incumbency voting should dominate post-communist elections.

NON-PARTY ORGANISATIONS AS LINKS BETWEEN PARTIES AND VOTERS

The extra-parliamentary support bases for West European parties have primarily consisted of trade unions and Churches, which have served a multitude of functions including mobilising voters for their associate parties and candidates. Though the extent of external support for mass parties has varied considerably across parties and countries, most West European socialist and social democratic parties have enjoyed considerable

¹⁶ M. P. Fiorina, *Retrospective Voting in American National Elections*, (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1981); D. R. Kiewiet, “Policy-Oriented Voting in Response to Economic Issues”, *American Political Science Review*, 75 (1981), 448-459.

support from trade unions.¹⁷ Post-war Italy and the Netherlands illustrate the point, with separate religious organisations and/or trade unions linked to each of the main denominational and left-wing parties.¹⁸ In rational choice terms, such organisations can be construed as means to overcome collective action problems in voting by means of persuasion, peer-pressure and eliminating the cost of information gathering. If voting is seen as low-cost insurance, this can be extended to include inducement of fear, e.g., of the ‘Stalin can’t see you in the voting booth but God can’ variety used by the Church in immediate post-war Italy, or trade unions invoking the need to protect the welfare state.¹⁹ This means that rational choice theory does not necessarily reject party identification as irrational. If a party purports to represent a segment of society, any rational member of this segment could reasonably be expected to cast his vote for ‘his’ party (subject to a sufficiently high salience and the party’s credibility). Hence the success of the mass ‘wing’ parties of the left in early Twentieth Century West European politics.

Though ‘social democrat’ and ‘reform communist’ families of parties are often identified in post-communist politics, the parties which make up this group remain a far cry from their West European counterparts in the aftermath of the First World War.²⁰ This is partly due to their limited links with supporting organisations. The main role of trade unions under post-communism has been bargaining over pay and working conditions rather than acting as sponsors of political parties.²¹ If anything, parties have attempted to capture trade unions rather than vice versa, thereby reversing or distorting the classical pluralist pressure group – government relationship. The National Federation of Hungarian Trade Unions’ (MSZOSZ) failure to oppose the MSZP-led

¹⁷ A. Panebianco, *Political Parties: Organisation and Power*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1988); D. Sassoon, *One Hundred Years of Socialism*, (London, Tauris, 1996).

¹⁸ H. Daalder, “The Netherlands: Opposition in a Segmented Society”; and S. H. Barnes, “Italy: Opposition on Left, Right and Center”, in R. A. Dahl (ed.), *Political Oppositions in Western Democracies*, (New have, Yale University Press, 1966).

¹⁹ D. Sassoon, *Contemporary Italy: Politics, Economy & Society Since 1945*, (London, Longman, 1986), p.142-147; G. Esping-Andersen, “Single-Party Dominance in Sweden: The Saga of Social Democracy”, in T. J. Tempel (ed.), *Uncommon Democracies: the One-Party Dominant Regimes*, (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1990).

²⁰ K. von Beyme, *Systemwechsel in Osteuropa*, (Frankfurt-am-Main, Suhrkamp, 1994).

²¹ C. Schnabel, “Die Arbeitsbeziehungen im Osteuropaischen Transformationsprozess”, in O. Vogel (ed.), *Osteuropa auf dem Weg in die Marktwirtschaft*, (Köln, Deutscher Instituts-Verlag GmbH, 1993).

government's tight economic programme in 1994/95 would be a case in point.²² Though six of eight Hungarian unions have been described in terms of socialist, Christian, liberal or populist "ideological outlook", the links with government and parties are "very weak".²³ In Poland Solidarity's demand for social protection illustrated the problematic relationship between the trade union and political parties that emerged from the same opposition movement.²⁴ The unions failed to impede economic shock therapy, partly due to fragmentation.²⁵ In the Czech and Slovak Republics, trade union activity has likewise been limited mainly to pressure politics.²⁶ In short, they have proved a poor basis for post-communist mass parties in East Central Europe.

The Catholic Church provided the second major external basis for West European mass parties, notably in inter-war Belgium and the Netherlands. In Italy *Azione Cattolica* played a considerable part in the development of the DC into a mass party during the last year of WW II.²⁷ However, the post-war success of Christian Democrat parties in Germany, Italy and Austria was based on the Church acting as "a loose framework of commitment" leaving the politicians to "make the running."²⁸ This was not to be the case in East Central Europe. The moderate success of Christian democrat parties under post-communism has been attributed partly to crowding out by conglomerate and 'Christian national' parties.²⁹ Moreover, explicit Church involvement in politics appears to have backfired. The clearest case of direct Church involvement was the Polish election of 1991, whereas by the 1993 election the Church was already beginning to exercise more self-restraint.³⁰ Polls in 1991 indicated that the Church's stance on religious education and abortion in particular and its public role in general were

²² *Eastern Europe Newsletter*, 9:10 (12 May 1995).

²³ T. Cox & L. Vass, "Civil Society and Interest Representation in Hungarian Political Development", in T. Cox & L. Vass (eds.), *Hungary: The Politics of Transition*, (London, Frank Cass, 1995), p.165ff.

²⁴ M. Orenstein, "Who's Right, Who's Left", *Transition*, 1:14 (11/08/95).

²⁵ M. Kramer, "Polish Workers and the Post-Communist transition", in *Communist and Post Communist Studies*, 28:1 (1995), 74-114.

²⁶ S. L. Wolchik, "Democratisation and Political Participation in Slovakia"; and D. M. Olson, "The Experience of the Czech Republic", both in K. Dawisha & B. Parrott (eds.), *The Consolidation of Democracy in East-Central Europe*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1997).

²⁷ P. Ginsborg, *A History of Contemporary Italy: Society and Politics*, (London, Penguin, 1990), p.50.

²⁸ G. Smith, *Politics in Western Europe*, (Aldershot, Dartmouth, 1990, 5th ed.), p.54.

²⁹ See, e.g., von Beyme, *Systemwechsel in Osteuropa*, p.309.

counterproductive, affecting its popular standing “adversely” as RFE understatement put it.³¹ A 1994 poll indicated that 60% of Poles believed the Church had too much influence in politics, while 53% and 49% respectively said the Church should permit divorce and abortion.³²

However, the limited relationship between extra-parliamentary organisations and political parties does not preclude party identification on the part of voters. To the extent that East Central Europe features disaggregated interest rather than the absence of pluralism, political competition based on (economic) interests remains an option. However, alignments based on interests in rapid economic transition do not correspond to owner vs. worker class politics inasmuch as interests depend on each industry’s prospects in a market economy rather than class divisions. Political parties are not dependent on external support from interest groups, nor do most of them represent organised interests or a well-defined segment of society. Party identification is, therefore, not being developed through or enhanced by extra-parliamentary organisations. It therefore becomes a more long-term prospect, to be established over a number of elections.

PARTY IDENTIFICATION THROUGH ISSUE VOTING

Though organisations and identity might promote the development of links between voters and parties, they are far from the only road to party identification. It can also be based on iteration, i.e., if the voter judges party ‘X’ to be most competent or closest to his interests in several successive elections he may use his previous judgements to guide his future voting. Based on Downs’ rational voter, Fiorina developed a model of retrospective voting in which party identification features heavily. Whereas Downs’ rational voter uses past performance as a means for estimating possible future

³⁰ A. Sabbat-Swidlicka, “The Polish Elections: The Church, the Right, and the Left”, *RFE/RL Research Report*, 2:40 (8 October 1993).

³¹ J. B. de Weydenthal, “Catholic Bishops Call for Cooperation between Church and State”, *RFE Report on Eastern Europe*, 17 May 1991; J. L. Curry, “Are the Church and Public Opinion at Variance?”, *RFE Report on Eastern Europe*, 12 July 1991.

³² L. Vinton “Opinion Poll: Poles are Selective Catholics”, *OMRI Daily Digest*, 8 August 1994.

performance, Fiorina's rational voter develops party identification over time through an iteration of this process: "current party ID combines additively with future expectations. But party ID at any given time is a function of party performance prior to that time."³³ In other words, if imperfect information makes it rational for a voter to base his choice in part or mostly on past performance, then this will *over time* contribute to the development of party identification.

However, one defining feature of *new democracies* is the *lack of time* over which party identification can develop. In the short term, any party identification must, therefore, be based on identity or organised interest. Voting on the basis of expected performance or individual economic interest constitutes issue voting, though it might eventually lead to party identification. Organised interests have proven too disaggregated to contribute meaningfully to the development of widespread party identification, but some evidence of the stability of ethnically based voting can be found among the Hungarian minority in Slovakia (stable at 9% +/- 1.5%). The logic of party identification and the main parties' broad appeal therefore suggest that the floating voter will figure prominently under the conditions of post-communism. Only over time, after a handful of elections, can a degree of party identification be expected. If the voter repeatedly assesses one party as his preferred choice, or as 'his' party, the extent to which he invokes his previous assessments at each new election determines the extent to which party identification develops. This is not only rational in terms of cutting the cost of information, but also in terms of invoking the long-term view as opposed to myopic voting. Party identification therefore becomes at best a medium-term prospect in East Central Europe, and given the limited role non-party organisations play in this process the electoral markets can be expected to remain very open.

³³ Fiorina, *Retrospective Voting in American National Elections*, p.76.

THE STRUCTURE OF ALTERNATIVES: COMPETITION FOR 'LEFT' AND 'RIGHT', AND 'WASTED VOTES'.

The openness of electoral markets in East Central Europe is reinforced by the structure of political competition, at least as far as the first few elections are concerned. Post-communist politics has featured competing visions of left – right competition, and to some extent it still does. This represents a ‘conflict of conflicts’, a competition to determine the main dimension in the party system.³⁴ The social democratic and reform communist parties invoked the social democratic legacy (local and European), hoping to pit social democracy against a liberal and conservative right. Meanwhile the parties loosely referred to as the ‘Christian national’ right invoked inter-war conservative – liberal competition, grouping the liberals on the left with the reform communists and new social democratic parties. Finally, the ‘liberal parties’, generally favouring rapid economic reform, emphasised the division between ‘shock therapists’ and ‘timid’ economic reformers (whether Christian national or reform communist). This tripartite alignment produced party competition in East Central Europe that was far from uni-dimensional. While the social democratic and reform communist parties monopolised the mainstream ‘left’, the liberal and Christian national camps competed to dominate the ‘right’. If the terms ‘left’ and ‘right’ are to be used, they require, at the very least, modifiers to distinguish the free-market ‘liberal’ right and the more *Gemeinschaft*-oriented (conservative) ‘Christian national’ right. The over-all problem is complicated by the similarity in the policy positions adopted by the ‘far right’ and the ‘hard left’, as openly nationalist and unreformed communist parties all argued against the free market.

This ‘trichotomy’ was not conducive to the stabilisation of electoral markets. Each major party or ‘camp’ had at least two rivals, each on a separate dimension. Rejection of the government did not produce a shift to *the* opposition, but to one of two alternative oppositions. In the Polish case, the aggregate shift at electoral level was from the liberal

³⁴ E. E. Schattschneider, *The Semi-Sovereign People: A Realist's View of Democracy in America* (New York, Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1960); M. Maor & G. Smith, “On the Structuring of Party Competition: The Impact of Maverick Issues”, (manuscript, The European Institute, LSE, 1993); P. Mair, “E. E. Schattschneider’s *The Semi-Sovereign People*”, *Political Studies*, 14 (1997), 947-954.

camp to the Christian national camp in 1991, and then to the social democrat camp in 1993. Moreover, the plenitude of parties meant that a considerable number of voters cast their votes for parties that did not gain representation in parliament (see table 5.1 below), or became marginalised from mainstream politics. To the extent that these voters opt for viable parties in the next elections they (by definition) contribute to electoral volatility. Moreover, inasmuch as the electoral systems punish factionalised camps (all four featured 4% or 5% thresholds by 1993) and the winning camp was less factionalised than the opposition. This volatility was set to produce an anti-incumbency effect. Between 1993/94 and 1997/98 the SLD gained 6.7% and the MSzP lost only 0.1%, but both lost seats to united liberal and Christian national camps. The structure of alternatives and the plenitude of parties therefore contributed to an over-all anti-incumbency effect, by increasing volatility and (to the extent that voters had learned to vote for viable parties by the time of the 1997 – 98 elections) dispersing the vote in the 1991 – 94 rounds of elections. As table 5.1 illustrates, this effect has been clearest in Poland and Slovakia though parties that fail to make it to parliament continue to poll some 12% of the vote in three of the four cases.

Table 5.1 Votes for parties that failed to gain representation in parliament

| Period: | 1990 – 1992 | | 1993 – 1996 | | 1997 – 1998 | |
|----------------|-------------|------------|-------------|-------|-------------|-------|
| Czech Republic | 1992 | 14.0% | 1996 | 19.3% | 1998 | 11.4% |
| Hungary | 1990 | 15.8% | 1994 | 12.4% | 1998 | 12.3% |
| Poland | 1991 | No barrier | 1993 | 34.4% | 1997 | 12.8% |
| Slovakia | 1992 | 17.7% | 1994 | 13.0% | 1998 | 5.8% |

THE ECONOMIC TRANSITION – “IT’S THE ECONOMY, STUPID”

Rational choice accounts of voting behaviour have long stressed the role of retrospective voting, i.e., the casting of a vote based on the incumbent’s record, as part of rational voting behaviour under conditions of uncertainty. Downs’ rational voter uses past performance as a guide to future performance, a short-cut in the world of imperfect information.³⁵ Given the cost of estimating the performance of a future government, the

³⁵ Downs, *An Economic Theory of Democracy*.

comparatively low-cost activity of observing the performance of the incumbent should contribute considerably to the voter's choice. This is particularly relevant in the context of catch-all parties, where competition centres on competence and priorities rather than fundamentally different (ideological) political programmes. Given the degree of consensus on the need for economic reform in East Central Europe performance-based retrospective voting should be particularly important. Moreover, the depth and duration of the recession, and the level of unemployment in particular, suggests an anti-incumbency effect.

To be sure, the theory of retrospective voting based on economic performance is hardly uncontroversial. Several studies point to its explanatory power in the US and the UK, particularly with respect to unemployment, disposable income, inflation and the general state of the economy (GDP growth).³⁶ Interestingly, this tends to reflect voters' perceptions of overall economic problems, which in turn "closely reflect actual conditions in the nation's economy", and even voters' appraisals of their own financial situation reflect unemployment and inflation.³⁷ Voters are therefore better described as sociotropic (concern for overall economic performance) rather than egocentric (focus on personal financial situation). However, alternative models based on future expectations have claimed better empirical results, criticising the "past-oriented" approach used in retrospective models.³⁸ A study of one decade of British politics concluded that, as far as the party leaders are concerned, comparative and prospective evaluations matter more than individual and retrospective evaluations. In other words, voters compare leaders and consider their prospective performance rather than evaluate the Prime

³⁶ D. R. Kinder & D. R. Kiewiet, "Economic Discontent and Political Behavior: The Role of Personal Grievances and Collective Economic Judgements in Congressional Voting", *American Journal of Political Science*, 23 (1979), 495-517; Fiorina, *Retrospective Voting in American National Elections*; M. Paldam, "A Preliminary Survey of the Theories and Findings on Vote and Popularity Functions", *European Journal of Political Research*, 9 (1981), 181-200; F. Schneider, "Public Attitudes towards Economic Conditions and their Impact on Government Behaviour", *Political Behaviour*, 6 (1984), 211-227; M. Harrop & W. L. Miller, *Elections and Voters: A Comparative Introduction*, (London, Macmillan, 1987), Chapter Eight; D. Sanders, "Economic Influence on the Vote: Modelling Electoral Decisions", in Budge & McKay (eds.), *Developing Democracy*.

³⁷ Kiewiet, "Policy-Oriented Voting in Response to Economic Issues", p.454.

³⁸ J. H. Kuklinski & D. M. West, "Economic Expectations and Voting Behavior in the United States House and Senate Elections", *American Political Science Review*, 75 (1981), 436-447.

Minister on his or her past performance.³⁹ Sanders' evidence for the same period suggests a combination of sociotropic retrospective voting (reflecting GDP growth) and egocentric (personal) expectations of the immediate future.⁴⁰ In the US, "[t]he electorate "responds with the sophistication of the banker [foresight, as opposed to the simple peasant's focus on experience], evaluating the president on the basis of an informed view of the nation's economic prospects rather than its current standard of living."⁴¹

Nevertheless, there is a theoretical and practical case for returning to the four basic economic indicators: economic growth (GDP), unemployment, inflation and, particularly for East Central Europe, real wage growth (measured in US \$). First, the questions used in surveys to determine future expectations about candidates' or parties' ability to solve a particular problem are closely linked to the question of who/what is the voter's preferred candidate/party. A close correlation between this and the actual vote is, therefore, hardly surprising. Testing this argument for the US 1992 election, Miller & Shanks found that prospective evaluations of overall performance of parties and candidates is significant, but the explanatory power vanishes for *parties* (not presidential candidates) when they control for "other significant prospective evaluations" (i.e., issues other than the economy).⁴² Second, focusing on hard economic data permits separate focus on the question of preference shaping (see below). The effect of parties' efforts to engage in preference shaping would be included in prospective data, but not in hard data on economic performance. Finally, as polls prior to the 1992 election in Britain illustrated, survey evidence may be of questionable reliability.⁴³ Such problems have been exacerbated in East Central Europe, for example yielding surveys that indicate higher turnout in past elections than was actually the case.

³⁹ R. Nadeau, R. G. Niemi & T. Amato, "Prospective and Comparative or Retrospective and Individual? Party Leaders and Party Support in Great Britain", *British Journal of Political Science*, 26 (1996), 245-258.

⁴⁰ Sanders, "Economic Influence on the Vote".

⁴¹ M. B. MacKuen, R. S. Erikson & J. A. Stimson, "Peasants or Bankers? The American Electorate and the U.S. Economy", *American Political Science Review*, 86:3 (1992), 597-611, p.606.

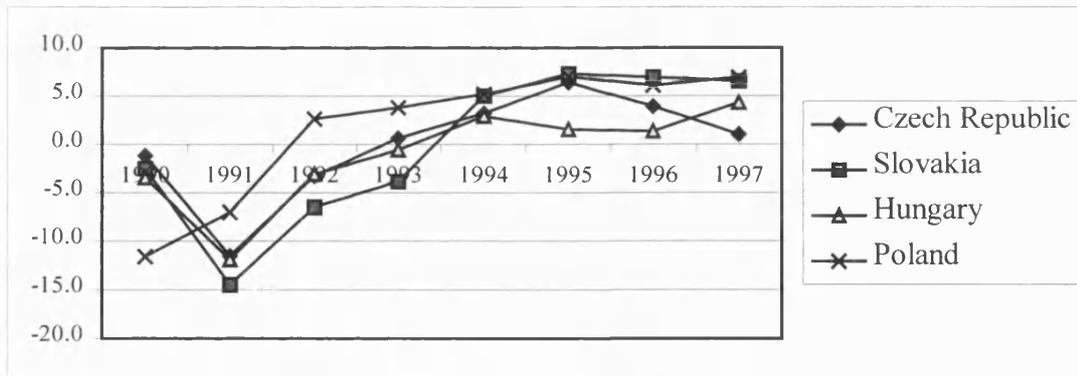
⁴² W. E. Miller & J. M. Shanks, *The New American Voter*, (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1996), Chapter Fourteen.

⁴³ D. Sanders, "Voting and the Electorate" in P. Dunleavy, A. Gamble, I. Holiday & G. Peele (eds.), *Developments in British Politics 5*, (Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1997), p.58-62.

One possible explanation of survey unreliability is mistrust in pollsters or reluctance to provide information. This potential problem is elegantly circumvented by use of hard economic data and electoral results rather than ‘soft’ survey data.

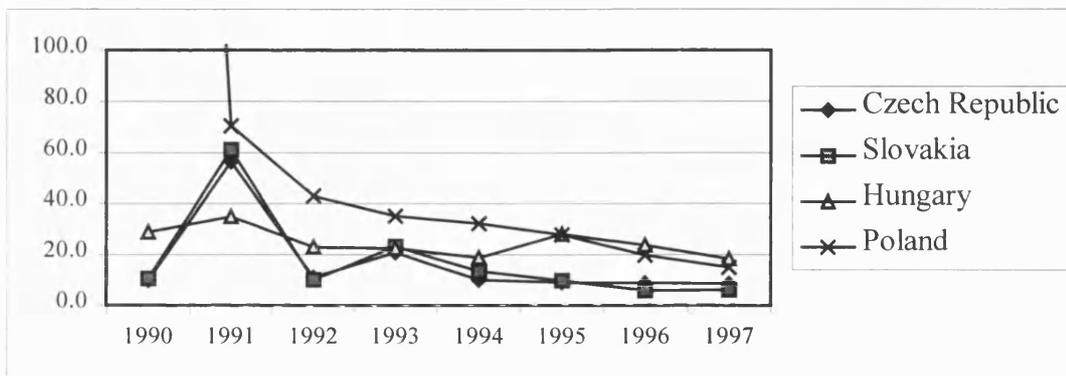
Given the tremendous tasks involved in the economic transitions, the anti-incumbency approach suggests that most post-communist governments would face the wrath of voters as expectations of a rapid economic transition go unfulfilled. In this light it is the survival of Klaus’ government, rather than other post-communist governments’ defeat at the polls, which requires explanation. Alternation in government, sometimes considered a sign of a consolidated democracy, thus becomes the norm while stability would indicate either economic success or domination by a single party facing a fragmented opposition. A brief examination of economic indicators suggests that the Czechs have fared somewhat better than their neighbours, particularly with regard to unemployment.

Figure 5.1 GDP growth in % 1990 – 1997



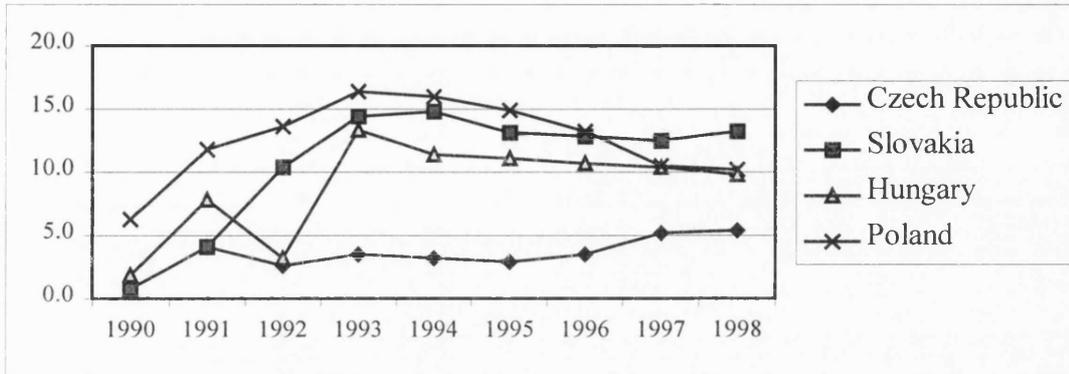
Source: *Business Central Europe*, BCE Online statistical database, <http://www.bcemag.com>.

Figure 5.2 Inflation in % 1990 – 1997
Polish inflation in 1990 was 585% (off the scale)



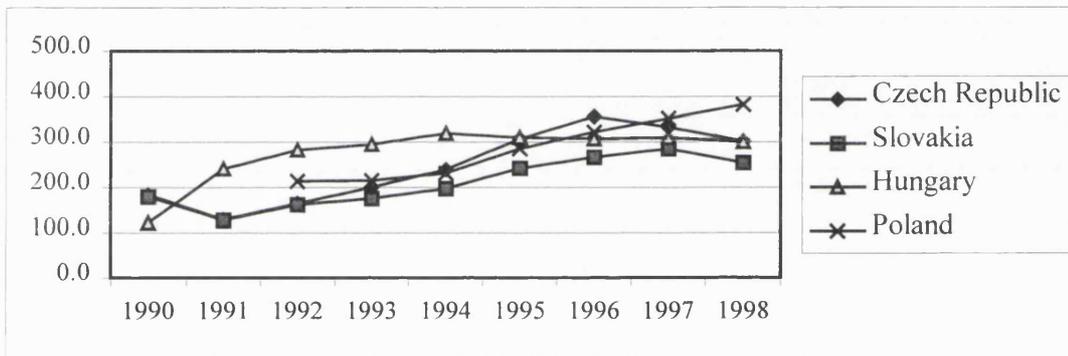
Source: *Business Central Europe*, BCE Online statistical database, <http://www.bcemag.com>.

Figure 5.3 Unemployment in % 1990 – 1998



Source: *Business Central Europe*, BCE Online statistical database, <http://www.bcemag.com>.

Figure 5.4 Average monthly wages in US \$ 1990 – 1998



Source: *Business Central Europe*, BCE Online statistical database, <http://www.bcemag.com>

PREFERENCE SHAPING AS PARTY STRATEGY

Though the four factors discussed so far point in the direction of large-scale anti-incumbency voting under the conditions of post-communism, the governments of East Central Europe have considerable means at their disposal by which they may attempt to shape voters’ preferences. The notion that liberal democracy may be stacked against the incumbent is hardly new to East Central Europe, and as Dunleavy points out, a “rationally-led opposition should simply track all the government’s policies which attract majority support, incorporating them into its own programme.”⁴⁴ However, he goes on to argue that this effect has been offset by governments’ abilities to use the

⁴⁴ Dunleavy, *Democracy, Bureaucracy & Public Choice*, p.114.

resources that office provides to shape voters' preferences. In Britain, this has included partisan social engineering (increasing the number of potential supporters), adjusting social relativities (making potential supporters more satisfied), context management and institutional manipulation. Examples include, respectively, Conservative efforts to reduce the size of the public sector and increase the number of home-owners by selling council houses (fewer potential Labour voters, more potential conservative voters); making home-owners better off relative to tenants by changing rent-control laws; generating booms shortly before elections by relaxing monetary policy to improve the context; and changing local government structures (abolishing the seven metropolitan councils).⁴⁵ Elections provide more than a prize for the winner – the winner is in control over substantial resources that may affect the outcome of the next contest.

Analogous efforts have been made in post-communist East Central Europe, though with mixed success. Examples of institutional manipulation include introduction of the 5% threshold in Poland in 1993 and Meciar's efforts to change the Slovak electoral system to a more majoritarian type in 1998. Slovakia's electoral reform of May 1998, which applies the 5% threshold to parties within coalitions, was criticised as gerrymandering targeted at the Hungarian coalition.⁴⁶ In 1997 Meciar used the interior ministry's power to remove the question of the direct election of the president from the referendum ballot.⁴⁷ Hungary and Slovakia have seen considerable controversy over media laws and government efforts to control the press, either directly or by influencing appointments in the broadcast media. Examples include the establishment of the Club of Journalists for a True picture of Slovakia (non-members were refused access to the government), political interference in the privatisation of the Danubaprint company (which harmed the Slovak opposition press), and broadcast media resignations over political interference in Hungary and Slovakia.⁴⁸ More subtly and successfully (at least in the short term) the Klaus government's efforts to keep unemployment low modified

⁴⁵ Dunleavy, *Democracy, Bureaucracy & Public Choice*, p.119-125.

⁴⁶ *RFE/RL Newslines*, (2:98) 25 May 1998.

⁴⁷ The constitutional court subsequently ruled against the government, *RFE/RL Newslines*, (2:28) 11 February 1998; *RFE/RL Newslines*, (2:36) 23 February 1998.

⁴⁸ J. Obrman, "The Slovak Government versus the Media", *RFE/RL Research Report*, 2:6, 5 February 1993; J. Pataki, "Power Struggle over Broadcasting in Hungary", *RFE/RL Research Report*, 2:11, 12 March 1993; "The Media in Eastern Europe", *RFE/RL Research Report*, 2:19, 17 May 1993.

the real pace of economic reform, e.g., by reluctance to enforce bankruptcy laws, Klaus' free-market rhetoric notwithstanding.⁴⁹ Moreover, survey evidence suggests that voters participating in voucher privatisation or exposed to privatisation via their work place were more likely to support the government in the elections, lending some credence to the link between preference shaping and the ODS' success. Some 80% of the electorate had been exposed to privatisation by 1996 (i.e., worked in a privatised company or owned shares through the voucher scheme).⁵⁰ A final point, not limited to government parties, concerns party elites' efforts to set the agenda for the electoral campaign, to focus on issues on which they are stronger or more cohesive than their competitors, to capitalise on social tension or to build up long-term constituencies.⁵¹ In East Central Europe, divisions over the implications of multi-ethnic states or potential irredentism at home or abroad have provided ample material for mobilisation, battles over the agenda and capitalising on (if not inciting) social tensions.

In the wake of the collapse of communism the major parties were not divided over the need to achieve a transition to a free-market economy, but rather over the pace at which this goal should be pursued. Given that success in this field contributes significantly to a government's ability to pay off discontented voters and to the scope for preference shaping, macro-economic success should be expected to affect voters' evaluation of government performance. The overall implications of the autonomy of parties from non-party organisations, the slow dynamic of the development of party identification, the nebulous structure of left-right competition and the difficulties involved in economic transition suggest that East Central European post-communist elections should feature a clear and present anti-incumbency trend. However, parties' efforts to engage in preference shaping constitute the countervailing force. The extent to which the evidence supports this analysis is the subject of the second part of this chapter.

⁴⁹ For example, few large industrial firms went bankrupt under the Klaus government. B. Slay "The Czech Economic Transition: A Moment of Truth?", *OMRI Analytical Briefs*, 1:143, 3 June 1996.

⁵⁰ J. S. Earle, S. Gehlbach, Z. Sakova, J. Vecernik, "Mass Privatisation and Voter Response in the Czech Republic: Will the Klaus Strategy Work?", *OMRI Analytical Briefs*, 1:137, 30 May 1996.

⁵¹ Dunleavy, *Democracy, Bureaucracy & Public Choice*, p.125-128; T. Iversen, "The Logics of Electoral Politics: Spatial, Directional and Mobilizational Effects", *Comparative Political Studies*, 27:2 (1994), 155-189; A. Przeworski & J. Sprague, *Paper Stones: A History of Electoral Socialism*, (Chicago, Chicago University Press, 1986).

EAST CENTRAL EUROPE 1989 – 98: ELECTORAL VOLATILITY AND ANTI- INCUMBENCY VOTING

The rational choice case for an anti-incumbency bias in post-communist East Central Europe is derived primarily from the problems of economic transition and the limited degree of party identification that can be expected under the condition of post-communism. Both of these factors are analysed below. First the evidence for anti-incumbency voting is considered, and tested against aggregate economic indicators. Second, the extent of electoral volatility is analysed, with a view to confirming the arguments concerning weak party identification. Though the limited number of elections have not generated sufficient data for a thorough test, an analysis of the data available lends support to the theories put forward above, suggesting that they are valid, but not providing conclusive proof. The key point, however, is that governments in East Central Europe do not tend to win elections.

THE ANTI-INCUMBENCY BIAS

So, “are winners losers?” Rose & Mackie’s reply to this question was that the anti-incumbency bias in post-war West European politics has been limited. Moreover, even when some coalition partners lost votes, this does not automatically lead to loss of control of government.⁵² The same question has been raised concerning post-authoritarian elections in Western Europe and Japan. Turner, surprisingly, found that: “[e]very single postauthoritarian election winner won the next parliamentary election. Five of eleven postauthoritarian election winners gained votes in the next election.”⁵³ The same cannot be said for post-communist East Central Europe, with the exception of the Czech Republic. As table 5.2 indicates, anti-incumbency voting has dominated not just East Central Europe but most of post-communist Eastern Europe. Out of 33 elections across Eastern Europe 1989-1998 (excluding Yugoslavia), the incumbent was

⁵² R. Rose, & T. Mackie, “Incumbency in Government: Asset or Liability?”, in H. Daalder & P. Mair (eds.), *Western European Party Systems: Continuity and Change*, (London, Sage Publications, 1983).

⁵³ Turner, “Postauthoritarian Elections”, p.346.

either voted completely out of office or lost overall control of the government in all but six cases. A further five cases, classified as mixed outcomes, indicate less clear-cut results, either by way of the replacement of the government by a coalition or technocratic government, with substantial losses for the incumbent on election day; or a previous government's return after a brief period of opposition. However, in all five cases the incumbents were technically defeated at the polls.

Table 5.2
Elections in Eastern Europe and the Baltic States (excluding Yugoslavia) 1989-98

| State | Date | Incumbent voted out? | Comments |
|----------------|------------------|----------------------|--|
| Poland | June 1989 | YES | In the contested seats. 1st election, anti-communist. |
| Hungary | March/April 1990 | YES | 1st election, anti-communist. |
| Lithuania | Feb 1990 | YES | Soviet election, anti-Soviet vote. |
| Estonia | March 1990 | YES | Soviet election, anti-Soviet vote. |
| Latvia | March 1990 | YES | Soviet election, anti-Soviet vote. |
| Romania | May 1990 | NO | 1st election, ex-communists win after coup. |
| Czechoslovakia | June 1990 | YES | 1st election, anti-communist. |
| Bulgaria | June 1990 | NO | 1st election, constitutional assembly, Ex-communist win. |
| Albania | March/April 1991 | NO | Communists win. |
| Bulgaria | October 1991 | YES | Opposition wins, close anti-communist outcome. |
| Poland | October 1991 | YES | Anti-government vote. (But 'liberals' back in May 1992) |
| Albania | March 1992 | YES | Anti-communist election. |
| Czech lands | June 1992 | NO | Post-conglomerate party, continuity. |
| Slovak lands | June 1992 | YES | Meciar returns (ousted in April 1991). |
| Romania | September 1992 | MIX | Change, but still ex-communists-supported government. |
| Estonia | Sept 1992 | YES | Government fell Jan 1992, centre-right coalition after the election. |
| Lithuania | Oct/Nov 1992 | YES | Ex-Communists win. |
| Latvia | June 1993 | MIX | Conglomerate party collapsed. |
| Poland | Sept 1993 | YES | Reform-communist win. |
| Hungary | May 1994 | YES | Reform-communist win. |
| Slovakia | Sept 1994 | MIX | Meciar returns again (ousted March 1994). |
| Bulgaria | Dec 1994 | YES | Ex-communist win, after government collapse Oct 1994. |
| Estonia | March 1995 | YES | Laar government fell Oct 1995. Centre-left government after the election. |
| Latvia | Sept/Oct 1995 | MIX | no majority, technocratic government. |
| Czech Republic | July 1996 | NO, but | Coalition survived, minority government. |
| Albania | May 1996 | NO, but | Widespread allegations of fraud. |
| Romania | Nov 1996 | YES | Ex-communist government out, opposition in. |
| Lithuania | Nov 1996 | YES | Ex-communist government out, the right wins. |
| Bulgaria | April 1997 | YES | Ex-communists out Feb. 1997, lose election. |
| Poland | Sept 1997 | YES | Reform-communist government out. |
| Hungary | May 1998 | YES | Reform-communist government out. |
| Czech Republic | June 1998 | MIX | Government fell Nov 1997, divided former coalition retains majority, minority CSSD government. |
| Slovakia | September 1998 | YES | Opposition wins, Meciar out |

Returning to East Central Europe, the first wave of elections requires little elaboration, they are ideal-type illustrations of anti-incumbency voting. The communist political and economic system was rejected *en masse* by voters, who voted for new parties about which relatively little was known. It would make little sense to speak of party systems, let alone party identification, as conglomerate movements swept the board. Solidarity took all but one of the contested seats in 1989, while the communist party fared somewhat better with 13.7% and 13.6% in the Czech and Slovak lands, and the reform-communist MSzP polled 10.9% of the first round votes in Hungary. Though it could reasonably be objected that the 'founding elections' were part of the process of regime change rather than the first step in the process of party system formation, they nevertheless constituted part of the formative experience of the new democracies.

The Polish and Hungarian cases broadly support the anti-incumbency thesis. In the 1991 and 1993 elections, Polish voters declined to support governments which had implemented the most radical scheme of economic reforms in post-communist Europe. If the 1989 election was interpreted as a mandate for shock therapy, the same cannot be said of any of the subsequent elections. However, it should be noted that the 1993 election generated a majority of seats for two parties which combined took only 35.9% of the vote, as the 5% barrier (8% for coalitions) eliminated 34.6% of the votes for the lower house. Both liberal and Christian national parties suffered significantly from this electoral system change because of their disunity. The swing was nevertheless considerable. The SLD and PSL increased their respective share of the vote in 1993 to 20.4% and 15.4% from 12.0% and 8.7% in 1991. Though the extent to which this can be put down to economic insecurity is debatable, the SLD's appeal undeniably focused on economic concerns.⁵⁴ Four years later the situation was reversed, with the unification of the Christian national right under the AWS banner. The coalition was voted out of office, even though the SLD actually increased its share of the vote by 6.7% to 27.1%.

The Hungarian case is even clearer. The 1990 election represented a founding election inasmuch as it ousted the old regime, but it also ushered in the new party system. The

⁵⁴ H. Tworzecki, "The Polish Parliamentary Elections of 1993", *Electoral Studies*, 13:2 (1994), 180-185.

Christian national right's advantage over the liberal opposition was to no small extent due to its association with nationalist appeal rather than an economic programme.⁵⁵ However, this approach led to problems in the formulation of economic policy. Come the 1994 elections, the governing coalition was open to challenge from an MSzP which focused on an Austrian-type social market economy, stressing not so much an alternative programme as more competent management of the economy.⁵⁶ Four years later a revamped Fidesz turned the very same arguments against the MSzP – SzDSz coalition, offering tax cuts and increased spending and sending the financial market into a dive with the prospect of a Fidesz victory and fears that it would not prioritise fiscal rectitude.⁵⁷ The SzDSz, which was widely seen as responsible for the 1995 austerity package, dived from 19.5% to 7.9%, while its senior coalition partner lost only 0.4% of its 1994 vote.

The two constituent republics of the old Czechoslovakia present less clear-cut cases. The 1992 elections produced two more or less incompatible party systems, with no party gaining representation in both regions (except various communist successor parties). Whilst the Czech lands returned a predominantly liberal government, the Slovak election favoured parties appealing for national sovereignty and slower economic reform. The latter is perhaps the best illustration of the potential significance of non-economic cleavages. Meciar's re-election in 1992 and 1994 cannot be explained without reference to his role as a founder of independent Slovakia. Though the HzDS' victories technically qualify as anti-incumbency voting because both elections followed a period of non-Meciar government, his domination of Slovak governments makes such an assertion dubious. Nevertheless, the 1992 election was partly as a reaction against Czech pressure for rapid economic transition. Only the former communists and Meciar's party polled double figures.⁵⁸ The parallel to inter-war Slovak voters' rejection of the

⁵⁵ K. Okolicsanyi "The Economic Programs of the Major Hungarian Parties", *RFE Report on Eastern Europe*, 13 April 1990; J. Pataki "New Government Prefers Cautious change", *RFE Report on Eastern Europe*, 13 July 1990; A. Reisch "The Democratic Forum at the Finishing Line", *RFE Report on Eastern Europe*, 6 April 1990.

⁵⁶ J. Fitzmaurice, "The Hungarian Elections of May 1994", *Electoral Studies*, 14:1 (1995), 77-80.

⁵⁷ "The Price of Austerity", *Business Central Europe*, 6:52, June 1998.

⁵⁸ G. Wightman, "The Czechoslovak Parliamentary Elections of 1992", *Electoral Studies* 12:1 (1993), 83-86.

Petka parties (the governing coalition at 'federal' level) is clear. Come 1994, "Slovakia saw the same backlash against the economic reform process as elsewhere in the region," but to the benefit of the HzDS rather than the old left which had "become part of the modernisers coalition."⁵⁹ In addition, the SNS and the HzDS could exploit the ruling coalition's links with the Hungarian minority and the SDL's communist past. Meciar's success thus depended on a combination of ethnic nationalism and anti-communism, while riding on the backlash against economic reform.

The Czech Republic remains the 'odd man out' in terms of 'throwing out the rascals'. In 1996 the ODS managed to recapture most of the votes it won in 1992, but its campaign was "not good enough to increase [its] electoral support above the 30 percent Klaus hoped to receive."⁶⁰ The big winner was the CSSD, campaigning on a platform appealing to "those who have not benefited from Klaus's reforms."⁶¹ The 1996 elections, therefore, demonstrated an anti-incumbency factor in action, again related to the problems associated with the economic transition. But why was it not strong enough to oust Klaus' government? One answer may lie in the government's use of nationalist appeal and invoking 'national myths', though Williams argues that this failed to produce results in 1996.⁶² Moreover, the ODS-led coalition has not been above criticism for its approach the Roma.⁶³ More significantly, deliberate preference shaping played a part. Klaus' government proved less free market-oriented than some of its rhetoric might suggest, as the low unemployment figures in figure 5.3 suggest, and the ODS campaigned explicitly on its economic record.⁶⁴

⁵⁹ J. Fitzmaurice, "The Slovak Election of September 1994", *Electoral Studies*, 14:2 (1994), 203-206, p.206.

⁶⁰ J. Pehe, "Elections Result in Surprise Stalemate", *Transition*, 2:13, 28 June 1996.

⁶¹ J. Pehe, "Elections Result in Surprise Stalemate".

⁶² K. Williams, "National Myths in the New Czech Liberalism", in G. Hosking & G. Schopflin (eds.), *Myths and Nationhood*, (London, Hurst & Company, 1997), p.140.

⁶³ T. Gross "A blot on the conscience - Czech attitudes on citizenship for gypsies come under fire" *Financial Times*, 19 December 1994. The 1992 Czech citizenship law has been subject to criticism from the US Congress and the Council of Europe (CTK, in English, 1314 gmt 22 February 1996 (SWB 24/02/96)). The law was amended in April 1996, easing the alleged restrictions on the Roma (CTK, in English 1000 gmt 26 April 1996 (SWB 27/04/06)).

⁶⁴ J. Pehe, "Czech Elections Result In Stalemate", *OMRI Analytical Briefs*, 1:141, 3 June 1996; S. Kettle, "Czech Election Campaign Officially Starts", *OMRI Analytical Briefs*, 1:112, 1 May 1996.

Figures 5.5 and 5.7 below plot the fortune of the seven coalitions discussed above for which meaningful calculations of losses and gains at the polls are possible (Poland 1993 and 1997, Slovakia 1994, Hungary 1994 and 1998, and the Czech Republic 1996 and 1998), against aggregate indexes of economic performance. In both cases the horizontal axis represents the coalitions' gains or losses in the election. Each of the vertical axes represent an aggregate index of GDP growth, inflation, unemployment and increases in real wages, averaged out over the coalitions' time in office. Both indexes are linked to year-on-year growth in GDP and real wages (in US \$). The first index combines this with *changes* in inflation and unemployment, measures in percentage points (GDP and wage growth increase the index value, inflation and unemployment growth reduce the index). The second index uses *overall levels* of inflation and unemployment rather than increases or decreases.

Though there are too few cases (and the scattering is too great) to draw statistically significant conclusions, the scatter-plot suggests a positive relationship between economic performance and governing coalitions' performance at the polls. The obvious outliers are Hungary 1994 (in the upper left corner in both scatter-plots) and the Czech Republic 1998 (lower right in the 'first index' scatter-plot). In the Hungarian case the strength of the indicators reflects high wage growth in 1991 and 1992, which was offset by a dramatic increase to 13.3% unemployment in 1993 from 3.2% the previous year. The Czech case is complicated by the fact that the former coalition had divided six months before the election, and voters could therefore punish the government without voting for the opposition parties (by casting their vote for the US, the ODS anti-Klaus splinter). Though this evidence is merely indicative, it lends support to the rational choice-based argument that the anti-incumbency trend so clearly evident in East Central Europe is grounded, to a significant extent, in the problems of economic transition.

Figure 5.5 Coalition performance (votes gained/lost in percent) against economic performance in seven East Central European elections (the index is relative, the absolute values are not significant).

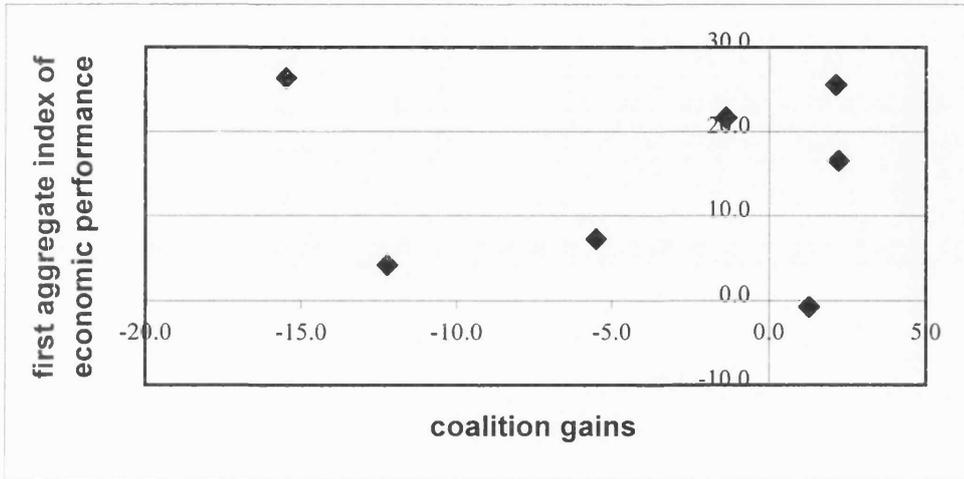
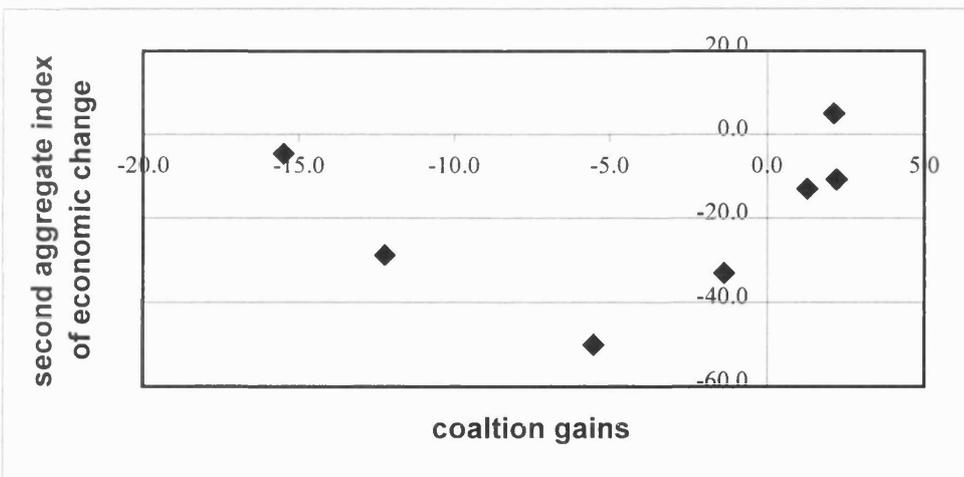


Figure 5.6 Coalition performance (votes gained/lost in percent) against economic performance in seven East Central European elections (the index is relative, the absolute values are not significant).



TOWARDS PARTY IDENTIFICATION? ELECTORAL VOLATILITY IN EAST CENTRAL EUROPE.

The second part of the argument advanced in this chapter concerns the relative weakness of party identification in post-communist East Central Europe compared with early Twentieth Century Western Europe. However, in this case the argument is based as much on special conditions in early Twentieth Century Western Europe as on the conditions of post communism. While the magnitude of the tasks involved in economic transition render East Central Europe somewhat different from late Twentieth Century West European politics, the same is not the case in terms of party identification. The links between the new parties and voters should be as weak in the Italian ‘Second Republic’ as in East Central Europe. In both cases the former communists (reformed or otherwise) enjoy some loyalty inherited from the past, but most new parties started from scratch in terms of voter loyalty. A reliable aggregate guide to volatility has been developed by Bartolini & Mair, and tested on West European data. In table 5.3, below, the relevant aggregate Bartolini & Mair data is compared with volatility in East Central Europe elections. The method of calculation is set out in the appendix, suffice it to note that the index is based on the sum of all absolute gains and losses for all parties, which is then divided by two to yield a 0 –100 scale of volatility. In the case of ambiguities, the calculations have been designed to minimise the figures for East Central Europe and Italy.

Table 5.3 Electoral Volatility

| | | | Volatility | |
|--|-------------|---------------|------------|---------|
| Czech Republic | 1992 – 1996 | (1996 – 1998) | 17.5 | (6.21) |
| Slovakia | 1992 – 1994 | (1994 – 1998) | 19.9 | (19.3) |
| Hungary | 1990 – 1994 | (1994 – 1998) | 21.2 | (22.12) |
| Poland | 1991 – 1993 | (1993 – 1997) | 26.9 | (23.61) |
| Italy | 1992 – 1994 | (1994 – 1996) | 40.8 | (17.8) |
| Western Europe equivalent average 1885 – 1985: | | | | |
| Second elections after first male enfranchising election | | | 11.55 | |
| Same, but including female enfranchisement | | | 11.43 | |

Source: Post-communist and Italian figures calculated by author, see Appendix. West European figures from S. Bartolini, & P. Mair, *Identity, Competition, and Electoral Availability: the Stabilization of European Electorates 1885-1985*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990), p.149.

In the absence of strong links between external organisations and most parties in 1990s East Central Europe and Italy the results cited in table 5.3 are hardly surprising. The relatively high Polish 1993 figure stands out from the rest partly due to the introduction of a 5% barrier between the 1991 and 1993 elections. Counting only parties with more than 5% of the vote as ‘in parliament’ in 1991 would yield the lower figure of 21.2 for Poland 1991 – 1993. In effect, therefore, both Hungary and Poland saw a marginal increase in volatility in 1997/98, while Slovak volatility only decreased marginally. Only Italian and Czech voters *appear* to have moved in the direction of party identification. However, again a cautionary note is necessary. The suggestion that a limited degree of party identification may be developing is based on rational choice analysis that is only partly supported by a limited data set. Surveys conducted in East Central Europe offer some support for the arguments about limited party identification set out above, though they offer a wide range of estimates of party identification.

Table 5.4 Party identification in percent.

| Source (date) | Hungary | Poland | Czech Rep.* | Slovakia* | Austria | BRD |
|----------------------------|---------|--------|-------------|-----------|---------|-----|
| Bruszt/ Simon (1990-91) | 51% | 17% | 53%* | 53%* | na. | na. |
| Plasser/ Ulam (1991) | 25% | 15% | 29%* | 29%* | 58% | 70% |
| Rose (1993-94) | 21% | 15% | 40% | 30% | na. | na. |

*Czechoslovakia treated as one entity by Bruszt & Simon and Plasser & Ulam.

Sources:

- L. Bruszt & J. Simon, *Political Culture, Political and Economic Orientations in Central and Eastern Europe During the Transition to Democracy: The Codebook of the International Survey of 10 Countries*, (Budapest, Institute of Political Science of the Hungarian Academy of sciences, 1992). Data from 1990 – 91, reproduced in J. J. Linz & A. Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe*, (Baltimore, John Hopkins University Press, 1996), p.283.
- F. Plasser & P. Ulam, “Perspektiven der Demokratisierung in Ost-Mitteleuropa: Vorläufige Anmerkungen”, in P. Gerlich, F. Plasser & P. Ulam (eds.), *Regimewechsel: Demokratisierung und politische Kultur in Ost-Mitteleuropa*, (Wien, Bohlau, 1992), p.339. Data based on “Projekt: Demokratie- und Parlamentsverständnis in Ost-Mitteleuropa”, (1991). Austrian data from 1992, FESSEL+GfK.
- R. Rose, “Mobilizing Demobilized Voters in Post-Communist Societies”, *Party Politics*, 1:4 (1996), p.522. Data based on Paul Lazarfeld Society, New Democracies Barometer III, data collected 1993-94.

THE IMPLICATIONS FOR PARTY SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT: THE ONE-TERM RULE AND ITS EXCEPTIONS

The above analysis and data point to two tentative conclusions about the parameters of party system development in East Central Europe. First, cleavages (in the traditional sense) do not form the basis of electoral politics, as a considerable number of voters are on the electoral market and tend to reject their incumbent governments at election time. Sociological constraints on political parties are, therefore, limited. Second, however, the anti-incumbency bias imposes a very different form of constraint on political parties. Party strategy and efforts to defeat the anti-incumbency trend take on great importance, but it becomes near-impossible to attain 'dominant party' status. Parties have not been able to hold on to power long enough. These two factors have combined to generate pressure for parties to compete along two-bloc, government – opposition lines.

The electoral volatility data indicates that post-communist electorates feature a high number of floating voters and open electoral markets. Whilst this is not to say that sociological models of voting are irrelevant, they are overshadowed by the importance of floating voters in the first few post-communist elections. Moreover, the problems associated with the transition from command economies limited any government's prospects for re-election considerably. In the absence of strong links between external organisations and most post-communist parties the low salience of cleavages at the electoral level is hardly surprising, but Fiorina's approach suggests that party identification should currently be developing. In short, the post-communist context provides a poorer basis for cleavage-based party competition than did its earlier West European counterpart. There is considerably more room for party strategy and the party leadership to exert autonomous influence than was the case in West European politics in the aftermath of WW I. The point is not that the rational choice approach explains all post-communist voting patterns, but merely that due to the scope of the electoral space retrospective voting is comparatively significant. While democratisation in Western Europe tended to close or narrow down electoral space, the 1989 wave opened it up. Furthermore, the task of economic transition implied that the governments could not be expected to benefit from a 'feel-good factor'.

Cleavages provide even less of a constraint than was the case in Western Europe, but the post-communist parties face other constraints, of which the anti-incumbency bias is the most significant. Leadership, party strategy and government performance play a considerable role in the development of party systems in the region and the individual parties' prospects, but the other side of the coin is the limits the very same openness of electoral markets impose on parties. The anti-incumbency tendency makes for one-term governments, and alternation in power is the norm in post-communist East Central Europe (as it may well be in post-1992 Italy). Yet one factor strengthens governments against the opposition. Large-scale economic and political reform has provided opportunities for preference shaping, whether in the form of exposing most voters to the benefits of privatisation (in the Czech Republic) or manipulating the rules of the game (Slovakia).

Finally, the anti-incumbency trend has promoted a type of two-bloc adversary politics in East Central Europe, despite the multi-party systems. The governments' economic problems and the prospect of incumbents losing elections rewards bloc-formation along government – opposition lines. The result has been efforts to create and hold together alliances that offer an alternative to the government, as evident in the emergence of the AWS in Poland, the SDK in Slovakia, and pre-election coalition negotiations in Hungary in the run-up to the 1998 elections. However, given the multi-party nature of each bloc, the result has not been simply centripetal. Each bloc, united in opposition to the former incumbent, has experienced considerable disunity in government.

Party systems formation in East Central Europe has taken place under limited constraints. Sociological constraints on party system development have been limited, as cleavages do not tie voters to parties, and party identification is weak compared with West European politics. Though rational choice analysis suggests that party identification will strengthen, the lack of external organisational support indicates that this will be a medium term prospect at best and that party identification is unlikely to reach 1960s West European levels. Parties are, therefore, the main actors on the scene. However, the pattern of alternation in power has constrained their abilities to establish

'dominant democracy', Meciar's and Klaus' efforts notwithstanding. Preference shaping has included not only economic policy, but also institutional manipulation and capitalising on ethnic tension. The prize which alternation provides for successful bloc-building in opposition has placed party strategy in a central position in party system development and 'brought the party back in' as the central actor. This is the subject of the next chapter.

APPENDIX
A NOTE ON CALCULATIONS AND ELECTORAL VOLATILITY

Figures have been calculated as per the index used by Bartolini & Mair, i.e., the sum of all individual party volatilities divided by two.

All parties which gained representation in parliament in either of the two relevant elections have been counted separately, while all parties which did not gain representation in parliament in either of the elections have been counted as one single 'others' party.

The effect of this approach is a reduction in the index of volatility. As the point here is to illustrate the high level of volatility in post-communist East Central Europe compared with Bartolini & Mair's West European data, the method which produces the *lower* estimate for East Central Europe has been used. Hence there should be no danger of exaggerating the differences between the two levels. As the point is to illustrate the greater volatility under post-communism, this approach has been chosen so as to err on the side of caution. However, the effect is rather limited. For example, in the Slovak case, counting all the parties on the ballot rather than using the above approach would yield an increase in the index of 0.83 points, from 19.87 to 20.70.

Where a party has split or two parties have merged they are counted as one single party, pace Bartolini & Mair. For example, the MDF vote in 1990 is compared to the combined MDF and MIEP vote in 1994. Again the effect is to reduce the indicated overall level of volatility.

The divisions and mergers counted for the purpose of the calculations used in table 5.3 are as follows.

Poland:

1993: PC (Centre Alliance) + Coalition for the Republic = PC in 1991

1993: UP (Union of Labour) = Labour Solidarity in 1991

1993: KLD = KLD + PPPP

1997: UW = KLD + UD

1997: AWS = Solidarity + PC + ZChN + BBWR + KPN

Hungary

1994: MDF (Hungarian Democratic Forum) + MIEP (Csurka's Hungarian Life and Justice Party) = MDF in 1990

1994: FKgP (Independent Smallholders Party) + United Smallholders Party = FKgP in 1990

1998: Fidesz + KDNP = Fidesz + KDNP (counted as a single bloc, liberal wing of KDNP joined Fidesz).

Czech Republic:

1996: KSCM (Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia) + LB (Left Block) + SDL = LB in 1992

1996: SD-LSNS = OH + LSU (Liberal and Social Union) in 1992

1996: HSMSMNSJ + MNS-HSMF = MSD-SMS in 1992

1998: US + ODS = ODS + ODA in 1996 (US broke away from ODS, ODA told voters to vote for ODS)

Slovakia:

1994: SV = SDL in 1992

1994 MK (Hungarian Coalition) = Egyutteles in 1992

1998 SDK = KDH + DU in 1994

A similar set of calculations by Rose is set out below for comparison.⁶⁵ The figures are considerably higher, as Rose employs neither of the two rules set out above to avoid exaggerated levels of volatility. Rose's figures are the sum of all volatilities for parties securing more than one percent, not divided by two. The index thus runs from 0 - 200, rather than the 0 - 100 index used above.

Post-communist systems Rose's 0 - 200 index. Divided by 2 (1 - 100 index).

| | | | |
|-------------|---------|-----|------|
| Czech Lands | 1990-92 | 178 | 89 |
| Slovakia | 1990-92 | 160 | 80 |
| Slovakia | 1992-94 | 59 | 29.5 |
| Poland | 1991-93 | 63 | 31.5 |
| Hungary | 1990-94 | 59 | 29.5 |

Post-war West European politics

| | | | |
|----------|---------|----|------|
| Greece | 1977-7 | 59 | 29.5 |
| FRG | 1949-53 | 52 | 26 |
| Italy | 1946-48 | 46 | 23 |
| Portugal | 1975-76 | 25 | 12.5 |
| Spain | 1977-79 | 25 | 12.5 |
| Austria | 1945-49 | 24 | 12 |

Though the index is some 25-30% higher due to the method of calculation and rules applied, the conclusions are more or less the same. Post-communist elections demonstrate considerably higher volatility than their West European counterparts.

⁶⁵ R. Rose, "Mobilizing Demobilized Voters in Post-Communist Societies", *Party Politics*, 1:4 (1996), 549-563, p.556.

CHAPTER SIX

DOES PARTY ORGANISATION MATTER?

“Le Parti C’est Moi!”

– Robert Michels, *Political Parties*, 1915

Party organisation remains an under-researched topic in East Central European politics, at least at a comparative level, even if some country studies have been carried out.¹ Though some theories have been put forward concerning the relationship between party organisation and political competition in West European politics, the field remains relatively unexplored.² The catch-all thesis dominated the West European politics writing on the subject until it was supplemented by Katz & Mair’s cartel party thesis, which rejuvenated the debate on the development and decline of parties.³ While the mass party represented a link between voters and government, the implication of the shift towards catch-all parties is a change in this relationship towards parties that represent the state to civil society and act as a cartel. The developments and changes in party organisation are seen as dynamic, as a party may respond to electoral defeat by changing not only its ideology, programme, strategy, tactics or leaders, but also its organisation. With the transition to democracy in East Central Europe, the emergence of parties with weak organisational structures raises new questions about the relationship

¹ P. Kopecky, “Developing Party Organisations in East Central Europe”, *Party Politics*, 1:4 (1995), 515-534; R. Gilespie, M. Waller & L. L. Nieto (eds.), *Factional Politics and Democratisation*, (London, Frank Cass, 1995); P. G. Lewis (ed.), *Party Structure and Organisation in East Central Europe*, (Cheltenham, Edward Elgar, 1996).

² The two prominent exceptions are A. Panebianco, *Modelli di partito: Organizzazione e potere nei partiti politici*, (Bologna, Il Mulino, 1982), translated as A. Panebianco, *Political Parties: Organisation and Power*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1988); and R. S. Katz & P. Mair (eds.), *How Parties Organise: Change and Adaptation in Party Organizations in Western Democracies*, (London, Sage, 1994). The topic is also dealt with in three classics: O. Kirchheimer, “The Transformation of West European Party Systems”, in J. LaPalombara & M. Weiner (eds.), *Political Parties and Political Development*, (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1966); M. Duverger, *Political Parties*, (London, Methuen, 1954); L.D. Epstein, *Political Parties in Western Democracies*, (London, Pall Mall, 1967).

³ R. Katz & P. Mair “Changing Models of Party Organisation and Party Democracy: The Emergence of the Cartel Party”, *Party Politics*, 1:1 (1995), 5-28. Panebianco saw the electoral-professional (catch-all) party heralding a decline of parties in favour of, e.g., interest groups, *Political Parties: Organisation and Power*.

between party organisation and party systems. The same holds for the Italian 'Second Republic'. The new parties in Italy and East Central Europe indicate that parties can opt for either a potentially rewarding but vulnerable 'weak' structure or attempt to rely on a more traditional mass base. Of course there are limits to the extent that either option is open to post-communist parties. Party organisation is the product of exogenous factors as well as strategic choice. It represents a strategic choice, made under constraints imposed by the limits to party – voter links discussed in the preceding chapter.

The political parties of post-communist East Central Europe are bound to have more in common with new parties in Western Europe, be they post-authoritarian parties in Greece, Spain or Portugal or new parties in established West European states, than with early Twentieth Century parties. The 'normal' path from mass party to catch-all party was by and large closed to the parties East Central European parties.

[One possible lead from Western Europe] is the emergence of so-called 'catch-all' parties, ones which in being ideologically bland are able to win support from all sections [of] the electorate; these 'people's parties', pragmatic and moderate, can achieve a dominant position, and they are kept on a moderate course through the compromises they have to make to keep the party and its support intact. This possibility for Eastern Europe is attractive, since – it may be assumed – the 'unstructured' electorate will have no fixed political commitments, and there is no real basis for, say, strong class-based cleavages. The problem in applying this model is that it requires making an 'evolutionary leap', leaving out the fact that the catch-all parties developed from the pre-existing parties and still embodied their traditions.⁴

Though the post-communist parties may share some attributes with the catch-all or cartel parties of West European politics, they start from a different, unstructured, basis. Only former communist or satellite parties had a mass-membership from which to 'de-align'. As for the rest, one analyst suggests that "parties in east central European countries are likely to develop as *formations with loose electoral constituencies, in which a relatively unimportant role is played by the party membership, and the dominant role by the party leaders.*"⁵ This suggestion is grounded in supply- as well as demand-side politics. Popular aversion to joining parties (a hang-over from communism) and the diffuse links between parties and collective interests means that

⁴ G. Smith, "Transitions to Liberal Democracy", in S. Whitefield (ed.), *The New Institutional Architecture of Eastern Europe*, (Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1993), p.9.

⁵ Kopecky, "Developing Party Organisations in East Central Europe", p.517, emphasis in original.

there is limited demand for membership of political parties. Conversely, parties do not require mass membership for financial viability, and a large active membership represents a potential danger in terms of intra-party conflicts or challenges. Of course, based on this analysis, much the same could be said about the parties of the Italian 'Second Republic' and post-authoritarian Spain and Greece.

Even if it were a feasible option, the mass party would not necessarily be a desirable strategy. For most parties in post-communist East Central Europe it was neither. The limited link between organised interests, voters and parties means that the mass party model might well not be a feasible option and that similarities with catch-all parties may be deceptive. However, mass membership may also be counter-productive, because party activists limit the leadership's flexibility.⁶ The advantages of the mass party emphasised by Duverger turned out to be temporary, linked to a historical period in which large electorates, labour intensive campaigns and supportive mass organisations made the mass party a superior machine for mobilising voters. These factors were "destined by definition not to last".⁷ Moves towards increased public financing of parties and the use of mass media-based campaign techniques rendered the mass party less appropriate to West European politics.⁸ This was not limited to the parties that developed from mass towards the catch-all or cartel type, if anything it applies even more to new parties, e.g., in democratic Spain.⁹ This prompted Montero Gibert to suggest that the parties might "transform into institutions of the state rather than society."¹⁰ The Greek post-junta experience also illustrates the difficulty of establishing

⁶ Kopecky, "Developing Party Organisations in East Central Europe", p.519-520. See also S. Bartolini, "The Membership of Mass Parties: The Social Democratic Experience, 1889-1978", in H. Daalder & P. Mair (eds.), *Western European Party Systems: Continuity and Change*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1983), p. 206-211; G. Tsebelis, *Nested Games: Rational Choice in Comparative Politics*, (Berkeley, California University Press, 1990).

⁷ A. Pizzorno, "The Individualistic Mobilization of Europe", in S. R. Graubard (ed.), *A New Europe: A Timely Appraisal*, (Boston, Beacon Press, 1964), cited in Bartolini, "The Membership of Mass Parties", p.213.

⁸ Bartolini, "The Membership of Mass Parties", p. 209-210.

⁹ M. Caciagli, "Spain: Parties and the Party System in Transition", in G. Pridham (ed.), *The New Mediterranean Democracies: Regime Transition in Spain, Greece and Portugal*, (London, Frank Cass, 1984), p.88-91.

¹⁰ J. R. Montero Gibert, "Partidos y participacion politica: algunas notas sobre la afiliacion politica en la etapa inicial de la transicion espanola", *Revista de Estudios Politicos*, 23 (1981), 33-72, p.72 (my translation).

new mass parties, as New Democracy and PASOK tried to develop mass parties rather than focus on clientelism and charisma, but had very limited success.¹¹

Both exogenous and endogenous factors have therefore contributed to the emergence of party systems that are very much dominated by the parties, or rather by the party leadership. Though party organisation may be approached from a rational choice perspective, focusing on maximising votes, influence on policy or survival of the party, organisational choice is still constrained by the conditions facing the party. Unless the party has a clearly defined constituency or a set of 'core voters', focus on mass membership may not be an option. The professional party with limited membership therefore represents a rational strategy for party organisation. Like the cartel parties, new parties tend to feature a greater degree of leadership domination within the party, and more focus on the 'party in central office' and the 'party in public office' (as opposed to the 'party on the ground') than was the case with the mass parties.

PARTY ORGANISATION AND CHANGE IN WEST EUROPEAN POLITICS: A COMPARATIVE POLITICS PERSPECTIVE

Despite the limited relevance of the mass party model, there is a case for considering the nature of party organisation and party system change in the light of West European experience and theory. On West European party organisation, Mair concludes that, "[l]ike previous party types, the cartel party implies a particular conception of democracy; moreover, also like previous party types, it stimulates further reactions and sows the seeds for yet further evolution."¹² The same is no doubt true as far as the new East Central European parties are concerned, there is little or no reason to suspect that the development of these parties will be any less dynamic than that of their Western brethren. Patterns of party organisation change and adaptation in West European politics should thus prove relevant to East Central Europe, and developments in post-communist

¹¹ C. Lyrantzis, "Political Parties in Post-Junta Greece: A Case of 'Bureaucratic Clientelism?', *West European Politics*, 7:2 (1984), 99-118.

¹² P. Mair, *Party System Change: Approaches and Interpretations*, (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1997), p.74.

politics may throw some light back on contemporary West European parties.

Before considering the development of West European party organisation, it is worth noting that the catch-all and cartel theses do not apply to all parties across the board. As Katz & Mair point out, *new* West European parties do not conform to their model. The anti-system (or rather anti-cartel) parties that have appeared since the mid-sixties do not share the mass party's concern with membership, but tend to feature smaller membership and more professional activists. Despite their lack of participation in the *cartels* (i.e., government/office), these parties have a lot in common with the cartel party ideal-type in terms of *organisation*. The Scandinavian protest parties, the Progress Parties in Norway (FrP) and Denmark (Z) and New Democracy in Sweden (NyD), provide the clearest examples. These parties combine anti-system politics and neo-liberal economics to form 'new populist' parties, which "may well represent an emergent new party family".¹³ The Italian 'Second Republic' and post-junta Greece provide more complicated examples, which are approaching the cartel-type from a different route than the catch-all parties. *Forza Italia's* local organisation was modelled on AC Milan's (football) supporters' clubs and the party is run largely by professional staff drafted from industry (including Berlusconi's marketing agency, *Pubitalia*).¹⁴ Despite efforts to create mass bases, New Democracy and Pasok have been dominated by the central leadership and charismatic leaders, a far cry from Duverger's mass party.¹⁵ These parties are top-heavy with very limited party organisation 'on the ground', and FI only transformed itself into a party officially at the 1998 conference.

A second set of parties refused to follow the catch-all path altogether, focusing on a limited section of the electorate and defence of its specific and readily identifiable interest. Not all parties emphasise strategic goals over value goals. "[A] party may be reluctant to increase its support through a loosely tied and possibly quite uncommitted

¹³ P. Taggart, "New Populist Parties in Western Europe", *West European Politics*, 18:1 (1995), 34-51, p.47.

¹⁴ M. Donovan, "The 1994 Election in Italy: Normalisation or Continuing Exceptionalism?", *West European Politics*, 17:4 (1994), 193-201.

¹⁵ M. Spourdalakis, "Securing Democracy in Post-Authoritarian Greece: The Role of Political Parties", in G. Pridham & P.G. Lewis (eds.), *Stabilising Fragile Democracies: Comparing New Party Systems in Southern and Eastern Europe*, (London, Routledge, 1996).

electoral base, and so may prefer the relative security involved in sticking to its traditional, albeit more numerically restricted, partisan base.”¹⁶ Agrarian and Lutheran parties like the Norwegian Sp and KrF or Sweden’s Centre party (C) and KDS more or less rejected the catch-all approach, or at least maintained their secure base, capitalising on tension related to questions such as EC membership. Although they may nevertheless take part in the ‘cartel’, this is done largely as representatives of specific minority interests. At least this held until 1997, when the Norwegian KrF (and FrP) challenged the Conservatives’ (H) status as the country’s second largest party. The same holds for a number of parties representing ethnic minorities. The Swedish People’s Party and the (German) Suedtiroil Union have limited appeal to most of their respective Finnish and Italian electorates.

THE FOUR STAGE MODEL: CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN PARTY ORGANISATION

A four-stage model of party organisation can be extrapolated from the comparative West European politics literature, beginning with the emergence of mass parties backed by non-parliamentary organisations. The first three stages of this model have dominated much of the literature on party systems, and the fourth stage has been proposed by Katz & Mair.¹⁷ Towards the end of the nineteenth century the emerging mass parties of the left challenged the dominant elite-based parties, setting out to provide an explicit link between their supporters and the state.¹⁸ These ‘wing parties’ of the left, backed by organised trade union support, set the scene for inter-war party competition. Though the original structures of party organisation may have been driven by circumstances, e.g., gradual franchise extension in England after 1832, strategic decisions like the Independent Labour Party’s break with the Liberals in 1892 shaped the development of the party system.¹⁹ Further developments in party organisation after the full extension of

¹⁶ K. Dittrich, “Testing the Catch-All Thesis: Some Difficulties and Possibilities”, in Daalder & Mair (eds.), *Western European Party Systems*, p.266.

¹⁷ Katz & Mair “Changing Models of Party Organisation...”.

¹⁸ Parties’ changing role as links between state and society is emphasised particularly in Katz & Mair, “Changing Models of Party Organisation...”; and T. Mackie, “Parties and Elections”, in J. Hayward & E. C. Page (eds.), *Governing the New Europe*, (Cambridge, Polity Press, 1995).

¹⁹ M. Ostrogorski, *Democracy and the Organization of Political Parties*, Vol. I, (New York, The Macmillan Company, 1902).

the franchise were more internal to the party system. First the ideological mass party and later the de-ideologised catch-all party were hailed as the organisationally superior form, giving a party a considerable advantage over its opponents.²⁰ Kirchheimer argues that once one major party has adopted the catch-all strategy, there is little its major opponent can do but choose a similar approach.²¹ Panebianco disagrees, relating party change primarily to organisational structure and power rather than goal-oriented parties, though he concedes that 'environmental' factors, such as electoral defeat, can prompt organisational change.²² In either case, parties' organisational adaptation and change represent a rational strategy. The goal need not be office-seeking or vote maximisation, it can include organisational survival by way of keeping challengers out of the party system. Panebianco presents this as an organisational dilemma: pursuit of a single rational (policy) goal or responding and adapting to outside pressure.²³ Przeworski & Sprague's dilemma for socialist parties is similar: short-term vote maximisation versus long term efforts to shape the preferences of the electorate.²⁴

The *first stage* is the period running up to and including the emergence of mass parties, during the period leading up to the adoption of universal male franchise. The established elite parties were challenged by emerging mass parties of the left, backed by extra-parliamentary labour organisations. The shift from cadre parties to mass parties entailed a shift from political competition characterised by theoretical pursuit of the common interest to politics based on the collective interest of different social groups.²⁵ This required consciousness of collective interest, and its organisation into trade unions, but also that the unions be prepared to support socialist political parties.²⁶ The organisational development of the old right from loosely organised 'parties of notables' to mass/catch-all parties only came with franchise extension and the challenge from

²⁰ On the 'wing-parties': Duverger, *Political Parties*, and Epstein, *Political Parties in Western Democracies*; on the catch-all party: Kirchheimer, "The Transformation of West European Party Systems".

²¹ Kirchheimer, "The Transformation of West European Party Systems".

²² Panebianco, *Political Parties*, p.207-214.

²³ Panebianco, *Political Parties*, p.6-9.

²⁴ A. Przeworski & D. Sprague, *Paper Stones: A History of Electoral Socialism*, (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1986).

²⁵ Mair, *Party System Change*, p.98.

²⁶ Epstein, *Political Parties in Western Democracies*, Chapter Six.

wing parties of the left (including, in Britain, the Liberal left).²⁷ “The advent of externally created mass parties tends toward a radicalization and intensification of the competitive process,” and political survival dictated a “snowballing effect in party organisation.”²⁸

Panbianco rejects the goal-oriented basis of this approach, focusing instead on internal developments and the genesis of parties. Party organisation depends on *genetic aspects*, i.e., how the parties originally developed. First, ‘territorial penetration’/‘diffusion’ relates to whether the party is the product of an alliance of regional groups or a centralised organisation penetrating the periphery. Second, the presence or absence of an extra-parliamentary sponsoring organisation affects the future development of a party. So does the third factor, the role of charismatic leaders. Combined these factors affect the extent to which parties develop into strong or weak institutions (*institutional aspect*). In this context strongly institutionalised parties control their external environment, while weakly institutional parties are not in a position to do this. Institutionalisation is measured in terms of the party’s “autonomy *vis-a-vis* its environment” and “its degree of *systemness*”.²⁹ Other aspects of institutionalisation include a developed central extra-parliamentary organisation (the central office), homogeneity of organisational structures, plurality of sources of finance and correspondence between actual and statutory power structures within the party. The degree of institutionalisation is linked to the first two genetic aspects, yielding four types of parties:

Table 6.1

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| Type Examples Genetic factors Institutionalisation | Type 1 Communist parties: PCF, PCI Penetration + external legitimation Strong | Type 2 UK Labour, SFIO, PSI Diffusion + external legitimation Weak |
| Type Examples Genetic factors Institutionalisation | Type 3 Centralised: UK Conservatives Penetration + internal legitimation Strong | Type 4 Federations: CDU Diffusion + internal legitimation Weak, with a dominant coalition |

²⁷ Ostrogorski, *Democracy and the Organization of Political Parties*; Epstein, *Political Parties in Western Democracies*, Chapter Five; R. Dahl (ed.), *Political Oppositions in Western Democracies*, (Yale, Yale University Press, 1966).

²⁸ J. LaPalombara & M. Weiner, “The Origin and Development of Political Parties”, in LaPalombara & Weiner (eds.), *Political Parties and Political Development*, p.27.

²⁹ Panbianco, *Political Parties*, p.55.

The role of charisma is more problematic, leading to a possible fifth type of party. Here institutionalisation is associated with a shift of loyalty from the leader to the party, or 'objectivisation of charisma' as in the case of the Gaullist right in France. Though charisma inhibits institutionalisation through focus on personality, it is also associated with highly centralised parties. This produces a hybrid case, of low 'systemness' but high autonomy and central control. The point is not that parties do not respond to changes in the environment (they do), but rather that their degree of institutionalisation affects their responsiveness to exogenous stimuli. This approach has three advantages for analysis of East Central Europe. First, it provides a framework for categorising parties, and one that can (ostensibly) be linked to their flexibility and responsiveness to change. Second, it raises the question of the role of charismatic leaders. Third, it draws attention to the organisational difference between new European parties (West and East Central) and the old established West European parties.

The *second stage* followed the adoption of full franchise, and featured the development of mass parties of the right during the inter-war and immediate post-war period. This stage was dominated by the older parties' need to respond to the growth of the mass parties of the left. The response came by way of efforts to transcend ideological and class bases of parties, i.e., a strategy based on developing a cleavage-based party into a less ideological mass organisation. Hence the catch-all party, which came in the form of conservative and Christian democrat parties. Though it still plays the role of a link between voters and the state, the catch-all party is an *independent* link rather than a representative of its electorate to the state. Though it may adopt many of the trappings of the mass party, its parliamentary party is considerably more independent. The mass base (party on the ground) becomes mainly an organisation supporting the parliamentary party (party in public office).

In the same vein, the *third stage*, catch-all contagion, saw mass parties' attempts to cope with the competition provided by their catch-all opponents. "Conversion to catch-all parties constitutes a competitive phenomenon. A party is apt to accommodate to its competitor's successful style because of hope of benefits or fear of losses on election

day.”³⁰ Again the pace was set by the Germans, as the SPD adopted the Bad Godesberg programme abandoning Marxism in 1959, while the British and Dutch Labour parties shifted to the left before adopting a more catch-all oriented strategy.³¹ Other possible factors contributing to this development include the fact that the ‘big battles’ of welfare state and class were resolved, electoral de-alignment, new issues, and technological change driving new campaign styles.³² For Panebianco the shift from ‘bureaucratic-mass party’ to ‘electoral-professional’ parties is a matter of *de-institutionalisation*, which threatens the role of political parties in West European politics – ‘the crisis of parties’.³³

Katz & Mair provide the *fourth stage*, which offers an alternative to the ‘crisis of party’ thesis. As membership is stabilised and electoral campaigns have come to rely increasingly on the media rather than mass membership, the main parties in West European politics have developed into more professional organisations. The process started by, and identified with, the catch-all parties thus continues. The parties become dependent on the state rather than their membership for resources, including finance and access to media. The links between voters and parties are loosened, the parties developing into representatives of the state rather than independent links between society and the state.³⁴ Like the other stages, however, this is not necessarily a stable stage, and Katz & Mair point to challenges from new parties.³⁵ The cartel party is the product of a dynamic development, the search for more efficient organisations in the battle for votes. Like Kirchheimer’s catch-all party the cartel party is a party which has opted for a strategy that plays down the significance of ideology and cleavages.

³⁰ Kirchheimer, “The Transformation of West European Party Systems”, p.188.

³¹ PvdA moved leftwards after the 1967 election (but returned in the 1970s), Labour after its 1979 defeat. By the 1990s both can be described as catch-all or cartel parties, having adopted some of the most free market agendas of West European social democrat parties. On Dutch data: K. Dittrich, “The Netherlands 1946-1981”, in I. Budge, D. Robertson & D. Hearl (eds.), *Ideology, Strategy and Party Change: Spatial Analyses of Post-War Election Programmes in 19 Democracies*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1987).

³² Respectively: Mair, *Party System Change*, Chapters Two and Five; R. Rose & D. Urwin, “Persistence and Change in Western Party Systems since 1945”, *Political Studies*, 18:3 (1970), 287-319; R. Inglehart, *The Silent Revolution: Changing Values and Political Styles Among Western Publics*, (Princeton University Press, 1977); and Panebianco, *Political Parties*.

³³ Panebianco, *Political Parties*, p.269.

³⁴ Katz & Mair “Changing Models of Party Organisation...”.

³⁵ Katz & Mair, “Changing Models of Party Organisation...”.

However, the challenge which faced politicians in East Central Europe, the new Mediterranean democracies in the 1970s and Italy in the early 1990s was how to build a *new* party, not how to change a party in response to electoral success or failure. This is not a matter of responding to or anticipating cleavages' declining salience, but rather a matter of attempting to build new parties without the benefit of cleavages or a previous mass base. Most South and East Central European parties therefore circumvented this multi-step development, reaching straight for the 'un-aligned' stage. Their 'catch-all' type status (in organisational terms) is the product of 'new populism' rather than de-alignment. While the West European catch-all parties were associated with de-alignment, the conglomerate parties of East Central Europe in 1989-90 drew on un-aligned electorates. Likewise, the new Mediterranean parties in the 1970s were not the products of a gradual process of de-alignment, but rather of the extent to which old alignments could be invoked. The question was whether this was possible, and the degree of stability that could be expected.³⁶ The parties that emerged from the conglomerate movements by and large followed the same pattern, developing around the leadership and central office rather than external mass organisations or social cleavages.

FOUR IDEAL TYPES OF PARTY ORGANISATION

The West European politics four-stage model and its exceptions suggest a possible four-fold typology of East Central European, and new West European, parties. Parties that have arrived on the scene since the 1960's have by and large fallen into Panebianco's third category (territorial penetration and internal legitimation) or been 'charismatic parties'. Bearing in mind that some interest-based parties that have preserved a regional or sectional basis, four 'ideal-type' parties are suggested for East Central European politics and late Twentieth Century West European politics. Given the importance of party strategy as the driver of party change in Western Europe, this schema is based only partly on origin and background and partly on the aims and aspiration of the new parties.

³⁶ A point made by G. Smith as early as 1991. "Transitions to Liberal Democracy", was delivered as a lecture at the School of Slavonic and East European Studies, University of London, spring 1991. Similar

- *Former mass party* (reform-communist). Some parties feature a mass-base dating from the previous regime, even if this may be reduced by defections. This provides a basis for transformation to catch-all and/or cartel status, at least over time. Though the party could have roots of any of the four types in table 6.1, type 1 featuring external legitimation (USSR, military) and penetration has been most common. Charisma is another possible basis for such parties.
- *Interest based and historical parties*. Parties based on minority interests have been common to East Central European politics, mainly in the form of agrarian parties and ethnic minorities. Both include considerable potential for populist appeal, but target a specific section of the electorate. Inasmuch as historical parties attempt to recapture their old bases these should probably be included here.
- *New cartel parties* (born in government). Several of the new East Central European parties were formed as successors to a governing conglomerate party (Solidarity, OF, VPN). Smith's 'evolutionary leap' appears to have been facilitated by their role as governing parties, and was not so much straight to catch-all as straight to cartel. The big question is, of course, the extent to which they actually form a cartel. Though they may be organised like 'cartel parties', party competition has been less cartel-like (this is the subject of Chapter Eight).
- *New populist parties* (protest). This term is borrowed from Taggart, who uses it to distinguish between neo-fascist parties and new populist parties that rely on anti-system appeals.³⁷ These are "characterised by strongly centralised structures with charismatic and personalised leadership". If the West European protest parties rally against the post-war welfare state consensus, their East Central European counterparts have inherited opposition to the 'Western' or 'cosmopolitan' ('un-Ruritanian') free market from their inter-war 'old populist' predecessors. However, the term covers a wider set of parties, including HzDS and *Forza Italia*, parties that

questions were asked in the context of the Spanish transition, Caciagli, "Spain: Parties and the Party System in Transition".

³⁷ Taggart lists 12 new populist parties, with a mean best result of 7.4%, and 12 neo-fascist parties (mean 2.2%), "New Populist Parties in Western Europe", p.45.

combine populism and protests (against the Czech-dominated government and the old corrupt regime respectively) with spells in office.

It is tempting to add a fifth group, or type, particularly in the light of the ‘electoral parties’ in Poland.³⁸ However, the SLD and WAK are/were dominated by the SdRP and the ZChN respectively, and though the BBWR was a special case it hardly merits a new category. Better to recognise that not all parties fall neatly into the ‘ideal types’. The BBWR featured a ‘charismatic’ element inasmuch as it was set up to support Walesa, and included a ‘new populist’ appeal against the UW liberal right (i.e., ‘protest’) despite being set up to support the incumbent. It therefore mixes elements of at least two ‘ideal types’, and whether it originally leant towards ‘new populism’ or aspired to ‘government party’ status, it is indisputably leadership dominated. Something similar holds for the AWS, the broad electoral alliance designed to oust the SLD – PSL government, though without the same charismatic element.

POST-COMMUNIST PARTY ORGANISATION AND STRUCTURE:

FOUR IDEAL TYPES

The problem facing the new parties in the Mediterranean and East Central European states was that there is precious little material from which to build the new party organisations. Only the former communist parties (or their satellites) could opt for something like a multi-step catch-all approach, and given the negative connotations of ‘socialism’ and the ‘left’ these parties were severely handicapped in 1989-90. Other parties had three options: i) attempt to build a mass base, ii) opt for the ‘catch-all’ or ‘cartel’ strategy without the benefit of a former mass base, iii) or pursue the ‘new populist’ strategy of the West European ‘new parties’. All strategies were attempted, some with more success than others.

³⁸ S. Gebethner, “Parliamentary and Electoral Parties in Poland”, in Lewis (ed.), *Party Structure and Organisation in East Central Europe*.

Prima facie, an application of Panebianco's schema would suggest strong institutionalisation in East Central Europe, because most parties feature territorial penetration and very limited support from external organisations. Only charismatic leadership could limit this, and Panebianco argues that it can be associated with strong as well as weak institutionalisation. It is tempting, therefore, to suggest that the post-communist parties' institutional weakness can be explained by the role of charismatic leaders and/or the strength of external supporting organisations. The weak institutionalisation of the post-Solidarity parties can thus be explained by "the historical legacy of Solidarity and the unique role it played as an established social movement."³⁹ The problem is that Solidarity was anything but a trade union in the classic sense, but rather an opposition movement playing a role comparable to that of Civic Forum/VPN in Czechoslovakia. The fact that the Solidarity Trade Union organised separately and contested 1991 and 1993 elections merely reinforces the point: the Solidarity 'old opposition' disintegrated, it did not represent an external force directing the post-Solidarity parties or the Mazowiecki government. An amorphous movement throughout the 1980s, Solidarity fragmented into more than thirty parties. The reliance on social unity as part of its political strategy against communism gave it an 'anti-party legacy' that made it a poor basis for party organisation (though it was but useful vehicle for endorsing candidates in local elections).⁴⁰ Though the PC made an effort to use its electoral machinery (the Civic Committees) in the 1991 election, it split and disintegrated after Olszewski left to form the RdR the next year.⁴¹ Even the trade union's parliamentary deputies disavowed politics in favour of focusing on workers rights, and the local Solidarity networks' disparate reactions to its no confidence motion against Suchocka illustrated the extent to which the social movement had fragmented.⁴²

Panebianco's schema is primarily a comparison of West European mass parties, and it is far more difficult to apply to East Central or new West European parties. Even as far as

³⁹ P. G. Lewis, "Democratization and Party Development in Eastern Europe", *Party Politics*, 1:3 (1994), 391-405, p.401.

⁴⁰ P. G. Lewis, "Political Institutionalisation and Party Development in Post-Communist Poland", *Europe-Asia Studies*, 46:5 (1994), 779-799; M. Marody, "Three Stages of Party System Emergence in Poland", *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, 28:2, 263-270.

⁴¹ K. Jasiewicz, "Polish Politics on the eve of the 1993 Elections: Toward Fragmentation or Pluralism?", *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, 26:4 (1993), 387-411.

⁴² L. Vinton, "Walesa Applies Political Shock Therapy", RFE/RL Research Report, 2:24 (11 June 1993).

the West European mass parties are concerned the suggestion that de-institutionalisation heralded a 'crisis of parties' is dubious. With hindsight, the transition from mass to catch-all or cartel parties has hardly led to a decline of parties in general, or even to 'de-institutionalisation'.⁴³ The notion of institutionalisation should be de-coupled from the mass party since there is no clear link between mass-membership and institutionalisation. Parties that are 'weak' in terms of the development of a mass base or the 'party on the ground' may still be strong in terms of centralisation and control over the environment. Nevertheless, Panebianco's argument suggests that more than one path is open to post-communist parties, and draws attention to the potential role of charismatic leaders and the importance of strategic decisions about party organisation. Four strategies correspond to the four ideal-types above.

First, the reform communist strategy appears to have paid off inasmuch as the reformed socialist parties came to power in Poland and Hungary in 1993 and 1994, and in Italy in 1996. Though the previous chapter concluded that this should be interpreted in terms of anti-incumbency voting rather than a resurgence of the left, the ex-regime parties enjoyed some advantages despite their association with the former regimes. They inherited property, resources and mass membership (even if it contracted severely), as well as experience and established party structures. There are clear parallels between the resilience of the parties of the left in East Central Europe and the success of their Italian counterpart (PDS) in the 1995 regional and the 1996 national elections. At the time, the Italian press put this down to the PDS' advantage in retaining strong regional organisations.

A second strategy involves attempting to build a mass base by way of setting up parties based on historical cleavages. While West European Christian Democratic parties mobilised around a religious catch-all strategy, several of their East Central European counterparts tried to do very much the same, substituting (ethnic) nationalism for religion. A variation on this theme can be found in the peasant parties, combining a cleavage base with populist appeal (this includes the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia, as Czech agriculture was 'industrialised' under communism). West European

⁴³ Katz & Mair, "Changing Models of Party Organisation...".

agrarian parties' experience indicates that this secure basis can be defended. However, the Greek parties illustrate the possible problems of creating *new* mass parties.

Third, the conglomerate parties' successors in Poland and Czechoslovakia attempted Smith's evolutionary leap, opting for catch-all status without previous alignment (other than broad opposition to communism). The 'liberal' parties rejected appeal based on cleavages, choosing to focus on the 'return to Europe' and introduction of a free market economy. To the extent that these parties rejected organisation and mobilisation based on social cleavages they resemble West European cartel parties more than anything else. It is perhaps no accident that these parties developed as the government parties, and that their fortunes were inextricably linked to their governments' performance.⁴⁴ The similarity to the new Spanish parties' strategy suggests that this is a category of 'new parties' which should be added to West European party organisations. They may reach 'cartel' status, but by a new route.

A final option follows the path marked out by West European 'new populist' parties, organised around the twin principles of populism and 'new politics'.⁴⁵ This combines a broad anti-elite appeal to *the people* (or rather the nation) and rejection of mainstream left – right competition. Though the 'third way' between socialism and capitalism might be lost (or revealed as a fraud), 'new populism' suggests a 'superior way' based on national consensus.⁴⁶ The potential danger of the 'new populist' strategy lies in the burden of government. It is considerably easier to criticise a government than to run one, and until 1994 no West European 'new populist' party had been involved in running a government.⁴⁷ Berlusconi's eight months in power illustrated the point, the coalition disintegrated and lost the subsequent elections (regional in 1995 and national in 1996).

⁴⁴ This explains the difficulties faced by the liberal parties in Poland compared with the Czech Republic. See previous chapter.

⁴⁵ Taggart, "New Populist Parties in Western Europe".

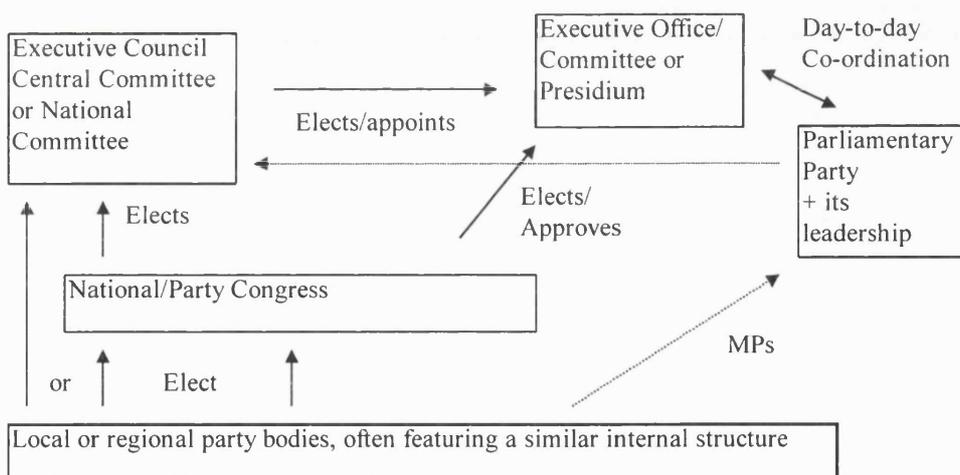
⁴⁶ Not to be confused with Blair's 'Third Way' that combines pragmatic elements of centre-left and centre-right ideology for Britain's New Labour.

⁴⁷ Fianna Fail could arguably be counted as a 'new populist', or at least a populist, party. If so, it is the only one in Western Europe to consolidate its governing position. Given its nationalist approach to state-building, this may hold a valuable lesson for Meciar.

COMPARATIVE PARTY ORGANISATION IN EAST CENTRAL EUROPE

Despite the different strategies open to the emerging political parties in terms of party organisation and mobilisation of voters, parties across the political spectrum share much in terms of party organisation. In fact, most of the new post-communist parties have adopted internal structures that resemble those of the communist and satellite parties: a party congress meeting on a regular basis that elects or appoints an executive council or central committee, which in turn appoints or elects a presidium or executive office.⁴⁸ The former is either elected by the congress or made up of representatives of central, parliamentary, local or regional party branches; the latter frequently includes professional party ‘technocrats’ as well.

Figure 6.1



Three points should be noted about figure 6.1. First, not all parties' congresses elect the 'national committee' or its equivalent. Particularly in Hungary, it tends to consist of representatives of local branches, the executive committee and the parliamentary party (MDF, MSzP, FKgP, Fidesz). In SzDSz's case it includes members elected by the congress as well.⁴⁹ In Poland it includes the party's MPs (deputies and senators).⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Lomax makes this point explicitly for Hungary, but it also applies elsewhere. B. Lomax, "The Structure and Organisation of Hungary's Political Parties", in Lewis (ed.), *Party Structure and Organisation in East Central Europe*.

⁴⁹ Lomax, "The Structure and Organisation of Hungary's Political Parties".

⁵⁰ Gebethner, "Parliamentary and Electoral Parties in Poland", p.131.

Second, most parties feature formal or informal presidia or inner groups within the 'executive committee'. Finally, with the exception of the former communist and satellite parties, the parties tend to be weak at the local level.⁵¹ Though Solidarity support for local *candidates* proved successful in local elections, this was at the expense of the political *parties*.⁵²

Remaining at the general level, a series of features make the East Central European parties increasingly resemble the cartel parties of the West, despite Lewis' suggestion that "it is difficult, for example, to see parties in East-Central Europe forming anything like the kind of cartel envisaged by Katz and Mair."⁵³ Due to the persistence of anti-incumbency voting, most of the parliamentary parties in the four cases had enjoyed a spell in office by late 1994, with the notable exceptions of the CSSD and Fidesz, which were in office by 1998.

- In terms of finance, the parties rely on state funding to a considerable degree. As a share of total funding state subsidies usually account for more than half, much like the current state of affairs in West European politics.⁵⁴
- In all the parties concerned the executive party office plays the main day to day role, again conforming to West European norms. The same, to a considerable extent, holds true for electoral campaigns.
- In most, but not all cases, parliamentary candidates are chosen by regional or local branches, sometimes subject to approval from central office. The most notable

⁵¹ A. Kroupa & T. Kostecky, "Party Organization and Structure at National and Local level in the Czech Republic Since 1989", in Lewis (ed.), *Party Structure and Organisation in East Central Europe*, p.102-104.

⁵² Lewis, "Political Institutionalisation and Party Development in Post-Communist Poland".

⁵³ P.G. Lewis, "Introduction and Theoretical Overview", in Lewis (ed.), *Party Structure and Organisation in East Central Europe*, p.13-14.

⁵⁴ A. Korosenyi, "Das Parteiensystem Ungarns", S. Szomoolanyi & G. Meseznikov, "Das Parteiensystem der Slowakei", and K. Vodicka, "Das Parteiensystem Tschechiens", all in D. Segert, R. Stoss & O. Niedemayer (eds.), *Parteiensysteme in Postkommunistischen Gesellschaften Europas*, (Opladen, Westdeutscher Verlag, 1997); P. Mair, "Party Organizations: From Civil Society to the State", in Katz & Mair (eds.), *How Parties Organise*, p.9-10.

exceptions to this model are the Polish ‘electoral parties’, i.e., shells formed around a series of parties to contest elections (WAK) or to support a specific goal (BBWR).

- Mass membership is most conspicuous by its absence. As table 6.2 illustrates, Slovakia and the Czech Republic are near average Western levels for the 1980s, while Poland and Hungary have little mass membership to speak of. Compared with 1960s levels, even the Czech Republic’s score is low. The relatively high Czech score can be explained by the KSCM’s 222,000-strong membership, an adjusted Czech score would be at 5.0%.

Table 6.2 Total party membership as % of electorate, 1960s figures in parentheses.

| State | % | State | % | State | % |
|----------------|------------|-----------------------|------------|---------|-------------|
| Poland | 1.4 | Slovakia | 4.7 | Italy | 9.7 (12.7) |
| Hungary | 2.7 | Ireland | 5.3 (n.a.) | Finland | 12.9 (18.9) |
| Netherlands | 2.9 (9.4) | Denmark | 6.5 (21.1) | Norway | 13.5 (15.5) |
| UK | 3.3 (9.4) | Czech Republic | 7.4 | Sweden | 21.2 (22.0) |
| Germany | 4.2 (2.7) | Belgium | 9.2 (7.8) | Austria | 21.8 (26.2) |

Source: West European data (late 1980s) from P. Mair & R.S. Katz (eds.) *Party Organizations: A Data Handbook on Party Organisation in Western Democracies* (London, Sage, 1992), cited in P. Mair, “Party Organizations: From Civil Society to the State”, in R. S. Katz & P. Mair (eds.), *How Parties Organise: Change and Adaptation in Party Organizations in Western Democracies*, (London, Sage, 1994), p.5.

1995-96 East Central European data calculated by the author, based on D. Segert & R. Stöss, “Entstehung, Struktur und Entwicklung von Parteiensystemen in Osteuropa nach 1989 - Eine Bilanz”, in D. Segert, R. Stoss, O. Niedemayer (eds.), *Parteiensysteme in Postkommunistischen Gesellschaften Europas*, (Opladen, Westdeutscher Verlag, 1997) and population data from UNECE, <http://www.unece.org/stats/trend>, and WHO, *World Health Statistics 1995*, (Geneva, WHO, 1996).

Within this comparative framework the key questions relate to the degree of independence enjoyed by the central executive office, the relationship between the parliamentary party and the party organisation and the extent to which top posts are held by one or more persons. Despite the similarities in organisation and structure, there is considerable room for variation here.

- The degree of independence of the party leadership depends on several factors, including personality and charisma as well as formal party rules concerning election of leaders and their formal powers.

- The independence of the parliamentary party tends to be considerable, largely due to so many parties being born in parliament or at the negotiating table during the fall of communism. Division between party and parliamentary leadership haunted the FKgP and KDNP to the point of extinction.
- Concentration of leadership power depends on ‘separation of power’ within and between national and executive committees, the number of leadership posts and whether they are held by a single individual. This varies considerably, from parties normally identified with one individual (Meciar’s HzDS) to those that will not even name their PM designate during an electoral campaign (MSzP).

The case studies below are arranged according to the four ideal-types suggested above. This by no means represents an attempt to cover all parties of the region, but rather an effort to test the hypothesis that post-communist parties are leadership dominated and tend not to focus on a mass base. Former communist parties should show a greater propensity for mass membership than their opponents, and new cartel and new populist parties the least. Electoral alliances without much basis in party organisation (BBWR, Ojczyzna, WAK) are not considered here. They are not just leadership dominated – they *are* the leadership. Likewise, the AWS is not a political party in terms of organisation, but an electoral alliance made up of several parties. Its deputies do not sit as a united bloc in the Sejm, let alone present united bloc support for the AWS – UW government.

CASE 1. REFORM COMMUNIST CATCH-ALL: SLD AND MSZP

The SLD and the MSzP represent the closest post-communist East Central Europe comes to catch-all parties in West European politics. Like the Italian PDS, the two inherited an organisational basis when the old communist party split and the reform communists took over the party structure and resources. Though membership was reduced in the two East Central European cases, it remained far higher than that of their competitors. Like the PDS, both parties were able to exploit their organisational

advantage against the 'first' governments, in the context of these governments' perceived failures. All three have transformed successfully to catch-all, if not cartel, status. With 60,000 and 40,000 members respectively the SdRP (the main component of the SLD) and the MSzP are large by East Central European standards, second only to the peasant parties. In terms of party finance, they are less dependent on state subsidies than their competitors. For example, by 1992 figures the MSzP was the only Hungarian parliamentary party to receive less than 50% of its funding from the state (33.6%).⁵⁵

Both parties fit the model set out in figure 6.1, with a party congress electing the two superior organs, a National Committee and a National Executive in the Hungarian case and a Supreme Council's Presidium and a Central Executive Committee in the SdRP's case. Though the SLD is a coalition of 28 groups the SdRP's role is so dominant as to make the leadership virtually identical: the chairman of the SLD parliamentary club is the leader of the SdRP.⁵⁶ In both the Polish and Hungarian cases the parliamentary party and the central office are integrated. MPs are represented in both the parties' higher organs, and the overlap in leadership between the SdRP and SLD provides a similar link. The leadership's *de facto* power is considerable in both cases, as illustrated by their running tight economic programmes despite scepticism within the party, leading to some internal conflicts (see Chapter Eight). Though the MSzP is comparatively well structured by East Central European standards, one member of its Executive Committee said it was unprepared for government in 1994 because "the party's internal integration was not satisfactory."⁵⁷ However, within a year of his inauguration, prime minister Horn was being criticised by his own party executive for acting too much without consultation, particularly over his dismissal of trade and industry minister Pal in June 1995.⁵⁸ Nevertheless, neither party relies on a single charismatic leader. The MSzP took this approach to the extreme, refusing to name its candidate for prime minister in the 1994 electoral campaign, and the uncertainty concerning both prime ministerial and presidential candidates within the SLD during the 1993-97 Sejm indicates a similar reluctance to focus on one leader. The contrast to Klaus' role in the ODS or Antall's in

⁵⁵ Korosenyi, "Das Parteiensystem Ungarns".

⁵⁶ Gebethner, "Parliamentary and Electoral Parties in Poland", p.131.

⁵⁷ J. Geczi, interviewed in *Magyar Nemzet*, in Hungarian, 5 October 1994 (SWB, 07/10/94).

⁵⁸ MSzP National Council Vice President Csintalan, cited in *The Hungary Report*, No. 1.14, July 3 1995.

the MDF is telling. The MSzP leaves selection of parliamentary candidates up to the local party branches, though the national list is drawn up by the party central offices (and approved by congress). Finally, the two parties have proved resistant to trade union demands. In both cases efforts have been made to influence economic policy in a less radical free market direction, but with limited success. Though the parties may be linked to their respective trade unions, their freedom of action is hardly limited by this association.

The CSSD provides a contrast to the Polish and Hungarian parties, a social democrat party without mass membership (ca. 12,000) but with considerable electoral success. The CSSD, like the Hungarian and Polish left, benefited from the anti-incumbency factor, but the ODS-led coalition proved a far stronger adversary than the Polish and Hungarian coalitions. Moreover, “the remarkable increase in popularity of the CzSDP [CSSD], and its subsequent stabilization, was probably brought about by the change in leadership to Milos Zeman, a charismatic leader who inspired greater confidence than his predecessor.”⁵⁹ However, by 1997 a conflict between Zeman and his First Deputy Chairman, Machovec, had developed, centred on the party’s electoral strategy but including Machovec criticising Zeman’s “authoritarian” leadership.⁶⁰ In the Czech Republic the mass CP membership remained with the KSCM (222,000, down from over 1m in 1989).

Compared with most other post-communist parties the reform communist parties appear the least leader-oriented. Yet the leadership (if not the leader) remains dominant vis-à-vis the rest of the party, as evident in struggles over economic policy. The Bekesi-Bokross continuity in Hungarian economic policy illustrates the point, and Medgessy continued their programme, albeit in a somewhat more relaxed way. This moderate leadership domination and the free-market approach to economics bears close resemblance to the character of D’Alema’s PDS in Italy, not to mention Blair’s New Labour. The MSzP and SLD indicate the catch-all strategy’s potential for success

⁵⁹ Kopecky, “Developing Party Organisations in East Central Europe”, p.522; see also Vodicka, “Das Parteiensystem Tschechiens”, p.119.

⁶⁰ This is CTK’s indirect quote, CTK, 11 March 1997.

inasmuch as they benefited from broad anti-government voting and did not enjoy support from an electorate that can be pinned down geographically or sectorally.⁶¹ The key obstacle was putting sufficient distance between the party and its communist predecessor, an obstacle both parties overcame during the first parliaments. The parties are close to the West European cartel model, having reached this stage by rejecting old ideology and by ‘modernising’, even if the changes within the PSL, MSzP and PDS were so radical as to represent a new path to cartel status (perhaps a ‘reform communist’ path).

CASE 2. PEASANT AND HISTORICAL PARTIES: FKGP AND PSL - FROM INTEREST PARTY TO CATCH-ALL?

The PSL and the FKgP are the largest parties in their respective states according to membership figures, with estimates up to 250,000 and 60,000 members respectively. Both feature clear regional patterns of voting, as did the 30,000-strong KDNP which was stronger where the FKgP was weaker. They provide the second possible ‘real’ catch-all development inasmuch as they develop from (supposedly) interest-based parties towards catch-all parties. In the PSL’s case, the background includes satellite status under communism, which helps account for its large membership. All three (KDNP included) attempt to employ populist appeal to mobilise a broader electorate, with some degree of success (not in the KDNP’s case in 1998). In the peasant parties’ case, this involves a marriage of agrarian interests (modern agrarian politics) and populist appeal (traditional East European populism). The Norwegian Sp did something similar with considerable short-term success in the 1993 election, where it capitalised on anti-EU sentiment to become the second largest party in parliament. Its support has since declined back to close to normal levels.

The peasant parties of post-communist East Central Europe fall somewhere between Urwin’s two ideal-type peasant parties. Whereas Western-type agrarian parties “were concerned more with defending agrarian economic interests within a market economy,” the peasant populist parties of inter-war Eastern Europe were “more prone to espouse at

⁶¹ Ziemer, “Das Partiensystem Polens”, in Segert, Stoss, Niedemayer (eds.), *Parteiensysteme in*

least superficially peasantist doctrines, and appeared more concerned with preventing the contamination of rural areas by the market economy.”⁶² To be sure, most peasant parties straddle the two ideal types. The Norwegian Sp remains primarily a party defending agrarian economic interests, but it ventured into populist mobilisation centred on opposition to European integration in the 1993 election, thus indicating the attraction of using populist appeal to go beyond interest-based appeal as long as this does not compromise the original ideology. In this sense the peasantist parties may have an advantage in the quest for a greater share of the electorate, inasmuch as they can develop beyond their sectoral interest. Like their West European cousins, the peasant parties have seen reasonable success rate in terms of regional and/or sectoral mobilisation. The FKgP and KDNP found considerable support in rural Hungary, and both are to some extent regionally based parties. Their fortunes in 1990 reflected the regional distribution of their predecessors’ votes in 1947.⁶³

The peasant parties differ somewhat from the organisational norm in East Central Europe, because they are more centralised. The PSL’s National Council is elected by the Congress, and, like other Polish parties, MPs participate on the Council. The FKgP features a more complex organisation, with the Grand Committee replacing the Congress as the main elector of higher offices. As figure 6.2 illustrates, considerable power flows from the President and the National Executive, represented in full on the National Leadership and the Grand Committee. No power flows from the Congress, though some flows from local and regional organisations as they elect a minority on each of the leadership bodies. Lomax contrasts the FKgP and the KDNP, the least and most democratic of the Hungarian right wing parties.⁶⁴ The KDNP followed the standard model, the Congress electing the National Committee, which in turn elected the executive. The KDNP’s abnormality lay in its Executive Committee, a body composed of the Executive and representatives of MPs and local party organisations which

Postkommunistischen Gesellschaften Europas, p.62.

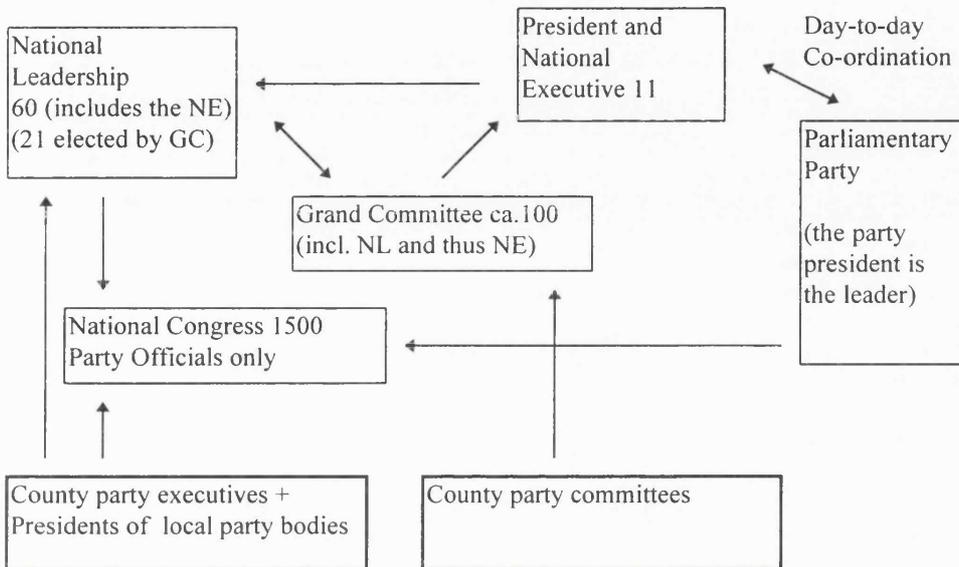
⁶² D. W. Urwin, “From Ploughshare to the Ballot Box: The Politics of Agrarian Defence in Europe”, (Oslo, Universitetsforlaget, 1980), p. 206.

⁶³ Korosenyi, “Revival of the Past or a New Beginning? The Nature of Post-communist Politics”, in A. Bozóki, A. Korosenyi, & G. Schopflin (eds.), *Post-Communist Transition: Emerging Pluralism in Hungary*, (London, Pinter Publishers, 1992).

⁶⁴ Lomax, “The Structure and Organisation of Hungary’s Political Parties”, p.35.

oversaw the Executive's work, thus limiting the centralising tendency. However, this did not save the party from an extinction-level split.

Figure 6.2 The FKgP. Arrows represent election or representation.



Though all three parties are thus firmly leadership directed, two of them have seen serious conflicts between top leaders. The FKgP split over Torgyan's withdrawal of support for the Antall government in October 1991, whereupon he concentrated power in his own hands by strengthening the party presidency only six months after he had been elected to the position (June 1991).⁶⁵ In the KPND's case, the internal crisis came in 1997, following parliamentary group leader Isepy's successful legal challenge to the December 1996 leadership election.⁶⁶ After winning the leadership election, Giczy attempted dissolution of the parliamentary faction over its refusal to follow central party office instructions, thereby precipitating the split in the party and its demise in the 1998 election. Isepy took half the parliamentary group into Fidesz and Surjan (leader of the breakaway Christian Democratic Alliance) ran on a Fidesz ticket.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ B. Lomax, "Factions and Factionalism in Hungary's New Party System", in Giles, Waller & Nieto (eds.), *Factional Politics and Democratisation*.

⁶⁶ Hungarian Radio, in Hungarian 1300 gmt 28 April 1997 (SWB 30/04/97).

⁶⁷ Hungarian TV2 satellite service, in Hungarian, 1730 gmt 18 April 1998 (SWB 20/04/98).

The peasant parties share some of the features of their Western cousins, including a sectoral and regional base. Like their West European counterparts, their fortunes are tied to alliances, and in the Hungarian and Polish cases the result has been tension within the alliances over economic and agrarian policy as well as national and religious questions. Like Sp and KrF in Norway, the PSL, FKgP and KNDP have a solid regional and occupational base, from which attempts to achieve a populist or moderate catch-all type appeal can be launched. But this leaves the parties in a difficult situation, demanding concessions of their coalition partners on 'their' issues. The strategic choices lie with the party leaders, all of whom have been challenged over these decisions. In the KNDP's case, the split proved fatal.

CASE 3. 'EVOLUTIONARY LEAPS' AND 'NEW CARTEL' PARTIES: ODS, FIDESZ AND UW.

In contrast to the peasant and former communist parties, the liberal parties' evolutionary leap towards the cartel-type was a 'forced move', i.e., the only move that made sense in the circumstances. The ideological outlook and strategy is similar to, e.g., the Dutch VVD in terms of secular appeal focused on economic questions. The ODS, KLD and DU were born in government, and were thus granted immediate cartel status. Apart from their background, there is little to distinguish these parties from West European cartel parties. This strategy relies on the parties' governing role, and links their appeal to success in government. The ODS' success has been linked to successful 'preference shaping' and economic management, in contrast to the UW parties' falling support in the run-up to the 1993 election (see Chapter Five, above). Membership figures support this interpretation of the liberal parties as 'new cartel' parties. With 25,000 members the ODS was the largest of the three before its 1998 split, followed by the UW's 18,000 and Fidesz' 12,000. Territorial analysis of the 1992 and 1996 elections shows that the ODS' strongholds are in Prague and Central Bohemia, with a solid vote in the rest of the republic except South Moravia.⁶⁸ In both elections its coalition partners compensated for

⁶⁸ See T. Kostecky, "Changing Party Allegiances in an Changing Party System: the 1990 and 1992 Parliamentary Elections in the Czech Republic", in G. Wightman (ed.), *Party Formation in East Central Europe*, (Aldershot, Hants, Edward Elgar, 1995); and final official results provided by the Election Commission, results by district for 1996 (<http://www.ios.com:80/~jirim/special/docresut.html>).

the low ODS vote in South Moravia, leaving Northern Bohemia as the coalitions' weakest region.⁶⁹ Fidesz on the other hand, had "the most evenly spread constituency in regional terms" in the Hungarian 1990 elections.⁷⁰

All three parties are dominated by the leadership, though this is a stronger feature in the Czech and Hungarian cases where Klaus and Orbàn run their respective parties than in the UW (the product of a merger between the UD and KLD). The ODS is very much a one-man party, dominated by Klaus and described by Kopecky as the 'most outstanding' case in this context.⁷¹ Internal criticism of Klaus' centralisation grew after the 1996 elections, and was reflected in the differences between Klaus and deputy chairman Zieleniec (though their policy differences went back to the 1994 conference).⁷² In contrast to other Czech parties, the ODS Main Office (the executive) consists of party employees and is not elected by the Congress.⁷³ Fidesz is similarly dominated by its president, Viktor Orbàn. Its development from a small party featuring collective leadership to a centralised organisation led by its president and the National Executive has been analysed by Balazs & Enyedi, who suggest that the "recent [1994] electoral defeat could be interpreted as the result of too rapid rate of organizational reform", including changes in ideology, which alienated activists.⁷⁴ In other words, given its particular youth basis, Fidesz might have moved towards a catch-all stage too fast, and in contrast to the UW parties and the ODS, it lacked the resources that come with government power. The result has been a party dominated by Orbàn, particularly since Fodor left in 1993. The party is run by a National Executive, elected by the party congress, and a National Committee representing regional committees and other party organisations, making it similar to the standard post-communist party organisation. The UW remains the least centralised of the three parties considered here. The party leader is elected by Congress, as is the Political Council. The fact that the party is the product of

⁶⁹ In N. Bohemia the coalition polled a low 35.8% in 1996, compared with a 44.1% national vote and near or above 40% elsewhere (second lowest was N. Moravia, 39.2%).

⁷⁰ Korosenyi, "Revival of the Past or a New Beginning?", p.125.

⁷¹ Kopecky, "Developing Party Organisations in East Central Europe", p.528-529.

⁷² CTK, 11 September 1996.

⁷³ Kroupa & Kostecky, "Party Organization and Structure at National and Local Level in the Czech Republic Since 1989".

⁷⁴ M. Balazs & Z. Enyedi, "Hungarian Case Studies: the Alliance of Free Democrats and the Alliance of Young Democrats", in Lewis (ed.), *Party Structure and Organisation in East Central Europe*, p.65.

a KLD – UW merger contributed to limited centralism, and with 27 representatives on the 100-strong council the KLD was somewhat over-represented after the merger.

In short, the liberal parties have adopted a straight-to-cartel strategy, which given their conditions appears to be a ‘forced move’. These parties feature limited membership, relatively concentrated leadership, and rely on access to the state and state funding. The leadership enjoys considerable freedom. Of the three, the ODS clearly took greatest advantage of its government position, while the choice of shock therapy and the presence of a strong president removed this option for the UD and KLD. Fidesz had no such option at all, but represented the most credible and popular alternative in 1993, only to face disappointment in the 1994 elections and a reversal to success four years later. The transition to cartel party by way of Smith’s evolutionary leap appears not only to have been possible, but also to have been profitable in the medium-to-long term.

CASE 4. NEW POPULISM: MDF AND HZDS

In contrast to the peasant parties’ ‘old populism’, the MDF and the HZDS have adopted what can be described as a modern ‘New Populist’ approach to politics. They fit Taggart’s characteristics to a large extent, claiming to speak for all of society or to represent the entire *nation*, and using anti-system appeal. The parties’ appeal and organisation are neither local nor based on one of Lipset & Rokkan’s four cleavages, but rather centred on questions of state-building (and by extension, nationalism). However, the anti-system element HZDS’ appeal included opposition to Czech-driven rapid economic reform. The ‘new populists’ of East Central Europe tend to oppose neo-liberal economics, a fact Schopflin explains through their ‘under-developed conservatism’.⁷⁵ The result differs little from Taggart’s West European new populist parties, which are “very centralised and [set] great store in the leadership which is both personalised and charismatic.”⁷⁶

⁷⁵ G. Schopflin, *Politics in Eastern Europe: 1945-1992*, (Oxford, Blackwell, 1993), p.292-299.

⁷⁶ Taggart, “New Populist Parties in Western Europe”, p.40.

While the HzDS corresponds closely to the new populist ideal type, the MDF is more of a hybrid party. Nevertheless, both parties share elements of new populism. Moreover, like *Forza Italia*, they have both earned spells in government, a development that is bound to affect the party. Both are limited in terms of membership, at 34,000 and 40,000 respectively, though this is above their countries' averages. They score near the average in terms of party finance, relying on state subsidies for 65% and 60% respectively in 1992/93.⁷⁷ During the run-up to the 'velvet divorce', the HzDS emphasised Slovak sovereignty and economic transition subject to Slovak national interest, and confirmed its new populist stance by stressing its organisational nature as a 'movement' and Meciar's role as a charismatic leader.⁷⁸ Until his death in December 1993 Antall played a similar role in the MDF, the party focusing on medium-pace economic transition and Hungarian national identity. Yet the two parties have little in common in terms of genesis, where the HzDS's mixture of reform communists and nationally oriented "parteilosen" ('the ones without party') differs from the MDF's 'anachronistic conservatism' (family, nation, religion).⁷⁹ Their similarity lies in organisation, political appeal and reliance on charismatic leadership, which adds up to weakly institutionalised parties in Panebianco's terms.

Like other Slovak parties, the HzDS features a Congress and its council, which selects the Executive Council. However, formal party organisation is secondary to personal loyalty expressed through clientelistic networks within the party, leading to a highly centralised party where regional and local organisations take instructions from the centre, e.g., on candidate selection.⁸⁰ Internal party tension has been manifest in factions, and these usually lead to expulsion or defection of the dissidents. R. Kovac and Moravcik left in early 1993, soon to be followed by another ten MPs who refused to sign a declaration of loyalty. Further loss of MPs precipitated the collapse of Meciar's government in March 1994. Gaulieder's defection in November 1996 led to his

⁷⁷ Korosenyi, "Das parteiensystem Ungarns", and Szomolanyi & Meseznikov, "Das Parteiensystem der Slowakei", p.169 and 155, 1993 and 1992 figures, respectively.

⁷⁸ M. A. Hatschikan, "Von der 'sanften Revolution' zur 'sanften Scheidung': Politik, Parteien und die Wahlen in der CSFR 1989 – 1992", in M. A. Hatschikan & P. R. Weilermann (eds.), *Parteienlandschaften in Osteuropa: Politik, Parteien and Transformation in Ungarn, Polen, der Tschecho-Slowakei und Bulgarien 1989 – 1992*, (Paderborn, Schöningh, 1994).

⁷⁹ Szomolanyi & Meseznikov, "Das Parteiensystem der Slowakei".

⁸⁰ Szomolanyi & Meseznikov, "Das Parteiensystem der Slowakei", p.150.

expulsion from Parliament. The expulsion was later declared unconstitutional, but to no effect.⁸¹ This suggests that within the ‘new populist’ parties, ‘exit’ is a more feasible option than ‘voice’. The MDF has earned a characterisation as the most hierarchical of the three main Hungarian parties.⁸² Centralisation is manifest in the party’s executive committee (National Executive), whose members are also members of the National Committee. This body, in turn, has no independent chairman, in contrast to, e.g., the SzDSz’ two executive bodies which have no overlapping membership.⁸³ Nevertheless, the MDF contained three broad currents, usually identified as populist, conservative and Christian national.⁸⁴ Though Antall steered the party towards the conservative strand, intra-party debates over the future of the party continued, based as much on personality and ‘milieu’ as on policy. Like the HzDS, its factions have exercised the ‘exit’ option, first with the departure of Csurka’s section in 1993, and three years later with the formation of the MNDP. In the latter case, new MDF Chairman Lezsak emphasised personal conflicts with Szabo as well as political differences.⁸⁵

New Populism, therefore, constitutes a high-risk strategy, with potentially high rewards but leaving the party vulnerable if it governs ‘poorly’. Both parties have lost influential MPs to the opposition or in divisions of the party. The parallels between *Forza Italia* and HzDS are far from coincidental. Berlusconi’s support for Meciar in the run-up to the 1994 election included help with the campaign.⁸⁶ The HzDS slogan “Slovakia – go for it – and trust yourself!” is a direct take-off of Berlusconi’s (the football-chant ‘*forza Italia*’ translates as ‘Italy – go for it!’).⁸⁷ Like the FI, both the MDF and HzDS remain weakly institutionalised and dominated by the leadership. All three have proved vulnerable to challenges from other parties in the same camp or to defections. Though the language of catch-all parties is sometimes used, these parties have more in common

⁸¹ *OMRI Daily Digest II*, No. 215, 6 November 96; *RFE/RL Newslines*, No. 129, Part II, 1 October 1997.

⁸² B. Lomax, “The Structure and Organisation of Hungary’s Political Parties”, in Lewis (ed.), *Party Structure and Organisation in East Central Europe*.

⁸³ Lomax, “The Structure and Organisation of Hungary’s Political Parties”, p.29.

⁸⁴ Lomax, “Factions and Factionalism in Hungary’s New Party System”, p.127-129.

⁸⁵ Lezsak, Hungarian Radio, Budapest, in Hungarian 1700 gmt 4 March 1996 (SWB 06/03/96).

⁸⁶ “Campaigning Meciar stars in MFDS pop video”, CTK, in English 1917 gmt 4 September 1994 (SWB 07/09/94); the report cites Czech tabloid paper *Blesk*, 02/07/94; G. Schopflin recounted this story, in conversation, 1994.

⁸⁷ HzDS homepage (in English), <http://www.hzds.sk/indexE.html>, 19/01/98.

with new populist parties in Western Europe than with the de-aligned (and strongly institutionalised) catch-all parties.

HYBRIDS

Solidarity Electoral Action (AWS), established on 8 June 1996, in anticipation of the 1997 parliamentary elections, is a noteworthy hybrid case. Though it qualifies as a particular form of a 'historical party' (Solidarity Trade Union has 50% + 1 vote), the AWS also has much in common with the new populists. It represents one of the few successful attempts to sustain electoral support based on opposition to the communist regime, at least in the short term. Invoking the legacy of Solidarity in the 1980s, the AWS combines 'new populism' with its own brand of historical appeal, namely opposition to communism. The development of post-Solidarity parties has been very different in the 'liberal' and 'Christian national' camps. While the former has institutionalised to a considerable extent in the form of the UW, the later has remained fluid, from the original PC, to the failure of the BBWR in the 1993 elections and the success of the AWS four years later. The AWS' announced intention is to turn into political party *a la* US Republicans or German CDU (which illustrates how little is known of Western parties – ideologically and organisationally).⁸⁸ Krzaklewski, leader of the Solidarity Trade Union, became chairman of the AWS, and is Kwasniewski's prospective challenger for the presidency. On 13 November 1997, AWS filed its application to become a political party. However, its parliamentary groups (the plural is used advisedly) are less than cohesive, particularly over fiscal policy.

⁸⁸ "Solidarity Election Action - AWS", <http://www.solidarnosc.org/>.

PARTY ORGANISATION AND STRUCTURE IN THE ITALIAN SECOND REPUBLIC, THE IRISH FREE STATE AND POST-JUNTA GREECE

Three very different West European cases all share the common factor that their parties have little or nothing in common with the traditional West European mass parties. The party system of the Irish Free State was, at least partly, born of the Civil War; in post-junta Greece the new parties drew on their predecessors' clientelistic practices and ideology; and after the collapse of the 'First Republic', which under the DC had become a 'dominant democracy' (or partitocracy), a new 'Second Republic' party system emerged. In the Irish case, neither Fianna Fail nor Cumann na nGaedheal (after the 1933 merger with the Centre Party: Fine Gael) adopted the classic West European mass party organisation, though a degree of organisational convergence has occurred since, as Fine Gael sought mass membership and both parties rely increasingly on professional staff and media-oriented campaigns.⁸⁹ The new Italian and Greek parties, and FF and FG (at least until the 1970s), differ considerably from West European mass or catch-all model, and are more akin to the new populist party. The Irish system suggests that this may not be so 'new' after all.

On the left, the PDS (now DS) *is* a post-communist party. Like its East Central European reform communist counterparts, it is less leadership dominated than its rivals and much less so than its former self, which makes it one of the few West European parties for which the move to catch-all and then cartel type entailed less leadership control. The PDS has enjoyed some advantage from its structure as it inherited organisational strength (the party on the ground).⁹⁰ In a deliberate move away from its mass and class background the new structure was modelled partly on the German SPD.⁹¹ By contrast, PASOK, despite being "at first the only party apart from the Communists to create a well-structured grass-roots organisation," soon adopted a more populist,

⁸⁹ D. M. Farrell, "Ireland: Centralization, Professionalization and Competitive Pressures", in Katz & Mair (eds.), *How Parties Organise*.

⁹⁰ L. Bardi & L. Morlino, "Italy: Tracing the Roots of the Great Transformation", in Katz & Mair (eds.), *How Parties Organise*.

⁹¹ G. Pasquino, "Programmatic Renewal and Much More: from the PCI to the PDS", *West European Politics*, 16:1 (1993), 156-173.

leadership oriented strategy.⁹² It therefore represented a hybrid between the mass-party and the new populist party, as “[it] aimed to appeal to its followers not as a class but as the people or ‘the nation.’”⁹³ On the right, FI and ND come close to the new populist ideal type. Both feature a limited party organisation, and focus on populism and national identity. In the ND’s case attempts were made to develop a well-organised mass party, but Karamanlis decided to rely on personal influence and keep the party a party of notables rather than transform it into a catch-all or mass party.⁹⁴ The same holds for FI, which explicitly subordinates the role of the party (and parliament!) to the direct link between leader and the electors.⁹⁵ Its rapidly built-up mass membership has been compared to AC Milan’s (football) supporters’ club rather than an activist mass party.⁹⁶ An alternative interpretation sees the FI as unique to Italian conditions, a “media-mediated personality party” based on post-materialism, de-alignment, political change, monopoly media capitalism and “an electoral system which strengthens the personalisation tendencies in politics.”⁹⁷ However, this focus on ‘technical populism’ (Berlusconi’s media empire) obscures the similarities between FI and other ‘new populist’ parties, whether in Western or East Central Europe. The Greek parties, despite initial efforts to adopt mass-structures, fell back on populism and personality-driven parties, prompting one observer to comment that “change resides in the translation into *new forms* of some traditional dysfunctional aspects of Greek politics.”⁹⁸

Despite the debate as to whether Irish politics is exceptional, where Sinnott, Mair, and Laver reject the ‘peculiarity’ arguments, there is a considerable degree of consensus on the organisational structure of Irish parties.⁹⁹ Fianna Fail was, at least in the Free State,

⁹² Y. Papadopoulos, “Parties, the State and Society in Greece: Continuity within Change”, *West European Politics*, 12:2 (1989), 55-71, p.65.

⁹³ Lyrantzis, “Political Parties in Post-Junta Greece”, p.111.

⁹⁴ Lyrantzis, “Political Parties in Post-Junta Greece”, p.106-108.

⁹⁵ It invokes a model of democracy “which tends to let democracy come straight in with the election of the leader. This does not take away the party’s role, but it is subordinate to the requests of the elector. The relationship between the leader and the people modifies the role of parliament...”, www.Forza-Italia.it.

⁹⁶ Donovan, “The 1994 Election in Italy”, 193-201.

⁹⁷ J. Seisselberg, “Conditions of Success and Political Problems of a ‘Media-Mediated Personality-Party’: The Case of Forza Italia”, in *West European Politics*, 19:4 (1996), 715-743, p.729.

⁹⁸ Y. Papadopoulos, “Parties, the State and society in Greece: Continuity within Change”, *West European Politics*, 12:2 (1989), 55-71, p.68 (emphasis in original).

⁹⁹ R. Sinnott, “Interpretations of the Irish Party System”, *European Journal of Political Research*, 12:3 (1984); P. Mair, *The Changing Irish Party System: Organisation, Ideology and Electoral Competition*, (London, Frances Pinter Publishers, 1987); M. Laver, “Are Irish Parties Peculiar?”, in J. H. Goldthorpe &

more akin to a movement than a party. Despite its mass basis and appeal to society's 'have-nots', "Fianna Fail never sought to emulate the organisational style of social democracy."¹⁰⁰ Yet its local base provided for organisational superiority well past the life-time of the Free State.¹⁰¹ Despite both parties' difference from their mainstream West European counterparts, FF has been described as a mass party compared to Cumann na nGaedheal's 'party of notables'.¹⁰² Nevertheless, despite decentralising forces due to local clientelism and the STV electoral system, both FF and Fine Gael are centralised and dominated by parliamentary wings.¹⁰³ Taggart identifies no new populist party in Ireland, but if the British Isles is considered as a whole, FF (and Sinn Fein before the split) would qualify under the Free State, being "on the right, anti-system in orientation [Anti-UK] and claim to be speaking for the 'mainstream' of society", "characterised by strong centralised structures" and dominated by the leadership.¹⁰⁴ 'New populism' may be less 'new' than initially assumed, to the extent that FF and FG/CG came close to this ideal type. However, if both started their life closer to the 'new populist' ideal type, their developments in the last two decades suggests that even these parties may develop towards the cartel model.

C. T. Whelan (eds.), *The Development of Industrial Society in Ireland*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1992).

¹⁰⁰ Mair, *The Changing Irish Party System*, p.114.

¹⁰¹ Mair, *The Changing Irish Party System*, p.134-137; T. Garvin, "Political Cleavages, Party Politics and Urbanization in Ireland: The Case of the Periphery-Dominated Centre", *European Journal of Political Research*, 2 (1974), 307-27; R. K. Carty, *Parties and Parish Pump: Electoral Politics in Ireland*, (Waterloo, Ontario, Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1981).

¹⁰² Garvin, "Political Cleavages, Party Politics and Urbanization in Ireland", p. 318.

¹⁰³ M. J. Carey, "Ireland", in P. H. Merkl (ed.), *West European Party Systems: Trends and Prospects*, (London, Collier Macmillan, 1990); Farrell, "Ireland: Centralization, Professionalization and Competitive Pressures".

¹⁰⁴ Taggart, "New Populist Parties in Western Europe", p. 43-44. It also fits Taggart's electoral profile, though this is less relevant given the different contexts.

CONCLUSION

Party organisation does matter. However, it matters most in comparison to established West European parties – the catch-all parties. The development of parties since 1989 differs considerably from pre-1970 West European politics, but less from late Twentieth Century developments. New parties in West and East Central Europe stand in contrast to the mass- and catch-all parties with which most of the literature on party organisation has been concerned, and they can best be understood in terms of the contrast with these parties. While most West European parties developed in the context of ideological left – right competition and many were linked to organised interests, many new parties challenge this left – right dimension and do not enjoy interest group support. Lomax’s conclusion about Hungary, “I do not think the finding that modern political parties are dominated by the professional political elites, and that rank-and-file membership is effectively excluded from the decision-making process, can be seriously challenged,” can safely be extended to the rest of East Central Europe.¹⁰⁵ But it also holds for West European politics.

Party organisation cannot be considered a completely exogenous factor in the development of party systems. Though analysts of early Twentieth Century West European party systems might be forgiven for excluding this factor (or considering it exogenous), this omission cannot be justified in post-communist politics. Each party has made a strategic choice as far as party organisation is concerned, sometimes quite openly at the floor of party conferences. To be sure, this choice has been restricted by circumstances, notably the lack of large extra-parliamentary organisations that aggregate economic interests. But most parties have chosen something close to one of the four ideal-type strategies and organisational models discussed above. In general, the post-communist parties share many of the features of new West European parties inasmuch as i) they accord tremendous power/influence to the leadership (party in office/parliamentary party); ii) they are dominated by professional politics (party in

¹⁰⁵ Lomax, “The Structure and Organization of Hungary’s Political Parties”, p.41.

central office); iii) membership (the party on the ground) is of limited importance; iv) the parties are state-sponsored; and v) they have weak links with interest groups. These are characteristics that set them aside from the old West European parties, but render them comparable to new West European parties and cartel parties. The result is parties that are dominated by the leadership, but this need not mean weak or unstable parties.

Parties' choice as far as party organisation is concerned has proved a central factor in political competition. In Italy as well as in Hungary and Poland, and to a lesser extent Slovakia, the post-communist left has enjoyed some advantage from maintaining their organisation on the ground. First in regional elections, and later in national elections, the parties' organisational strength proved advantageous. A similar option was open to the agrarian parties, for whom a relatively clearly defined electorate (and, in the Polish case, membership) provided a choice between mass basis and broad appeal. The neo-populist option, on the other hand, has proved a riskier strategy (which is ironic given that these parties have proved risk-averse in economic policy). While this strategy propelled Antall, Meciar and Berlusconi to power, the new parties proved vulnerable in terms of unity and economic policy. Yet they may have had relatively little choice, an existing mass membership was not there for the asking. Similarly, the post-conglomerate parties, unsurprisingly, focused on the parliamentary party and the party in central office rather than the (weak) party on the ground. It is no surprise that parties tend to be centralised and elite-dominated. Despite their differences, the most significant attribute of post-communist political parties is the lack of constraints under which they operate. Two elements are particularly significant. The parties remain relatively unrestrained by extra-parliamentary organisations, and the party leaderships tend to enjoy considerable freedom within the party. The party leadership, therefore, provides the key to understanding the development of post-communist party politics, and leadership choice and strategies become more significant. Here Panebianco's focus on strong and weak institutionalisation indicates one possible paradox in East Central European politics. The 'right' in the Hungarian party system (i.e., MDF, KDNP, FKgP and even Fidesz) has been dominated by parties prone to weak institutionalisation, with a heavy focus on the leader. This has left ample room for potential leadership contests, and, therefore, party system instability. This helps explain why the oldest East Central European party

system, and that which has been most stable in terms of the number and names of parties, may not have been the most stable one in terms of party competition.

“Like previous party types, the cartel party implies a particular conception of democracy; moreover, also like previous party types, it stimulates further reactions and sows the seeds for yet further evolution.”¹⁰⁶ This can be extended to the new East Central European parties. If the West European experience is anything to go by, further evolution and change in party organisation can be expected. The question is the extent to which this will affect the party system, and the answer suggested by the West European experience is ‘not very much’. Party organisation provides the context in which party systems develop and consolidate, but in stable, developed party systems, changes in party organisation are as much a form of adaptation as a driver of party system change. Though the institutional heritage from communism helped shape the structure of the reform-communist parties, even these parties conform to the general pattern of leadership-dominated parties. Party organisation, therefore, matters, though it primarily serves to explain differences between the East Central and the mainstream West European party systems. In East Central Europe, leadership dominance has left the parties as the main drivers in party system development, not unlike Irish politics or the Italian ‘Second Republic’. The dimensions of political competition that the parties choose to focus on therefore became the key factor in party system development, a process that has been far less constrained by extra-parliamentary supporting organisations or the mass membership than was the case in early Twentieth Century Western Europe. These dimensions of competition are the subject of the next chapter. West European politics also suggests that parties develop and change their strategy and organisation in response to their competitors, in a dynamic process as government – opposition relationships are developed and broken. This, the development of party *systems*, in turn forms the subject of the last chapter, Chapter Eight.

¹⁰⁶ Mair, *Party System Change*, p.94.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CLEAVAGES AND POST-COMMUNIST PARTY ALIGNMENTS

"I'm no 'closet social democrat' – that's the Financial Times' characterisation!"

- Vaclav Klaus, May 1995

CLEAVAGES AND PARTY ALIGNMENTS IN A COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

The two previous chapters have painted a picture of East Central European politics dominated by the political parties in general and the party leadership in particular. The political parties operate with a considerable degree of freedom, within parameters set by, e.g., the anti-incumbency effect. This, in turn, suggests that cleavages may be less important to political competition than was the case in early Twentieth Century Western Europe (or at least Lipset & Rokkan's core cases). The re-working of the Lipset-Rokkan model suggests a broader definition of cleavages that permits adding divisions over regime change to Lipset & Rokkan's four cleavages. Hence the attempt to drop some of the sociological baggage attached to cleavage theory without reducing cleavages to mere 'divisions'. In West European politics a left – right dimension has developed over time, based primarily on the owner – worker cleavage, the fourth of Lipset & Rokkan's cleavages. The fact that it is more difficult to ascertain a similar division in East Central Europe has not prevented the use of 'left' and 'right' to describe the parties, though these terms must be qualified. Though the development of a 'left' and 'right' based on one predominant dimension of politics is problematic, the terms can still be useful in East Central European politics.

LEFT – RIGHT COMPETITION IN WEST EUROPEAN POLITICS

Though European party systems reflect a range of cleavages, the socio-economic dimension has dominated practically every post-war West European party system and formed the main basis for left – right competition in West European politics. Lijphart has summed up the four main questions central to left and right positions on socio-

economic policy: i) government vs. private ownership of the means of production; ii) the role of the government in economic planning; iii) the extent of redistribution of wealth; and iv) the scope of government welfare programmes.¹ The socio-economic issue dimension, therefore, ranges from a free-market, laissez-faire right to a left-wing position focusing on political redistribution of resources. This dimension has been present, if not dominant, in every post-war democratic party system in Europe (Ireland included).² Even if the shift to catch-all parties has rendered these four questions somewhat less salient, particularly with growing consensus on free-market politics since the early 1980s, the socio-economic dimension retains considerable relevance. Competition need not reflect great differences in party positions on this dimension, because different priorities provide a sufficient basis for competition.³

A second dimension, based on non-economic issues, is far more diffuse than the socio-economic dimension, but nevertheless present in every post-war European democracy. This has been described alternatively as post-materialist, non-materialist and libertarian vs. conservative.⁴ Though this dimension can be reduced to one central question in most party systems at any given time, a broad dimension ranging from a conservative or 'particularist' pole to a libertarian pole allows for cross-country comparisons. These two poles reflect, to a considerable extent, collective and individualist approaches to society, i.e. *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*. Central questions in European politics have included i) defence of the role of the Church in politics vs. secularism; ii) extension of political rights to the entire population; iii) breakdown of social hierarchies; iv) social liberal questions including divorce and abortion; and more recently v) post-materialist and feminist issues that do not fit the *Gemeinschaft* – *Gesellschaft* distinction. The diffuse nature of this broad dimension is off-set by the advantages in comparative analysis across states and time, as it allows for comparison between a range of different

¹ A. Lijphart, *Democracies: Patterns of Majoritarian and Consensus Government in Twenty-One Countries*, (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1984), p.129.

² I. Budge, D. Robinson & D. Hearl (eds.), *Ideology, Strategy and Party Change: Spatial Analyses of Post-War Election Programmes in 19 Democracies*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1987).

³ P. Dunleavy & C. Husbands, *British Democracy at the Cross-Roads*, (London, George Allen & Unwin, 1985).

⁴ R. Inglehart, *The Silent Revolution: Changing Values and Political Styles Among Western Publics* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1977); H. Kitschelt, "A Silent Revolution in Europe", J. Hayward & C. Page (eds.), *Governing the New Europe*, (Cambridge, Polity Press, 1995); I. Crewe, "Voting and the Electorate", in P. Dunleavy, A. Gamble, I. Holliday & G. Peele (eds.), *Developments in British Politics 4*, (Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1993).

but related non-material issues or cleavages.⁵ In this context the ‘silent revolution’ placed new issues on the ‘non-material’ dimension, rather than introducing an entirely new issue dimension consisting of post-materialist politics. Kitschelt, therefore, argues that Inglehart’s case for post-materialist cleavages is exaggerated, inasmuch as these represent one of many manifestations of non-material politics.⁶ The issues that formed the bases for both socio-economic and non-material competition in Western Europe in the 1990s have developed and changed considerably since the immediate post-war era, hence the two broad dimensions which provide a more long-term perspective.

UNCERTAINTY AS THE LINK BETWEEN THE TWO AXES

Institutionalised uncertainty represents one of the fundamental bases for liberal democracy, and provides a link between the material and non-material dimensions of competition. Uncertainty lies at the heart of Przeworski’s and Di Palma’s analyses of democratisation, inasmuch as democracy can be considered consolidated when all major players accept the ‘rules of the game’ and its in-built uncertainties of outcome.⁷ The players’ acceptance of the game is based on built-in uncertainty, in democracies, “distributional conflicts must be institutionalized”.⁸ This uncertainty is derived primarily from ‘decentralisation’ of decision making, as decisions are made by a number of actors, and not one single actor (the dictator). Outcomes depend on the strategies of several players, not one single agent, and can, therefore, not be anticipated with certainty. Though the rules and procedures are known, the outcomes of the political game are not known *ex ante* by any of the participants. However, while uncertainty of outcome may be built into the democratic process, there is room for debate on the extent to which it is desirable. The rules of the game determine the extent to which outcomes are uncertain, for example through providing ‘safety nets’ for losers in the economic game. A political party’s approach to economic policy is, therefore, based to a large extent on its degree of acceptance of market-based (and uncertain) distribution of resources. This, in turn is linked to democratisation and the economic

⁵ H. Kitschelt, *The Transformation of European Social Democracy*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1994).

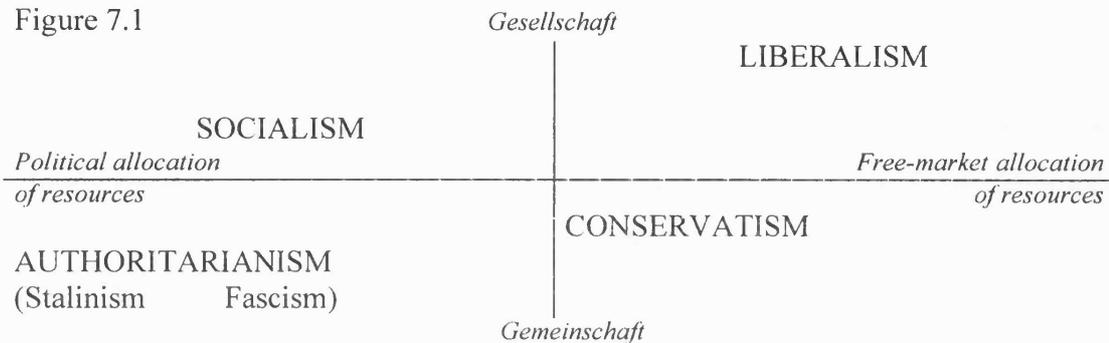
⁶ Kitschelt, “A Silent Revolution in Europe.”

⁷ A. Przeworski, *Democracy and the Market: Political and Economic Reforms in Eastern Europe and Latin America*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1991), p.26-27; G. Di Palma, *To Craft Democracies: An Essay on Democratic Transitions*, (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1990).

⁸ Przeworski, *Democracy and the Market*, p.12, 180.

status quo at the time. Late Nineteenth and early Twentieth Century political ideologies are depicted in figure 7.1.

Figure 7.1



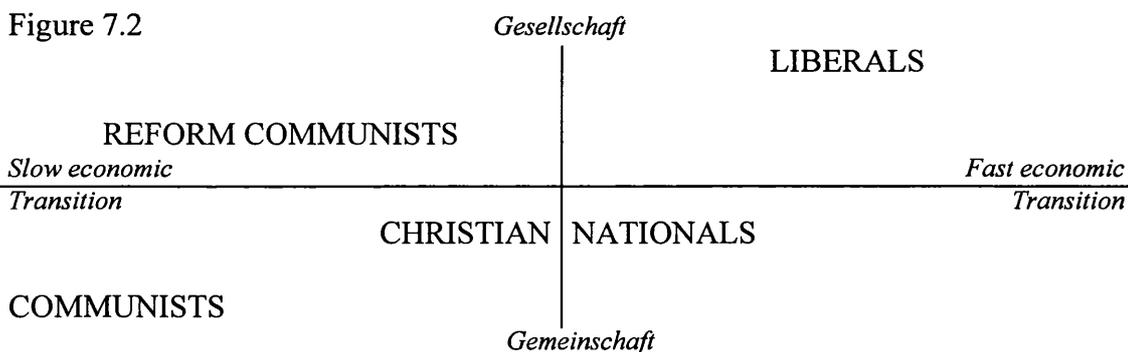
The broad political movements at the turn of the century are easily located in this grid. The conservative status quo, based on free-market allocation of resources modified by protectionism, was challenged on two fronts, first by secular, free-market liberalism and later by socialism. These challenges to the status quo focused on two forms of uncertainty, the socialists pressing for breaking down social hierarchies (uncertainty) but instituting a system of political distribution of resources (certainty), and the liberals focusing primarily on the benefits of increased uncertainty inherent in economic distributions of resources. The socialist and liberal positions are based on advocating change on both dimensions, increasing social mobility (both) and economic uncertainty (liberals advocating moving to a more free-market regime) or change of the economic system (towards a different system of economic certainty). Over time, as the right occupied more free market-oriented positions, the main line of political competition in West European politics came to run from the upper left corner in figure 7.1 to the lower right, ‘libertarian-oriented’ social democracy against free-market social conservatism.⁹ The old right’s options in response to challenges from socialism and liberalism lay in a move to the right in figure 7.1, towards modern free-market conservatism, or down and to the left, towards right-wing authoritarianism and autarky (social and economic ‘certainty’). With the failure of fascism, West European politics has been dominated by

⁹ This argument is based on Kitschelt, *The Transformation of European Social Democracy*, Chapters One and Two. A debate on Thatcher’s policy was cast in similar terms: B. Jessop et Al., “Authoritarian Populism, Two Nations and Thatcherism”, *New Left Review*, 147 (1984), 32-60; S. Hall, “Authoritarian Populism: A Reply”, *New Left Review*, 151 (1985) 115-124; B. Jessop et Al., “Thatcherism and the Politics of Hegemony: A Reply to Hall”, *New Left Review*, 153 (1985), 87-101.

left – right competition by way of modern free-market conservatism vs. social democracy or free-market liberalism vs. social democracy.

Extending this grid to post-communist East Central European politics presents relatively few problems. The horizontal axis representing the mainstream socio-economic ‘left-right’ dimension in Twentieth Century West European politics as defined by Lijphart is closely related to the set of economic issues which dominate the East Central European economic system changes. The privatisation process reflects the question of ownership of the means of production and the government’s role in the economy, while questions concerning the scope of welfare programmes and social protection correspond to Lijphart’s issues of redistribution of wealth. The non-material dimension is somewhat more nebulous. Though political system change from communism to pluralism was accomplished rapidly, a range of non-material issues have been salient in post-communist politics, e.g., the Catholic Church’s role in Polish politics.

Figure 7.2



The grid in figure 7.2 looks deceptively similar to that in figure 7.1. However, the starting point (status quo) was different in the post-communist case, as the *ancien regime* (communism) was associated with political allocation of resources. The conservative option thus lay in the lower left quadrant, and liberalism, not social democracy, represented the most radical challenge. Therefore, the logic of uncertainty, which links the two axes, did not operate in the same way as in Twentieth Century West European politics.

LEFT – RIGHT COMPETITION UNDER THE CONDITIONS OF POST-COMMUNISM

The triple nature of the ‘revolutions’ in East Central Europe in 1989/90 has already been established (see Chapter Two, above). System change meant both economic and political change, with questions related to nationalism and national identity ever-present in the background. However, divisions over economic and political system change reflected the optimal pace of transition rather than the final goal. In contrast to the inter-war period’s readily available alternative systems, communism in the USSR and Fascism in Italy and Germany, the 1990s are dominated by one model: liberal democracy.¹⁰ Cleavages based on political system change centred on two main issues, the acceptability of individuals associated with the *ancien regime* and the extent to which they should be ‘cleansed’ from the political and/or economic system – ‘lustration’. More significantly, there was an underlying difference between those who stood to benefit from opening up the political and social system, and those individuals and groups for whom privileged positions depended on their status under the former regime.¹¹ This is the basis for individual or group interests against rapid social system change, i.e., increased social mobility and break-down of the *ancien regime* hierarchical order. Much the same holds for economic system change. The key issues centred on shock therapy, price liberalisation, provisions of welfare ‘safety-nets’ and the type and speed of privatisation. In Kitschelt’s terms, groups of individuals with common economic interests are readily identifiable, based the difference between individuals who possess skills and resources that are transferable to a market economy, and those who rely on non-transferable skills or political connections. Extreme examples would include professionals (e.g., the transferable skills of a doctor) and ‘apparatchiks’ (bureaucratic skills linked to the Communist Party) respectively.

LEFT – RIGHT COMPETITION: LINKING POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC SYSTEM CHANGE

The principle of uncertainty offers a link between the two dimensions in East Central Europe politics, on a basis that is comparable with West European politics. Though a

¹⁰ F. Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*, (London, Hamish Hamilton, 1992).

¹¹ H. Kitschelt, “The Formation of Party Systems in East Central Europe”, *Politics and Society*, 20:1 (1992), 7-50.

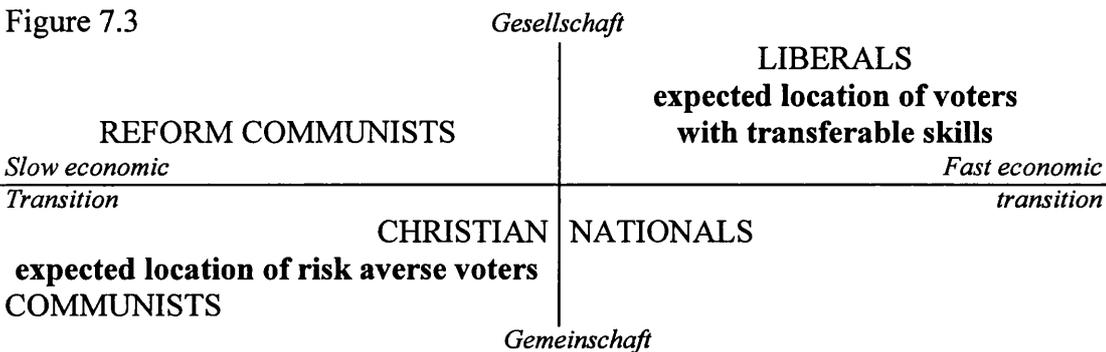
left – right dimension for post-communist politics could be extrapolated from economic cleavages, the West European experience suggests that there is more to left – right competition than economic policy. Though Lijphart’s four-factor economic dimension dominates left – right competition, figure 7.1 indicates that it does so in conjunction with non-economic dimensions. Risk aversion and the prospect of uncertainty provided the link between the two axes in figure 7.1. In figure 7.2, risk and uncertainty are implicit in the reduction of government support for ‘losers’ as welfare state ‘safety nets’ are dismantled. The certainties which characterise the outcomes of political distribution of resources are abandoned in favour of the uncertain outcomes of the free market. Similarly, a shift up the vertical axis involves a reduction of the certainties associated with social hierarchies, in favour of a more mobile and less structured social order. Established, risk-averse elites are set to oppose both changes, while an emerging political elite could be expected to press for precisely such changes. Predictably, therefore, both the 1980s communist elites and Nineteenth Century conservatism are located somewhere in the lower quadrants, varying along the horizontal axis depending on the economic system of the day. The key difference is that in East Central Europe, the strongest opposition came from the upper right quadrant, in the form of free-market, individualist, liberalism (rather than social democracy).

A guide to group interests can be derived from the resources with which actors in the political game entered the post-communist era.¹² While a series of resources and skills were transferable to a free market economy, a number of groups relied on resources or skills that were not transferable. Moreover, some resources are derived from the individual’s position in the social hierarchy, while others are independent of the social order. The combination of transferable skills and resources that are independent of the social order should place an individual or interest group in the top right quadrant, i.e., willing to face the risks and uncertainties associated with both social/political and economic change. By extension, groups or individuals that rely on resources derived from their social or political position under the communist system should find themselves opposed to libertarian policies *and* rapid transition to the free market, i.e., in the lower left quadrant. The point is that the social and economic dimensions are linked, not merely through risk aversion, but also due to the links between social/political

¹² H. Kitschelt, “The Formation of Party Systems in East Central Europe”.

position and ‘non-transferable resources.’ Hence Kitschelt’s argument that parties located in the upper left and lower right quadrants should face poor electoral fortunes, as they would find limited support among voters (in figure 7.3 the expected location of most voters would be the upper right and lower left quadrants).¹³ The failure of this prediction was explained in Chapter Five in terms of anti-incumbency voting and economic performance, rather than in terms of the existence of an ‘under-represented social democrat constituency’ in the upper left quadrant.¹⁴

Figure 7.3



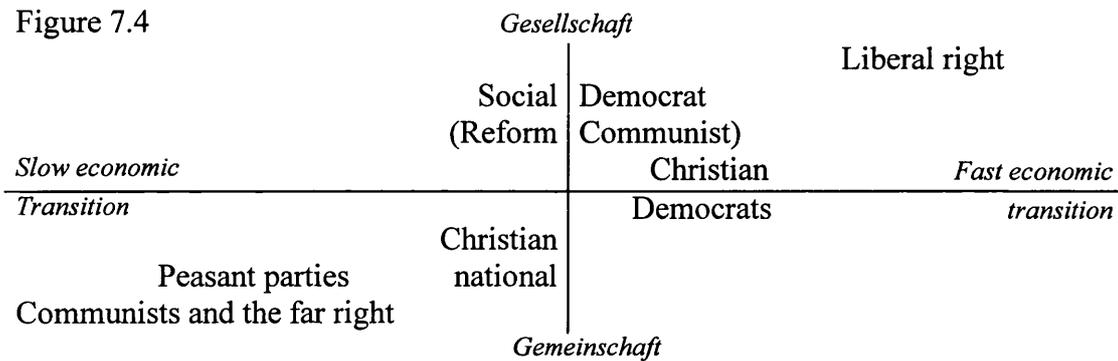
Borrowing terms from West European politics, a rough guide to party alignments in post-communist East Central Europe is set out in figure 7.4. Though this simplification ignores a number of idiosyncrasies, it highlights the changing alignments of parties over the period of the first parliaments. First, the reform communist parties moved considerably to the right in economic terms during the first five years after the fall of communism, to the extent that the SLD, the MSzP and SV advocated and implemented more free-market-oriented policies than Olszewski’s conservative right in Poland, the MDF in Hungary and the HzDS in Slovakia respectively. Second, divisions in the Christian national camp prompted the development of a Christian democrat right, more akin to its West European counterpart. Though the party alignments set out in figure 7.4 represent a simplification of four complex party systems, they indicate something akin to the left – right dimension in West European politics, i.e., a combination of the two axes into one single dimension. However, while the main line in West European politics

¹³ H. Kitschelt, “The Formation of Party Systems in East Central Europe.” Kitschelt has since modified his model, H. Kitschelt, “Formation of Party Cleavage in Post-Communist Democracies: Theoretical Propositions”, *Party Politics*, 1:4 (1995), 447-472.

¹⁴ I. Selenyi & S. Selenyi, “The Vacuum in Hungarian Politics: Class and Parties”, *New Left Review*, 187, 121-137.

runs from the upper left to lower right, the main concentration of East Central European parties runs along a line running from the lower left to upper right. “[W]hereas in advanced capitalist societies libertarian views go with a moderate left anti-capitalist economic reformism, in post-communist countries libertarians are the most ardent supported of rightist, pro-capitalist change of the economy.”¹⁵

Figure 7.4



The two-dimensional grid could be simplified into one single dimension based on party alignments running from the lower left to upper right. One end of this single-dimension spectrum features parties oriented towards a closed and homogeneous society, combined with a slow pace of economic transition. Risk aversion provides the link between the two. Parties and interest groups associated with this end of the political spectrum represent scepticism towards the risks and uncertainties entailed by radical social *and* economic transformation, combined with defence of the interests of individuals or groups which stood to lose financially or socially from the system changes. The opposite end of this single dimension would feature parties accepting uncertainty and risk, advocating ‘open’ social structures, combined with market-based allocation of resources. This is associated with individuals or groups that stood to benefit from the economic transition, e.g., by way of being in possession of skills that are transferable to the market economy. The result is a single dimension, running from a ‘closed society’ end to an ‘open society’ end. This is as close as post-communist politics comes to a single ‘left – right’ dimension, i.e., a one-dimensional interpretation of political competition.

¹⁵ Kitschelt, “A Silent Revolution in Europe”, p.146.

Figure 7.5

| | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------|---------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------|
| Communist left | Peasant parties | Christian nationals | Social/Chr. democrats | Liberal right |
| <i>risk aversion/‘closed’ society</i> | | | <i>uncertainty/‘open’ society</i> | |

While the two-dimensional grid used above might prove useful for analysis of the immediate post-communist period, it is not necessary to separate the two dimensions after about 1991, when the reform communist parties had begun to adopt free-market strategies. While keeping the two dimensions separate allows finer distinctions within each of the four East Central European party systems, there are considerable advantages to be had by amalgamating the two axes as per figure 7.5. As the broad groups of parties lie more or less in one line, relatively little is lost by combining the two axes. The advantage of this amalgamation lies in its permitting the introduction of a dimension which has proved particularly prominent and problematic in East Central European politics, if not across European politics, over the last century: nationalism.¹⁶

NATIONALISM AND LEFT–RIGHT COMPETITION

Questions concerning nationalism have been central to East Central European politics for the last century and a half, if not longer. The challenge for the political scientist lies in analysing East Central European politics with due reference to nationalism, without losing sight of political competition on socio-economic issues or the libertarian vs. authoritarian dimension discussed above. Nationalism has been defined as a political doctrine that holds that the world is divided into nations and that the boundaries of nations and states should be congruent.¹⁷ In East Central Europe this condition is clearly far from being met, by virtually any definition of ‘nation’. Nevertheless, nationhood provides a key link between the state as an institution and its population, if not *the* key link. It has continuously played the role of a legitimising principle, even during the communist period. Yet one key concern of nationalists, border change, was all but

¹⁶ G. Schopflin, ‘Nationalism and Ethnicity in Europe, East and West’, in C. Kupchan (ed.) *Nationalism and Nationalities in the New Europe*, (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1995).

¹⁷ E. Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, (Oxford, Blackwell, 1983).

eliminated by the Helsinki agreement in 1975 and the CSCE/OSCE arrangements. The key focus of current nationalists is therefore not border change, but the implications of the lack of congruence between nations and states. Minority rights, language laws, definition of citizenship and protection of 'diaspora minorities' in neighbouring states have become the major 'nationalist' issues.

NATIONALISM AND POLITICAL COMPETITION: CIVIC AND ETHNIC APPROACHES TO NATIONHOOD

Several theories of nationalism distinguish between two types of nationalism in Europe: civic and ethnic; territorial or cultural; western and eastern; or political and cultural.¹⁸ Whether developed as a normative or descriptive distinction, the division centres on the process of state-building. Civic nationalism is usually taken to indicate nationhood being conferred upon the population of an existing state, e.g., by way of turning 'peasants into Frenchmen'.¹⁹ Membership of the nation is obtained through citizenship. Ethnic nationalism reverses this approach, inasmuch as states are (supposedly) built on the basis of existing nations or ethnic groups. The state-building (or rather 'empire-disintegrating') process leading to Hungarian, Romanian and Bulgarian statehood in the latter half of the nineteenth century, and to the Polish and Czechoslovak (two 'existing nations') states in the aftermath of WW I, furnished prominent examples. Greek and Serb nationalism can be added to this list. By extension, civic nationalism has been considered democratic and liberal, due to its focus on citizenship, whilst ethnic nationalism has been associated with 'nasty' nationalism.²⁰ In a region featuring blurred ethnic boundaries and pockets of minorities, this poses a number of problems for liberal democracy, not least in terms of political equality.

Yet the bi-polarity of this approach is misleading. Nationhood cannot be divorced entirely from either its political or its cultural bases. It is conditional not merely upon

¹⁸ Respectively: A. D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1986); H. Kohn, *The Idea of Nationalism: A Study in its Origins and Background* (New York, Macmillan, 1944, 1958); J. Plamenatz, "Two Types of Nationalism", in E. Kamenka (ed.), *Nationalism: The Nature and Evolution of an Idea*, (London, Edward Arnold, 1976); J. Hutchinson, *The Dynamics of Cultural Nationalism*, (London, Allen & Unwin, 1987). See also R. Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany*, (Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1992).

¹⁹ E. Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen: the Modernisation of Rural France, 1870-1914*, (Stanford, Calif., Stanford University Press, 1976).

²⁰ Plamenatz, "Two Types of Nationalism".

the notion of the state, but also upon the notion of a state that rules in the name of the people.²¹ It also includes a more tangible basis, namely the ‘ethnie’.²² Though myths can be invented, or communities imagined, there are few, if any, cases of successful national identity being completely invented.²³ Nationhood thus combines both political and cultural elements, and “should be conceptualised as simultaneously having a political (civic) and a cultural (ethnic) dimension.”²⁴ In political terms, “nationhood became the tissue that was to connect the entire population of the state with its political institutions and claim to exercise power or control over it in the name of popular sovereignty. This process is the civic core of nationhood, its channel into politics.”²⁵ Nationhood is therefore linked directly to citizenship and democratisation, as the state exercises national self-determination on behalf of the people. And for *the people* read *the nation*.²⁶ Even if nationalism has little to say about domestic political arrangements, it holds that government should be on behalf of, if not by, the people/nation. In cultural terms, nationalism is based on a number of elements summed in Smith’s concept of the ‘ethnie’.²⁷ The ethnic origins of nations include a mixture of religion, language, and endogamous communities, but also common myths of ancestry or foundation myths. The ethnic group is sustained by “a series of rituals and by establishing various markers that differentiate it from other groups.”²⁸ Even if there is no ‘ethnie’, which is arguably the case in the USA, a range of myths are drafted or invented to form a cultural base for nationhood.

‘Ethnic’ and ‘civic’ nationalism can therefore be understood as ‘ideal types’, two ends of a continuous dimension rather than as two separate and alternative (let alone mutually exclusive) approaches to understanding and delineating nationhood. Political parties can be associated with either end of this dimension, or any point along it, but no

²¹ G. Schopflin, “Ethnic Minorities in Central and Eastern Europe: Analyses and Solutions”, (manuscript, 1996); E. Kedourie, *Nationalism*, (London, Hutchinson, 1960).

²² A. D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*. Smith’s term is used here to emphasise the ethnic bases for nationhood, as opposed to its political elements.

²³ B. R. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, (London, Verso, 1983). The German Democratic Republic may have attempted this, but even in this case the nation appropriated figures from imperial Germany, down to and including Bismarck! G. Schopflin, *Politics in Eastern Europe: 1945-1992*, (Oxford, Blackwell, 1993), p.222; M. Fulbrook, “Myth-Making and National Identity: The Case of the GDR”, in G. Hosking & G. Schopflin (eds.), *Myths and Nationhood*, (London, Hurst & Company, 1997).

²⁴ Schopflin, “Nationalism and Ethnicity in Europe, East and West”.

²⁵ Schopflin, “Nationalism and Ethnicity in Europe, East and West”.

²⁶ M. Billig, *Banal Nationalism*, (London, Sage, 1995).

²⁷ A. D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*.

political movement or organisation in the state can be non-aligned. Socialist and liberal movements may have some ideological difficulties in dealing with the political implications of multi-ethnic states, but a strategy which ignores the ethnic dimensions of nationhood is by default a 'civic' approach. The political question becomes which of the two aspects of nationhood is to be dominant. In post-communist Eastern Europe this is illustrated nowhere better than by the debates over citizenship laws in Estonia and Latvia, which have featured proposals for language tests, proof of lineage from pre-Soviet residents, and transitional periods of residence without citizenship for (ethnic Russian) residents who fail to meet the criteria.²⁹ However, in the four East Central European states approaches to nationhood have been less directly linked to questions concerning concrete day-to-day matters. The absence of large ethnic minorities within their borders, with the exception of ethnic Hungarians in Slovakia, has removed most of the pressing questions concerning the relationship between ethnic identity and politics. Yet nationalism remains politically salient. Even if parties can agree more or less on *de facto* treatment of minorities, they remain divided in terms of their overall approach to citizenship and nationhood.

NATIONALISM, IDEOLOGY AND LEFT – RIGHT COMPETITION

Despite the different ethnic make-up of the four East Central Europe states, all have featured divisions between parties that take predominantly ethnic or civic approaches to nationalism. Three different scenarios all permit political competition along the ethnic – civic dimension. First, the classic minorities problem in East Central Europe is the ethnic minority within the state, and this is often a minority which is the titular nation of a neighbouring 'mother state'. Slovakia's 600,000-strong Hungarian minority provides the best case in point, where the salient questions have concerned language, education, local autonomy, organisation of local government and power-sharing. Second, the converse is the 'nation state' with co-nationals residing in neighbouring states as

²⁸ Schopflin, "Ethnic Minorities in Central and Eastern Europe: Analyses and Solutions".

²⁹ OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities Max van der Stoep criticised Latvia's naturalisation law in April 1997, *RFE/RL Newslines*, No. 6, Part II, 8 April 1997. See also A. Lieven, *The Baltic Revolution: Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania and the Path to Independence*, (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1993).

(potentially irredentist) minorities.³⁰ Poland and Hungary both lost substantial territories less than two or three generations ago, leaving diaspora minorities in the former Soviet Union and Romania, Slovakia and former Yugoslavia respectively. Focus on the ethnic dimension of nationhood implicitly calls into question the legitimacy of boundaries, however much commitment is expressed to peaceful and agreed change and respect for current borders. Third, the dual nature of nationhood means that tension between parties focusing on its ethnic and civic dimensions cannot be ruled out even in homogeneous states without substantial diaspora populations. Nationhood can still play a substantial symbolic role in party politics, as Klaus' use of Czech national imagery illustrates.³¹ The CSSD reacted by rejecting this mixing of civic and ethnic elements of nationhood, focusing instead on its civic dimensions.³² Though few issues reflect this division, it remains part of the language that the parties use for self-identification.

In ideological terms, liberalism and socialism are not particularly well equipped to deal with the political implications of ethnic diversity. Both are universalistic doctrines, and therefore stand in stark contrast to the particularistic approaches to politics inherent in nationalism. The two focus on the *individual* and *class* respectively, not on *community*. Individual or class identity provides the basis for politics, and, therefore, for party competition. Society is a *Gesellschaft* rather than a *Gemeinschaft*. In contrast, conservatism and populism focus on the community, in the form of Burke's continuity between past, present and future generations or populist focus on the *narod* or traditional (rural) community. The latter is usually contrasted to the modern or cosmopolitan urban elite, in both the East European and Russian variants.³³ Both conservatism and populism's notions of the community are readily equated with the nation, made up of the community (past, present and future) in conservative thought or represented by the peasants in peasant populism. This distinction between liberalism and conservatism was evident in the differences between the 'democratic opposition' and the 'national opposition' to communism. While civil society was understood in

³⁰ R. Brubaker, "National Minorities, Nationalizing States and External Homelands in the New Europe", in *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996).

³¹ K. Williams, "National Myths in the New Czech Liberalism", in Hosking & Schopflin (eds.), *Myths and Nationhood*.

³² Zeman went so far as to compared the ODS to the Republicans after ODS Senator Klausner hinted that Romas should be moved outside Prague (Klausner also attracted criticism from the ODS), CTK, 3 July, 1997.

³³ M. Canovan, *Populism*, (New York, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1981).

terms of *the individual* as far as the liberal opposition was concerned, a second, more conservative, approach to 'civil society' centred on *the nation* and *the Church*. For example, opposition could be expressed in terms of liberal rights such as freedom of religion, based on either individual or collective rights.³⁴ Though this division was sometimes obfuscated by expedience, it was expressed organisationally in the Hungarian opposition (separating the populist or national camp from the democratic opposition formed around the journal *Bezelo*).

By the same logic that linked the material and non-material axes in figures 7.1 – 7.4 above, risk aversion and acceptance of uncertainty ought to provide a link between the 'open – closed' dimension and the 'civic – ethnic' dimension. Commitment to diversity or 'open society' could be linked to 'civic' nationalism by much the same logic that linked liberal non-material policy and the free market. Civic nationalism (i.e., a civic approach to nationhood) suggests a degree of diversity by way of allowing for ethnically mixed states. In the context of economic and political transition, it is difficult to combine a focus on the civic elements of nationhood and the ensuing (uncertain) diversity with non-liberal economic and social policy designed to limit diversity. Attempts to combine civic nationalism with limited economic transition and illiberal policies should thus come under considerable strain. But the reverse does not hold. Acceptance of uncertainty and risk-taking need not imply a commitment to civic nationalism. If West European liberalism has tended to associate the two with each other, this is partly due to liberalism's focus on rationality, which suggests emphasis on the political rather than the ethnic aspects of citizenship, i.e., civic nationalism. Yet economic risk-taking does not necessarily imply civic nationalism, even when it is associated with other non-economic liberal values. Individualistic liberalism can exist within clearly defined ethnic boundaries, even if this poses awkward questions about non-citizens. Apartheid South Africa, or at least its National Party, represented an extreme example. The logical link between liberalism and civic nationalism is thus somewhat weaker than that between free market orientation and liberal non-economic policy. More to the point, however, some states lack the immediate domestic problems associated with a large ethnic minority. While the need to deal with such issues may

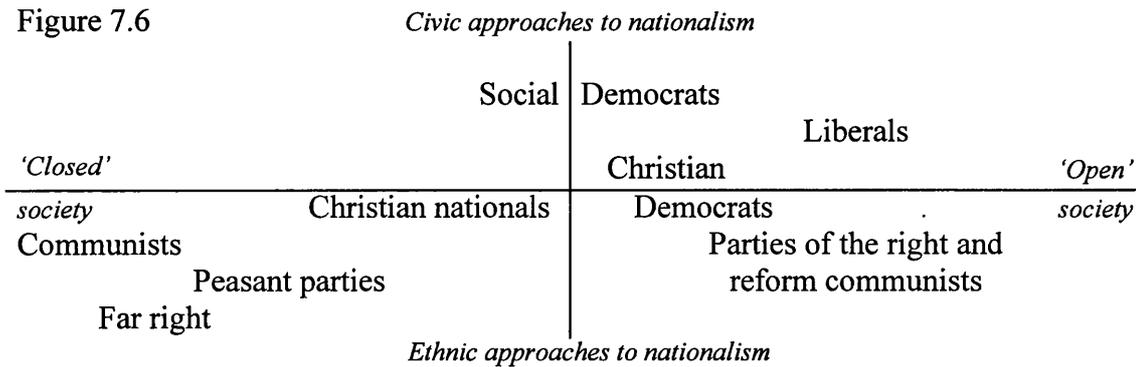
³⁴ J. Szacki, *Liberalism after Communism*, (Budapest, Central European University Press, 1994), p.84, 95-96.

expose the logical problem of combining liberalism and ethnic nationalism, this combination is far less problematic in practice in states with minor minority problems. By way of example, the Czech government's approach to its small Roma minority has raised some awkward questions, but it has hardly undermined the ODS.

At the other end of the spectrum the logic holds to a greater degree, as defence of social hierarchies and commitments to political redistribution of wealth are associated with ethnic nationalism as a means by which uncertainty is kept at bay. Ethnic nationalism can be deployed rationally as a tool in defence of the interests of a community against a 'cosmopolitan' threat from free-market policies or breakdown of old social hierarchies. This applies regardless of the existence of substantial ethnic minorities within a state's borders, the mere invoking of 'foreign conspiracies' is sufficient. Conversely, the community focus associated with ethnic nationalism may make individualistic liberalism difficult, though elements of ethnic nationalism can be combined with a relatively liberal approach to minorities if these are sufficiently small (and can be overlooked). In the case of substantial domestic minorities, however, tension between liberal individual rights and an ethnic approach to nationhood must be expected.

The link between approaches to nationalism and the main 'left – right' (or rather 'open – closed') dimension of political competition is therefore weaker than that between economic and non-economic issues. If a grid is drawn up representing the 'civic – ethnic' and 'open – closed' dimensions, several parties fall into the lower right quadrant. East Central European parties do not always conform to the 'families' set out in figure 7.1. The purpose of the grid is to suggest the spread of party 'families' across the grid. The nationalist and peasant parties by and large conform to expectations, as do most of the Christian national parties. However, the liberal, social democrat/democratic left and Christian democrat parties are less predictable, as the next section will demonstrate when the actual alignment of parties in post-communist East Central Europe is analysed in more detail.

Figure 7.6



PARTY ALIGNMENTS IN EAST CENTRAL EUROPE

Party alignments in East Central Europe have been obfuscated by a remarkable degree of consensus on the goals of the economic and political transition. After 1989, there were literally no normative alternatives to liberal democracy and the free market. The main divisions between parties were over how to achieve these goals, and the pace of economic reform. This generated great similarities in party programmes in Hungary, Poland and the Czechoslovak successor states, most of which called for free market-oriented reforms and integration into West European economic and security structures (the 'return to Europe'). Programmes, therefore, tend to be of limited value in assessing party alignments, compared with speeches, interviews or statements by party elites as reported in the media. Though programmes may prove useful on specific issues, particularly when parties go against the free-market consensus, they cannot always be accepted uncritically. The party alignments and *familles spirituelles* discussed below have, therefore, been based only partly on programmes, and primarily on evidence drawn from the contemporary media, reflecting speeches, statements, interviews and occasional analyses by journalists, concerning party policy and party alignments. This has been supplemented by reference to parties' activities in parliament, e.g., support for legislation on abortion.

THE LIBERAL AND BURGERLICH PARTIES

The liberal parties of East Central Europe form a relatively cohesive group. All fall into one of the two right-hand quadrants in figure 7.6, largely due to their economic policy and libertarian policies on 'non-material' questions. However, there is less consistency on the nationalist dimension. While the SzDSz, UD and KLD have maintained the classical liberal position, more or less ignoring the national question, Fidesz and the ODS have chosen to adopt more 'ethnic' approaches to nationhood. This combination of liberalism and conservatism is captured in the German term *bürgerlich*, which has clear right-wing connotations and is used to denote the Norwegian non-socialist parties. This is more appropriate than the neutral 'civic' often used in English translations, because it reflects an urban, bourgeois, middle class and cosmopolitan outlook, which is not necessarily liberal in all non-economic matters, nationalism in particular.

In Poland the UW (the UD and KLD before they merged in 1994) has taken the 'classical' liberal approach to politics, focusing primarily on the economic transition. The Balcerowicz plan represented the most radical shock therapy in the region, and the two parties refused to modify their stance after defeat in the polls, maintaining opposition to Olszewski during the 1991/92 winter. The KLD was the more ardent advocate of free market liberalism, as evident in its demands for a 'liberal minimum' to be guaranteed in the merger, and in some UD members' fear this might herald a shift to the right.³⁵ In terms of non-economic policy, the key question dominating Polish post-communist politics has been the role of the Church, particularly on abortion laws. Again the KLD proved the more explicitly liberal party, while the UD left the issue up to its members according to their convictions.³⁶ Both parties' policy on the religious neutrality of the state was brought into the new party.³⁷ The two parties confirm the general observation that liberals and socialists share "difficulty in the understanding of nationalism, because they both derive their first principles from economic rationality."³⁸

³⁵ PAP in Polish, 1822 gmt 3 March 1994 (SWB 05/03/94); Zofia Kuratowska, leader of the DU Socio-Liberal Faction, PAP in Polish, 1630 gmt 26 February 1994 (SWB 02/03/94).

³⁶ T. Mazowiecki (UD leader), Polish Radio, 1300 gmt 29 November 1992 (SWB 01/12/92).

³⁷ Mazowiecki on the UD policy, PAP in English 1858 gmt 4 April 1993 (SWB 06/04/93); Kuratowska on the merger, PAP in Polish 1630 gmt 26 February 1994 (SWB 02/03/94). This was part of KLD's above-cited 'liberal minimum', PAP in Polish, 1822 gmt 3 March 1994 (SWB 05/03/94).

³⁸ Schopflin, "Nationalism and Ethnicity in Europe, East and West", p.43.

Key statements usually included reference to the free market economy, privatisation, freedom of the individual, religious neutrality of the state, minority rights, and local government, but made few references to nationalism.³⁹

The Polish Beer Lovers' Party (PPPP) was East Central Europe's purest free-market business-oriented party. Despite its less than serious origins and its preoccupation with promotion of beer, most PPPP candidates returned to the Sejm in the October 1991 were independent businessmen.⁴⁰ Within a month the parliamentary PPPP had split into two camps. The Polish Economic Programme (PPG), consisting of 12 of the PPPP's 16 deputies led by Tomasz Bankowski, took up a free market position closely aligned with the KLD and the UD.⁴¹ Better known as Big Beer, it remained part of the liberal camp until the merger with the KLD one year later, supporting the UD and the KLD against Olszewski's government, e.g., in rejecting the government's economic programme.⁴² The remainder of the party all but disintegrated, one deputy joining the SLD.⁴³ The PPPP's liberal stand on non-economic matters was illustrated by the annual congress' resolution in favour of a referendum on abortion.⁴⁴ Like the KLD and the UD, the PPPP appeared to be not so much a 'civic nationalist' party as a party ignoring nationalist questions.

The OH and ODA in the Czech Republic and the SzDSz in Hungary are close relatives of the UD and KLD in both economic and nationalist terms. Like the Polish liberal parties, the ODA, OH and SzDSz all emphasised their commitment to rapid economic transition. The ODA even proved critical of Klaus over slow economic reform in 1996-97, and its 1996 party conference emphasised privatisation and accelerated macro-

³⁹ B. Gemerek, PAP in English 1915 gmt 2 October 1993 (SWB 05/10/93); PAP in Polish 1824 gmt 4 November 1993 (SWB 06/11/93); Kuratowska, PAP 26 February 1994 (SWB 02/03/94); D. Tusk (KLD leader) PAP in Polish 1755 gmt 9 February 1994 (SWB 11/02/94); KLD's 'liberal minimum', PAP in Polish, 1822 gmt 3 March 1994 (SWB 05/03/94).

⁴⁰ It has been described as a "cabaret routine" turned serious (L. Vinton "'Outsider' Parties and the Political Process in Poland", *RFE/RL Research Report* 3:31, (21 January 1994) and "harmless political cranks [...] hijacked by entrepreneurial elements", V. Zubeck, "The Fragmentation of Poland's Political Party System", *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, 26:1 (1993), 14-71, p.59. The campaign for promotion of Prezydent beer eventually led to embezzlement allegations against PPPP's president J. Rewinski. PAP in English 1602 gmt March 1993 (SWB 03/03/93).

⁴¹ PAP in English 1420 gmt 11 November, 1730 gmt 14 November and 0200 gmt 21 November 1991 (SWB 13/11/91, 20/11/92 and 22/11/92).

⁴² PAP in English 2314 gmt 28 February 1992 (SWB 03/03/92).

⁴³ PAP in English 1354 gmt 5 May 1993 (SWB 10/05/93).

⁴⁴ PAP in English 1839 gmt 22 November 1992 (SWB 25/11/92).

economic reform, coupled with de-centralisation and tax cuts.⁴⁵ When they split in 1991, one commentator described the ODA and ODS platforms as “in many respects, identical”.⁴⁶ Neither the SzDSz nor the ODA have attempted to use nationalism for political mobilisation. Taking this approach one step further, the OH relied on its credibility as a party of the former dissidents to take the high ground on liberal issues, while maintaining an overall free market oriented approach to the economy. The main difference between the ODA and SzDSz and their Polish counterparts has been their openness to coalitions with the left. Even though it is generally considered further to the right than the ODS, the ODA considered co-operation with the CSSD.⁴⁷ After the 1996 election, both the ODA and the KDU-CSL favoured a written agreement with the CSSD or a grand coalition.⁴⁸ Though the SzDSz joined the MSzP in government 1994-98, it remains open to alliances with other ‘non-extreme’ parties, i.e., Fidesz, and has advocated more radical and stricter economic measures than both the MDF-led government and the MSzP.⁴⁹

By contrast, Fidesz and the ODS have combined radical free market rhetoric with elements of ethnic nationalism. The ODS tempered its free market rhetoric with considerable welfare provisions, through focus on target-oriented welfare policy.⁵⁰ Nevertheless, it presided over remarkable economic progress, or at least that appeared to be the case until 1997, and attacked the CSSD’s alleged “idea of a very expensive welfare state,” hailing America’s combination of individualism and the market over that of unnamed “semi-socialist” West European countries.⁵¹ Though less critical of the West European experience, Fidesz adopted a similar, mixed, economic policy.⁵² For the

⁴⁵CTK in English 1338 gmt 23 March 1996 and Czech Radio Radiozurnal in Czech 1715 gmt 7 March 1996 (SWB 26/03/96 and 10/03/95).

⁴⁶J. Pehe, “The Realignment of Political forces”, *RFE Report on Eastern Europe*, 24 May 1991, p.3.

⁴⁷CTK in English 1337 gmt 4 June 1996 (SWB 06/06/96). The ODA demanded CSSD’s commitment before joining a minority coalition. Eventually this came in the form of a ‘deal’, not a written political agreement. CTK in English 1108 gmt 7 June 1996 (SWB 10/06/96); CTK in English 1912 gmt 27 June 1996 (SWB 29/06/96).

⁴⁸J. Kalvoda (ODA Chair) CTK in English 1338 gmt 23 March 1996 (SWB 26/03/96).

⁴⁹I. Peto, SzDSz President, interviewed by *Liberal Voice* (SzDSz Newsletter), 6:1-2, at <http://www.szdsz.hu/libvoice/index.html>.

⁵⁰CTK in English 1520 gmt 1 January 1995 (SWB 03/01/95); Klaus’ statement was welcomed by unions, CTK in English 1651 gmt 2 January 1995 (SWB 04/01/95).

⁵¹Klaus, cited by CTK, in English 1651 gmt 2 January 1995 (SWB 04/01/95) and 1242 gmt 7 December 1996; Czech Radio-Radiozurnal, in Czech 1200 gmt 11 May 1996 (SWB 09/12/96 and 13/05/96). He made a similar point at the Prognos forum in October 1995, CTK in English 1457 gmt 13 October 1995 (SWB 16/10/95).

⁵²K. Okolicsanyi “The Economic Programs of the Major Hungarian Parties”, *RFE Report on Eastern Europe*, 13 April 1990.

1998 election campaign, the party adopted an economic programme that failed to impress financial markets due to its commitments to cutting tax and increasing spending.⁵³ On nationalist questions both Fidesz and the ODS have found it expedient to emphasise a more ethnic approach to nationhood. In the run-up to the 1994 election, in the face of declining popularity, Fidesz decided to emphasise nationalist issues more strongly.⁵⁴ One year later it joined the KNDP and MDF in criticism of the government's handling of the Hungarian-Slovak treaty, on the grounds that the draft treaty did not confer constitutional status on Hungarian minorities abroad (which the three considered part of the Hungarian nation 'in a cultural sense').⁵⁵ In 1995, Fidesz's shift 'rightwards' included a name-change to Fidesz-MPP.⁵⁶ The ODS' problem with the 1993 citizenship law (which attracted Western criticism for obstructing Roma citizenship in the Czech Republic) led to the law's amendment in April 1996.⁵⁷ Given the predominantly negative attitude to the Roma in the Czech Republic, the *Financial Times* suggested that the ODS played on this issue for electoral advantage.⁵⁸ Criticism from the Council of Europe and the US Congress followed.⁵⁹ Though the ODS shares a pro-EU stance with its main competitors, it stresses defence of national interest and is more sceptical than the ODA and CSSD as far as the European Union's supranational power is concerned.⁶⁰ An analysis of Klaus' approach to national identity revealed extensive use of myths, invoking an approach to national identity that is more ethnic than civic.⁶¹ Its programme invokes national history more than those of its rivals.⁶²

Slovakia's DS (initially represented in parliament only by its chairman, Langos, who was elected as a KDH deputy) is the country's most liberal party in the classical sense. In 1996 it became the first party to call for open co-operation with the ethnic Hungarian parties, a move that was hailed by Egyutteles' (ethnic Hungarian party) Duray as "an

⁵³ "The Price of Austerity", *Business Central Europe*, June 1998.

⁵⁴ Jozsef Szajer, head of Fidesz national committee, *Magyar Hirlap*, 30 April 1994, p.11 (SWB 05 May 1994).

⁵⁵ Hungarian Radio, in Hungarian 1700 gmt 18 March 1996 (SWB 20/03/96).

⁵⁶ The MPP is translated as Hungarian Civic Party, though *polgari* translates into German as *bürgerlich*. T. Vitos, "FIDESZ-MPP for the New Bourgeoisie", *The Hungary Report*, No. 1:6, 7 May 1995.

⁵⁷ On Helsinki Committee criticism, see CTK, in English, 0837 gmt 1 February 1995 (SWB 01/02/95); on amendment, CTK, in English, 1000 gmt 26 April 1996 (SWB 27/04/96).

⁵⁸ T. Gross "A blot on the conscience - Czech attitudes on citizenship for gypsies come under fire" *Financial Times*, 19/12/94.

⁵⁹ CTK, in English, 1314 gmt 22 February 1996 (SWB 24/02/96).

⁶⁰ J. Pehe "Czech Parties Views on EU and NATO", *OMRI Analytical Brief*, 1:121, 20/05/96.

⁶¹ Williams, "National Myths in the New Czech Liberalism".

⁶² "The ODS Political Programme", 6th Congress, October 1995.

entirely new situation in Slovak politics.”⁶³ CTK described the DS as known “principally for [its] defence of civil rights”.⁶⁴ Its programme describes it as a “conservative, secular party,” citing the free individual as its cornerstone, praising free-market principles and invoking “traditional European values.”⁶⁵ Langos and ODA chairman Zantovsky both agreed that the DS is the closest Slovak counterpart to the ODA.⁶⁶ The DU is included among the liberal or *bürgerlich* parties because of its aspiration to belong to this ‘family’ of parties, in spite of the less than liberal background of some of its key members. It was set up when Moravcik’s DEUS (formerly the Alternative for Political Realism, formed by Moravcik and Roman Kovac upon their expulsion from HzDS) merged with Cernak’s NDS-NA. The three, who had left the Meciar cabinet shortly before, toned down their ethnic nationalist rhetoric considerably and adopted a more free market-oriented strategy.⁶⁷ However, this has more to do with personality conflicts than ideological divisions, with the DU taking president Michal Kovac’s side against Meciar.⁶⁸ DU deputy leader Budaj eventually accused the HzDS of “political terrorism.”⁶⁹ On economic policy, the party has proved critical of the Meciar governments’ slow pace of economic reform and their intervention in the economy.⁷⁰

THE DENOMINATIONAL AND CONFSSIONAL PARTIES

The confessional parties make up the most diffuse ‘family’ of parties on the post-communist scene, despite the limited number of parties. The KDNP epitomised the ideal type position, modesty on economic reform and reluctant to pursue shock therapy, and oriented towards ethnic nationalism. The term ‘Christian national’ has therefore been used frequently to describe the KDNP, and its Polish counterpart, the ZChN. By

⁶³ CTK, in English 1341 gmt 19 March 1996 (SWB 21/03/96).

⁶⁴ CTK, in English 1251 gmt 23 August 1994 (SWB 25/08/94).

⁶⁵ “Political Programme of the Democratic Party”, 18/11/95, <http://www.demstrana.sk/>.

⁶⁶ CTK news agency, Prague, in English 1208 gmt 9 May 1997 (SWB 11 May 1997).

⁶⁷ TASR news agency, Bratislava, in English 1905 gmt 25 March 1995 (SWB 27/03/95).

⁶⁸ Moravcik suggested the DU would contemplate co-operation with the HzDS, but only after Meciar retired from politics. TASR in English 1857 gmt 9 September 1994 (SWB 13/09/1994). In 1996, Huska stated that the HzDS’s coalition government was open to any party but the DU. CTK in English 1805 gmt 13 January 1996 (SWB 15/01/96).

⁶⁹ Budaj, cited by CTK, in English 1545 gmt 6 May 1996 (08/05/96), citing the police investigation of the DU’s list of signatures for the 1994 election and opposition parties’ exclusion from monitoring of security services.

⁷⁰ Budaj, TASR news agency, Bratislava, in English 1616 gmt 15 November 1996 (SWB 19/11/96).

contrast, the Czech and Slovak Christian democrat parties emulated their West European counterparts' economic policies, and have taken a stand on national questions that is more 'civic' than 'ethnic'. In the KDH's case this was driven by its support for maintaining the Czechoslovak state.⁷¹

The ZChN and the KDNP have both combined their ethnic approach to nationalism and their scepticism to free market politics, e.g., in the KDNP's opposition to privatisation of the food industry based partly on fear of foreign ownership.⁷² Its economic platform emphasised the "social market economy", whilst criticising the MSzP-SzDSz government's privatisation programme.⁷³ Both parties have taken a less than liberal stance on Church – state relations and the role of religion in politics. However, the ZChN's impact has been more limited than might be expected given Poland's overwhelmingly Catholic population, partly because religion had not translated into popular demand for restriction on divorce or abortion.⁷⁴ In Hungary, the 1996 KDNP programme was clear on this point: "*We support the family model with several children. [...] Our aim is the abortion free Hungary...*"⁷⁵ Commenting on the question of Hungarians beyond the border, KDNP-leader Bela Csepe agreed with Csurka's 'ethnic nationalists' demands (see MIEP, below), but in a "Christian democratic, real Hungarian way".⁷⁶ The party was critical of the MSzP-SzDSz government's alleged subordination of protection of the interests of Hungarians abroad to European integration.⁷⁷ Shortly before the break-up of the party, the KDNP was expelled from European Union of Christian Democrats over unacceptable links with MIEP.⁷⁸ Meanwhile, having failed to pass the 8% threshold for coalitions as part of the Fatherland Coalition in 1993, the ZChN threw in its lot with the AWS in 1997.

⁷¹ KDU-CSL, "The Principles of the Policy of the Christian and Democratic Union – Czechoslovak People's Party", undated, supplied by KDU-CSL International Office in 1997.

⁷² Hungarian Radio, 1600 gmt 31 March 1993 (SWB 05/04/93); DU economic spokesman Vaskovic, CTK, in English 1211 gmt 20 July 1995 and CTK, in English 1536 gmt 13 July 1995 (SWB 22/07/95 and 20/07/95).

⁷³ M. Jarosi, G. Szokolczay, A. Szanto, *Declaration of Platform*, September 1996. KDNP homepage, <http://www.kdnp.hu.anagprog.htm>.

⁷⁴ Louisa Vinton "Opinion Poll: Poles are Selective Catholics", *OMRI Daily Digest*, 08/08/94.

⁷⁵ M. Jarosi et al., *Declaration of Platform*, September 1996. Emphasis in the original.

⁷⁶ Hungarian Radio, 0500 gmt 24 April 1993 (SWB 28/04/93).

⁷⁷ M. Járosi et al., *Declaration of Platform*, September 1996. The programme also cites opposition to foreign participation in privatisation of utilities, banks and land, a position that would pose problems for EU membership.

⁷⁸ *RFE/RL Newslines*, No. 73, Part II, 15 July 1997.

The KDH, the KDU-CSL and the smaller KDS all come closer to West European Christian Democrat parties. On economic matters the KDU-CSL supported the Klaus governments' reform effort, albeit as the most vociferous advocate of welfare measures within the coalition.⁷⁹ Like some of its West European counterparts the KDU-CSL emphasises religious issues more than its allies.⁸⁰ The KDS leadership under Pilip was more closely aligned with the ODS, on which ticket it ran in 1992. By September 1995 its deputies divided between the ODS and KDU-CSL-oriented camps and a formal decision for a merger was taken in November. Five out of ten MPs joined KDU-CSL, while the rest merged with the ODS in March 1996.⁸¹ The KDH is the most liberal of the Christian democrat parties, to no small extent owing to its eschewing Meciar's nationalist approach in favour of a pro-federalist position on the Czechoslovak question. The party has become the main advocate of rapid economic reform in Slovakia, critical of Meciar's backtracking on privatisation, which it has combined with criticism of Meciar's attacks on the president and the DU.⁸² On nationalist issues, the party generally pursued an anti-Meciar policy, which involved opposing or abstaining on language legislation and general criticism of Meciar's minority policies.⁸³ Meciar responded by ruling out any co-operation with the KDH (or the Hungarian parties).⁸⁴

THE NEW POPULIST RIGHT

The new populist right is firmly lodged in the lower left quadrant of figure 7.6, due to its combination of scepticism towards rapid economic transition and its 'ethnic' approach to nationalist questions. The BBWR, HzDS and the MDF constitute near ideal type examples. The MDF maintained a balance between its liberal and nationalist factions until Antall's expulsion of Csurka over anti-Semitism in 1993, which he

⁷⁹ CTK in English 1242 gmt 7 December 1996 (SWB 09/12/96).

⁸⁰ This led to some internal coalition tension in 1994, *Eastern Europe Newsletter*, 8:6 (16/03/94).

⁸¹ S. Kettle, "Czech Deputies Change Parties", *OMRI Daily Digest* (13/09/95); S. Kettle, "Czech Coalition Parties Vote to Merge" *OMRI Daily Digest* (20/11/95).

⁸² M. Dzurinda, KDH deputy chairman, on HZDS' abandoning of coupon privatisation, 'Steps' party leader discussion programme, Slovak TV1, Bratislava, in Slovak 1129 gmt 25 June 1995 (SWB 28/06/95).

⁸³ CTK in English, 1724 gmt 19 November 1995 (SWB 21 November 1995); *Eastern Europe Newsletter*, 8:3 (01/01/94).

⁸⁴ CTK in English, 1407 gmt 28 April 1993 (SWB 30/04/93).

attempted to counterbalance with the expulsion of two liberal MDF MPs as well.⁸⁵ All three parties adopted or advocated economic policies that rejected shock therapy in favour of a more gradualist approach to economic reform.⁸⁶ When the AWS coalition succeeded in uniting the Christian national and populist forces where the BBWR had failed four years earlier, its policy remained more or less intact.⁸⁷ Like the old PC – ROAD division, the dividing line within the AWS – UW coalition reflects the institutional legacy of the 1980s struggle against communism. Whereas the UW contains most of the intellectuals of the old Solidarity, the AWS represents the trade union section of the old movement.⁸⁸

In terms of economic transition, the MDF can at best be described as cautious. Its initial medium-pace approach to economic transition was met by scepticism from the IMF, and earned its intermittent criticism.⁸⁹ Its approach to the acceleration of economic transition under the MSzP-SzDSz government is summed up in the party programme, which condemns the combination of “former existing socialism and a 19th-century wild capitalism.” “The Government’s utterly dilettantish economic policies [...] are alien to Hungarian circumstances.”⁹⁰ The HZDS’ economic reform effort was equally moderate.⁹¹ It has been critical of the privatisation carried out by non-HZDS governments, some of which it subsequently annulled.⁹² Economic policy has been linked to the party’s (ethnic) nationalist populist outlook, summed up in deputy chairman Huska’s call for ‘economic sovereignty’.⁹³ Similarly, from the PC’s criticism

⁸⁵ *Eastern Europe Newsletter*, 7:13, (22/06/93).

⁸⁶ G. Blazyca & R. Rapacki, “Continuity and Change in Polish Economic Policy: The Impact of the 1993 Election”, *Europe-Asia Studies*, 48:1 (1996), 85-100; M. Butora, Z. Butororova & T. Rosova, “The Hard Birth of Democracy in Slovakia: The Eighteen Months following the ‘Tender’ Revolution”, *The Journal of Communist Studies*, 7:4 (1991), 435-459; S. Fisher, “Tottering in the Aftermath of the Elections”, *Transition*, 29 March 1995; K. Okolicsanyi, “The Debate over Economic ‘Shock Therapy’”, *RFE/RL Report on Eastern Europe*, 11 January 1991; A. Reisch, “Prime Minister Replaces Key Ministers”, *RFE/RL Report on Eastern Europe*, 8 February 1991.

⁸⁷ Wałęsa, cited by Polish Radio 1, Warsaw, in Polish 1500 gmt 30 August 1997 (01/09/97).

⁸⁸ A. Prazmowska, ‘work in progress’ paper on Solidarity presented at the LSE, Spring 1998.

⁸⁹ D. L. Bartlett, “Democracy, Institutional Change and Stabilisation in Hungary”, *Europe-Asia Studies*, 48:1 (1996), 47-83.

⁹⁰ “Hungary – its Present and Future: The Basic Principles of the Policies of the Hungarian Democratic Forum”, February 1997, <http://www.mdf.hu/indexuk.htm>.

⁹¹ *Eastern Europe Newsletter* 9:9 (28/04/95).

⁹² Specifically direct privatisation after 6/9/94. *Eastern Europe Newsletter* 8:23 (16/11/94) and 9:1 (04/01/95).

⁹³ “We really want Slovakia to be economically sovereign. To put it another way, we want to be protected in order to prevent a situation in which foreign interests prevail and destroy our possible steps aimed at the best economic development in our country.” A. M. Huska, ‘Steps’ party leader discussion programme, Slovak TV1, Bratislava, in Slovak 1129 gmt 25 June 1995 (SWB 28/06/95).

of the original Balcerowicz plan to the AWS – UW tension over economic policy, the Polish populist right has proven sceptical towards shock therapy. The AWS describes itself as centre-right, and presented an electoral programme focusing heavily on “the family”.⁹⁴ If abortion is a useful guide to parties’ social liberalism in Poland, it falls firmly in the ‘old right’ camp.⁹⁵ Economically, its programme calls for “modern legislation concerning collective bargaining and social dialogue”. The breadth of the AWS membership is illustrated by the (initially ambivalent) inclusion of the KPN, and the fact that PC leader Kaczynski stood on the ROP list in the 1997 elections, though his party belongs to the AWS.⁹⁶ Within the MDF, the faction that seceded to form the MDNP in 1996 represented the more Western-oriented, liberal faction.⁹⁷ This was reflected in the parties’ first choice of alliance partners, Fidesz and the KDNP respectively.⁹⁸ Lezsak’s election as chair of the MDF, the immediate cause of the split, was welcomed by the FKgP as a step towards co-operation within the ‘national camp’.⁹⁹ The main evidence of the HzDS’s ethnic nationalist approach to minorities lies in its approach to the Hungarian minority, e.g., on language laws regulating the use of Hungarian and in efforts to change regional boundaries (north-south boundaries would diminish the Hungarian minority’s influence, as it is located along the southern border with Hungary).¹⁰⁰

Two other parties, the PC and the MNDP, were located on the blurred boundary between the populist/Christian national and the *burgerlich* camps. The divisions between the PC and ROAD in 1990 reflected divisions over the government’s economic shock therapy, though the Mazowiecki – Walesa division was primarily a matter of

⁹⁴ AWS, “Democracy in Poland” and “Plan for Poland of the 21st Century”, <http://www.solidarnosc.org/>.

⁹⁵ M. Krzaklewski (party leader), PAP in English 1805 gmt 25 October 1996 (28/10/96).

⁹⁶ On KPN, Polish Radio 3, Warsaw, in Polish 1900 gmt 4 July 1997; Polish Radio 1, Warsaw, in Polish 0600 gmt 6 July 1997 (SWB 07/07/07); on Kaczynski, Polish Radio 1, Warsaw, in Polish 1300 gmt 9 July 1997 (SWB 14/07/07).

⁹⁷ T. Vidos (GJW Government Relations), “The fog lifts on opposition politics”, *The Hungary Report* 1:41, 11/03/96. Also in the *Budapest Business Journal*. MDNP, “Self-Portrait of the People’s Party” at <http://www.net.hu/English/mdnp/selfport.htm>.

⁹⁸ I. Csuhaj, “Similarities and differences in the policy of the MDF and the MDNP” *Magyar Hirlap* 7 March 1996 (SWB 09/03/96). MDNP, “Self-Portrait of the People’s Party” at <http://www.net.hu/English/mdnp/selfport.htm>.

⁹⁹ Z. Lanyi (FKgP spokesman) in Hungarian Radio, in Hungarian, 2100 gmt 4 March 1996 (SWB 06/03/96).

¹⁰⁰ TASR in English 1545 gmt 9 February 1996 (SWB 12/02/96); CTK in English 1252 gmt 20 June 1995 (SWB 22/06/95); CTK in English 1805 gmt 13 January 1996 (SWB 15/01/96).

personality.¹⁰¹ Despite its avowed market orientation, ambivalence towards economic reform was evident in the PC in the 1991 election, and in its subsequent voting record.¹⁰² Though favouring ‘radical privatisation’ its second congress emphasised combating unemployment as a main objective.¹⁰³ On non-economic matters, the PC differed from ROAD in terms of “attitudes to history and tradition”, and mutual allegations that the PC was anti-Semitic and the ROAD Jewish.¹⁰⁴ The MDNP split off from the MDF following a growing division between the party leadership and its more populist element, the MDNP representing the faction that was more liberal on both economic and cultural/national issues.¹⁰⁵ This difference is clearly reflected in the MDNP’s ruling out any co-operation with Csurka’s MIEP, a move the MDF was not prepared to make.¹⁰⁶ On minority questions, the MDNP looked primarily to European international organisations to guarantee the right of Hungarian minorities abroad, in some contrast to the MDF’s focus on bilateral relations and close direct relations with Hungarian minorities in Slovakia and Romania.¹⁰⁷ The PC and the MDNP thus joined the Slovak DU in attempting to make the transition from the Christian national camp to more West European type Christian democrat parties, or in Szabo’s words, “a moderate, civic opposition force”.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰¹ ROAD Supreme Council statement, cited by Warsaw Home Service (radio) 1900 gmt 4 February 1991 (SWB 07/02/91); L. Balcerowicz, *Socialism, Capitalism and Transformation*, (Budapest, Central European University Press, 1995), p.298.

¹⁰² L. Vinton "'Outsider' Parties and the Political Process in Poland" in RFE/RL Research Report 3:31, 21 January 1994, p.14.

¹⁰³ Polish Radio, Warsaw 2100 gmt 25 April 1993 (SWB 28/04/93).

¹⁰⁴ The ROAD was charged with downplaying these aspects, e.g., by J. Mikke (Citizens’ Committee Attached to Wałesa), as per PAP in English 2001 gmt 29 July 1990. Other delegates criticised ROAD’s less than nationalistic stance. On the alleged Jewish nature of ROAD, Wałesa commented that “persons of Jewish origin should not conceal this (their origin)”. The statement “I am proud of the fact that I am Polish and, similarly, I would have been proud of my origin if I had been Jewish” illustrated the combination of rejection of anti-Semitism with a suggestion that Jewish is not Polish. Wałesa cited by PAP in English 1822 gme 29 July 1990 (SWB 01/08/90).

¹⁰⁵ Former PM P. Boross attributed the party’s loss of popularity to its liberal line, suggesting that only Lezak could bring it back on the Christian, popular national-liberal line. *Magyar Nemzet*, cited in *The Hungary Report*, 1:34, 22/01/96. MDNP, “Self-Portrait of the People’s Party” at <http://www.net.hu/English/mdnp/selfport.htm>.

¹⁰⁶ I. Csuhaj, “Similarities and differences in the policy of the MDF and the MDNP”, *Magyar Hirlap*, 7 March 1996 (SWB 09/03/96). S. Fisher, “New caucus in Hungarian parliament”, *OMRI Daily Digest*, 12/03/1996.

¹⁰⁷ I. Csuhaj, “Similarities and differences in the policy of the MDF and the MDNP”; S. Fisher, “New caucus in Hungarian parliament”.

¹⁰⁸ Hungarian Radio, in Hungarian, 17000 gmt 4 March 1996 (SWB 06/03/96).

THE PEASANT PARTIES

Only two peasant parties have seen much success in East Central Europe, and both have adopted policies that reflect general scepticism towards rapid economic transition, grounded in protection of the agricultural sector, as well as a populist orientation towards 'ethnic nationalism.' The PSL party programme emphasises the party's opposition to "'absolutisation' of political and economic liberalism."¹⁰⁹ This scepticism was evident in the Pawlak government's ambivalent attitude towards privatisation, and in the continuing tension between the PSL and SLD, 1993-97.¹¹⁰ Likewise, the FKgP has been sceptical to privatisation, except full agrarian re-privatisation (which caused its departure from the governing coalition in 1991).¹¹¹ The Polish party has been the more openly conservative of the two in terms of the role of the Church, a point that is specifically recognised in the party programme, as is the peasants' role as perpetuators of the Polish nation. Both parties have invoked the inter-war East Central European 'peasantist' tradition, combining scepticism towards the market with populism and ethnic nationalism, the FKgP emphasising its 'national' character, e.g., in deputy chair Agnes Maczo Nagy's call for a "really independent Hungary".¹¹² Party leader Torgyan argued it would be an "unforgivable crime" to sign the treaty with Romania.¹¹³ Unrestrained by participation in government, Pawlak's resignation speech took a similar nationalist stance warning against foreign investment dominating the country.¹¹⁴

The Liberal and Social Union, formed in 1991 of a merger between the Czechoslovak Social Democrats, the Green Party and the Agrarian Party, offered a short-lived alternative, focusing on local self-administration and emphasising liberal principles, a mixed economy and environment protection. "The LSU perceives the social principle as

¹⁰⁹ "Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe: Ideological Declaration of the Polish People's Party" adopted at the Extraordinary Congress of Polish People's Party Warsaw, 29 June 1991 (amended at III and IV PSL Congresses), <http://www.psl.org.pl/anglia/psl-ide.html>.

¹¹⁰ L. Vinton "Pawlak Questions Mass Privatisation" OMRI Daily Digest 05 August 1994; B. Slay "Gdansk Shipyard Causes Political Tensions to Flare Anew in Poland", *OMRI Analytical Briefs*, 1:207, 01/07/96.

¹¹¹ FKgP general secretary G. Gyimoti said the party would end "predatory privatisation" (rabolprivatizalas). Hungarian Radio, in Hungarian, 1500 gmt February 1994 (SWB 01/03/94); *Magyar Nemzet* 18 January 1994, p.4 (SWB 26/01/94).

¹¹² Interview in *Magyar Nemzet* 18 January 1994, p.4 (SWB 26/01/94).

¹¹³ Hungarian Radio in Hungarian 1240 gmt 3 September 1996 (SWB 05/09/96).

¹¹⁴ This included reference to Poland as a potential "white-half-colony", *Eastern Europe Newsletter* 9:5 (02/03/95).

an organic part of the market economy".¹¹⁵ The author of its economic strategy was Milos Zeman, subsequent leader of the CSSD. However, the LSU's liberal principles were counterbalanced by fear of German influence through privatisation, particularly by Sudeten Germans purchasing or potentially reclaiming land.¹¹⁶ The party developed a focus on protection of farmers' interests, eventually merging with the Farmers' Party, though this failed to prevent it being wiped out in the 1996 election, polling less than half a percent.¹¹⁷

THE SOCIAL DEMOCRAT AND DEMOCRATIC (REFORM COMMUNIST) LEFT

The social democrat/democratic left 'family' of parties is characterised by the duality that its name suggests: the difference between social democrat parties and the formerly communist democratic left. In terms of policy, all the parties have taken a liberal stand on non-economic issues, while the democratic left has adopted more radical economic programmes but also a more 'ethnic' approach to nationalism. The Czech CSSD represents the 'ideal type' social democrat party in the region, and Poland's UP came close to this model too. Founded in 1878 and merged with the Communist Party (KSC) in 1948, the CSSD was re-established in November 1989. Its economic policy has been shaped by its opposition to Klaus' governments, and has, therefore, focused on increased welfare spending, though party leader Zeman expressed qualified support for the right's economic programmes and lent some measured support to Klaus' minority government.¹¹⁸ Zeman rejected Klaus' allegations that the CSSD would reverse developments since 1989 as "silly", and replied by favourably contrasting his critical stance in early 1989 to Klaus' work at the (old regime's) Economic Forecasting Institute.¹¹⁹ Even KDU-CSL chairman Lux argued that the ODS created an "artificial clash" between itself and the CSSD during the 1996 Senate elections.¹²⁰ Zeman has

¹¹⁵ LSU election broadcast, Czech Radio, Prague 0830 gmt 26 May 1992 (SWB 01/06/92).

¹¹⁶ LSU press conference, Czech Radio, Prague 2030 gmt 3 April 1992 (SWB 09/04/92); Slovak Radio, Bratislava 1730 gmt 20 February 1992 (SWB 24/02/92).

¹¹⁷ CTK news agency, Prague, in English 1738 gmt 3 December 1994, (SWB 05/12/94), CTK news agency, Prague, in English 2130 gmt 3 February 1996 (SWB 06/02/96).

¹¹⁸ 1996 electoral programme, cited by CTK in English 1915 gmt 23 April 1995 (SWB 25/04/95); M. Zeman, as per CTK in English 1641 gmt 3 June 1996 (SWB 05/06/96).

¹¹⁹ Klaus and Zeman on Czech TV1, in Czech 2009 gmt 1 June 1996 (SWB 03/06/96); CTK in English 0926 gmt 20 November 1995 (SWB 21/11/95).

¹²⁰ Lux on Czech TV1 in Czech 1100 gmt 24 November 1996 (SWB 26/11/96). Klaus disagreed.

been at pains to point out that the CSSD is a normal West European Social Democratic party, rejecting Klaus' assertion that ideology separates the two parties.¹²¹ The key difference is prioritising social or economic values.¹²² Yet the CSSD remains the party most voters perceive as competent on welfare issues.¹²³ Finally, Zeman has been critical of Klaus' "sceptical" and potentially "isolationist" tendencies on European integration.¹²⁴

If the CSSD is a more modernised form of social democracy, the post-Solidarity UP (Union of Labour, formerly Labour Solidarity) represented the traditional Twentieth Century social democrat orientation towards protection of workers, advocating progressive taxation and liberal social policy.¹²⁵ Its scepticism towards rapid economic reform was evident in its reluctant support for the Pawlak government and its criticism of the Oleksy government's economic policy for heavy taxation of low and medium income workers.¹²⁶ The UP dropped out of coalition talks after the October 1993 election primarily over the SLD's intention to continue the previous government's privatisation policy, and it had opposed Suchocka's government programme in 1992 on the same grounds (though it lent support to the government as such).¹²⁷ On non-economic matters the party has proved more libertarian, opposing legislation banning abortion and leading the campaign for a referendum on the issue, and emphasising the secular nature of Polish politics.¹²⁸ Its party congress instructed its MPs to reject the Concordat with the Vatican.¹²⁹ Like several of the liberal parties, it said little about ethnicity.

¹²¹ Zeman on Czech TV1, in Czech 2009 gmt 1 June 1996 (SWB 03/06/96).

¹²² Zeman on Czech TV1, in Czech 1100 gmt 24 November 1996 (SWB 26/11/96).

¹²³ In a 1996 poll, 32% named the CSSD, 17% named the ODS. CTK in English 0651 gmt 10 June 1996 (SWB 11/06/96).

¹²⁴ Zeman, as per CTK in English 1546 gmt 30 August 1996 (SWB 02/10/96).

¹²⁵ In 1993, R. Bugaj (party leader) was reportedly aiming to build a party along the lines of the UK Labour Party. *Eastern Europe Newsletter*, 7:21 (19/10/93).

¹²⁶ Opposition to Pawlak was made clear at an extraordinary conference, as reported by PAP in English 1821 gmt 26 March 1994 (SWB 30/03/94). The UP proceeded to join the BBWR and KPN in a vote against the government's wage control law, PAP in English, 1524 gmt 23 April 1994 (SWB 25/04/94). On Oleksy: PAP in Polish, 1734 gmt 18 March 1995 (SWB 20/03/95).

¹²⁷ Bugaj as per PAP in English 1526 gmt 13 October 1993 (SWB 15/10/93); Bugaj, as per PAP in English 2024 gmt 11 July 1992 (SWB 13/07/92).

¹²⁸ PAP in English 1736 gmt 13 November 1992 (SWB 17/11/92); R. Bugaj (UP party leader) as per PAP in English 1159 gmt 26 July 1993 (SWB 29/07/93).

¹²⁹ PAP in English 1821 gmt 26 March 1994 (SWB 30/03/94).

The democratic left (reform communist) parties have proved more aggressively free market oriented than the CSSD and the UP, partly because they shed their left-wing factions to the 'rump-communist' parties. Once in office they maintained (SLD) or even accelerated (MSzP) the previous governments' economic reform programmes. The MSzP's economic programme, as set out by Finance Minister Laszlo Bekesi after the 1994 elections, was reported as a "belt-tightening plan" due to its "generally restrictive policy" including reduction of government spending, its wage policy and attack on "over-regulation".¹³⁰ Though Bekesi resigned in January 1995, citing disagreement with Horn over privatisation and economic reform, the SzDSz-MSzP coalition continued to pursue a strategy of rapid economic reform under Bokros and Medgyessy.¹³¹ Even though its rhetoric in 1994 stressed the problems of uncontrolled privatisation and unemployment, the MSzP was responsible for acceleration of economic reform.¹³² In Poland, the SLD set out to pursue a tight monetary policy and close links with the IMF, despite its links with OPZZ.¹³³ After the 1993 election, negotiations between the SLD, the UP and the PSL revealed considerable differences over economic policy, largely due to the SLD's commitment to its predecessors' economic programmes (which it had occasionally supported).¹³⁴ Come the 1997 election its position on privatisation was close to that of the UW, save for its reluctance to break up utilities monopolies (gas, electricity and telecommunications).¹³⁵ Though neither party can be accused of conservative or illiberal tendencies as far as social policy is concerned, both parties have

¹³⁰ MTI in English 1025 gmt 11 July 1994 (SWB 21/07/94).

¹³¹ E. Oltay "Hungarian Finance Minister Resigns", *OMRI Daily Digest* 30/01/95; *Eastern Europe Newsletter* 9:4 (16/02/95). Separation of the finance and privatisation portfolios sparked the crisis; Z. Szilagyi "Implications for the Coalition" *OMRI Analytical Brief* 1:6, 20/02/96. Finance Minister Bokros continued the economic programme, but ceded control of privatisation to the newly appointed privatisation minister, Suchmann. *Eastern Europe Newsletter* 9:9 (28/04/95). Economic austerity measures were announced on March 12th, 1995, and pushed through a surprised cabinet by Bokros with support from G.Suranyi (the new Central Bank Governor), causing the resignation of two ministers (P. Kovacs, welfare, and B. Katona, without portfolio, in charge of the secret services), *Eastern Europe Newsletter* 9:6 (15/03/95). On Bokros: Z. Szilagyi "Hungary's Finance Minister Steps Down" *OMRI Analytical Brief* 1:6, 20/02/96; Z. Szilagyi "Hungary's Finance Minister Steps Down" *OMRI Analytical Brief* 1:6, 20/02/96. On Medgyessy: Z. Szilagyi, "The First Hundred Days of Hungary's New Finance Minister", *OMRI Analytical Brief*, 1:180, 18/06/96; Z. Szilagyi, "Hungarian Finance Minister Outlines Reform Programme", *OMRI Daily Digest*, (29/02/96).

¹³² Horn, Hungarian TV1 in Hungarian 1800 gmt 20 August 1994 (SWB 23/08/94).

¹³³ The ex-communist OPZZ trade union supported 60 out of 171 SLD MPs. *Eastern Europe Newsletter*, 21:7 (19/10/93).

¹³⁴ PAP, in English 2253 gmt 6 October 1993 (SWB 08/10/93); PAP in English 1807 gmt 1 May 93 (SWB 04/05/97); Oleksy, Polish Radio 1, Warsaw, in Polish 1249 gmt 4 March 95 (SWB 06/03/95).

¹³⁵ 55 PAP news agency, Warsaw, in English 1425 gmt 18 September 1997 (SWB 20/09/97).

adopted a more or less 'ethnic' approach to nationhood and issues related to nationalism. Within the MSzP, a more populist 'national democrat' faction has been associated with F. Kosa.¹³⁶ It thus joined Fidesz in combining a generally liberal outlook with an emphasis on the ethnic dimension of nationhood. Following the election, however, the new government shifted its foreign policy in the region to a more conciliatory approach.¹³⁷ A similar approach on the part of the SLD was reflected in Oleksy's inauguration speech, citing minority rights.¹³⁸

The SDSS and the SDL, the principal partners in the Common Choice (SV) coalition in the Slovak elections in 1994, both pursue predominantly 'civic' strategies when it comes to social policy and policy towards the Hungarian minority (though both have seen internal dissent on this matter), but their economic policies have differed somewhat. The SDL has at times contemplated supporting an HzDS minority government, though this has been conditional on the HzDS severing its ties with the ZRS and the SNS and Weiss has proved more open to co-operation with the KDH.¹³⁹ However, the SDL's criticism of Meciar focused on his failure to *halt* privatisation, whereas the SDSS has proved more supportive of radical privatisation, shifting its position closer to the more liberal parties, at the cost of the departure of some of its left-wing members. Like their Czech sister party (CSSD), both parties have been critical of the two governments' limited efforts at improving relations between the Czech and Slovak republics.¹⁴⁰ The SDL confirmed its civic orientation on national questions with chairman Peter Weiss' re-election in February 1995, when he defeated a candidate more open to co-operation with the HzDS.¹⁴¹ Within the SDSS a faction advocating a shift towards more focus on "Slovakia's national interests" was formed in June 1995.¹⁴² However, the party has since entered formal co-operation with the KDH – DH – DS coalition, to the point where they formed a joint coalition for the 1998 elections.

¹³⁶ After the 1994 elections this faction's strength was an estimated 50-55 of the party's 209 MPs. *Eastern Europe Newsletter*, 8:24 (01/12/95).

¹³⁷ This entailed advocating regional rather than individual entry to NATO and focus on bi-lateral treaties with Slovakia and Romania. *Eastern Europe Newsletter*, 9:3 (01/02/95).

¹³⁸ Oleksy, Polish Radio 1, Warsaw, in Polish 1249 gmt 4 March 95 (SWB 06/03/95).

¹³⁹ Meciar in *Pravda* (Bratislava) in Slovak 4 July 1996, p.1,4 (SWB 08/07/96); CTK in English 0627 gmt 8 August 1996 (SWB 09/08/96). The SDL accepts the KDH as clearly separated from the Church.

¹⁴⁰ Joint CSSD-SDL communiqué, as per TASR, in English 1403 gmt 9 January 96 (SWB 11/01/96).

¹⁴¹ Though Lubomir Fogas rejected belonging to a faction that favoured closer co-operation with Meciar, there is clear discord between him and Weiss on questions of local level cooperation with the HzDS and KDH. Both are cited by CTK, in English, 1457 gmt 19 February 1995 (SWB 21/02/95).

¹⁴² L. Kohut, Renewal spokesman, cited by CTK in English 0937 gmt June 1995 (SWB 24/06/95).

THE FAR LEFT, EXTREME RIGHT AND ETHNIC MINORITY PARTIES

The KSCM and the ZRS have combined opposition to free market-oriented economic policy with 'ethnic' approaches to nationalism, with a degree of electoral success. In the KSCM's case, this can be put down to its regional nature and agrarian politics, because collectivisation left most peasants classified as workers rather than peasants. The party fits the ideal type unreformed communist party, emphasising opposition to free market reforms and ethnic nationalism. Its proposed Czech language law is a case in point, as is its criticism of the governments' "vassal policy" towards Germany.¹⁴³ On economic policy, it makes no secret of its attachment to pre-1989 values.¹⁴⁴ Hence its focus is on expansion of welfare expenditure, but also on a strong agricultural sector.¹⁴⁵ When the ZRS registered as a political party before the 1994 election, its chairman Jan Luptak emphasised the party's left wing status: a party defending the interests of the 'people at the bottom'.¹⁴⁶ Following the election, he made it clear that his party was not prepared to join the government unless President Kovac would appoint it in time to halt the second step of the privatisation process, stressing that "we, the workers, and our party..." were looking for ways to reject it.¹⁴⁷ Coupon privatisation was delayed and the ZRS duly got the privatisation portfolio.¹⁴⁸ It continued to support the Meciar government. For its part, the KSCM rejected the Klaus' government's relationship with West European states, which it criticised in highly nationalist terms.¹⁴⁹ Grebenicek reacted to the Czech – German Treaty by charging that the Klaus government falsified national history and was a "government of national treason".¹⁵⁰

¹⁴³ CTK in English 1638 gmt 17 January 1996 (SWB 19/01/96); M. Grebenicek, as per CTK in English 0839 gmt 30 May 1996 (SWB 31/05/96).

¹⁴⁴ M. Grebenicek (KSCM chairman), cited by CTK in English 1331 gmt 20 June 1996 (SWB 22/07/96). V. Exner (then KSCM chair) in parliament, as per CTK in English 1321 gmt 15 December 1994 (SWB 17/12/94); and as per CTK in English 1549 gmt 23 November 1995 (SWB 25/11/95); Grebenicek's address to the 4th KSCM national conference, CTK in English, 1257 gmt 2 December 1996 (SWB 05/12/96).

¹⁴⁵ M. Grebenicek, as per CTK in English 0839 gmt 30 May 1996 (SWB 31/05/96).

¹⁴⁶ CTK in English 2009 gmt 27 April 1994 (SWB 02/05/94).

¹⁴⁷ Jan Luptak, and presidential spokesman Vladimir Stefko, Slovak 1 Radio in Slovak 1100 gmt 12 December 1994 (SWB 14/12/94).

¹⁴⁸ P. Bisak (ZRS) appointed privatisation minister December 11th, 1994, while coupon privatisation had been due to start December 15. *Eastern Europe Newsletter*, 8:25 (15/12/94). The ZRS opposes privatisation in principle.

¹⁴⁹ J. Navtail on the KSCM's opposition to NATO and EU membership (KSCM press conference) CTA in English 1829 gmt 27 July 1995 (SWB 29/07/95).

¹⁵⁰ M. Grebenicek, as per CTK in English 2306 gmt 21 January 1997 (SWB 23/01/97); KSCM spokeswoman Vera Zezulova, CTK in English 1537 gmt 13 April 1996 (SWB 15/04/96).

The parties on the extreme right share much of the hard left's platform. All conform to the classical West European extreme right, focusing on ethnic nationalism, stressing threats to the nation from foreigners and opposing liberal measures in social policy. However, while the Scandinavian far right has developed a strong element of libertarian economics, their East Central European counterparts emphasise scepticism on the economic front. The Czech Republicans (SPR-RSC) are close to their German counterparts and the (pre-AN) MSI in Italy, i.e., fiercely hostile to minorities and featuring a limited economic agenda. Sladek and Krejsa, SPR-RSC chairman and editor of *Republika* respectively, both had their parliamentary immunity lifted so that they could be prosecuted for inciting racial hatred.¹⁵¹ MIEP, the nationalist MDF-breakaway led by Csurka, accordingly brandishes an extremist form of Hungarian nationalism, which is translated into economic policy, e.g., in accusations to the effect that Western Europe has been "colonising" Hungary.¹⁵² In 1993 co-chairman Horvath cast its policy in terms of a social market economy, adding criticism of the IMF and pointing out that "we will not voluntarily give up the territories that were detached from us."¹⁵³ In Slovakia, even the HzDS has found the SNS a problematic coalition partner due to its extreme nationalist stand.¹⁵⁴ At one point, the party walked out of parliament in objection to a law legalising the use of Hungarian Christian names.¹⁵⁵ Its line towards the minority is summed up in the party leader's reference to "these Hungarian irredentists".¹⁵⁶ Upon entering government, SNS ministers wasted little time in alienating the Hungarian community, e.g., over education policy.¹⁵⁷ Nevertheless, even the SNS described itself as "progressive in the economic sphere", favouring privatisation, while socially "moderately conservative", and Cernak was expelled for breaking the coalition agreement with the HzDS by voting against the 1994 budget.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵¹ CTK, in English 1447 gmt 15 March 1997 and 2011 gmt 10 July 1997 (SWB 17/03/97 and 12/06/97).

¹⁵² MTI news agency, Budapest, in English 1650 gmt 9 December 1995 (SWB, 11/12/95).

¹⁵³ Horvath, interviewed in *Nepszabadsag*, in Hungarian 20 November 1993 (SWB 26/11/93).

¹⁵⁴ CTK in English 1206 gmt 27 June 1995 (SWB 29/06/95). A Huska understatement had it that the SNS could be "a little more moderate", CTK in English 1805 gmt 13 January 1996 (SWB 15/01/96).

¹⁵⁵ CTK in English 1311 gmt 27 May 1994 (SWB 31/05/94).

¹⁵⁶ Slota, 'Steps' party leader discussion programme, Slovak TV1, Bratislava, in Slovak 1129 gmt 25 June 1995 (SWB 28/06/95). Minority MPs' use of Hungarian in Parliament, which required translators and headphones, was described as "simply revolting".

¹⁵⁷ Local schools have always been a critical question in minority relations, and SNS Education minister E. Slavkovska's focus on Slovak-language schools in the Hungarian region was hardly a popular move there. *Eastern Europe Newsletter*, 9:1 (04/01/95) and 9:9 (28 April 1995).

¹⁵⁸ Cernak, describing his party's programme, Slovak TV, 1730 gmt 25 April 1993 (SWB 28/04/93). SNS policy on privatisation remained close to that of the HzDS, stressing only increased agricultural subsidies,

In Poland, the far right was represented only by the KPN during the 1993-97 parliament. Its economic line has been critical of shock therapy, and it has stressed the need for 'lustration'.¹⁵⁹ However, the catch-all nature of the Polish right and the blurred boundaries between the Christian national right and the far right are illustrated by the KPN's membership of the AWS. Come 1997 only Olszewski's more extreme ROP remained as a parliamentary competitor to the 'right' of the AWS.

The Hungarian minority parties in Slovakia that make up the MK (Magyar Coalition), the Hungarian Civic Party (MOS), Coexistence (Egyuttes) and the Hungarian Christian Democratic Movement (MKDH) are relatively neutral on the economic and 'open society' axis, but have tended to favour the market. Egyuttes is a member of European Liberal Democratic and Reform Parties (ELDR), and describes itself as "standing for both liberal and conservative traditions".¹⁶⁰ The MKDH is closer to the DU. The MK has continuously opposed Meciar's governments, supporting anti-Meciar coalitions but requesting, e.g., language laws as a quid pro quo.¹⁶¹ It has found some co-operation from the KDH and the DS, and somewhat less from the SDL and the DU.¹⁶² However, the SDL and DU support the Hungarians' quest for legislation protecting their language rights, in accordance with OSCE requirements.¹⁶³ Internal MK problems have mainly reflected clashes of personalities, though on one occasion the MOS criticised Egyuttes as 'nationalist'.¹⁶⁴ Egyuttes' defence of Hungarian minority rights is cast primarily in collective rather than individual terms, based partly on their membership of the Hungarian state until 1918.¹⁶⁵ Its classification as 'civic' nationalist is therefore

Cernak, as per CTK in English 1520 gmt 1 December 1993 (SWB 04/12/93). *Eastern Europe Newsletter*, 8:3 (01/01/94); *Eastern Europe Newsletter*, 8:5 (02/03/94). J. Slota took over the leadership of the SNS, reduced from 14 to 8 MPs as Cernak set up the National Democratic Party.

¹⁵⁹ PAP in English 1628 gmt 10 July 1992, 1536 gmt 6 May 1993, 2313 gmt 15 June 1992 (SWB 13/07/92, 10/05/93 and 17/06/92).

¹⁶⁰ Coexistence homepage, <http://www.kdnp.hu/coex/ANGOL.HTM>.

¹⁶¹ A. Duka-Zolyomi (Egyuttes deputy chairman) on Meciar "rejecting any dialogue", cited by CTK in English 1843 gmt 20 Mar 94 (SWB 22/03/94); CTK in English 2110 gmt 21 March 1994 (SWB 23/03/94).

¹⁶² Egyuttes chairman Duray, as per CTK in English 1341 gmt 19 March 1996 (SWB 21/03/96).

¹⁶³ TASR in English 1925 gmt 9 January 1996 (SWB 11/01/96); CTK in English 1311 gmt 27 May 1994 (SWB 31/05/94); CTK in English 2726 gmt 7 June 94 (SWB 07/07/94).

¹⁶⁴ CTK in English 0915 gmt 7 July 1994 (SWB 08/07/94).

¹⁶⁵ Egyuttes document: "From minority status to Partnership", <http://www.hhrf.org/egyutt/AD-PARTN.HTM>.

somewhat misleading, as it is based on opposition to ethnic Slovak nationalism rather than necessarily on individualistic or 'civic' principles.

CONCLUSION: PARTY ALIGNMENTS IN EAST CENTRAL EUROPE

This overview of parties and party alignments in post-communist East Central Europe suggests two broad conclusions. First, a 'left – right' dimension is discernible, i.e., one major dimension can be extrapolated from patterns of party competition. However, it is better described as a dimension running from commitment to an 'open' society to a 'closed' society rather than in terms of left and right. The liberal parties may be located on the right, but the traditional right-wing populist parties are on the 'left' in this schema, with the reform communists and social democrats in the centre. Second, competition between parties that are committed primarily to 'civic' and 'ethnic' approaches to questions that derive from nationalism represents a second significant dimension of post-communist party competition. And party positions on nationalist questions do not necessarily reflect their position on the 'open' – 'closed' dimension. The two-dimensional grid therefore provides not only an appropriate device for analysis of party alignments, but also a basis for analysis of developments in party strategy and theories of coalition building, which is the subject of the next chapter.

The assessment of party alignments set out in Table 7.1 represents an effort to align East Central Europe post-communist parties on a cross-country comparative basis, based on party programmes, reports, interviews and analysis in the media and activity in parliament. For each party the co-ordinates reflect its average position over time, on two dimensions: the 'open' – 'closed' society dimension and the dimension reflecting 'civic' and 'ethnic' approached to nationalism. In both cases the scale runs from '-10' to '10', where '0' is neutral and +/-10 extreme. '1' – '3' denotes a moderate position, '4' – '6' a considerable position or commitment, and '7' – '9' a strong position. E.g., '3,-8' would indicate a moderate commitment to 'open' society and a strong commitment to ethnic nationalism.

Table 7.1 Comparative Party Alignments

| | POLAND | | SLOVAKIA | | CZECH REP. | | HUNGARY | |
|---|---------------|-------|-----------------|-------|-------------------|-------|----------------|-------|
| LIBERAL (BURGERLICH) PARTIES | KLD | 9,8 | DS | 8,7 | ODA | 8,6 | SzDSz | 7,6 |
| | UD | 7,8 | DU | 5,-1 | ODS | 7,-3 | Fidesz | 6,-2 |
| | UW | 8,8 | | | OH | 4,8 | | |
| | PPPP/PPG | 9,6 | | | | | | |
| DENOMINATIONAL PARTIES | ZChN | -5,-5 | KDH | 6,5 | KDU-CSL | 3,2 | KDNP | -3,-3 |
| | | | | KDS | 5,-1 | | | |
| NEW POPULIST PARTIES | BBWR | -3,-3 | | | | | MDF | -4,-1 |
| | PC | -3,-5 | HzDS | -5,-7 | | | MDNP | 2,-1 |
| | AWS | -3,-3 | | | | | | |
| PEASANT PARTIES | PSL | -7,-5 | | | LSU | -2,-2 | FKgP | -6,-7 |
| SOCIAL DEMOCRATS AND THE DEMOCRATIC LEFT | SLD | 5,-1 | SDL | -6,2 | CSSD | 1,4 | MSzP | 4,-3 |
| | UP | -3,2 | SDSS | 4,4 | | | | |
| | | | SV | -3,3 | | | | |
| THE FAR LEFT | | | ZRS | -9,-6 | KSCM | -9,-6 | | |
| THE FAR RIGHT | KPN | -5,-7 | SNS | -2,-9 | SPR-RSC | -1,-9 | MIEP | -5,-8 |
| | ROP | -6,-8 | | | | | | |
| ETHNIC MINORITIES | | | MK | 2,4 | | | | |

CHAPTER EIGHT

BEYOND THE ANARCHIC PARTY SYSTEM: THE EAST CENTRAL EUROPEAN PARTY SYSTEMS 1989-1998

*“To win a governing majority requires action at two levels: policy innovation and alliance building”
- Masimo D’Alema, Party Conference, July, 1995*

The introduction offered a definition of a party system in terms of multiple parties, parties’ influence on policy-making, their separation from the state and, most significantly, stable patterns of inter-party competition. In post-communist East Central Europe, as in early twentieth Century Western Europe, the development of inter-party competition is the key to the metamorphosis from a ‘nascent’ to fully developed party system. This has been a dynamic process. Parties have responded to their opponents’ strategies in the light of electoral performance, thereby developing government – opposition competition at the electoral, parliamentary, intra-coalition and inter-party level.¹ Given the structure of party organisation and the room for leadership discretion this development has been driven by the party elites, and often associated very closely with specific individuals. The outcome has been well-developed party systems, at least in three out of the four East Central European cases. Slovakia provides the partial exception.

The party systems that emerged from the collapse of communism could at best be described as ‘anarchic’ during the early years. Party competition did not conform to the patterns found in West European politics – and definitely not to Katz & Mair’s cartel of parties (even though the parties may have resembled the cartel party ideal type organisationally). Until the 1992-94 series of elections, party competition in Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Poland featured a host of parties competing for votes and office without undue concern for coalition politics. The first elections and the subsequent

¹ Levels and dimensions of competition are discussed in the introduction, with reference to M. Maor & G. Smith “Government-Opposition Relationships as a Systemic Property: A Theoretical Framework”, *ECPR Joint Session of Workshops*, Leiden April 1993.

break-up of conglomerate parties compelled the successor parties to form alliances and coalitions in an 'anarchical society'.² Parliamentary anarchy has a greater tendency to give way to a stable system than Bull's international 'anarchical society', though, as the Slovak case illustrates, this development is not inevitable. The process of making and breaking of governments tends to force parties to adopt strategies for coalition-building in government or opposition. This is the stuff of developed party systems.

So far, three central arguments have been developed. Though party system development is approached from a rational choice perspective, party elites operate under constraints that influence party competition. First, high electoral volatility and the slow development of party identification means that East Central European parties operate under fewer constraints than their West European counterparts did in the first decades of the century. Their freedom of action is considerable, at least as far as electoral strategies are concerned, but the anti-incumbency tendency provides one major constraint on this freedom. East Central European governments do not, as a rule, get re-elected. Though it will probably change in the medium to long term, this pendulum effect has provided most major East Central European parties with government experience. Incumbent governments, therefore, compete with prospective governments at election time, and every major party has been in government.

Second, despite some differences in party organisation, all East Central European parties are leadership-dominated. In West European terms they resemble the 'cartel' ideal type organisationally. This makes party elites the driving force behind party system development. Pappalardo argues that elite motivation and independence are requirements for consociational democracy, and this argument can be extended to East Central Europe.³ Strategic choices determine the patterns of competition and co-operation within and between the government and opposition camps, and can lead to consolidation of party systems (Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary) or continued fluidity (Slovakia).

² The title is borrowed from H. Bull, *The Anarchical Society: A Study in World Politics*, (London, Macmillan, 1977).

³ A. Pappalardo, "The Conditions for Consociational Democracy: A Logical and Empirical Critique", *European Journal of Political Research*, 9 (1981), 365-390.

Third, the left – right dimension associated with economic transition and ‘liberal’ politics dominates post-communist party competition. Like their West European counterparts, the East Central European party systems feature one dominant dimension. Moreover, competition between liberal and authoritarian non-economic policy tends to align with this dimension. However, the development of post-communist party systems also reflects tension between civic and ethnic approaches to nationalism. Even though this may not be manifest in party programmes, it is evident in party competition. Both dimensions combine to shape inter-party competition and government-formation.

Only with the second elections and the consolidation of political parties, did the *party systems* develop beyond anarchy towards stable competition. Since this competition centres on the government - opposition relationship, and competition and co-operation within each bloc, coalition theory provides an appropriate starting point. Parties without coalition potential, or at least the potential to ‘blackmail’ the coalition, have been discounted as irrelevant in several analyses of West European politics.⁴ The point of a party *system* is that it is more than the sum of its parts. In Mair’s words, “an understanding of party system change must focus on that which defines the system in the first place: the patterns of interaction between the parties.”⁵ Therefore, the current focus on the development of and change in East Central European party systems is based on patterns of interaction: between parties and between blocs of parties. Hence the focus on coalition theory.

THEORIES OF COALITION GOVERNMENT

The history of coalition theory reveals a development that takes increasing account of the influence of the party system. While the early (numerical) approaches assumed a considerable degree of anarchy, coalition theories developed in the 1990s are taking patterns of competition and the party systems into account. The advantage of the more complex coalition theories is that some of them consider party strategies and alliances

⁴ G. Sartori, *Parties and Party Systems: A Framework for Analysis*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1976), Chapter Five.

⁵ P. Mair, *Party System Change: Approaches and Interpretations*, (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1997), p.74. On p.51, Mair quotes Sartori’s focus on the system of interactions between parties with approval. Sartori, *Parties and Party Systems*, p. 44-45; see the Introduction, above.

as input into the process, not merely as the output of coalition games. The limits of many numerical coalition theories derive from their blindness not only to policy, but also to the very party system they are designed to analyse.

FORMAL COALITION THEORY AND ASSUMPTIONS OF RATIONALITY

Two historical traditions in analysis of coalition building are identified in Laver & Schofield's analysis of multiparty government: a West European politics tradition and one based on game theory.⁶ Broadly speaking, the first is derived from single-country and comparative studies of coalition politics on Western Europe, while the second has been developed from formal models that attempt to go beyond the peculiarities of individual cases. However, more sophisticated formal models are being developed, with the capacity to incorporate some country-specific elements. Notably, Laver & Shepsle's model focuses on the government portfolios and dimensions of competition that experts consider most significant in each case, and gives due consideration to the starting point in negotiations.⁷ The history of formal coalition theories reflects increasing recognition that party strategy matters. Formal coalition theories have faced problems precisely because party systems are more than just the sum of their parts, i.e., because they are *systems*.

Nevertheless, 'policy blind' coalition theories provide significant insight into the dynamics of making and breaking governments. The rational choice assumptions behind these theories may be vindicated even if no formal theory can explain all the peculiarities of each case study. For example, most formal coalition theories suggest that the MSzP-SzDSz coalition requires an explanation in terms of the particular circumstances, given that the MSzP had a parliamentary majority on its own. The most interesting questions for comparative politics derive from cases that contradict game theories that are 'blind' to national factors.

⁶ M. Laver & N. Schofield, *Multiparty Government: The Politics of Coalition in Europe*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1990), Chapter One.

⁷ M. Laver & K. Shepsle, *Making and Breaking Governments: Cabinets and Legislatures in Parliamentary Democracies*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996).

The formal theories are based on a series of assumptions, most of which have been discussed in considerable detail elsewhere.⁸ These assumptions are, however, worth noting.

1. The basic Downsian assumption that political parties seek office lies at the heart of Riker's approach to coalition theory.⁹ Parties seek office for the sake of the spoils of office, in a zero-sum game. Votes are maximised in pursuit of office, though West European history provides several examples of conflict between short term office seeking and medium term vote maximisation. Winning entails taking part in a 50%+ coalition.
2. Alternatively, de Swaan assumes that parties seek office in order to implement policy.¹⁰ Taking this one step further, Laver & Schofield note that office is but one means by which policy can be influenced.¹¹
3. Finally, the two assumptions can be combined: i) parties seek office in order to influence policy, or ii) parties choose to focus on certain policies or aspects of ideology in order to maximise votes.¹²
4. Several theories assume a degree of consistency, i.e., parties cannot depart too radically from the political identity they have developed, even if the original policy stance was merely opportunistic.¹³

These assumptions are problematic in several ways, particularly due to their blindness to the setting within which the coalition games are played and their assumptions of perfect information.

- i) Formal coalition theories assume that clear preferences are being pursued. However, these need not necessarily be hierarchical, let alone well known.
- ii) Coalition games are played at several levels, within as well as between parties.¹⁴ Parties are not necessarily unified actors.

⁸ See in particular, Laver & Schofield, *Multiparty Government*, and I. Budge & H. Keman, *Parties and Democracy: Coalition Formation and Government Functioning in Twenty States*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1990).

⁹ W. Riker, *The Theory of Political Coalitions*, (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1962); A. Downs, *An Economic Theory of Democracy*, (New York, Harper & Row, 1957).

¹⁰ A. de Swaan, *Coalition Theories and Cabinet Formation*, (Amsterdam, Elsevier, 1973).

¹¹ Laver & Schofield, *Multiparty Government*.

¹² One modern 'classic' example is (New) Labour's use of focus groups, UK 1994 – 1997.

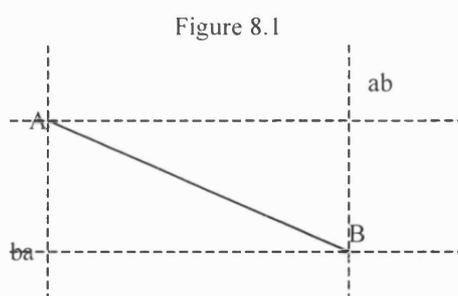
¹³ Laver & Shepsle, *Making and Breaking Governments*, p.248-249.

¹⁴ G. Tsebelis, *Nested Games: Rational Choice in Comparative Politics*, (Berkeley, California University Press, 1990).

- iii) Nested games may involve future expectations, which are discounted by time and uncertainty.
- iv) A party's bargaining strength may vary with risk aversion, internal unity and its perceived margin of discretion.

Moreover, theoretical developments in the 1990s have shifted the focus away from minimal winning coalitions and the accompanying suggestion of zero-sum politics towards 'viable coalitions', a concept developed by Budge & Laver, and elaborated by Laver & Schofield.¹⁵ A coalition may be viable even if it contains less than 50% of parliament's seats, as long as no majority prefers an alternative coalition that the coalition parties cannot veto.

Similarly, the use of Euclidian distances in early coalition theory has been challenged. The most significant alternative is 'city block metric', developed in Laver & Budge and Budge & Shepsle.¹⁶ In two-dimensional policy space, two parties may not be able to meet in the middle on each policy distance (the unbroken straight line between A and B), but may instead have to choose one party's position on each issue (points ab or ba). Budge & Keman dispose with distances altogether, using a non-spatial approach.¹⁷



¹⁵ I. Budge & M. J. Laver, "Office Seeking and Policy Pursuit in Coalition Theory", *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, 11:4 (1986), 485-506; I. Budge & M. J. Laver, "Coalition Theory, Government Policy and Party Policy", in M. J. Laver & I. Budge, (eds.), *Party Politics and Government Coalitions*, (London, Macmillan, 1992); Laver & Schofield, *Multiparty Government*, Chapter Four.

¹⁶ I. Budge & M. J. Laver, "Measuring Policy Distances and Modelling Coalitions", in Laver & Budge (eds.), *Party Politics and Government Coalitions*, p.36-38; Laver & Shepsle, *Making and Breaking Governments*.

¹⁷ Budge & Keman, *Parties and Democracy*.

More problematically, the West European experience indicates that *changes* in party performance may be more significant than the absolute result of an election. There was little reason for Norwegian prime minister Jagland to resign after the DNA lost two of its 67 seats in the 165-seat parliament in the 1997 election, other than the party's failure to achieve the 36.9% it had polled four years earlier (it polled 35.0%).¹⁸ Though the Centre Party abandoned its seven-year support for the minority government, Jagland did not even try to negotiate. In other words, perceived victory or loss matters, as do commitments to resign if a certain target is not reached. Only the Laver & Shepsle model is equipped to deal with such problems, given its focus on the starting point in coalition negotiations (which can be an election, a government's resignation or crisis, or a stable situation).

All the assumptions cited above regard parties as primarily instrumental. Yet parties are institutions that seek to survive, or even modernise. The survival element stressed by Panebianco is frequently forgotten in game theory, which tends not to consider the possibility of a player being eliminated (but only winning and losing) and the prize that survival represents.¹⁹ A more up-to-date version of this would focus on the need or desire for modernisation and adaptation.²⁰ Similarly, the party system can be interpreted as an institution which seeks to survive.²¹

Finally, and most significantly, the party system and coalition strategies matter. The spatial coalition theories discussed briefly below all assume a degree of anarchy in inter-party relations, i.e., parties are free to form coalitions with any other party. Nevertheless, the history of coalition theory illustrates a growing concern with the impact of factors related to the party system.

¹⁸ T. Jagland, NRK, in Norwegian, 00:15 gmt 16 September 1997.

¹⁹ A. Panebianco, *Political Parties: Organisation and Power*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1988).

²⁰ Again the New Labour serves as a dramatic example, though the adaptation and modernisation themes were present in earlier debates on the superiority of different types of party organisation. M. Duverger, *Political Parties*, (London, Methuen, 1954); L.D. Epstein, *Political Parties in Western Democracies*, (London, Pall Mall, 1967); O. Kirchheimer, "The Transformation of West European Party Systems", in J. LaPalombara & M. Weiner (eds.), *Political Parties and Political Development*, (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1966).

²¹ G. Sartori, "The Sociology of Parties: A Critical Review", in O. Stammer (ed.), *Party Systems, Party Organisations, and the Politics of New Masses*, (Berlin, Free University of Berlin, 1968).

OFFICE SEEKING AND POLICY-BLIND COALITION THEORIES

Riker's *minimal winning coalition* theory holds that coalitions will form that include only as many parties as is necessary.²² In other words coalitions should include no parties whose seats are not needed to provide a (qualified) majority, because the benefits of government will have to be divided among a larger number of parties. This explains a number of coalitions (34% in Western Europe, 1945-71), but represents the least sophisticated theory of coalition building.²³ Its explanatory power derives from the high number of potential minimal winning coalitions in each case, it is simply a matter of no party being able to leave the coalition without its collapsing. Only overweight or minority coalitions fail to confirm this theory. Strom adds that "there is no reason Riker's logic should not apply below the majority threshold", i.e., that the incremental process of adding more parties to the coalition may stop before the 50% mark.²⁴ Minority coalitions can, therefore, be explained in rational choice terms if a party can enjoy benefits by way of influence on policy through support for a coalition, without incurring long-term costs of being held accountable for the government's performance.

The *minimum winning coalition* provides a far stricter, but also less explanatory, approach. This version of Riker's theory suggests that the smallest minimal winning coalition will form, i.e., the coalition that contains the smallest number of seats but still more than 50%. Alternatively, allowing for the significance of bargaining costs, an alternative minimum winning coalition could be based on the smallest number of parties required for a coalition commanding more than half the seats in parliament. A seat distribution of 49 - 16 - 16 - 16 - 3 would thus yield the 16 + 16 + 16 + 3 (51 seats) and the 49 + 3 (two parties) coalitions respectively. The focus on seats is based on sharing out the spoils of government, but bargaining cost might warrant minimising the number of parties.

²² Riker, *The Theory of Political Coalitions*.

²³ Budge & Keman, *Parties and Democracy*, p.14.

²⁴ K. Strom, *Minority Government and Majority Rule*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990), p.49.

INTRODUCING POLICY: POLICY-ORIENTED THEORIES

Minimal (and minimum) connected winning coalitions attach some weight to policy, escaping the blindness of Rikers' approach. Briefly, Axelrod's coalitions cannot 'skip' intermediary parties on a single left – right scale.²⁵ This would indicate that a C,D,F coalition must also include E. Coalitions that would contain 'surplus' parties by the above definitions could, therefore, be included.

Figure 8.2

| |
|---|
| LEFT ----- A ---- B ----- C ---- D ---- E ----- F ----- RIGHT |
|---|

De Swaan stresses the significance of policy *space*, suggesting that parties prefer to join parties that are not only adjacent on the left – right dimension, but that the relative distance is also significant.²⁶ An alternative, which can avoid the need to estimate distances, could be based on Crewe's work on directional voting.²⁷ Extended to coalition theory, this would suggest that parties are reluctant to join coalitions that advocate change in a different direction from a perceived status quo or neutral point. A variation would suggest that parties and coalitions gravitate towards the centre, i.e., that parties B and C in figure 8.2 would prefer party D to party A as their third partner. Finally, minority coalitions (e.g., C-D-E relying on F's support) could be explained because the extreme parties face a dilemma as to whether to support coalitions on their side of the spectrum. A classic case would be Norway's centre-right minority coalition in 1985-86, which relied on passive support (i.e. abstention) from the extreme right and collapsed when the Progress party voted with the left against increased petrol taxation.

Grofman's *proto-coalitions* model assumes that each party forms a proto-coalition with the party closest to it in a given policy space, thus according considerable weight to policy space.²⁸ Proto-coalitions cannot break up, and subsequently form new proto-

²⁵ R. Axelrod, *Conflict of Interest*, (Chicago, Markham, 1970).

²⁶ de Swaan, *Coalition Theories and Cabinet Formation*.

²⁷ I. Crewe, "Voting and the Electorate", in P. Dunleavy, A. Gamble, I. Holliday & G. Peele (eds.), *Developments in British Politics 4*, (London, Macmillan, 1993).

²⁸ B. Grofman, "A Dynamic Model of Proto-Coalition Formation in Ideological N-Space", *Behavioural Science*, 27 (1982), 77-90.

coalitions with other parties or proto-coalitions until a winning coalition is formed. Modifying this model, Budge & Laver focus on viable coalitions, and invoke non-hierarchical cluster algorithms.²⁹ In other words, they assume that proto-coalitions that fail may break up, releasing the parties into new negotiations (the process is not hierarchical).

While pure policy orientation excludes the price of office, focusing instead on the parties' pursuit of policy, *policy implementation* approaches focus on gaining office in order to achieve policy. Moreover, office is valuable in itself, and can be used by the incumbent to shape the next electoral contest.³⁰ Laver & Schofield and Laver & Shepsle stress the importance of portfolio distribution, and the discretion enjoyed by ministers.³¹

NON-SPATIAL COALITION THEORY

Budge & Keman reject the spatial approach to coalition theory in favour of a hierarchy of coalitions based on regime support, socio-economic left – right competition, and 'other issues'. The model can be summarised in five assumptions, (the conditions are cumulative, unless otherwise stated):

- i) If there is an immediate threat to the regime, "all significant pro-system parties will join the government excluding anti-system parties."
- ii) If there is no such threat, any majority party will form a single party government, or the dominant party of a government excluding anti-system parties.
- iii) If left – right issues are salient, the 'tendance' with majority support will form a government along these lines, supported by the majority (including support from, but not coalitions with, anti-system parties).
- iv) If these issues are not salient the party which is "manifestly larger" than any other pro-system party will form or lead the government.
- v) If there is no such party, a coalition will be formed around groups with similar views on salient issues (i.e., a minimum connected winning coalition); or

²⁹ Budge & Laver, "Measuring Policy Distances and Modelling Coalitions".

³⁰ Dunleavy, *Democracy, Bureaucracy and Public Choice: Economic Explanations in Political Science*, (London, Harvester, 1991), p. 119-125.

³¹ Laver & Schofield, *Multiparty Government*, Chapters Two and Seven; Laver & Shepsle, *Making and Breaking Governments*, p.13-15.

minimise the number of parties needed to win a vote of confidence (i.e., a minimum winning coalition).

Anti-system parties do not participate in coalitions. Significantly, this model emphasises the coalitions' ability to survive a vote of confidence, i.e., not necessarily containing a majority of the deputies.³² In the East Central European post-1989 context this would suggest focus on economic policy once the threat to the regime has been removed. Nevertheless, as long as some parties perceive regime change to be relevant, it will affect the coalition games. The nationalist dimension could be added as a significant third dimension, producing a hierarchy that runs from regime support, to left – right competition, to nationalism. This is not dissimilar to Evan & Whitefield's analysis, though that approach is not based on coalition theory.³³

LAVER & SHEPSLE: THE WINSET THEORY

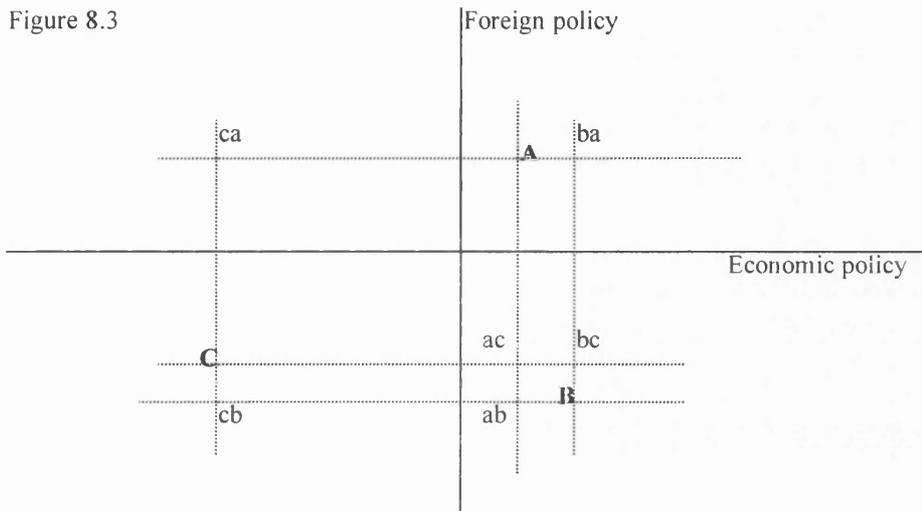
Laver & Shepsle take coalition theory to a new level by incorporating portfolio distribution and multi-dimensional politics into spatial models (and rejecting Euclidian distances in favour of 'city block' metric).³⁴ In figure 8.3, the lowercase letters show the six possible coalitions, giving portfolios on the horizontal and vertical dimension to the first and second party in each case. For example, coalition bc gives party B the economic portfolio, and party c the foreign portfolio. However, it is clear from the figure alone that both A and C prefer 'ac' to 'bc', so if bc is the starting point, a change to 'ac' would be predicted. In fact, in this case, ac is the only stable equilibrium (even B prefers 'ac', in which it does not participate, to 'ba' and 'cb'). The potential cabinets preferred by a majority to any given cabinet are called *lattice winsets*, the policies preferred by a majority to a given policy make up it *policy winset*.

³² Budge & Keman, *Parties and Democracy*, table 2.3.

³³ G. Evans & S. Whitefield, "Identifying the Bases of Party Competition in Eastern Europe", *British Journal of Political Science*, 23 (1993), 521-548.

³⁴ Laver & Shepsle, *Making and Breaking Governments*; see also P. Dunleavy & H. Margetts, "Understanding the Dynamics of Electoral Reform", *International Political Science Review*, 16:1 (1995), 9-29.

Figure 8.3



One advantage of this approach is the search for *equilibrium* coalitions, i.e., a cabinet that remains stable once it is formed because “no political actor with the ability to act in such a way as to bring down the cabinet and replace it with an alternative has an incentive to do so. Conversely, no actor with the incentive to replace the cabinet with some alternative has the ability to do so.”³⁵ The ‘ac’ government in figure 8.3 provides an example of such an equilibrium. A second point follows from this. A party that can (theoretically) veto all coalitions that are preferred by a majority to a cabinet in which the party holds all portfolios is described as a *strong* party. *Very strong* parties have an empty winset, merely *strong* parties do not, but can veto all coalitions within its winset. The model predicts that *strong* and *very strong* parties will dominate coalition governments or rule alone as a minority government. Third, the Laver & Shepsle model is built on a specific starting point: the existing or outgoing government. This omission in other theories can be a serious problem, as many situations have more than one equilibrium (a point where the pivotal parties can hold out against change). Which one is reached depends on the starting point in negotiations. Finally, Laver & Shepsle’s WINSET software permits a rudimentary search for credible and stable coalitions in the case of simulated election results. The stability of a party system can be tested against simulated shocks, such as a shift in voting patterns or party policy positions, thereby indicating how solid or precarious a party’s position is.

³⁵ Laver & Shepsle, *Making and Breaking Governments*, p.61.

THE LIMITS OF FORMAL COALITION THEORY*ANARCHY AND CONSTRAINTS...*

The debate between ‘West European politics’ and game theory highlights the problems of formal coalition theories, which attempt to analyse coalition behaviour outside the *sui generis* context peculiar to each party system. Though formal coalition theories have generated considerable insight into the dynamics of coalition formation, most face problems inherent in particular party systems when they are applied. Budge & Keeman found that commitment to the regime and the socio-economic left – right dimension tends to dominate West European politics. Laver & Shepsle came to a similar conclusion: coalition building centres on two or three key portfolios, or sets of portfolios. Even minimum connected winning coalition theory takes account of the party systems rather than merely the number and size of the parties. The relative position of parties clearly matters, as does the ‘starting point’ and the bargaining strength of parties that are in hold-out positions. But, as Laver & Schofield ask, are these ad hoc constraints (e.g. personality) or generalised constraints (e.g., a pariah party)?³⁶ Exclusion of communist parties in West European politics could be interpreted as input into rather than outcome of the bargaining process. Institutional factors such as consociational arrangements, the electoral systems, or a requirement for a positive vote of confidence matter, but so do legislative – executive links and the role played by the head of state.

What may seem like ad hoc factors, such as parties’ pre-election declarations of intent in terms of potential coalition partners or special treatment of some parties on the grounds of ethnicity or extremism, may in fact be generalised factors, i.e., properties of the party system. The fundamental parameters of coalition games are not only the institutional rules and rational pursuit of policy or office, they must also include the party system itself. Formal coalition theories tend to assume a degree of anarchy in inter-party relations, leaving history (historical institutionalism) to one side (available to explain away peculiar outcomes). Hence the tendency to test formal coalition theories against random predictions. Theory is better than no theory. In Laver & Shepsle’s case

³⁶ Laver & Schofield, *Multiparty Government*, Chapter Eight.

this is also justified because the theory lacks obvious competitors against which to test it.

...OR SYSTEMIC INTERACTION?

Yet party systems are anything but anarchic. They are characterised by systematic competition at several levels – virtually no election in a multi-party system is entered into without a relatively clear set of potential alliances. The parties of formal coalition theories enjoy far more freedom than do real party leaders, whose credibility would be at stake if they were to ignore principles and/or ideology. In the Norwegian example cited above, Jagland's commitment to resign unless Labour improved on the 1993 result effectively removed a 'very strong' party from the game and gave way to a coalition holding only 42 seats.³⁷ Though a Labour – Conservative grand coalition might make sense, both parties have an interest in maintaining left – right competition. Policy and office-seeking are elements of a party's set of preferences, but so is self-preservation (which includes avoiding marginalisation). The anarchic assumption in formal coalition theory must, therefore, be modified, taking account of the systemic elements of the party system (i.e., party competition). In the post-communist cases, the obvious example is the refusal of some former regime and opposition parties to co-operate under any circumstances. In other words, the rational choice based formal coalition theories are subject to historical constraints (regime change).

Yet in one fundamental way the post-communist party systems resemble the anarchic party systems in formal theory. During the first parliaments, party competition featured a series of parties, each of which attempted to dominate the scene and be recognised as *the* party of the nation – not unlike an image of six or seven communist parties (or party factions) competing for the dominant position.³⁸ A similar parallel can be drawn to inter-war party competition in East Central Europe, as well as inter-war Ireland, post-war Italy and post-junta Greece. The relationships between the parties developed much

³⁷ A WINSET test using economic and foreign (EU) policy confirms Labour as the very strong party. It holds 65 seats in the 165-strong Storting. For software, see Laver & Shepsle, *Making and Breaking Governments*, p.97, n.7.

³⁸ This image was presented by G. Schopflin, in conversation in 1994.

more slowly than the parties themselves. Though Di Palma's focus on acceptance of the rules of the game is crucial to *regime* consolidation, the consolidation of *liberal democracy* requires acceptance of the legitimacy of opponents. Competition is central to both the party system and liberal democracy. Przeworski makes the point forcefully: liberal democracy is about competition and uncertainty of outcome.³⁹ But party competition in East Central Europe developed only gradually, from competition for the dominant position to recognition of the necessity of coalitions and alliances.

A THREE-STEP MODEL FOR EAST CENTRAL EUROPE

A three-phase model of party systems based on the development of patterns of inter-party competition, starting with the development of parties, followed by anarchic party competition, and completed by the development of ordered party competition, characterises East Central European politics. The first phase was characterised by the development of political parties, largely through the disintegration of the conglomerate movements that dominated the first post-communist governments in Poland and Czechoslovakia. The break-up of anti-communist alliances represented the first step toward competitive party systems. Even in Hungary, where parties emerged early, the round-table parties' differentiation centred on defining their relationship with each other and the communist party. The second phase, during the first and/or second parliaments, featured anarchic party systems: alliances were brokered and collapsed, and patterns of inter- and intra-bloc competition began to emerge. The third phase, following the 1992 election in the Czech Republic, the 1993 election in Poland and the 1994 elections in Hungary and Slovakia, is characterised by the development of stable patterns of competition and cooperation within and between alliances that make up the government and opposition.

Two observations are worth noting before proceeding to more detailed analysis of the four party systems. First, despite a considerable level of anarchy in inter-party relations,

³⁹ A. Przeworski, *Democracy and the Market: Political and Economic Reforms in Eastern Europe and Latin America*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1991).

average coalition durability has not been radically lower in post-communist East Central Europe (30 months) than in post-war Western Europe (37 months). Second, the complexity of coalition-building has increased as the party systems have developed, warranting application of the Laver-Shepsle or Budge-Keeman models rather than variations on the minimal winning coalition theme. Klaus' second government and Horn's coalition with the SzDSz are better explained by non-spatial and Winset theory respectively.

On average, East Central European coalition governments have lasted some four-fifths of the average life-time of their West European counterparts, or two-thirds if the three SLD-PSL coalitions are counted separately. To be sure, a single decade of post-communist politics provides too few cases for this to be meaningful in statistical terms. The point is simply that East Central European coalitions have not, on average, been excessively unstable. The main exceptions are the 1991-93 Sejm in Poland, Meciar's governments, and the break-up of Klaus' coalition in November 1997. In table 8.1, Lijphart's approach to cabinet durability based on whether one party withdraws its support for the coalition has been applied to East Central Europe.⁴⁰ This permits counting the Hungarian 1990-94 coalition and the Polish 1993-97 coalition as single coalitions, despite withdrawal of part of the FKgP's support and the death and resignation of prime ministers respectively. Given the fluidity of East Central European political parties, 'cabinet durability' is defined in such a way that a coalition does not collapse if the government continues in power with support from rebel MPs from departing coalition parties. Though elections provide a maximum potential life for coalitions, Laver & Schofield's practice of counting elections as terminating a coalition (even if it re-forms afterwards) has not been followed here.⁴¹ However, if it were to be applied, together with changes in prime minister and changes in coalition status, the averages for cabinet durability would be 19 and 21 months in East Central and Western Europe respectively.

⁴⁰ A. Lijphart, "Measures of Cabinet Durability: A Conceptual and Empirical Evaluation", *Comparative Political Studies*, 17:2 (1984), 265-279.

⁴¹ Laver & Schofield, *Multiparty Government*, Chapter Six.

Table 8.1 Cabinet durability in East Central Europe, first elections 1989/90 – 1997/98.

| | | | | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|---|---------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Western Europe average 1945 – 1980 37 months | | | | | |
| Poland | Mazowiecki Resigned Total 26 | Bielecki Completed term Months (16+10) | Olszewski Fell 6 months | Suchocka Fell 11 months | PSL-SLD (x 3) Full term 48 months |
| Hungary | Antall/Boross Full term 48 months | Horn Full term 48 months | | | |
| Czech Republic | Pithart Full term 24 months | (coalition maintained by post-OF parties) | Klaus Full term 48 months | Klaus Fell 18 months | Tosovsky Caretaker 7 months |
| Slovakia | Meciar I Recalled/fell 10 months | Carnogursky Rest of term 14 months | Meciar II Fell 21 months | Moravcik Caretaker 10 months | Meciar III Full term 48 months |
| Czecho-slovakia (Federal) | Calfa Full term 24 months + | Strasky Interim 6 months | | | |

Source: West European data from Lijphart, "Measures of Cabinet Durability".

Notes: Brief failed efforts to form governments, e.g., Olzewski 1990 and Pawlak 1991, have been omitted, as has Suchocka's four-month caretaker government in 1993. Bielecki's government enjoyed an extended life due to a four-month delay in passing the electoral law. It incorporated significant elements of Mazowiecki's team and policy (notably Balcerowicz's finance portfolio) and enjoyed support from the entire post-Solidarity camp. The SLD-PSL coalition consisted of three governments, but has been counted as a single coalition since the coalition held together despite severe policy differences. Coalitions following 1997 and 1998 elections have not been included, as it is too early to estimate their durability.

Minimal winning coalitions (MWC) theories assume a considerable degree of anarchy in party competition and therefore require little moderation when applied to East Central Europe. In table 8.1, the connected MWC test is based on economic policy (fast or moderate economic reform). Both variations are more powerful in the first two phases, when they are compatible with more (and more durable) coalitions. By contrast, the Budge & Keeman model suggests that regime support should be the paramount question, and that left – right divisions will be reflected in cabinet formation only when there is no regime threat. The broad anti-communist coalitions featured during phase one are analogous to their grand coalitions facing a system threat (even if the former communists might not actually have posed a real threat to the new regime). Budge & Keeman's focus on left-right competition is more problematic, but a comparable dimension can be found dividing the advocates and opponents of fast economic reform. This theory, therefore, explains coalitions in phase one (anti-communist) and phase two (economic reform), but runs into problems with the Hungarian and Polish coalitions led by reform communists (which are divided on economic reform). Laver & Shepsle's Winset theory is not relevant to the first phase, largely due to the conglomerate parties' mixed policy platforms. However, in the second and third phases, the model is

compatible with most governments as the *strong* parties are included in cabinets (in two Slovak cases there is no *strong* party, and the model is, therefore, inapplicable). Interestingly, it is also compatible with the over-sized MSzP-SzDSz coalition, which can be explained in terms of factions within the MSzP. Table 8.2 suggests an increasing degree of complexity in East Central Europe party politics, which can be explained in terms of the development of patterns of party competition. To the extent that this is lacking and party competition is anarchic, minimal winning coalitions (or Strom-type minority coalitions) can be expected. However, as a party system develops, its format must be taken into account as the system becomes characterised by increasingly stable patterns of party competition and coalition-building.

Table 8.2 Coalition Theories Tested on East Central Europe 1989/90 – 1987/88: three phases of party competition and party system development. **Bold text** indicates when each theory is more powerful (in terms of number of cases and durability).

| THEORY TEST | Phase One Affirmative | Phase One Negative | Phase Two Affirmative | Phase Two Negative | Phase Three Affirmative | Phase Three Negative |
|------------------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| Minimal Winning Coal'tn. | Mazowiecki Meciar 1 Calfa† | Bielecki* Carnogursky* Pithart | Meciar 2** Antall/Boross Strasky | Olszewski Suchocka* | Klaus 1 3 x SLD-PSL Meciar 3 | Moravcik* Horn Klaus 2 |
| Connected Minimal Winning Coal'tn. | Mazowiecki Meciar 1 Calfa† | Bielecki* Carnogursky* Pithart | Meciar 2** Antall/Boross Strasky | Olszewski Suchocka* | Klaus 1 | Moravcik* Horn Klaus 2 Meciar 3 3 x SLD-PSL |
| Non-Spatial Theory (Budge/Keman) | Mazowiecki Meciar 1 Pithart Bielecki Carnogursky | Calfa | Olszewski Suchocka Antall/Boross Meciar 2 | Strasky | Klaus 1 Klaus 2 Moravcik Meciar 3 | Horn 3 x SLD-PSL |
| Winset Theory (Laver/Shepsle) | Not Applicable/banal due to conglomerate parties' majorities | | Olszewski Antall/Boross Meciar 2 (Strasky: N/A systems) | Suchocka two federal incompatible) | 3x SLD-PSL Klaus 1 Horn (Meciar 3: N/A no strong) | Klaus 2 Moravcik:N/A party exists) |

* These governments would not present negative evidence if the 50% threshold were lowered so as to include minority governments that enjoyed tacit support from parties that declines to take part in the coalition, as per Strom's arguments.⁴²

** Meciar's second government alternated between a minority government and a minimal winning coalition.

† The OF – VPN – KDH government qualifies because KDH's votes were required to meet qualified majorities required for major legislative initiatives.⁴³

⁴² Strom, *Minority Government and Majority Rule*.

⁴³ G. Wightman, "The Czech and Slovak Republics", in S. White, J. Batt & P.G. Lewis, *Developments in East European Politics*, (London, Macmillan, 1993), p.56.

All governments are identified by their respective prime ministers, except the three SLD-PSL coalitions (3 x SLD-PSL). The proto-coalition approach is not included, as it is essentially a variation of CMWC and yields similar results.

PHASE ONE – THE RISE AND DECLINE OF CONGLOMERATE-PARTY GOVERNMENT

The first phase is relatively similar in all four cases despite the negotiated transitions in Hungary and Poland and the swift Czechoslovak ‘velvet revolution’. Poland and Czechoslovakia were dominated by conglomerate parties, though these began to break up and form political parties competing against each other. Like their Hungarian counterparts they developed independently of their opponents, inter-party competition emerging only gradually. The Hungarian electoral campaigns of 1989 (referendum) and 1990 (parliament) illustrate the point inasmuch as the SzDSz and Fidesz and the MDF did not so much present alternative programmes as compete on entirely different sets of issues. Two factors dominated politics during this formative phase: anti-communism and conglomerate parties. The result is that spatial coalition theories are less than helpful, because all the anti-communist ‘coalitions’ were minimal winning coalitions inasmuch as no ‘party’ could leave without causing the government to enjoy less than majority support.

Hungary enjoyed the briefest conglomerate phase of the then three East Central European cases, as the parties were comparatively well developed by the time of the 1990 election. Party competition developed through the round-table negotiations, not only between government and opposition, but also between the ‘national’ and ‘democratic’ opposition. Hence the SzDSz and Fidesz’s stance on the November 1989 referendum, accusing the MDF and its allies of co-operating with the MSzP. While it is impossible, or at least pointless, to apply coalition theory to the Németh government of 1989/90, the parliament that was elected in March-April 1990 makes for a good testing-ground for coalition theory. However, as that parliament featured a set of well-defined and structured parties, it will be considered below as part of ‘phase two’. The opposition had metamorphosed into political parties by the end of 1989, leaving only a very brief

‘conglomerate phase’.⁴⁴ During the run-up to the 1990 elections, economics and national identity emerged as key dimensions of Hungarian political competition, the former stressed by Fidesz and SzDSz, the latter by MDF, FKgP and KDNP. SzDSz chairman Kis stressed that his party was the MDF’s natural opponent, and this sentiment was mutual.⁴⁵ The FKgP’s focus on agricultural privatisation added a dimension of interest-oriented competition, though the party became associated with the MDF-led Christian national camp.⁴⁶

Similarly, coalition theory is of little or no value as far as the *formation* of the Mazowiecki government in Poland in September 1989 is concerned. However, as Solidarity began the metamorphosis from conglomerate to multiple parties in the Summer of 1990, the question of majority backing for the government became increasingly salient. The ROAD – PC split was interpreted as reflecting differences between the prime minister and the solidarity leader, ROAD backing Mazowiecki and PC backing Walesa.⁴⁷ However, the split was largely over non-economic questions, with Walesa deriding his prime minister for slow political change.⁴⁸ Following Mazowiecki’s loss in the first round of the presidential elections, and his subsequent resignation and founding of the Democratic Union in December 1990, his faction continued to support Bielecki’s (KLD) government until the 1991 elections (though the UD was divided on his vote of investiture). Though Bielecki’s government commanded only a minority, it enjoyed support from the President over the practical elements of the Balcerowicz plan and benefited from his legitimacy in contrast to ‘Contractual Sejm’.⁴⁹ Bielecki’s resignation over the budget in August was duly rejected by 211 votes to 114 (35 abstentions and invalid votes), including all the Solidarity factions’ votes.⁵⁰

⁴⁴ L. Lengyel, “The Character of Political Parties in Hungary (Autumn 1989)”, in A. Bozoki, A. Korosenyi, & G. Schopflin (eds.), *Post-Communist Transition: Emerging Pluralism in Hungary*, (London, Pinter Publishers, 1992).

⁴⁵ *Nepszabadsag*, 20/03/1990 on Kis, cited in Z. Barany, “The Alliance of Free Democrats: From Underdog to Potential Victor”; A. Reisch “The Democratic Forum on the Finishing Line”, both in *RFE/RL Report on Eastern Europe*, 1:14 (06 April 1990).

⁴⁶ J. Pataki, “Smallholders’ Party Could Decide the Outcome of the Elections”, *RFE/RL Report on Eastern Europe*, 1:11 (06 March 1990).

⁴⁷ PAP in English 2202 gmt 27 July and 1849 gmt 28 July 1990 (SWB 31/07/90).

⁴⁸ L. Balcerowicz, *Socialism, Capitalism and Transformation*, (Budapest, Central European University Press, 1995), p.298-306.

⁴⁹ Balcerowicz, *Socialism, Capitalism and Transformation*.

Given the range of parties that gained representation in the 1991 election and the resulting coalition negotiations, this election heralded the move to the second phase in Poland. With it came increasing competition over the Balcerowicz Plan, including PC criticism of the government as insufficiently projectionist, the (post-Solidarity) Peasant Alliance's demand for agricultural protection and Solidarity's (trade union) demands for a 'windfall tax'.⁵¹ During the first phase the new parties thus began to align and compete over government performance and the economic transition, a division evident in a ZChN and PC vote rejecting Dabrowski's candidature for the central bank which was interpreted as "a referendum for or against Balcerowicz".⁵² Now transformed into a Christian democratic party under Walesa's chief of staff, Kaczynski, the PC combined anti-communism with criticism of economic transition, arguing that capitalism was being built on a communist foundation, i.e., former communists were too involved in the process.⁵³ Finally the potential for electoral success based on nationalist populism had been demonstrated in Tyminski's presidential campaign, when he beat Mazowiecki to the run-off. In short, a differentiated, if less than stable, party system was in place by the 1991 elections.

The Czecho-Slovak parties followed a path similar to that taken in Poland, though the national question took on a far more significant and immediate role as far as government formation and coalition politics is concerned. The main 'daughter parties' that emerged from Civic Forum and Public against Violence found themselves competing with reference to two major questions in 1990-92: the speed of economic transition and the structure of the federal state. The latter question was summed up in the 'hyphen-debate' which lasted until March 1990, when the name 'Czech and Slovak Federal Republic' was adopted.⁵⁴ The divisions in Civic Forum and VPN were products of proto-coalition games over questions threatening the future of the federal and

⁵⁰ L. Vinton, "Walesa, 'Special Powers' and the Balcerowicz Plan" and "Government Wins Contest of Wills with Parliament", *RFE/RL Report on Eastern Europe*, 2:29 (19 July 1991) and 2:37 (13 September 1991).

⁵¹ D. McQuaid, "The Political Landscape before the Elections", *RFE/RL Report on Eastern Europe*, 2:42 (18 October 1991).

⁵² L. Vinton, "A Postcommunist Parting Shot: Round-Table Sejm Rejects 'Special Powers'", *RFE/RL Report on Eastern Europe*, 2:40 (4 October 1991).

⁵³ McQuaid, "The Political Landscape before the Elections".

⁵⁴ J. Pehe, "The Instability of Transition", *RFE/RL Report on Eastern Europe*, 2:1 (04 January 1991).

national governments, which led to the emergence of early elements of party systems.⁵⁵ Though the Social Democrats, Christian Democrats (subsequently to incorporate the former satellite People's Party) and Greens were re-established as independent political parties in November-December 1989, the two conglomerate parties dominated the 1990 elections. Only their disintegration heralded the birth of party systems.

Following the 1990 elections, the Slovak national government could be interpreted as a minimal or minimal connected winning coalition inasmuch as it was not oversized, and at federal level KDH support was required due to provisions for qualified majorities. The Presidium of the Slovak National Council's decision to remove Meciar from his position as prime minister simultaneously reflected and exacerbated the divisions within the VPN, laying the foundations for a party system based largely on pro- and anti-Meciar positions and competing visions of Slovak nationalism. Moreover, the new Carnogursky government did not command a majority in the Slovak parliament, relying on support from Coexistence and/or the Democratic Party, and threatening to resign should the opposition impede its work.⁵⁶ By contrast, Pithart's Czech government included the KDU-CSL and the HSD-SMS in an over-sized grand coalition excluding only the communists, despite the OF's absolute majority (127 out of 200 seats).

PHASE TWO – COALITION BUILDING AND PARTY COMPETITION.

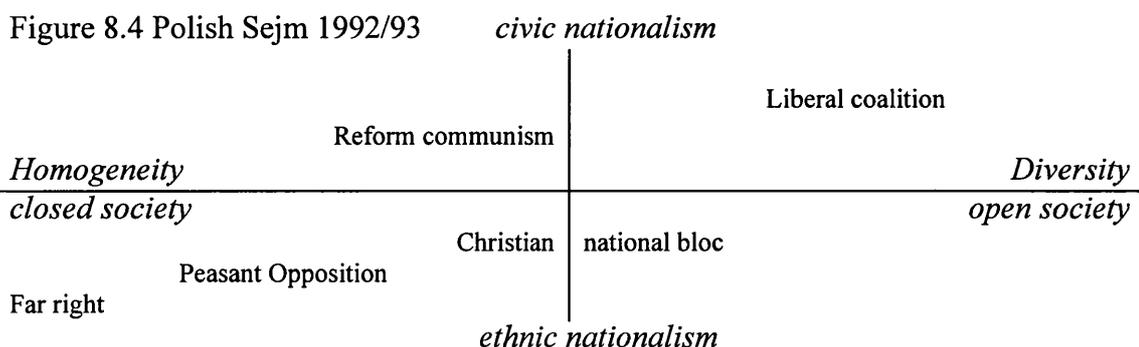
The conglomerate party phase lasted less than two years in East Central Europe. Even the Czech and Slovak national assemblies saw emerging multi-party competition in 1991, though the federal government was maintained until the 1992 elections (it was then replaced by an interim government under Strasky, which oversaw the dissolution of the Republic). By the 1992 elections Czech and Slovak parties were competing along government – opposition lines, divided into two or three main camps like the Hungarian and Polish party systems in the 1990 and 1991 elections respectively. Though this indicated the emergence of party systems, the parties were still competing for dominant positions. Even the SzDSz presented a campaign poster suggesting that “those who are

⁵⁵ J. Pehe, “Civic Forum Becomes a Political Party” and “Growing Slovak Demands Seen as Threat to Federation”, *RFE/RL Report on Eastern Europe*, 2:5 (01 February 1991) and 2:12 (22 March 1991).

⁵⁶ J. Pehe, “Political Conflict in Slovakia”, *RFE/RL Report on Eastern Europe*, 2:19 (10 May 1991).

not with us are with *them*".⁵⁷ The second phase is therefore the phase during which parliamentary politics, and specifically the need to build and maintain governing coalitions, forced the parties to engage in more systematic government – opposition relationships, thus laying the foundations of the four party *systems*. Unsurprisingly, Riker's theories of coalition government apply better to the 'anarchic' legislatures of second-phase East Central Europe than the ordered party competition common in West European politics. Minimal or minimal winning coalitions featured in all four states, either formally or informally as minority coalitions enjoying tacit support of other minor parties. Accordingly, the Polish and Slovak governments collapsed when these minimal coalitions broke up or when supporting parties outside a minority coalition withdrew support.

The development of the Polish party system during the first fully competitively elected parliament was to a large extent the product of coalition-building, or the making and breaking of coalitions. The result of the 1991 election was clear inasmuch as a majority of the voters that turned out for the election cast their votes for parties that were critical of the Balcerowicz plan and Bielecki's government. During Suchocka's eleven-month tenure, the 29 parties in the Sejm aligned into five broad blocs: i) a heterogeneous government bloc including the liberal parties, supported by ii) the Christian national parties and Solidarity, and opposed by iii) a peasant opposition, iv) the reformed communists and v) the far right.



Apart from the introduction of a 5%-barrier and the election result itself, three major events contributed to shaping the party system of the second competitive Sejm, 1993-

⁵⁷ Z. Barany, "The Alliance of Free Democrats: From Underdog to Potential Victor", *RFE/RL Report on Eastern Europe*, *RFE/RL Report on Eastern Europe*, 1:14 (06 April 1990).

97: the failure of the Olszewski government, the emergence of the Suchocka coalition, and her government's collapse in 1993. Olszewski's six-month government represented an effort to establish a new approach to economic transition, based on rejection of the Balcerowicz plan. In this enterprise, Olszewski's minority government enjoyed support from a motley coalition including the PC, the PSL and the ZChN. Mazowiecki's UD abstained in the vote of investiture. The government's problems became evident when it lost the March budget vote. After rescuing the budget, finance minister Olechowski resigned, thereby illustrating the difficulties involved in finding a coherent alternative to the Balcerowicz approach. Clashing with the president in May, the government relied on the PC and the Christian and agrarian parties for survival, but at this point an alternative was being developed around the "small coalition" of the KLD, UD and PPG. The terminal no-confidence motion in June was not the product of the opposition but an intervention from Walesa, who demanded this vote of the speaker following Olszewski's allegations that he had been a secret police informer. This was the final blow to a collapsing government. Apart from its minority status, the Olszewski government fits most coalition theories, with his PC as a strong party in the Winset model, and the government representing an effort to present an alternative to the Balcerowicz Plan.

The continuing relevance of the *ancien regime* – opposition cleavage was amply demonstrated in Pawlak's failed effort to form a government upon Walesa's request. The ZChN, PC and Rural Solidarity refused to support the PSL chairman because of the party's communist past, a sentiment shared by several UD members, if not the leadership. It was left to the surprisingly resilient Suchocka coalition to drive the Polish parties into clearer alignment on economic policy, as her new government pursued Balcerowicz-style privatisation. The seven-party coalition was based on the 'small coalition' and the Christian democratic and non-PSL peasant parties, but it fell 36 seats short of a majority in the 460-seat Sejm. This was only achieved with the 39 votes of Solidarity, the German minority and Christian Democracy.⁵⁸ A series of close votes on the budget and privatisation minister Lewandowski's survival by a twelve-vote margin illustrated the extent to which economic policy divided the Sejm. Accordingly, the no-

⁵⁸ L. Vinton, "Poland's Government Crisis: An End in Sight?", *RFE/RL Research Report*, 1:30 (24 July 1992).

confidence vote in May 1993 was caused by Solidarity's complaint over low wage increases. It passed by one vote, reportedly with recently sacked minister of justice Dyka smoking a pipe in the hallway. His presence inside the chamber, even if non-voting, would have saved the government.⁵⁹ Agriculture minister Janowski's resignation in April and the departure of 19 PL deputies from the coalition had all but sealed the government's fate. Nevertheless, the Suchocka coalition had prompted alignment of the parties into government and opposition camps based on economic policy, thus supporting the Budge-Laver theory's suggestion that if there is no regime threat the parties will align into social democrat – *bürgerlich* camps. However, as the coalition excluded the *strong* PC, the Laver-Shepsle model would not suggest that the government would be stable.

Meanwhile, both the Czech and Slovak national party systems developed rapidly from conglomerate proto-systems to competitive systems in the year running up to the 1992 election, to the extent that Czechoslovakia featured two party systems by the time of the 1992 elections. No party won seats in both regional assemblies. Both electoral campaigns featured efforts to build pre-election coalitions, differentiating the future government and opposition. However, while the Czech party system moved on to a third phase of fully developed government – opposition competition soon after the election, this process was far slower and far less pronounced in the Slovak case. Coalition-building continued to centre on Meciar and his HzDS, even after the 1994 elections. Come December 1994 it was clear that the Meciar/anti-Meciar division had formed the basis for party competition in the medium term. In fact the party system continued to be dominated by Meciar throughout the 1994-98 parliament.

With the disintegration of the Civic Forum, the Czech party system moved towards a competitive government – opposition scenario, with the former OF parties in the government role and the communists cast as the main opposition party. Until the 1992 election policy took precedence over numerical strength, with an oversized coalition government excluding only the communists. Therefore, the Czech government can be explained better by proto-coalition or non-spatial theories than the various types of minimal coalition theory. After the disintegration of Czechoslovakia, two main

⁵⁹ *Economist Intelligence Unit: Poland Country Report*, Second Quarter 1993.

competing camps, one *burgerlich* and one social democrat, developed a competitive two-bloc government – opposition relationship (flanked by communists and republicans) that was to last through the 1996 elections. ODS was the *strong* party in this system, and accordingly furnished the finance and the prime minister.

Similarly, the collapse of the Meciar government precipitated the development of coalition bargaining in the Slovak national assembly. Relying on the support of Hungarian parties, the Carnogursky minority government held off Meciar until the 1992 election, only to see the HzDS emerge as the clear winner with 74 of the Assembly's 150 seats. Two seats short of a majority, the second Meciar government could count on an informal alliance with the SNS and additional support from the SDL. However, the achievement of Slovak independence put the SNS – HzDS relationship under strain, leading to Cernak's resignation as economics minister and the collapse of the tacit coalition. Internal divisions caused the departure of eight HzDS deputies to form the Alliance of Democrats under Knazko.⁶⁰ The fluidity of the relationships between the parties was amply demonstrated over the Summer of 1993, with the opposition's failure to unite and the opening of talks between the HzDS and first the SNS and then the SDL. By October 1993 Meciar's government, now reduced to sixty-five deputies by Dolgos' departure, signed an agreement forming a coalition with the SNS, which took the education portfolio and two deputy prime ministers.⁶¹

The bargain that brought majority support for Meciar's government failed to secure stability due to divisions within both parties. This became clear in the tight budget vote in December when former SNS-chair and economic minister Cernak led a group of six SNS deputies in the vote against the budget.⁶² Meciar's request that his deputies sign a "declaration of perpetual loyalty" led to one further resignation, and of the then twelve SNS deputies four openly opposed the coalition.⁶³ The fall of Meciar's second government, like that of his first, was directly related to personality and leadership style. The expulsion of Roman Kovac and Moravcik in February 1994 (for forming a faction)

⁶⁰ *Eastern Europe Newsletter* 7:13, 22/6/93.

⁶¹ M. Nic, J. Oberman & S. Fisher, "New Slovak Government: New Stability?", *RFE/RL Research Report*, 2:47 (26 November 1993).

⁶² S. Fisher, "Controversy in Slovakia over Budget Proposal", *RFE/RL Research Report*, 3:2 (1 January 1994); *Eastern Europe Newsletter*, 8:3 01/01/94.

⁶³ *Economist Intelligence Unit: Slovakia Country Report*, First Quarter 1994.

precipitated Meciar's defeat in a no-confidence vote on March 11th. The coalition was replaced by another minority government, led by Moravcik's newly formed DEUS. The new government's focus on rapid privatisation and economic change became clear during its first 100 days.⁶⁴

The Slovak case illustrates the continuing problems of party system development in East Central Europe, namely the fluid nature of political parties and the relationship between these parties. Though the October 1994 HzDS – SNS agreement brought SNS ministers into the cabinet and therefore represented a new coalition, it did not resolve tensions within either of the two parties. In fact, it led to high-profile defections from both parties and the collapse of the government. The addition of the SNS to the cabinet did little to change the government's medium term status, and the whole period from June 1992 to March 1994 is, therefore, better understood in terms of Meciar's minority government struggling to meet the minimal coalition criteria than as two or three separate short-lived governments. Having failed this, it was replaced by a nominal minority government, an anti-Meciar coalition rather than a coherent alternative. Nevertheless, the new government built a degree of consensus centred on speeding up privatisation and improving the relationship with the EU. Though the coalition comprising the KDH, SDL, Knazko's ADSR (Alliance of Democrats), Cernak's SNS-breakaway NDS-NA (Democratic Party – New Alternative), and DEUS (later DU) was a minority coalition (67/150 seats), it ruled as a minimal winning coalition due to continuous support from the 14 deputies of the Hungarian Christian Democrats and Co-existence. The absence of a *strong* party renders the Winset model inapplicable, though it identifies the HzDS and SLD as central parties.

The first post-communist parliament saw the brunt of the metamorphosis from a collection of parties to a party system in Hungary. The major political parties went through several 'birth-pangs' during this period, in the form of leadership changes and splits or divisions over coalition strategies. Though the MDF-led coalition served the full term, its majority was down to two by the time of Antall's death. Csurka's defecting and setting up the MIEP and Torgyan's taking part of the FKgP out of the coalition

⁶⁴ *Economist Intelligence Unit: Slovakia Country Report, Third Quarter 1994.*

produced the two main challenges to the coalition's viability, but in doing so helped the relationship between the governing parties solidify. Meanwhile, the opposition parties developed their strategies, through top level struggles within Fidesz, the SzDSz and MSzP. The development of inter-party competition, therefore, took place at three levels, within the coalition, within the opposition, and between two. The MDF emerged as the *strong* party in 1990, but the KDNP would have been a contender for this role had the MDF taken about twenty seats less. Though it was located on one side of the coalition and not at its centre, the KDNP nevertheless held a position of considerable potential strength due to its central position in the party system. On the other hand, the FKgP was left at the margins of the coalition and withdrew support in October 1991, though 35 of its 45 deputies rebelled and continued to back the government.⁶⁵ Come the 1994 election, two Smallholders' parties competed, reflecting the Omolnar – Torgyan split.

Four years of opposition prompted a revision of the strategies adopted by the three Hungarian parties that lost the 1990 election. The result made it clear that an SzDSz - Fidesz alliance could not aspire to form or run a government on their own. A WINSET test that allocates the two liberal parties up to 100 additional seats (together) confirms this, as first the KDNP and then the MSzP become the *strong* party as the number of liberal seats increases. Both the liberal parties carried out major reassessments of their strategies during the opposition years, a process that brought Fidesz closer to the KDNP and SzDSz closer to the liberal wing of the MSzP. The election of Tolgyessy (from the SzDSz's classical liberal wing) after party president Kis' resignation, prompted the resignation of SzDSz parliamentary leader Peto (social democrat wing). However, Peto won the presidential post at the January 1993 congress, shifting the balance back towards the 'left'. The dispute over post-election coalition with MSzP exacerbated SzDSz divisions, with Tolgyessy opposing the coalition and eventually leaving the party and running on the Fidesz list in 1998.⁶⁶ Fodor's resignation from Fidesz after his failed leadership-challenge against Orban in November 1993 reflected similar disputes within that party, and even generated speculation about possible Fidesz – MDF co-

⁶⁵ J. Pataki, "Will the Governing Coalition Survive?", *RFE/RL Research Report*, 1:48 (4 December 1992).

⁶⁶ *RFE/RL Newslines* Vol 2, No. 62, 31 March 1998.

operation.⁶⁷ Fodor eventually joined the SzDSz in the run-up to the 1994 elections.

The MSzP did not escape internal disputes over re-orientation and party strategy. Bekesi, the finance minister under last communist government and the author of the party's economic strategy, was described succinctly by one western observer: "at times he sounds more liberal than the liberal parties."⁶⁸ The MSzP entered the 1994 elections with an economic strategy that was so similar to that of SzDSz that Bekesi refused to serve in a one-party government out of fear that his policy might be compromised by the MSzP left.⁶⁹ This internal MSzP division over economic strategy was to become more pronounced after the election, when the turbulent Horn – Bekesi relationship was compared to that between Thatcher and Lawson, with Medgyessy cast in the role of Alan Walters.⁷⁰ Nevertheless, the outcome was an orientation towards alliance with the SzDSz in the run-up to the 1994 election. In the event the MSzP's absolute victory at the polls made this unnecessary, except for internal MSzP reasons.

PHASE THREE – TOWARDS FULLY DEVELOPED COMPETITION.

The 1993/94 round of elections in Poland and Hungary and the break-up of Czechoslovakia set the scene for the development of fully fledged competitive party systems, at least in three out of the four cases. Slovak party competition has remained centred on Meciar, up to and including the 1998 campaign. If the first parliaments saw the development of political parties and alliances, the government – opposition relationships developed fully during the second parliaments. In every case but the Czech, the government was replaced by the opposition, and in the Czech case the CSSD developed into a single-party alternative to the ODS-led government. The Czech government crisis in November 1997 brought down the longest-serving government in East Central Europe, introducing an element of instability into the most stable East Central Europe party system, and sending the CSSD in search of potential centre-right partners. However, the crisis is interpreted here as a classic West-European style

⁶⁷ *Eastern Europe Newsletter*, 7:24 (19/10/93).

⁶⁸ *Economist Intelligence Unit: Hungary Country Report*, First Quarter 1994, p.8.

⁶⁹ *Eastern Europe Newsletter*, 8:12 (08/06/94).

⁷⁰ *Eastern Europe Newsletter*, 8:18 (01/09/94).

government crisis, no worse than that which afflicted the British Conservative Party in 1995-97 or the Norwegian right-wing coalitions in the mid-1980s. If anything, it is a sign that the Czech party system has much in common with its Scandinavian counterparts.

GOVERNMENT - OPPOSITION RELATIONSHIP AS A FUNDAMENTAL ELEMENT OF THE PARTY SYSTEM

The government – opposition relationship, which forms the main component of the systematic interaction between the component parts of a party system, is manifest in three main forms: i) government coalitions, ii) the development of credible alternatives to the government; and iii) the relationship between the two blocs. This entails an element of predictability and stability, as patterns of government – opposition competition emerge. In East Central Europe, all three aspects began to develop during the second phase, and became fully discernible in the third phase of party system development. As they entered the 1997/98 round of elections, all four states featured competition between two or three main blocs of parties, with relatively well-defined coalition alternatives. Moreover, with the exception of the CSSD and Fidesz, all the major parties had government experience and had taken part in coalition games.

GOVERNMENT PARTIES AND COALITION BUILDING

In Poland and Hungary the reform communist parties, victorious in the 1993/94 elections, sought to define themselves in relation to other parties that had so far shunned them. Both entered coalitions that experienced considerable tension over economic policy, though for different reasons. The PSL's reluctance to pursue aggressive economic transition in Poland was matched by the MSzP left's caution in Hungary, though in both cases this had negligible effect on the governments' economic policy. The Czech party system made for clear two-bloc competition, the CSSD versus the government, leaving the communists and republicans at the extremes. Though Klaus' coalition's viability was not in doubt until the middle of 1997, the second parliament saw increasing intra-coalition tension. In Slovakia, the collapse of Meciar's government in March 1994 and the brief anti-Meciar coalition under Moravcik settled the party system into a state of stability with competition centred on the Meciar – anti-Meciar

division. Such competition has not been common in West European politics, though the Berlusconi – anti-Berlusconi struggle in 1992 – 1996 offers one parallel.

Two themes run through the SzDSz – MSzP coalition as far as the relationship between the two parties is concerned. First, the question of long-term co-operation after the 1998 election remained salient throughout the first two years of the coalition. An alliance was only ruled out in late 1996, and then by both parties. Second, and equally significant, within the MSzP a struggle persisted between the liberal and social democrat wings, which cost two finance ministers their jobs. Within the SzDSz, the defeat of Tolgyessy's opposition to co-operation with the MSzP only settled the question temporarily. In fact, the future of the coalition became linked to intra-MSzP politics, with the Free Democrats repeatedly threatening to leave the coalition in the event that the left wing within the MSzP became too strong. These two themes of inter- and intra-party politics within the coalition came together in a series of economic decisions. The overall result was a victory for the SzDSz and the liberal wing of MSzP, in terms of policy if not personnel.

Three events sum up the SzDSz – MSzP relationship: the struggle over Bekesi's tenure as finance minister, the subsequent struggle over his predecessor's post, and Horn's attempt to counterbalance the finance minister by establishing a deputy prime minister in charge of economic affairs. Despite his membership of the MSzP, Bekesi was very much an SzDSz man in the cabinet. The death of Horn's wealth-tax proposals at the end of 1994 indicated a balance of power in Bekesi's favour, as did his failure to consult the union-dominated Interest Coordination Council on the draft budget and MSzOSz trade union president Nagy's failure to get elected to the MSzP executive.⁷¹ Commented MSzP Presidium leader Vitanyi: "Hungary does not have a social liberal government but a social and liberal cabinet".⁷² Bekesi's continuing struggle against the MSzP left led to his resignation in January 1995. This in turn prompted SzDSz warnings that economic policy must not be changed.⁷³ Yet Horn's quarrels with ministers were not limited to his liberal cabinet members, as his dismissal of Pal (trade and industry) in

⁷¹ *Eastern Europe Newsletter*, 8:22, (18/10/94).

⁷² Cited in *RFE/RL Research Bulletin*, 26 September 1994.

⁷³ Peto cited in *OMRI Daily Digest*, No. 21, 30 January 1995.

June illustrated.⁷⁴ Bekesi's succession by Bokross seemingly represented a victory for the MSzP left inasmuch as the SzDSz had promoted Suranyi's candidacy. However, Bokross soon made it clear that he would continue his predecessor's economic and fiscal policy, earning considerable criticism from his party's left for his 'Black Sunday' austerity package in March (though only eight coalition deputies actually failed to support these measures at the vote in June).⁷⁵ Meanwhile, Suranyi got the central bank governorship, thus providing further support for Bokross' measures. The struggle over the 'Black Sunday' package, and new measures following a constitutional court ruling against some of its elements, led to his resignation within a year, in February 1995.⁷⁶ Once again, the new finance minister was expected to relax economic policy. But, like his predecessor, Medgyessy vowed to maintain policy continuity.⁷⁷ Horn's effort to circumvent the finance minister by making Nagy deputy prime minister in charge of economic affairs brought the coalition to a breaking point, with SzDSz's Kuncze (interior minister) stating that it was "grounds for divorce."⁷⁸ The situation was only defused by Nagy's withdrawal of his candidacy. In the aftermath of this episode the MSzP's Fourth Congress marginalised Nagy, and by late 1996 it was clear that the two parties would co-operate through the parliament's full term but did not entertain the idea of a long-term alliance. Given the MSzP's majority, the coalition confounds most coalition theories, but is explained in terms of intra-party politics. However, the Laver-Shepsle model correctly suggested that the MSzP would take the two most significant portfolios, prime minister and finance.

Similar themes run through the more turbulent PSL – SLD relationship in Poland, 1993 – 97. The SLD's internal divisions may have been less tense than those evident in the MSzP, but its struggle with its coalition partner was definitely not. While internal party affairs and the quest for broader international acceptance may have made a coalition expedient for the MSzP, the SLD had little choice in the matter (except to rule as a minority government). In contrast to its Hungarian counterpart, the SLD faced criticism from its coalition partner for its rapid and liberal approach to economic transition and therefore faced a two-front struggle: against the PSL on its 'left' flank, and the liberal

⁷⁴ *The Hungary Report*, No. 1.14, July 3, 1995.

⁷⁵ *The Hungary Report*, No. 1.10, June 6, 1995.

⁷⁶ *OMRI Daily Digest II*, No. 229, 27 November 1995, and No. 36, 20 February 1996.

⁷⁷ *OMRI Daily Digest II*, No. 35, 19 February 1996, and No. 43, 29 February 1996.

⁷⁸ *The Hungary Report*, No. 1.19, August 8, 1995.

and conservative parties on the 'right'. The Winset model provides some further guidance to the problems of Polish coalition politics, inasmuch as the SLD was the *strong* party and a coalition giving the PSL the prime minister should be vulnerable to pressure for a more SLD-dominated cabinet (even from the UP and UD). While coalition bargaining explains the actual outcome, the model forecast tension over economic policy in an SLD – PSL coalition. Predictably, given the two parties' different economic policy, privatisation and the economy generated considerable intra-coalition tension as the PSL aimed to decelerate the pace established by its predecessors.

The tension over economic reform derived from the problem of reconciling the SLD's pursuit of economic reform with the Peasant Party's effort to defend agrarian interests. Hence prime minister Pawlak's disagreement with Borowski over reform of the ministry of finance, which resulted in his dismissing deputy finance minister Kwalec without consulting Borowski. The finance minister's resignation followed within a month.⁷⁹ PSL – SLD clashes over privatisation continued, e.g., between privatisation minister Kaczmarek (SLD) and foreign trade minister Podanski (PSL) over privatisation of the Rolimpex foreign trade enterprise, and over the PSL's opposition to Kaczmarek's privatisation of the tobacco industry.⁸⁰ Borowski's resignation in February 1994 over Pawlak's effort to slow down the pace of privatisation foreshadowed that of Bekesi in Hungary. Despite threats that PSL might leave the coalition, Pawlak's replacement came from the SLD's free-market wing.⁸¹ Vital portfolios including industry, privatisation and finance went to the SLD, indicating the party's weight within the coalition and its dominance over economic policy. By the end of 1994 *Gazeta Wyborcza*, edited by Michnik, even entertained the idea of a UW – SLD coalition if the PSL were to defect.⁸² Oleksy, in turn, was forced to resign over allegations of co-operation with the KGB, but the SdRP congress elected him Kwasniewski's successor as party leader. His successor, Cimosewicz, indicated economic policy continuity by keeping Kaczmarek and Kolodko at the ministries of privatisation and finance. Intra-coalition tension therefore continued, manifest on topics dear to the PSL such as farmers' social

⁷⁹ *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 29-31 January, 1994 and 3 February 1994.

⁸⁰ *Eastern Europe Newsletter*, 8:15 (21/07/94); *Economist Intelligence Unit: Poland Country Report*, First Quarter 1994; *Rzeczpolita*, 3 February 1994.

⁸¹ *Eastern Europe Newsletter*, 9:5 (16/03/95).

⁸² Reported in *Eastern Europe Newsletter*, 8:23 (16/11/94).

security payments, e.g., in the 1997 budget.⁸³ Economic divisions came to a head over tax questions, prompting Cimosewicz to condemn his coalition partners for their populism, throwing in criticism of the Catholic Church's anti-abortion stance at the same time.⁸⁴ To be sure, similar tension has since been evident in Buzek's government, where the Solidarity Trade Union continues to question Balcerowicz's economic reforms. Examples include a Solidarity sponsored rally at which EU flags were burned, featuring slogans like "Balcerowicz must go".⁸⁵ Both blocs, therefore, reflect the old regime – opposition divisions rather than the social democrat – *bürgerlich* division, though economic policy continues to cause tension within the blocs. The blocs thus conform to minimum winning coalition theory, but do not represent 'connected' coalitions or blocs that combine all pro-system parties on either side of the social democrat – *bürgerlich* division.

In contrast to the turbulence in the Hungarian and Polish coalitions, the 1992-96 Klaus government provided a model of coalition stability. Differences within the coalition were on minor points, e.g., an ODA-led defeat of Klaus' effort to outlaw budget deficits in 1994 and ODA criticism of alleged ODS-supervised secret service investigations of political parties (which was later ruled unsubstantiated).⁸⁶ In fact, the more significant divisions occurred within the ODS, between Klaus and Zieleniec over the latter's repeated attempt to secure more explicit party programmes since 1993. The run-up to the 1996 election saw some differentiation on the part of the junior coalition partners, with ODA developing a right wing economic agenda focusing on, e.g., tax cuts, freeing rent control, and student fees, and the KDU-CSL setting out a law-and-order agenda and emphasising church restitution.⁸⁷ On the other hand, the scene had been simplified somewhat by Benda's KDS' formal incorporation into the ODS before the 1996 election. Even after the return of the coalition as a minority government in 1996, there were no major policy disputes comparable with those within the Polish or Hungarian coalitions. The government's position was strengthened as it was effectively transformed into a majority government when two former CSSD deputies, expelled

⁸³ *Economist Intelligence Unit: Poland Country Report*, Third Quarter 1996.

⁸⁴ *Economist Intelligence Unit: Poland Country Report*, Fourth Quarter 1996.

⁸⁵ *RFE/RL Newslines* Vol 2, No. 55, 20 March 1998.

⁸⁶ *Economist Intelligence Unit: Czech Republic Country Report*, Fourth Quarter 1994; Second Quarter 1995.

⁸⁷ *Economist Intelligence Unit: Czech Republic Country Report*, Second Quarter 1996

from the party for voting with the government on the 1997 budget, announced that they would support the coalition. One of the two, Wagner, maintained his independence, and formed a centre-right party in January 1998.⁸⁸ However, from December 1996 the ODA took an increasingly critical stance pressing for acceleration of the privatisation process, while the KDU-CSL maintained its policy of never ruling out a coalition with the CSSD.⁸⁹

The collapse of the coalition and the government's resignation on November 30th 1997 was triggered not by policy differences or intra-coalition competition, but by the party finance scandal in which it emerged that in 1995 the ODS had accepted more than 7m CKr from Srejber, the part-owner and chairman of the board of a company that had recently won the tender for the Trinecke steelworks. Zieleniec insisted he had revealed the possible identity of the 'anonymous' donor to Klaus, though Klaus denied this.⁹⁰ The economic problems of early 1997, which warranted "corrective economic measures" in April and had brought Czech unemployment to a record 4.8% by September, provided a setting in which this challenge to the government's credibility could break up the coalition.⁹¹ RFE/RL's Pehe identified a "crisis of leadership" one year after the 1996 election, exacerbated by the government's failure in communication with the public, lack of dialogue within the coalition, and its reluctance to accept responsibility for the economic problems or carry out anything but a cosmetic reshuffle.⁹² By January 14th a breakaway group consisting of 30 of the ODS' 69 deputies had formed the Freedom Union (US), led by former interior minister Ruml and including former KDS chairman Pilip.

Though the coalition crisis brought down the government and split the ODS, and undeniably shook up the party system, it did not lead to wholesale party system change. The coalition had been under considerable strain due to its decline in the polls since the spring, causing its members to reconsider both policy and coalition strategy.⁹³ The campaign for the (early) 1998 election indicates that the main result of the crisis as far

⁸⁸ *OMRI Daily Digest* No. 59, 25 March 1997; *CTK*, 13 January 1997.

⁸⁹ *CTK*, 26 February 1997; 30 November 1997.

⁹⁰ *CTK*, 11 September 1997; 27 November 1997.

⁹¹ *RFE/RL Newslines* Vol. 1, No. 134, 8 October 1997; *The Prague Post*, 4 June 1997.

⁹² *The Prague Post*, 4 June 1997.

⁹³ *CTK*, 11 September 1997.

as the party system is concerned is a division of the non-socialist camp. The Czech two-bloc system moved towards a three-bloc system in which the centre contemplated co-operation with either side. The Winset model cast the KDU-CSL as the *strong* party (1996-98) by virtue of its ability to veto alternatives to KDU-CSL minority government. The ODS-dominated government, therefore, went against the Laver-Shepsle model's predictions. Its collapse was predicated on divisions within the ODS and the coalition rather than its minority status. These divisions caused the failure of coalition talks after the 1998 election, though the ODS, KDU-CSL, and the US hold 102 out of 200 seats. The ensuing ODS agreement not to bring down a CSSD minority government prompted concerns about an alleged Zeman – Klaus pact to change the electoral system.⁹⁴

Meanwhile in Slovakia, the 1994 election confirmed Meciar's HzDS as the 'government party', heralding another four years of Meciar – anti-Meciar government – opposition competition. In contrast to the development of stable patterns of competition in the three other cases, this indicated the consolidation of a pattern of party competition centred on Meciar's premiership and his conflict with president Kovac. The HzDS' search for allies, tacit or explicit, confirmed the continued anarchic nature of the party system, in which no party qualified as *strong*. The ambivalent position of SDL, the ZRS and the SNS, all of which entered into negotiations with Meciar, contributed further to this anarchic system, though the SDL eventually drew the battle-lines by settling for an opposition role. The president – prime minister division exacerbated this personality-oriented competition, but it was destined not to last beyond the expiry of Kovac's tenure in March 1998. It also reinforced the centre-right – HzDS division, with the 'blue coalition' backing Kovac and campaigning for direct election of president. This question was illegally removed from the May 1997 referendum ballots by interior minister Krajci, and though the government was subsequently censored by the constitutional court for this nothing was done about it.⁹⁵ If the 1992-94 parliament was dominated by Meciar's quest for a minimum winning coalition, little changed during the 1994-98 parliament except for a degree of stabilisation. The ten-week negotiations with the SNS and ZRS produced a coalition, but not without continued disputes. The ZRS

⁹⁴ *Mlada Fronta Dnes* 22/06/98, *Lidove Noviny* 22/06/98, as per *CTK Press Review*, 23 June 1998; *CTK News Summary*, 22 July 1998.

⁹⁵ *RFE/RL Newslines*, Vol. 1, No. 40, 28 May 1997; Vol 2, No. 28, 11 February 1998; Vol 2, No. 36, 23 February 1998.

went as far as to set up a 'shadow cabinet', and the SNS refused to support ratification of the bilateral treaty with Hungary (though it finally abstained in 1996). Economic policy provided contentious problems, e.g., when both parties joined the opposition in a debate on the HzDS-controlled national property fund.⁹⁶ This crisis prompted Meciar to go so far as to enquire about potential opposition support for a minority government. He subsequently attempted to reform the electoral system, advocating a mixed system which the EIU reported would have changed HzDS' 1994 result from 61/150 to 124/150.⁹⁷

OPPOSITION PARTIES: TOWARDS ALTERNATIVE COALITIONS

The defeat of the Hungarian *burgerlich* parties in 1994 prompted not only a reassessment of their respective electoral strategies but also considerable realignment of the party system. Fidesz's re-appraisal of its strategy included an effort to shift the party toward the 'right', i.e., the position of the former Antall/Boross government. Its April 1995 congress symbolically added 'Civic Party' to the party's name, thus emphasising its *burgerlich* nature. The 1997 congress re-elected Orban but, in a move that was less than ardently Thatcherite, it opposed privatisation of the energy utilities and the air lines. The MDF's initial reaction to its defeat was an effort to modernise the party and focus on modern conservatism.⁹⁸ However, the relations between its liberal and Christian national factions deteriorated during the first two years of opposition, leading to the division of the party in March 1996. Meanwhile the KDNP and FKgP continued to explore coalitions, particularly at local level. By the end of 1995 the FKgP, KDNP and MDF had formed a potential electoral alliance in the National Alliance for Hungary Association, only for it to collapse after MDF/MDNP split in March 1996. The division reflected long-term tension between the party's liberal and populist wings, which had surfaced during the Antall – Csurka split. Accordingly, the MDNP moved closer to Fidesz, signalling the development of a centre-right grouping in Hungarian politics, while the right camp that remained in the MDF under Lezak and Boross moved closer

⁹⁶ *Economist Intelligence Unit: Slovakia Country Report*, Third Quarter 1996.

⁹⁷ *Economist Intelligence Unit: Slovakia Country Report*, Fourth Quarter 1996.

⁹⁸ Interviews with MDF leaders (Fuer, Boross, Szabo), Hungarian TV1, Budapest, in Hungarian, 1700 gmt 12 June 1994. (SWB 12/07/94).

to the FKgP, at least temporarily.

The relationships between the opposition parties continued to develop throughout the remainder of the 1994-98 parliament, crystallising around a 'right' centred on the FKgP and a 'centre-right' on Fidesz. The leadership struggle in the KDNP between Giczy and Ispey, of the party's 'right' (i.e., sympathetic to the FKgP and MIEP) and 'centrist' wings respectively, culminated a split in the party that precipitated its demise in the 1998 election. Ispey took ten of its 23 deputies into Fidesz.⁹⁹ The KDNP had been expelled from the European Union of Christian Democrats shortly before over its unacceptable links with MIEP. The re-organisation of the right prompted by the split in the MDF in March 1996 and the KDNP a year later, in both cases reflecting divisions between the parties' Christian national or populist camps and their more liberal (centrist) elements, prompted a re-alignment on the right into two broad camps led by FKgP on the right and Fidesz on the centre-right. This two-bloc approach was reflected in cooperation in the 1998 elections in terms of mutual withdrawal of second-round candidates.¹⁰⁰ In line with the region's anti-incumbency trend, the 1998 election propelled Fidesz into a minimal winning coalition with the FKgP, though Csurka offered the support of his 14-strong MIEP.¹⁰¹

Like its Hungarian counterpart, the new Polish opposition took stock of the situation following its defeat in 1993 and embarked on a major effort to reconstitute the 'non-communist' alternative with a view to the next elections, which were due by 1997. The two-track opposition, divided into a Christian national and a more liberal camp, suggests similarities with the Hungarian party system. However, the Polish party system continued to centre on the divisions that were evident during the Mazowiecki government, with the anti-communist parties divided between the urban, cosmopolitan liberal camp and a more worker-based Christian national camp. In fact this division was evident in Solidarity during the 1980s, reflecting the intellectuals from KOR and Solidarity's trade union roots.¹⁰² During the 1993-97 period, the UW continued to

⁹⁹ *RFE/RL Newslines*, No. 78, 22 July 1997; No. 107, 1 September 1997; and No. 112, 8 September 1997.

¹⁰⁰ *RFE/RL Newslines*, No. 125, 25 September 1997; No. 126, 26 September 1997; No. 141, 17 October 1997; and No. 29, 12 February 1998.

¹⁰¹ *Aftenposten*, 25 May 1998.

¹⁰² This point has been developed by A. Prazmovska, and was the subject of a presentation at the London School of Economics and Political Science, in 1997; see also M. H. Bernhard, *The Origins of*

represent the well-organised, liberal wing of the former broad Solidarity movement, while the 'right' regrouped to form the AWS. Balcerowicz's taking over the leadership of the UW in 1995 illustrates the continuity with the Mazowiecki government, in terms of personnel as well as policy. By 1997, the UW congress concluded that the AWS was the most appropriate coalition partner, expressly stating its wish for co-operation.¹⁰³ This was subsequently realised after the 1997 election, when Balcerowicz took up his old cabinet portfolio at the ministry of finance. Efforts to integrate the 'right' came to little until the AWS was formed in June 1996, with the specific aim of winning the 1997 election. The potential problems inherent in the UW – AWS alliance became evident soon after the election, when 30 AWS deputies signed a statement to the effect that they intended to support their government on a case-by-case basis, and more announced similar intentions. Several deputies even failed to attend the vote of investiture in protest against the economic portfolios going to the UW.¹⁰⁴ In short, economic differences are keeping liberal and conservative blocs apart, even if they can unite internally and present a joint government.

The CSSD's opposition role from 1992 to 1998 was unique in the region inasmuch as it was the main party of the opposition, joined only by the KSCM and the SPR-RSC on the extreme left and right respectively. Following its 1995 party conference decision ruling out any coalition involving the two extremist parties, the CSSD had little option but to pursue strategy based on being the only credible opposition to Klaus. The main division over strategy following the 1996 elections pitted Zeman's confrontational approach, based on winning over voters from the two minor opposition parties, against deputy chairman Machovec's desire to fight the government on the centre ground.¹⁰⁵ This reflected the move away from co-operation with the right, which started when Zeman replaced Novak as party chairman in 1993. Its consequences included the expulsion of deputies Wagner and Teplik in December 1996, for voting with the government to pass the 1997 budget.¹⁰⁶ Though the Zeman strategy enhanced the

Democratisation in Poland: Workers, Intellectuals, and Opposition Politics, 1976-1980, (Columbia, Columbia University Press, 1993).

¹⁰³ TV Polonia, 1900 gmt, 26 October 1997, as per *Deutsche Welle Monitordienst* (27/01/97).

¹⁰⁴ *RFE/RL Newslines*, No. 159, 13 November 1997.

¹⁰⁵ *CTK*, 11 March 1997.

¹⁰⁶ *OMRI Daily Digest II*, No. 241, 16 December 1996; *CTK*, 11 March 1997.

competitive nature of the Czech government – opposition relationship, the CSSD nevertheless kept the option of a warmer relationship with the KDU-CSL open. This became clear when Zeman endorsed Lux for prime minister after the 1996 elections, and with the election of Pithart (KDU-CSL) as Senate chairman. By March 1997, Zeman was talking of an Austrian-style coalition between the two parties.¹⁰⁷ Come the 1997 crisis and the collapse of *burgerlich* unity, the prospects for centre-left coalition increased as both the KDU-CSL and the (ODA-breakaway) US entertained the possibility co-operation with the CSSD (and vice versa). By March 1998, surveys indicated that more than half the voters expected the election to lead to such a coalition.¹⁰⁸

The contrast between developments in the Czech and Slovak republics could hardly be more prominent. Whereas the CSSD emerged as a clear alternative to the Czech coalition, the Slovak parliament continued to be the setting for the continuous search for an anti-Meciar coalition. Most significantly, efforts to unite the non-socialist and non-nationalist parties led to the formation of the Blue Coalition in 1997, uniting the DU, KDH and DS. The three united with the Slovak Social Democrats (SDSS) and the Green Party (SZS), both former members of Common Choice, into what journalists dubbed the “rainbow coalition” in July 1997, since named the Slovak Democratic Coalition (SDK).¹⁰⁹ This coalition has since worked with the MK, laying the foundations for post-electoral co-operation and forming joint expert groups on internal affairs, foreign affairs, economics and minority policy.¹¹⁰ Meanwhile, the SDL remained divided over the strategic wisdom in supporting Moravcik, raising questions as to whether it was a “historic mistake”.¹¹¹ In other words, the opposition saw limited progress beyond the 1994 coalition based on opposition to Meciar. Though the *burgerlich* parties formed a closer alliance and negotiated with the Hungarian parties, the SDL remained outside the mainstream opposition, poised somewhere between the Blue Coalition and Meciar.

¹⁰⁷ CTK, 12 March 1997.

¹⁰⁸ CTK, 14 March 1998. The poll indicated 36.4% and 25% expecting a CSSD/KDU-CSL and a CSSD/KDU-CSL/US coalition respectively.

¹⁰⁹ Radio Twist, Bratislava, in Slovak 1000 gmt 3 July 1997, Slovakia 1 radio, Bratislava, in Slovak 1000 gmt 16 July 1997 (SWB 05/07/97 and 18/07/97).

¹¹⁰ CTK news agency, Prague, in English 1859 gmt 10 September 1997, TASR news agency, Bratislava, in English 1634 gmt 3 December 1997 (SWB 12/09/97 and 05/12/97).

¹¹¹ *Economist Intelligence Unit: Slovakia Country Report*, First Quarter 1995.

BEYOND ANARCHY?

PATTERNS OF COMPETITION AND COALITION GAMES IN A COMPARATIVE POLITICS PERSPECTIVE.

Come the 1997/98 round of elections, the East Central European party systems displayed the characteristics of thoroughly developed party systems. More or less permanent alliances are evident, as are stable patterns of inter- and intra-coalition bargaining. The dissolution of Czechoslovakia and the 1993/94 round of elections prompted major strategic revisions on the part of the losers. The Hungarian former ruling coalition collapsed over divisions that were visible during the first parliament, yielding a Christian national bloc around the Giczy-wing of the KPND and the FKgP and a more moderate conservative wing based on Fidesz, Ispey's KPND breakaway faction and the MDF. A similar two-bloc division characterises the Polish 'right', though the UW liberal camp is more attached to radical economic reform than Fidesz. Even the Czech party system is heading in this direction, towards a two-bloc right/centre-right. If the extremist parties are excluded from the analysis, the pattern of a large social democratic party facing a somewhat divided right can be found, though in the Czech case the Christian democrats are closer to the centre and the (classic) economic liberals in the ODS are on the 'right'. Though the relationships within each camp differ considerably along the three cases, and the Czech right is more cohesive than its Polish and Hungarian counterparts, the three party systems display considerable similarities as they consolidate. A three-bloc pattern is, of course, the key feature of several West European party systems, again with considerable variations within the blocs and with a host of smaller peripheral parties. The Slovak case remains less conformist, with party competition centred on Meciar's efforts to build and maintain viable coalitions. The closest West European counterpart is the Italian 'Second Republic', featuring a range of parties that have built loose coalitions around Berlusconi, Dini and Prodi, but with a considerable degree of uncertainty due largely to the flexible position of Bossi's Northern League.

When the patterns of competition and co-operation within the government and opposition are considered, the East Central European party systems appear comparable

with their West European counterparts. The Polish two-bloc government – opposition pattern that emerged during the Suchocka period shares several features of the pattern of Danish and Norwegian party competition, down to and including the ROP on the far right. The UW's stance compares with that of the Danish Venstre (the Left, classical liberals) and the Norwegian Høyre (the Right, conservative), i.e., liberal economic policy constrained by the need to cooperate with less free-market oriented conservative partners (the AWS, the Danish Conservatives and the Norwegian Christian Peoples' Party respectively). Like the UW, the Danish and Norwegian liberal right's social democrat adversaries share much of their policy platforms, but history makes them unlikely coalition partners. However, a considerable difference lies in the PSL's communist past which continues to provide an obstacle to co-operation between the agrarian party and the right, in contrast to the more flexible positions of the Norwegian and Danish centre parties which have supported both shades of government. The UP comes closer to this type of centre party (which means that the SLD faces little or no challenge to its left, in contrast to the Scandinavian social democrats).

Paradoxically, the rapid emergence of a solid party system in Hungary led to considerable party system re-alignment in the wake of the 1994 election. Yet the continuing search for coalitions in the run-up to the 1998 election produced solid patterns of competition, and a Fidesz-FKGP coalition after the election. Though the social democrat – liberal – Christian national pattern is analogous to Scandinavian, German and Dutch politics, no West European party system shares the intra-bloc divisions that characterise the Hungarian party system (except Belgium, where the system is divided on ideological and ethnic lines). Nevertheless, Danish and Dutch party politics provide ample examples of within-bloc competition and changing coalition strategies, e.g., with the Danish Centre Democrats re-considering support for Rasmussen's Social Democrat-led government in the run-up to the 1998 election (they had withdrawn support two years earlier), the competition between the denominational parties before 1976 in the Netherlands, and the exclusion of the CDA for the first time in Kok's 1994-98 coalition with the liberal VVD. Danish Venstre even formed a coalition with the Social Democrats alone under Jørgensen in 1978/79.

The patterns of party competition in the Czech Republic also appear unremarkable in a comparative politics context. The two-bloc government – opposition pattern featuring a

large social democrat party and a three-party opposition flanked by a radical right and a communist left mirrors the Norwegian and Swedish post-war party systems to near perfection, at least before the fall of the Conservative coalition government in Norway in 1987 and the fall of the Czech coalition ten years later. Coincidentally and curiously, both governments had a minority of one. More significantly, the collapse of the coalition prompted the more centrist partners to consider the potential for co-operation with the left, in Norway leading to Centre Party (Sp, agrarian) support for minority Labour governments until 1997. Given the ODS's free-market rhetoric, a comparison with the Dutch VVD – CDA – D'66 – PvdA pattern is warranted. The Zeman – Klaus agreement appears less controversial or unusual in the light of the Kok and Jorgensen coalitions.

In three of the four East Central European cases the patterns of party competition can, therefore, be compared with West European politics and analysed through the comparative politics framework. This suggests that the party systems have developed beyond the anarchy evident in the early 1990s party competition and government formation in the region, and that this development has been driven by party strategy. More specifically, the 1993/94 – 1997/98 parliaments saw reviews of coalition strategy on the part of the losers and the development of intra-coalition patterns of co-operation and competition on the part of the winners. There is no reason to expect that the process of reviewing party tactics or strategy will end after the 1997/98 elections. In fact West European politics suggests that it will continue. Nevertheless, the development of more stable patterns of between- and within-bloc competition indicates the stability of the party systems, thereby suggesting that party system change in East Central Europe may follow patterns similar to those characteristic of West European politics in the 1980s and 1990s – party system stability, but with scope for coalition bargaining and modification of coalition strategies.

The Slovak case is less clear-cut. The dismissal of Meciar's governments in 1991 and 1994 yielded broad coalitions united by opposition to Meciar and support for accelerated economic transition. A comparison between Meciar and Berlusconi was suggested above, in terms of political campaigning and party leadership as well as attitudes to the opposition. Moreover, Chapter Six showed that HzDS has much in common with *Forza Italia*, and that this is no coincidence given the two parties' co-

operation. Temporarily, during the run-up to the 1994 election and again after the 1996 election, the Italian party system appeared to be moving towards a potentially stable two-bloc pattern of competition pitting Berlusconi's *Polo* (FI, AN and LN) against the *Ulivo* bloc led by D'Alema's PDS. The title of the latter's book, "A Normal Country", summed up his aspirations.¹¹² However, a move towards US-style two-party competition has been prevented by the Northern League's ambiguous relationship with the right (due to its regionalist agenda), tension in the Fini – Berlusconi relationship (personal rivalry for *Polo* leadership by the AN and FI leaders), and the amorphous nature of the *Ulivo* bloc. Though the ideologies of Slovakia's SDL and Italy's *Lega* are not comparable and the Blue Coalition and the *Ulivo*'s identities differ considerably despite policy similarities and the presence of Christian democrats in both, the patterns of party competition share several key features. First, the HzDS/FI position is determined as much by personality as by policy, though it is clearly identified as 'right wing' despite its modest free-market economic policy. Unsurprisingly, therefore, the parties enjoy support from and co-operate with the far right, the SNS/AN. Second, the main opposition is a broad church, including Christian democrats and a series of smaller parties that broke away from the right and which were built around one or two key personalities. It counters the nationalist elements in the right's appeal by a focus on the EU, focuses on economic policy that includes 'realistic' but unpopular measures, and faces repeated threats of dissolution.¹¹³ Third, and finally, the third party (SDL/LN) enjoys a somewhat ambiguous position, is flexible enough potentially to work with either camp in terms of economic policy, but has shied away from the responsibility of government (partly by choice).

The Italian case offers little by way of prophecy for Slovakia, given the similar age of the two party systems (if anything, the Slovak one is older!). But it suggests that the peculiarities of the Slovak party system need not be *sui generis*, and that they could be due to systemic factors. The nationalist dimension provides one possible systemic factor, which has influenced politics in states like Finland, Ireland and Greece profoundly. In Slovakia and Italy the achievement of independence and the threat of

¹¹² M. D'Alema, *Un Paese Normale: La Sinistra e il Futuro dell'Italia*, (Milan, Arnoldo Mondadori Editore, 1995).

¹¹³ Prodi's government technically collapsed in the Fall'97, but a new deal was negotiated with the *Rifondazione Comunista*. Prodi's government's eventual fall came in October 98, when D'Alema replaced him, thus maintaining center-left government.

federalism respectively have provided opportunities for political appeal centred on national questions. Across East Central Europe, and in Italy, electoral volatility and weak party identification have provided considerable freedom for the parties, and a potential bonus for parties focusing on populist campaigning.¹¹⁴ In terms of party organisation, weak institutionalisation and strong leadership contributed further to personality-oriented political competition. In short, Berlusconi and Meciar enjoyed considerable freedom to shape party competition, and several incentives to adopt a nebulous platform (and court support from the far right). This has prompted the opposition to unite around an anti-Meciar/Berlusconi platform, though complete unity has not been achieved and the SDL/LN continue to act as third parties.

The dynamic of party system development in East Central Europe has been driven largely by party strategy, subject to constraints such as the one-term limits on government imposed by the pattern of anti-incumbency voting (except in the Czech case). This pattern centres on the development of party strategy when parties are in opposition and as they attempt to build durable coalitions. However, though the 1993/94 to 1997/98 period saw considerable reorganisation on the 'right' in all four cases (counting the Blue Coalition in Slovakia), the 'left' (reform communist and social democrat) parties have displayed a greater degree of stability. Part of the explanation lies in the former communist parties' more institutionalised structure. This dynamic has much in common with Mair's analysis of the changing Irish party system, where the Fianna Fail side remained relatively stable but Fine Gael and Labour's prospects fluctuated considerably and at times saw challenges from minor parties.¹¹⁵ The Irish system has shifted away from the 'FF vs. the rest' pattern with the rise of the Progressive Democrats in 1987 and the FF – Labour coalition of 1993.¹¹⁶ The Irish pattern thus combines change and adaptation with overall party system stability, not unlike developments in East Central Europe 1993/94 to 1997/98. Fluctuation and reorganisation in one 'bloc' (the term is used very loosely) reflects adaptation by the parties and developments in party strategy rather than party systems change (though

¹¹⁴ N. Sitter, "I vincitori sono degli sconfitti?"/"Are Winners Losers?", *Acque e Terre*, No. 1, 1997.

¹¹⁵ P. Mair, *The Changing Irish Party System*, (London, Frances Pinter, 1987).

¹¹⁶ B. O'Leary, "Affairs, Partner-Swapping, and Spring Tides: the Irish General Election of November 1992", *West European Politics*, 16:3 (1993), 401-412.

unlike the Irish case, aggregate electoral volatility does not disguise this).

The post-communist party systems, therefore, warrant the adjective 'developed' as they enter their third fully freely elected parliaments. The development of party competition has been more driven by party strategy and less by attention to constraints in the form of cleavages and extra-parliamentary organisations than was the case in early Twentieth Century West European politics. However, the new East Central Europe party systems are less peculiar in a comparative European context than the 'peculiarities of Eastern Europe' or 'peculiarities of post-communism' literature discussed in Chapter Two suggests. The party systems and patterns of party competition have much in common with their West European counterparts, in terms of development as well as patterns of stability and change. Perhaps significantly, they share some of the features of the 'problematic' West European cases, such as Ireland, the Italian 'Second Republic' and post-junta Greece. In terms of cleavages that are translated into party politics (regime change, nationalism), the preponderance of leadership-dominated and weakly institutionalised parties, and/or electoral markets of a considerable magnitude, these West European cases have much in common with the four post-communist East Central European cases. The magnitude of these variations from assumptions employed in some of the party systems literature may be greater in the post-communist cases, but the questions to which they point are relevant to a number of West European cases as well. It is to these theoretical conclusions and the implications of the East Central European cases for comparative politics that the concluding chapter of this project now turns.

CHAPTER NINE

CONCLUSION

"A state without the means of some change is without the means of its conservation"

- Edmund Burke, Reflections on the Revolution in France, 1790

"The urgent question of our time is whether we can make change our friend and not our enemy"

- Bill Clinton, Inaugural Address, 1993

Analysis of the four East Central European party systems based on comparative West European politics raises a series of questions about party system development, the East Central European cases in a comparative perspective, and party systems stability and change in general. Hence the following three conclusions. First, the conditions of post-communism prompted questions about the Lipset-Rokkan cleavage model. A re-working of the model has been approached from a rational choice perspective, including analysis of voters, cleavages (new and old) and party organisation in terms of rational choice constrained by institutions to a limited degree. Second, the analysis of developments in East Central Europe led to conclusions about the four party systems, based on institutions, the legacy of the previous regimes, voters, party organisation, cleavage structures, and, most significantly party competition. These factors have combined to generate a setting in which parties' strategic and tactical choices are of paramount importance. Third, if theories of party system change and stability contribute to the analysis of party system development in East Central Europe, it is perhaps equally significant and more interesting that party system development in East Central Europe contributes to general theories of party system stability and change. The East Central European experience suggests that parties themselves, as in recent cases in Western Europe, are the main drivers behind party system change and stability.

PARTY SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT

The process of regime change in East Central Europe in 1989-90 may have shared several features with its West European and Latin American counterparts in terms of negotiated adoption of new rules of the game. However, the 'triple revolutions' also contained factors that were more unique, or *sui generis*. These include structural factors such as non-market economies, multi-ethnic states, and few organisations that could serve as links between voters and parties, as well as political factors such as a weak discredited left, the 'ideological victory' of liberal democracy as a normative model, and competing approaches to nationalism. Moreover, the main actors, the political parties, emerged rapidly in most cases, without strong organisations or organised support. This made application of the Lipset-Rokkan model to East Central Europe somewhat complicated, particularly as it focuses on translation of cleavages into political competition. Links between parties and voters are far weaker than in early Twentieth Century Western Europe, parties are less institutionalised, and the 'translation process' has therefore been more problematic. Yet the result has not been particularly unstable party systems. This suggests that although Lipset & Rokkan's cleavage model is specific to the time and place of its core states, its dynamics are relevant to East Central Europe. The model provides a useful starting point for analysis of party systems in the 1990s if new constraints are taken into consideration and the rational-choice assumptions spelled out and analysed. This entails five steps.

First, no political system is an island, and post-communist East Central Europe is no exception. The development of party systems must take account of the *structure of cleavages*, the *legacy of the past*, and the *international context*. In the four cases at hand, cleavage structures reflect long-term national and ethnic conflicts over questions of nation-building, the division between the communists and opposition under the post-war regimes, as well as questions deriving from process of regime change in 1989-90 (particularly the pace of economic reform). This suggests that regime change and nationalism can be far more significant in terms of shaping the trajectory of party system development than Lipset & Rokkan assumed. In the post-communist cases, the impact of the legacy of the past was not uniform across the party spectrum, but

permitted each party to focus on national, communist or even West European ideological traditions. This illustrates the extent to which parties are in fact, to steal Friedman's phrase, *free to choose*. However, uniform pressure came from the international dimension, in the form of international rules and norms on border changes, security and human rights, and a dominant normative free-market, liberal democratic model.

Second, the *role of institutions* in party system development is limited inasmuch as institutions are the product of regime change (and are not independent variables). Though the rules of the game certainly contribute to the freezing of party systems and set parameters that limit the range of options available to political parties, they are not factors that independently shape the party systems. Only over time do they become constraining factors, but even then the rules of the game are open to re-negotiation in the event of major party-driven changes (e.g., France 1986-88, Italy 1996-98, UK 1997-2002?). The obvious exception to this rule is the constraints that institutions represent when they are exogenous factors, i.e., when they have been imposed by external forces. Electoral rules in Slovakia, Germany, and Ireland, and for the European Parliament, illustrate the point. In a wider sense, international norms and institutions constrict the options available to political parties and affect policy making.

Third, the *link between voters and parties* assumed in the cleavage model has long been controversial, in terms of both re-alignment and de-alignment. However, the East Central European cases have raised questions concerning party systems that are not based on a large degree of voter – party alignment. The weakness of party identification is reflected in relatively high levels of volatility and anti-incumbency voting, patterns that have been evident in Italy since 1992 and in direct elections for the European Parliament since 1979, as well as East Central Europe.¹ The functional approach to cleavages has been rejected in favour of a wider definition, which includes 'non-structural' cleavages that need not feature the same strong links between voters and parties.

¹ In EP elections, anti-incumbency voting means voting against the parties that govern the respective Member States. C. van der Eijk, M. Franklin & M. Marsh, "What Voters Teach US about Europe-Wide Elections: What Europe-Wide Elections Teach Us about Voters", *Electoral Studies*, 15:2 (1996) 149-166.

Fourth, the East Central European parties all feature *party organisations that are comparatively centralised and highly leadership dominated*. Again the similarity with some Irish parties and the new Italian parties are striking, as are the similarities with ‘new populist’ parties in West European politics. The evolution of mass, catch-all and cartel parties in Western Europe tells a similar story, in which the development of political parties (organisationally) is driven by the success of opponents rather than by social change alone. As Blair and Bossi have illustrated in Britain and Italy, the modern party leader’s freedom to shape party strategy is considerably higher than his early or mid-Twentieth Century predecessor. In both Western and East Central Europe party leaders are comparatively free to pursue their target voters rather than appease their traditional or safe constituencies. To the extent that parties represent cleavages at all, leadership independence works to (potentially) limit orientation to cleavage-politics.

Fifth, and finally, this means that *party strategy plays a preponderant role* in shaping the trajectories of party system development. This is not new, as the importance of the SPD’s Bad Godesberg review in 1959, the PvdA’s temporary turn left in response to D66’s challenge, and Labour’s ‘modernisation’ in the 1990s illustrate. The post-communist experience confirms that party system development, change and stability is driven primarily by party strategy, and that developments in party strategy are dynamic. Parties reconsider and develop their strategy and tactics in the light of major defeats at the polls in response to and in anticipation of their opponents’ strategies. With only moderate fear of exaggeration, one can, therefore, assert that *the history of party system development is the history of party competition and strategic choice*. However, rather than contradicting Lipset & Rokkan’s analysis, this indicates the importance of strategic decisions on the part of the ‘nation-building core’, i.e., the importance of the translation of cleavages into political competition and aggregating these divisions.² In short, cleavages represent parameters within which parties develop and operate, and party systems are explained in terms of rational choice within these constraints. To be sure, rational choice does not always generate rational outcomes. It is constrained by institutions (in the broader sense, including ideas and international factors), negotiation and bargaining under conditions of uncertainty, and the one-term limits most post-

² This is, of course, Sartori’s point. G. Sartori, “The Sociology of Parties: A Critical Review”, in O. Stammer (ed.), *Party Systems, Party Organisations, and the Politics of New Masses*, (Berlin, Free University of Berlin, 1968).

communist electorates have imposed on their governments through anti-incumbency voting.

The process of party system development in the late Twentieth Century, therefore, differs considerably from its counter-part in the core cases of the Lipset-Rokkan model. The over-all picture is one of party leaders that are far less constrained by cleavages, extra-parliamentary organisations, or even their own parties. However, this is not the result of peculiarities of post-communism, but rather a broad set of factors that are relevant to varying extents to party system development in general. Some of these are linked to the late-Twentieth Century context, such as the role of the media and public relations techniques in political campaigns. But even Berlusconi's (broadcast) media empire did not prevent a surprise centre-left victory in the 1995 Italian regional elections (which the press subsequently attributed to the PDS' organisational strength). Similarly, party competition in the Irish Free State suggests that some of the problems with the Lipset-Rokkan model are not simply linked to 'post-industrial' or late-Twentieth Century politics. Hence the two levels of conclusions – about the East Central European party systems in particular and about European party systems theory in general.

This has prompted a *new cleavage model*, based on the Lipset-Rokkan model but widened to take account of the assumptions inherent in the original model and a non-functional approach to cleavages. Cleavages remain the starting point. However, in place of the functional approach, the concept has been widened to take account of non-structural cleavages. Cleavages thus feature two of Bartolini & Mair's three elements, the *normative element* and *political organisation*, but do not require an *empirical element* (i.e., objective social divisions). This allows focus on civil wars and regime change, as well as 'post-materialist' cleavages and the pro- vs. anti-EU cleavage. To be sure, this widening of the concept dilutes the definition of cleavages, and has implications for the links between voters and parties. Non-structural cleavages provide weaker links than Lipset & Rokkan's four structural cleavages. Hence the focus on rational choice theories of voting, and not exclusively on sociological theories.

Institutions and context provide the second element of the new cleavage model. Historical institutionalism points to the importance of patterns of political competition,

particularly the legitimacy of opposition and the difference between absolute opposition and differences that can be subject to bargaining. International institutions limit domestic parties' freedom of action, and help shape patterns of party system formation. At state level, the institutions that are established as part of the process of democratisation may constrain political competition. Yet the predominance of proportional systems in Europe means that thresholds for representation have been relatively low. Finally, the context of transition produces *sui generis* factors, in the East Central European case the 'triple transition'.

Third, *political parties play the central role in the new cleavage model*. Party organisation matters. The parties that have emerged in Western and Eastern Europe in the second, third and fourth waves of democratisation have not been classical West European mass parties. If parties translate cleavages into political competition, their strategy and ideology are significant. The party leaderships have not been as constrained by party organisation, ideology and extra-parliamentary organisations as the mass party model suggests, and have been free to pursue a range of strategies. If parties do not base their appeal on structural cleavages, the close link between parties and electorates that characterised the socialist mass parties cannot be expected. The catch-all, interest-oriented, new populist and cartel models of party organisation all entail different strategies of political competition and electoral appeal.

Finally, the new cleavage model retains the model of party systems developing as parties build alliances and aggregate different dimensions of competition. Party systems, characterised by systematic patterns of competition between and within blocs of parties, develop with the consolidation of government – opposition competition. As in Lipset & Rokkan's model, they are the product of a series of strategic decisions about alliances, coalition-building, and competition. This is a dynamic process, in which parties react to defeats and victories by building alliances or blocs, thereby translating cleavages into systematic party competition. *Party systems are not merely about the number of parties or their ideology, but also about patterns of competition.*

THE EAST CENTRAL EUROPEAN PARTY SYSTEMS IN THE 1990S

Each of the above points is, of course, relevant to party system development and change in East Central Europe since the collapse of the communist regimes in 1989. Though the parties have proven relatively free to choose in terms of the historical legacy that they invoke (West European and European as well as national), they have all had to deal with *three central cleavages*: i) a *historical regime change cleavage* that reflects ethnic and civic approaches to the political consequences of multi-ethnic states; ii) the *political regime change of 1989*, i.e., whether to co-operate with formerly communist parties; and iii) the *economic transition*, i.e., whether to promote rapid economic transition or opt for a more moderate pace. Moreover, two of these reflect *regime change*. The divisions between the former communist and former opposition are still reflected in the party systems, and have shaped some of the coalition games to a great extent. Even if these divisions were not over the transition to liberal democracy after 1989, they reflect pre-1989 attitudes to the *ancien regime*. Second, the divisions that reflect civic and ethnic approaches to nationalism concern the very nature of the regime, including the question of who 'the people' is (even if border change may be less salient), and are therefore related to both state-building and regime change. However, within the parameters set by these cleavages, the parties have enjoyed a considerable degree of freedom.

In this context, political institutions (rules of the game) reflected competition between the main conglomerate parties (or movements) in 1989-90. Rather than constraining the party systems, the systems of proportional representation in elections opened up the party systems. Only the introduction of thresholds for representation in parliament and the provisions for semi-presidentialism shaped the party systems, excluding small parties across the board and punishing divisions in general, and reinforcing the role of personality-oriented politics in Poland (centred on president Walesa) and Slovakia (prime minister Meciar vs. president Kovacs). As the party systems have entered their more well-developed phase the role of institutions in freezing party systems is increasingly evident, e.g., as splinter parties have failed to re-enter parliament following elections in all four systems.

Voting patterns in East Central Europe in the 1990's indicate a *clear trend of anti-incumbency voting*, albeit more limited in the Czech lands than elsewhere. This trend has imposed a constraint on party systems development inasmuch most parties have been unable to build up a strategy centred on multiple terms in government or opposition. All the major parties have held office at some point since 1989, and most have carried out major reviews of party strategy in the wake of electoral defeat. The evidence indicates that the parties enjoy weak bases of support in general, and that party identification is limited. Part of the explanation lies in the parties' limited links with extra-parliamentary sponsoring organisations, but it is also due to the centralised and leadership-dominated party structures and limited quests for mass membership. In other words, party organisation is partly a matter of choice, and this in turn provides a considerable potential for freedom of manoeuvre for the party leadership. Therefore, party system change and instability is as much the cause of volatility as a consequence of it. Party system change generates electoral volatility, which then helps shape developments in party competition. Voters may constrain a party's ability to remain in office, but on the other hand, the parties are unconstrained by external organisations and many have adopted leadership-dominated structures.

The outcome in post-communist East Central Europe has been a *party-driven process of party system development and stabilisation*. This is summed up as a three-step process, where each step reflects major developments and changes in party strategy and the nature of competitive politics. First, East Central Europe entered the last decade of the century somewhat short of well-organised parties. Only the Hungarian political scene featured a clear set of parties, and even these parties owed much to identity and the division between the 'democratic' and 'Christian national' opposition. A similar division differentiated the intellectuals and workers in Solidarity, and was later reflected in support and opposition for Mazowiecki's government. Meanwhile the Czech and Slovak movements were disintegrating over questions of organisation, leadership, economic reform and approaches to the federal question. The federal coalition divided over the last two issues. By the time of the 1990 election in Hungary, the 1991 election in Poland and the 1992 election in Czechoslovakia, sets of parties, if not fully-blown party systems, had emerged.

During the second phase, the process of *making and breaking governments* during the first and/or second parliaments *heralded the emergence of party systems as parties were obliged to engage in coalition games*. The result was more or less stable coalitions built up around programmes of rapid economic transition (Poland, Czech Republic) or moderately paced economic reform and an ‘ethnic nationalist’ agenda (Hungary, Slovakia). In fact, the Czech coalition and the CSSD’s dominant opposition role ‘promoted’ this party system directly to phase three: developed party systems featuring clear government – opposition relationships. In the other three cases the coalitions remained divided, giving way to the opposition in 1993 and 1994 (albeit temporarily in the Slovak case).

The third phase is, therefore, the *emergence of fully developed party systems*. This is not to say that they are as stable as their West European counterparts, but rather that patterns of government – opposition competition and intra-bloc competition are becoming clear. All cases feature parties that can be classified as broadly liberal, social democratic, Christian national, and in some cases agrarian. The extent to which the terms ‘left’ and ‘right’ are applied (however misleadingly) depends on the blocs and alliances that have emerged during the first decade of competitive politics. The differences within the four systems relate to their respective choice of partners and adversaries. In the Czech Republic and Hungary, the division in the liberal camp generated a three-bloc system, featuring a less than cohesive bloc on the ‘right’ (including liberal elements and elements of moderate ethnic nationalism) that refuses to cooperate with the social democratic or post-communist left. In both cases intermediary parties (KDU-CSL, US, SzDSz) do not rule out such alliances. An interesting difference lies in the agrarian parties’ alliance with the communists (KSCM) and nationalist right (FKgP) and respectively, reflecting local political history. The Polish system likewise features a divided ‘right’ consisting of liberal and Christian national parties, in clear opposition to reform communist left (even though the SLD has proven more free-market oriented than the AWS). The presence of the PSL makes this a four-bloc system (as the agrarian party joins the reform communists), within which each bloc is as divided over economic policy as the two main blocs, if not more so! The Slovak system resembles the three-bloc structure, though in this case the dominant party is Meciar’s ‘right’ which is poised in stark competition with the Blue Coalition’s ‘liberal right’. Curiously the ‘left’ is located between the two, in less absolute opposition to Meciar than the Blue

Coalition (and its Hungarian allies). This reflects the importance of nationalist questions (Slovak independence, Hungarian minority rights) in the development of the party system, but also the extent to which party competition centres on opposition to and support for Meciar.

In short, the development of party systems in East Central Europe has centred on the emergence of parties and their strategic choice. Though this has been considered largely in rational choice terms, this is not to say that party system development in East Central Europe is or has been a rational process, let alone that the outcome is rational. Rational actors frequently make tactical and strategic mistakes, based on miscalculation, limited information, or erroneous analysis. Several parties appear to have underestimated the potential danger of an anti-incumbency backlash and of appeal based on ethnic nationalism, though Klaus provides a remarkable partial exception. Though a Lipset-Rokkan-type cleavage model provides for some interesting observations and comparisons across Europe and within East Central Europe, closer comparative analysis warrants a rational choice-based comparative politics analysis of party strategy and the party leaderships' decisions.

PARTY SYSTEM CHANGE AND STABILITY IN EUROPE – EAST AND WEST

This analysis of East Central European party systems has raised a number of theoretical questions which are of considerable relevance to West European politics. Several of the assumptions that lie at the base of Lipset & Rokkan's cleavage model do not apply equally to all the cases they consider, let alone to politics at the close of the Twentieth Century. Regime change has played a significant role in several European party systems, East, Central and West, when it has been translated into a dimension of party competition. The DC's portrayal of the PCI as an anti-system party in post-war Italy is a case in point. Not all parties have enjoyed the solid organisational structures or links with extra-parliamentary organisations that characterise the stronger parties (or 'wing' parties of the left and right) in Lipset & Rokkan's core cases. Similarly, the degree of '*verzuiling*' (literally pillarization, or division of society into pillars) is controversial even in some of the core West European cases. Though the East Central Europe cases

may be peculiar in that these factors all work towards enhancing the role of party strategy and the party leadership in shaping the party systems, the questions raised suggest a number of avenues for analysis of party system change and stability in West European politics.

The two points related to the dimensions of political competition, namely *nationalism and regime change*, have been under-estimated in much of the comparative politics literature, with the exception of the consociationalism debate. As might be expected of an analysis that draws on the rational choice literature and comparative politics, this project has emphasised parties and party competition over sociological factors as explanations for party system stability and change. Hence the wider definition of cleavages, which emphasises the role of parties in shaping the trajectories of party system development, stability and change. The crucial question is the extent to which divisions over regime change are translated into party competition, and a bi-polar system is then perpetuated (whether the specific issues are relevant or not). This has implications for analysis of, for example, the Irish or Greek party systems. In both cases the party systems reflect divisions over regime change, and more specifically, approaches to nationalism. Though the original issues may be of little direct relevance, the parties in question have maintained the dimension of competition as reflected in the party systems. This suggests a potential for rational choice analyses of the means by which this line of competition was maintained throughout inter-war Ireland, which included reduced district magnitude, ‘double elections’ (the second of which reduced the success of the smaller parties), and party competition reflecting the Treaty dimension. Likewise, questions of regime change had considerable relevance to party competition in the ‘first’ Italian Republic and Fourth French Republic.

Second, the question of *the role of nationalism in party competition follows from the regime change dimension*. This is particularly important in the post-WWI context (democratisation, new states), but it also raises broader questions about the link between democracy and nationalism. In inter-war Ireland, Finland and Greece nationalism and regime change were mutually reinforcing, but questions about the political implications of nationalism are also relevant to Italy’s ‘Second Republic’ (where the *Polo* fell apart partly due to FI and AN’s rejection of the LN’s quest for federalisation). One analyst of FI identified it as a “media-mediated personality-party”, but neglected to mention

nationalism or the question of national unity despite the party's invoking it in its name (the Italian football chant), its colour (blue – the national football shirt), and its cabinet's nick-name (*Gli Azzurri* – that of the Italian football team).³ An analogous dimension can be found in the Norwegian anti-EU movement, which is based as much on commitment to the nation-state as on cost-benefit analysis. This suggests potential questions for further research on the relationship between regime change, nationalism and democratic legitimacy.⁴

Beyond the questions of cleavages and nationalism, the East Central European experience suggests that *high voter volatility is linked not only to social structures, but also to government (economic) policy and the bonds between parties and extra-parliamentary organisations* (or the lack thereof). Increasing volatility in West European politics may therefore be explained partly by changes in party competition. Two-party or two-bloc adversary politics leaves middle voters divided. There is a chance of capturing new centrist voters when parties move to the centre, i.e., adopting a strategy of competing for centre voters rather than mobilising the party's 'own voters', but this should enhance volatility. The same holds for efforts to appeal above cleavages, or to introduce new cleavages (post-materialism) or 'maverick issues'.⁵ Party strategy, or opponents' strategies, thus reduces the incentive to present a party as representing cleavages and/or aggregation of cleavages, in line with Kirchheimer's 1966 analysis.⁶

Both West European and East Central European politics have seen a *proliferation of new populist parties* over the last two decades, accompanied by considerable developments in the older parties' organisational structure.⁷ The East Central Europe cases indicate some of the potential problems inherent in the new populist strategy,

³ J. Seisselberg, "Conditions of Success and Personality Problems of a 'Media-Mediated Personality-Party': The Case of Forza Italia", *West European Politics*, 19:4 (1996), 715-743.

⁴ C. Binns, *A Critique of Ernest Gellner's Views on Nationalism and Industrial Society*, LSE Government Department Seminar, 11 November 1998; G. Schopflin, "Nationalism and Ethnicity in Europe, East and West", in C. Kupchan (ed.), *Nationalism and Nationalities in the New Europe*, (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1995).

⁵ M. Maor & G. Smith, "On the Structuring of Party Competition: The Impact of Maverick Issues", (manuscript, The European Institute, LSE, 1993).

⁶ O. Kirchheimer, "The Transformation of West European Party Systems", in J. LaPalombara & M. Weiner (eds.) *Political Parties and Political Development* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1966).

⁷ P. Taggart, "New Populist Parties in Western Europe", *West European Politics*, 18:1 (1995), 34-51; R. Katz & P. Mair (eds.), *How Parties Organize: Change and Adaptation in Party Organizations in Western Democracies*, (London, Sage Books, 1994); and R. Katz & P. Mair "Changing Models of Party Organisation and Party Democracy: The Emergence of the Cartel Party", *Party Politics* 1:1 (1995), 5-28.

notably that the considerable potential for successful mobilisation based on populist appeal may leave a party vulnerable to disunity and failure to deliver. Berlusconi's problems in government and competition with Fini for leadership of the right represents a case in point. This in turn prompts questions about how Fianna Fail managed to maintain a degree of hegemony in Ireland (at least until 1987), while Berlusconi did not in Italy. Apart from country-specific conditions, the East Central European experience suggests that part of the answer might lie in the unity of FF and bi-polar competition with the national dimension channelled into FF – FG competition, in contrast to the Italian right's internal divisions over nationalism and its confrontation with the left on economic issues (where, incidentally, the 'left' proved as free-market oriented, if not more so).

Finally, *strategies of party competition* represent an integral feature of any party system. The West European norm has been competition with a view to alternation in office, though this was not the case in inter-war Ireland (though the 1932 election reversed the dominant party and opposition roles), let alone the Italian 'First Republic' or inter-war East Central Europe. A similar effort to keep the opposition permanently out of office on the grounds of its questionable legitimacy was undertaken by several parties in post-communist East Central Europe, though most now appear to have abandoned this strategy in favour of alliance-building and entering the games involved in making and breaking governments. This provides a starting point for distinguishing between hegemonic party systems where one party governs most of the time, and dominant-party systems in which the opposition is excluded. Though these are ideal types inasmuch as even if parties aspire to it they may not achieve a dominant position, they suggest something about the differences between inter-war Ireland and post-war Ireland, pre- and post-1992 Italy, and the role of the social democrat parties in Scandinavia (hegemonic, never dominant).

In short, this project indicates that *party system stability and change is driven primarily by the political parties rather than social change*. Social change might stimulate changes in party strategies, or prompt the emergence and growth of new parties if the existing parties fail to adapt to changing conditions or to their opponents' developments in party strategy. But weak party identification on the part of voters, the dis-aggregated nature of organised interest groups, image- and personality-driven campaigns (through

the media) and party organisation that provides considerable freedom for the leadership all limit the translation of social structures into political competition and increase the parties' freedom of manoeuvre. Something similar holds for institutional change, to the extent that it is driven by the parties that negotiate it. However, rational negotiation need not imply rational change, and existing institutions may limit the scope for or affect the trajectory of institutional change. Institutions do matter, but as constraints or parameters rather than as independent variables. This project partly represents an effort to bring the East Central Europe party systems into the West European comparative politics literature, but its conclusions also accord the parties and party competition centre stage in comparative analysis of party system change and stability. If comparative West European politics is influencing analyses of East Central European party systems, the East Central European experience has prompted revisiting comparative party systems theory, confirming trends observed in West European politics in the 1980s and 1990s.⁸ And the political parties have stolen the show.

⁸ M. Donovan & D. Broughton, "Party System Change in Western Europe: Positively Political", in D. Broughton & M. Donovan (eds.), *Changing Party Systems in Western Europe*, (London, Pinter, 1999).

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