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TABLE OF CONTENTS

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EUROPEANIZATION OF THE BULGARIAN PARTY SYSTEM: DYNAMICS AND EFFECTS

Stoycho P. Stoychev
PhD Student, Sofia University
stoychev@ecsbg.eu

Abstract

The traditional explanations of the party system transformations usually rely on domestic factors. However, there is growing research on the impact of European integration over party politics. This impact is even greater in Central and Eastern European Countries and Bulgaria is no exception. The Bulgarian party system is fragile and fragmented. It has entered a new phase of transformation since the 2001 elections. This article examines the impact of the European integration over this transformation. The article argues that its impact is significant, since the parties are focused on the European cleavage, and the European party families play a key role in the formulation of their behavior and electoral strategies. Moreover, the paramount importance of membership in the European Union predetermined the other explanatory factors. European integration is the environment for the formation of the contemporary party system in Bulgaria. However, the effects of Europeanization appear not to be only positive. It turns out that along with consolidation of the party system, it provokes rise of populism which hinders professionalization of the Bulgarian political elite and thus, the political process suffers ineffectiveness.

Introduction

The[1] process of Europeanization is a major topic in the fields of contemporary Political Science and European Studies. Despite the growing number of volumes and articles on Europeanization, it remains poorly conceptualized.[2] What kind of process is Europeanization? The literature does not provide an explicit explanation of this question. Ladrech makes one of the earliest suggestions in the context of the institutionalist – intergovernmentalist debate. He argues that "Europeanization is an incremental process reorienting the direction and shape of politics to the degree that EC political and economic dynamics become part of the organizational logic of national politics and policy-making"[3]. While being close to the neo-functionalist and federalist theoretical implications, this definition in the terms of Ladrech recognizes "the continuing validity of national politics, yet of a transformed nature"[4], thus offering a middle range approach of interpretation of the political and

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[1] Paper presented at the 8th post-graduate conference on Slavonic and Eastern European Studies, 28-30 June 2007, Brno.
[2] Peter Mair, "The Europeanization Dimension", *Journal of European Public Policy,* 11 (Apr. 2004): 338.
[3] Robert Ladrech, "Europeanization of Domestic Politics and Institutions: the Case of France" *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 32/1 (March 1994): 69.
[4] Ibid. 2.

institutional change in the member-states.

Sticking to the institutionalist perspective, Olsen provides five different interpretations of the term[5]: 1) alteration of the external borders; 2) development of institutions and policy at the EU level; 3) "central penetration of national and sub-national systems of governance"; 4) export of European political models in other regions; 5) "political project" for the establishment of united Europe. The first interpretation concerns the extent to which Europe as a continent could develop in a single polity (Europeanization as EU enlargement). The second interpretation represents Europeanization as institutionalization and formalization of institutions and mechanisms at the EU level of governance. The third interpretation implies adaptation of national and sub-national levels of governance to the norms formulated at the European level. The fourth definition concerns foreign relations of Europe with other regions and its historical role in forming contemporary societies in these regions. These four interpretations could be treated as integral parts of the project for establishing a united Europe (fifth interpretation). These five interpretations could be integrated in a single model of Europeanization with three specific features 1) development of European polity and multiple levels of government model, 2) expanding the

introduction of the model through vertical (deepening) and horizontal (enlargement) integration and 3) expanding the influence of the polity outside its territorial constrains. The reason that Olsen provides for not integrating his five interpretations in a single model is that they do not necessarily positively correlate with one another.

Other authors like Cowels, Caporaso and Risse[6] interpret Europeanization as institutional development and policy formulation at the EU level. Such institutionalization of an EU political system is, for Mair, one of the two aspects of a "single European dimension", where the other is the adoption of norms and rules formulated within this system at the national level[7].

Other interpretations are based on the notion of European integration as enlargement and deeper integration. In the perspective of the latter, Europeanization *encompasses the penetration of European rules, directives and norms into the otherwise differentiated domestic spheres*[8]. Vaguely but in the same fashion Vink defines Europeanization "as domestic change caused by European integration"[9]. The perception of

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[5] Johan P. Olsen, "The Many Faces of Europeanization" *ARENA Working Papers WP 01/2*: 3-4.

[6] Maria Green Cowles, James A. Caporaso, Thomas Risse-Kappen, *Transforming Europe: Europeanization and Domestic Change* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001), chap. 1.
[7] Mair, "The Europeanization Dimension" 340-43.
[8] Ibid. 341.
[9] Maarten P. Vink, *What is Europeanization? And Other Questions on a New Research Agenda*

Europeanization as a process of domestic adaptation forced by the EU norms penetration in the national sphere is shared also by Featherstone.[10]

Explanations of Europeanization as an effect of EU enlargement are especially relevant for explaining the end of the transitions in the CEE countries. In those terms Europeanization could be interpreted as modernization of the post-communist societies by adopting the Western European political model and introduction of the EU norms.[11] Furthermore, Europeanization is seen as a powerful tool for democratization in the post-communist states in Central and Eastern Europe[12].

To sum up, the definitions and interpretations presented above imply several important aspects of Europeanization: 1) the development of institutions and policies at European level; 2) introducing change in the way the national systems of the member-states function; 3) modernization of the candidate countries political and economic systems. The last two aspects could easily be integrated into one – both members and candidates experience domestic change due to European integration. Moreover, this change can be treated as modernization of both groups of countries. This process is more rapid and intensive in candidate countries since they have to catch up quickly with changes old members made decades ago, as well as to combine it with the transformation of their societies in the case of the post-communist states. Radaelli's definition of Europeanization includes the aforementioned aspects: "Europeanisation consists of processes of a) construction, b) diffusion and c) institutionalisation of formal and informal rules, procedures, policy paradigms, styles, "ways of doing things" and shared beliefs and norms which are first defined and consolidated in the EU policy process and then incorporated in the logic of domestic (national and subnational) discourse, political structures and public policies."[13]

Although this definition represents a one-way, vertical process, leaving out the possibility of horizontal or bottom-up influence, it is very useful for the purpose of this article.

(Paper for the Second YEN Research Meeting on Europeanization, Milan: University of Bocconi, 22-23 November, 2002) [database on-line]; available at: http://www.essex.ac.uk/ecpr/standinggroups/yen/paper_archive/2nd_yen_rm_papers/vink2002.pdf; accessed on Jan/23/2007, 1.

[10] Kevin Featherstone, "Introduction: In the Name of Europe" in K. Featherstone and C. M. Radaelli (eds) *The Politics of Europeanization* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003): 7.

[11] Robert Harmsen and Thomas M. Wilson, "Introduction: Approaches to Europeanization" *Yearbook of European Studies*, 14 (2000): 16.

[12] Juhani Grossman, *EU Membership as a Tool for Democratization* (Freedom House, 2006) [database on-line]; available at: http://www.partners.civiced.org/paw/tools/people_download.php?group=event&id=199, accessed on Apr/23/2007.

[13] Claudio M. Radaelli, "Europeanisation: Solution or problem?" *European Integration online Papers (EIoP)* 8/16 (Oct. 2004)

The effects of Europeanization over the national political systems[14], in general, and national party systems[15], in particular, are widely discussed in the literature. Mair finds "little evidence of any direct impact"[16] of Europeanization on domestic party structures, while others argue that Europeanization is the major factor framing the political parties and party systems in the states experiencing European integration, especially in the Central and Eastern European countries.[17] As Lewis points out "[t]hough perhaps not directly apparent in relation to the precise format and mechanics of CE party systems, the influence of European institutions and political models in terms of such factors as integration with international and EU-based party groupings, the careful tailoring of electoral mechanisms to regional norms, and the development of parliamentary procedures according to international practice has been so strong that it is that it is indeed difficult to classify it as just indirect."[18] The great

impact of Europeanization for achieving political stability and development of the party systems in CEE is outlined also by Pridham[19] and Dakowska.[20] This impact was fuelled by the domestic consensus[21] in CEE countries over membership in the European Union (EU) as a major political goal.[22] As the data of Candidate Countries Eurobarometer show[23], the public support for EU membership remained quite high until accession (around 60%). This support was even higher in Bulgaria and Romania – 10% above average. Despite the decrease in support after accession, the share of the opponents of the EU membership remained low.

The proposition that Europeanization is a major factor for the party system

[14] Simon Hix and Klaus H. Goetz, "Introduction: European Integration and National Political Systems." *West European Politics*, 23/4 (Oct. 2000): 1-30.
[15] Cowles, Caporaso and Risse, *Transforming Europe:*, chap. 1.
[16] Peter Mair, "The Limited Impact of Europe on National Party Systems" *West European Politics* 23/4 (Oct. 2000): 28.
[17] Zsolt Enyedi, *"Europeanisation" of Central Eastern European Party Systems* (Paper prepared for the POLIS Plenary Conference, 2005) [database on-line]; available at: http://www.epsnet.org/2005/pps/Enyedi.pdf, , accessed on Feb/2/2007, 1.
[18] Paul G. Lewis, "The Impact of the Enlargement of the European Union on Central European Party Systems" *SEI Working Paper 14*

(Sussex European Institute, University of Sussex, 2003): 10.
[19] Geoffrey Pridham, "EU enlargement and consolidating democracy in post-communist states – formality and reality" *Journal of Common Market Studies* 40/3 (2002): 953-54.
[20] Dorota Dakowska, "Beyond conditionality: EU enlargement, European party federations and the transnational activity of German political foundations" *Perspectives on European Politics and Society* 3,2 (2002): 277.
[21] Lewis, "The Impact of the Enlargement," 9-10.
[22] Jack Bielasiak, *Party Systems and EU Accession: Euroscepticism in East Europe* (Paper prepared for the Conference on Public Opinion about the EU in Post-Communist Eastern Europe, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN, April 2-3, 2004 [database on-line]; available at: http://www.indiana.edu/~iupolsci/euconf/Bielasiak.pdf accessed on May/12/2008, 3).
[23] Eurobarometter Spring 2004 [database on-line]; available at: http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/cceb_en.htm accessed on May/12/2008, 186.

transformation in CEE countries tends to provide a plausible explanation of the processes that framed domestic politics in the region. However, it is underestimated in mainstream explanations of the party system transformation in Bulgaria. Karasimeonov defines "political engineering" as a main factor in the formation of the contemporary party system.[24] As an example of such engineering, he points out the constitutions, electoral laws, laws for the political parties, as well as the behavior of the new political elite. In this article I argue that the main factor for the transformation of the Bulgarian party system is rather Europeanization.

The first section of the article describes the party system transformation since 1989. The second section focuses on the European factors that influenced the political parties and the party system. The third section illustrates the effects of the EU impact on the party systems. In the final section I conclude.

The Dynamics of the Bulgarian Party System

The party system in Bulgaria between 1989 and 2001 was dominated by the Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP) – the former Bulgarian Communist Party, and the Union of Democratic Forces (SDS). The historical parties, revived after the fall of the old regime, had little influence.[25] Most of them joined the SDS, which took the role of main opposition player. The main cleavage of the bipolar party system was the communism/anticommunism division between these two major actors. Anticommunism was the central impetus for mobilization of the opposition, while "nostalgia" towards the old regime was the driving force for supporters of the BSP.

The anticommunist SDS pushed for economic liberalization – developed market, full privatization except some limited sectors, limitation of the redistributive role of the state support or the private sector and tax concessions for foreign investors, etc. The party proclaimed strong commitment to the West and EU and NATO memberships as the only alternative in the foreign policy aspect. At the same time, it remained unfriendly towards Russia and appealed for economic and political delimitation. SDS insisted on revealing the archives of the former political police and conviction of people responsible for the communist terror, as well as compensation for the repressed by the old regime and full restitution of the confiscated property.

BSP, on the other hand, insisted on the preservation of the old regime's legacy. This included greater state participation in the economy, limited privatization, state regulation of prices and salaries, state monopoly over whole sectors of the economy, free education and healthcare managed by the state. The

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[24] Georgi Karasimeonov, *Партийната система в България* (The Party System in Bulgaria) (Sofia: Gorex Press, 2006), 225-26.

[25] Karasimeonov, *The Party System*, 228.

party was firmly against any conviction of former officials advocating that they have worked for their country and have fulfilled their duties. The party explicitly condemned a potential NATO membership and insisted on the preservation of good relations with Russia and enlargement of economic cooperation.

The communist/anticommunist division represented two entirely opposing political alternatives. Supporters of the SDS political platform were mostly young, educated people pushing for a change and better opportunities, as well as people repressed by the old regime and remaining representatives of the pre-communist elite and their heirs, writers, artists and poets. On the other side were all the people who benefited from the old regime. These were most of the people who, due to the planned communist industrialization, were brought from the countryside to the cities and provided with apartments, secure jobs and higher status in society, i.e., workers and peasants who were privileged in the old regime. These people had lived the greater part of their lives under the communist regime and its propaganda.

This cleavage was so strong and durable that it remained the only pillar of the so-called "first Bulgarian party system".[26] The sustainability of the bipolar model was fuelled by the unwillingness of the BSP to reform itself. The government formed by BSP

in 1994 however, lead to economic collapse and hyper inflation in 1996. The crisis provided grounds for radicalization and unification of the opposition. SDS and most of the opposition parties formed a coalition called United Democratic Forces (ODS). ODS initiated street protests in January 1997 which lead to pro-term parliamentary elections in April 1997 won by ODS (Table 1).

However, there was and still is another division – the ethnic cleavage, exploited mainly by the Turkish minority party – Movement for Rights and Freedoms (DPS), which allowed it to mobilize the largest minority group in the country in its own support. By monopolizing the Turkish minority vote and by developing its party structure, DPS managed to approve its place in the party system as a third player, which in its turn gave for some incentives to claim that the Bulgarian party system consists of two and a half parties. This cleavage is a typical example of the Center-Periphery model introduced by Lipset and Rokkan.[27] The DPS electorate populates remote and mainly rural regions in the north-east and the south of the country. DPS's main political struggle is for cultural and religious collective rights for the Turkish and Muslim community in Bulgaria (the Bulgarian Constitution prohibits collective religious and ethnic

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[26] Ibid, 229.

[27] Seymour Martin Lipset and Stein Rokkan, "Cleavage Structures, Party Systems, and Voter Alignments", in *The West European Party System*, ed. Peter Mair (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990). 91-138.

rights and guarantees them only at the individual level), which it negotiates with the center, suppressing the potential conflict. DPS managed to negotiate introduction of the right to study the mother tongue at schools, news emissions in Turkish on the national television, Muslim schools, etc. Sticking to the Center-Periphery model, the Turkish minority is territorially defined, it pushes for the extension of its rights and is open to coalitions with all other parties regardless their economic platform (except xenophobic parties). DPS also manage to institutionalize to a large extent the relationships between the Turkish minority and the Center.

It should be noted however, that these developments are to a high degree features of the leadership of the party. The party leader Ahmed Dogan is its founder and unchangeable leader since 1990. The deputy chairs Lyutfi Mestan, Yunal Lyutfi and Emel Etem are unchangeable as well. Although often criticized for lack of internal democratic mechanisms in decision-making, indecent relations with suspicious firms and electoral violations[28], DPS is a key factor for the construction of an ethnic model, which prevented ethnic struggles in the country.

Within the 1989 – 2001 period, two phases could be differentiated. The first

phase developed prior to 1997 and was marked with economic and political decline with the economic collapse in 1996 as its peak. Conventionally this phase was dominated by BSP. In 1991 SDS formed a government, but its support in parliament was so fragile that it is hard to define the years between 1991 and 1994 as dominated by the anticommunists. In 1994 the SDS government failed to receive vote of confidence and had to resign. BSP won the elections in 1994, but its government further intensified the crisis.

The second phase (1997-2001) was marked with economic stabilization and development. The ODS government headed by the SDS leader Ivan Kostov undertook rapid and deep structural reforms that delivered passable results. Enjoying stable majority in parliament, the government managed to pass pro-liberal legislation that facilitated the emergence of a market economy. The government launched an extensive privatization and restitution process. EU and NATO memberships were formulated as primary political goals of the country, and the ODS government started the negotiation processes. Despite the macroeconomic and foreign policy stability and development, the reforms that inevitably affected a large part of the population leaded to loss of popular support for the ODS.

The decline in the support for ODS and the still vivid memories of the economic collapse caused by the BSP government were expressed by the

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[28] DPS is widely criticized in the media for forcing people from the Turkish minority to vote for them, as well as organizing the Bulgarian emigrants of Turkish origin living in Turkey to vote in Bulgaria, which in the case of municipal elections always predetermines the election results in favor of DPS.

complex popular distrust in politics. People were looking for an alternative with a majority claiming that the political parties failed to deliver good governance and better standard during the 11 years of transition. The alternative came unexpectedly in 2001 when the former king Simeon Sax-Coburg-Gotha, exiled by the communists in 1946, proclaimed his.

Table 1. Political Parties in Bulgaria, Share of the Legislative Vote 1990 – 2005

Party	1990	1991	1994	1997	2001	2005
Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP) and coalition (KB)	47.2%	33.14%	43.5 %	21.97%	17.15%	30.95%
United Democratic Forces (SDS) and coalition (ODS)	36.2%	34.36%	24.23%	52.02%	18.18%	7.68%
Movement for Rights and Freedoms (DPS) in 1997 coalition (ONS)	6.0%	7.55%	5.44%	7.57%	7.45%	12.81%
Bulgarian Agrarian People's Union (BZNS)	8.0%	3.9%	in NS	in ODS	in ODS	in BNS
People's Union (NS)	***	***	6.51%	***	***	***
Bulgarian Business Bloc (BBB)	***	***	4.73%	4.91%	***	***
Bulgarian Euro-Left Coalition (BEL)	***	***	***	5.48%	***	***
National Movement Simeon II (NDSV) coalition	***	***	***	***	42.74%	19.88%
Attack Coalition	***	***	***	***	***	8.14%
Democrats for Strong Bulgaria	***	***	***	***	***	6.44%
Bulgaria People's Union (BNS)	***	***	***	***	***	5.19%

Source: *Elections Results Archive*, Center on Democratic Performance, Binghamton University
http://www.binghamton.edu/cdp/era/index.html#; accessed on 5/14/2007

intention to take part in the upcoming parliamentary elections with his own political formation. The 2001 parliamentary elections marked the end of the bipolar party system.[29] The newly formed National Movement Simeon the Second (NDSV) obtained a majority of the vote (see Table 1) and 120 out of 240 seats in the parliament. The movement founded by the former king relied on his personal popularity as well as on a platform focused on economic issues rather than ideological identifications. The two parties dominating the first decade of the Bulgarian transition found themselves in opposition with the worst electoral results since 1989. Subsequently, SDS split into several smaller parties ran by leaders whose relations were filled by personal animosityAfter the elections, NDSV had to form a coalition since it did not have absolute majority in parliament. The only possible partner appeared to be DPS, which determined the ideological identification of NDSV in the left/right dimension of the political specter. The movement proclaimed itself as a centre-right formation with a liberal platform. Doing so, it distinguished itself from BSP and SDS, representing the left and the right respectively. The centrist identification of NDSV provided ideological reasoning of its coalition with DPS, as well.

All these developments lead to structural change in the Bulgarian situation. NDSV appeared as an ideologically undefined catch-all party of the protest against the compromised old parties and the centrist image was quite useful. This was a vacant niche so far. DPS as a party representing the Turkish people fit perfectly in this coalition. It appeared that communism/anticommunism division had depleted its potential to mobilize electoral support. The old parties had to develop new ideological identifications and electoral strategies.

Figure 1a represents the Bulgarian political specter prior to 2001. During most of the period, BSP was at the margin between left and extreme left. SDS was firmly in the right art of the scale. Despite the fact that BEL could be classified as a center-left party, and DPS and BBB as centrist, these parties had virtually no impact or significant electoral support. Practically there was a vacuum in the center and two poles of the system. The change of the situation in 2001 forced SDS to become more right in order to differentiate from NDSV, while BSP moved towards the center-left under constant pressure for reforms. Figure 1b schematizes this notion, as well as the general decrease in the support for the right and the left.

The fragmentation of the party system deepened with the 2005 elections. Seven parties managed to pass the 4% threshold (Figure 1c). Apart from BSP, NDSV, DPS and SDS, one new party and two coalitions entered the parliament. The new party of the former

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[29] Georgi Karasimeonov, *Новата партийна система в България - облик и перспективи (The New Party System in Bulgaria: Aspects and Perspectives),* (Razum 2, 2002) [database on-line]; available at: http://www.razum.org/number2.php.htm#4 accessed on Feb/2/2007.: 54.

Figure 1. Bulgarian Political Specter

1990-2001

	BSP (KB)	BEL (97-01)	DPS, BBB (94-01)		SDS (ODS)	
Extreme left	Left	Center-left	Center	Center-right	Right	Extreme right

2001-2005

	BSP (KB)		DPS		NDSV	SDS (ODS)	
Extreme left	Left	Center-left	Center		Center-right	Right	Extreme right

2005-

	BSP (KB)		DPS NDSV		BNS SDS DSB Ataka		
Extreme left	Left	Center-left	Center	Center-right	Right		Extreme right

SDS leader and ex-prime minister Ivan Kostov – Democrats for Strong Bulgaria (DSB) managed to draw a part of the SDS electorate and obtained 17 seats. The coalition BNS consisted of three small parties: the Union of the Free Democrats (SSD) – a splinter of SDS, the Bulgarian Agrarian People's Union (BZNS) which was in coalition with SDS in the last two parliaments, and the Inner Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (VMRO) which was also a part of ODS between 1997 and 2001. Coalition Ataka (Attack) was the surprise of the electionsWith its populist and extremist rhetoric, it managed to gain more votes than any other right party.

These elections increased the "destabilization of the party system" and "created the most unstable political situation"[30] in the contemporary Bulgarian history. After an unsuccessful attempt of BSP and NDSV consecutively to form a government, the President in accordance to his constitutional powers authorized DPS to form a government. Faced with new elections, DPS, BSP and NDSV negotiated the formation of the "triple coalition", formed a cabinet and solved the crisis.

As illustrated in Table 1, until 1997 the Bulgarian party system was relatively stable and it has significantly transformed since the 2001 elections. The puzzle here is what caused this transformation. The widely argued explanation is focused on the exhaustion of the anticommunism cleavage.[31] As already noted, this cleavage was the main element of the bipolar party system. It was to a large extent convergent with the pro/anti EU and NATO integration division.

The support of BSP for the European integration of Bulgaria during the first decade of the transition was questionable, because of its positions on some issues concerning the membership conditions. These were: economic liberalization, shutting down some of the Kozloduy nuclear reactors, as well as some of the party's foreign policy positions. Furthermore, its position against the Bulgarian membership in NATO until 2000, acted as an amplifier of the anti-integrationist image of the party. This allowed SDS to create for itself an image of a guarantor of the European future of the country. Yet, given the strong public support toward the EU membership of Bulgaria by 2001 (Figure 2), and the sharply decreasing electoral support for BSP in two consecutive votes (1997 and 2001), the party was forced to change its positions in

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[30] Maria Spirova, "Europarties and Party Development in EU Candidate States: PES and EPP in Bulgaria," *Europe-Asia Studies* (under review): 10.

[31] Karasimeonov, *The Party System*, 230.

order to recover its image. Nevertheless, the consensus over EU and NATO memberships between the major political parties did not deplete the pro/anti EU cleavage. It just took it out of the communism/anticommunism context of the first decade of transition.

The cleavage was later utilized by Ataka, which given the drop of the public approval for EU membership, delivered success for its populist and in a way chauvinistic platform. The party took advantage of the ethnic cleavage as well. As already mentioned, the Turkish minority party remained widely criticized for electoral manipulations, suspicious business contacts and corruptive behavior. Moreover, ethnic parties are constitutionally banned in Bulgaria and the fact that DPS is not prohibited gave Ataka space to accuse the political elite in national and constitutional treason.

All these developments shaped two dimensions of the Bulgarian party system. The first is the left-right dimension and the other is the euro-optimistic/euro-pessimistic dimension. These features of the Bulgarian party system fit the European model of party system defined by Hix.[32] According to

Karasimeonov's classification[33] at present, the left is relatively united around BSP. NDSV and DPS occupy the center, while the right is quite fragmented. SDS, DSB, BZNS, VMRO, SSD and the newly founded Citizens for European Development of Bulgaria (GERB) share the right part of the political specter. Between 2001 and 2005, the government was formed by the two centrist formations, while the present cabinet is supported by a left-centrist coalition. On the other hand, all these parties are pro-European and clearly distinguishable from Ataka, which due to its extremist and anti-integrationist positions, is, in the terms of Hix – "un-coalitionable".[34] Figure 3 presents the two dimensions of the party system. The arrangement of the parties within the system represented by Figure 3 reflects their positions on political and ideological issues. Two of the parties do not have explicitly defined economic platforms. These are the Turkish minority party DPS and the moderate nationalists from VMRO. BSP offers left solutions for the economic issues, while GERB, NDSV, SDS, SSD and BZNS are classified as liberal formations. DSB is rather
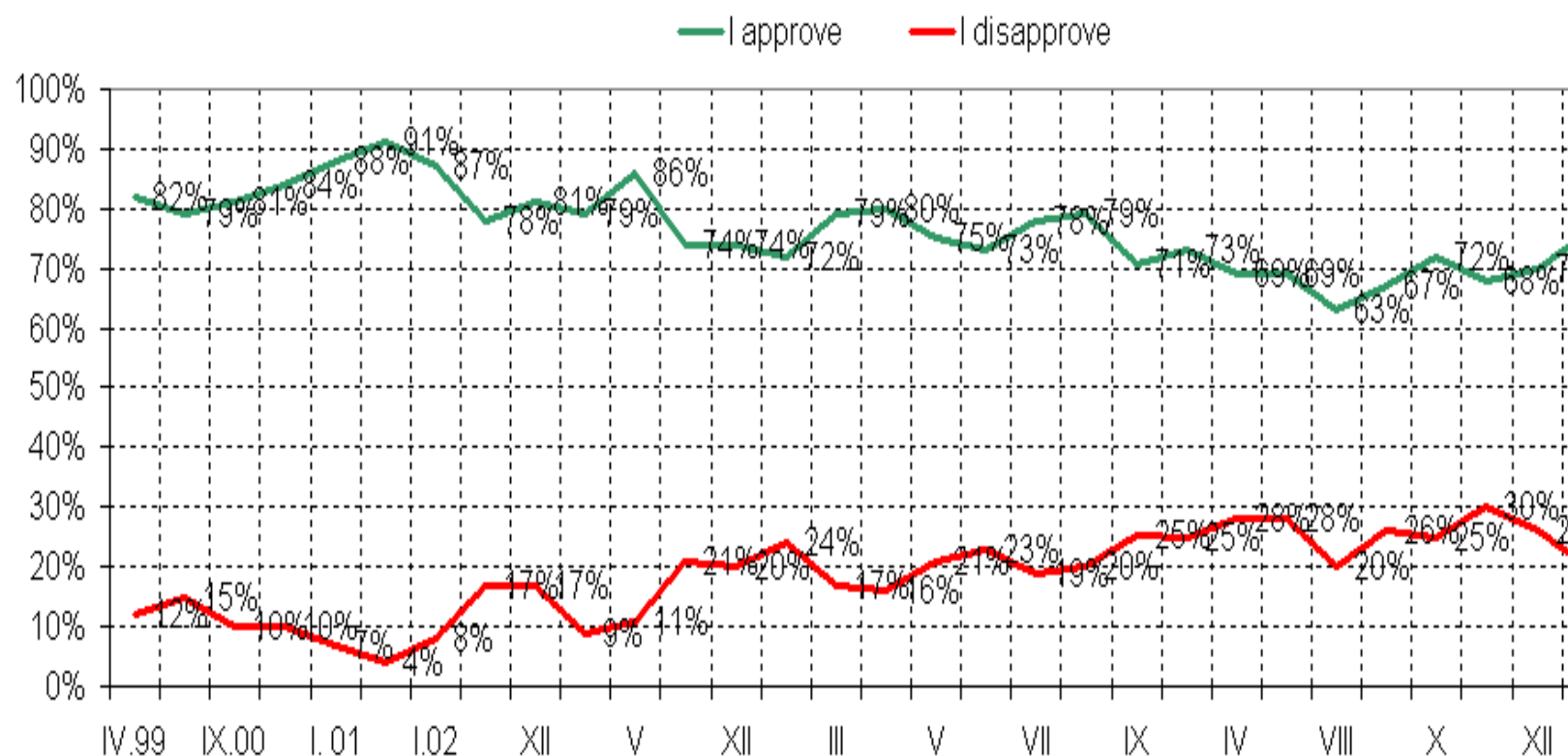
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[32] Simon Hix, *The Political System of the European Union*, 2nd edition (London: Palgrave, 2005), chap. 6.

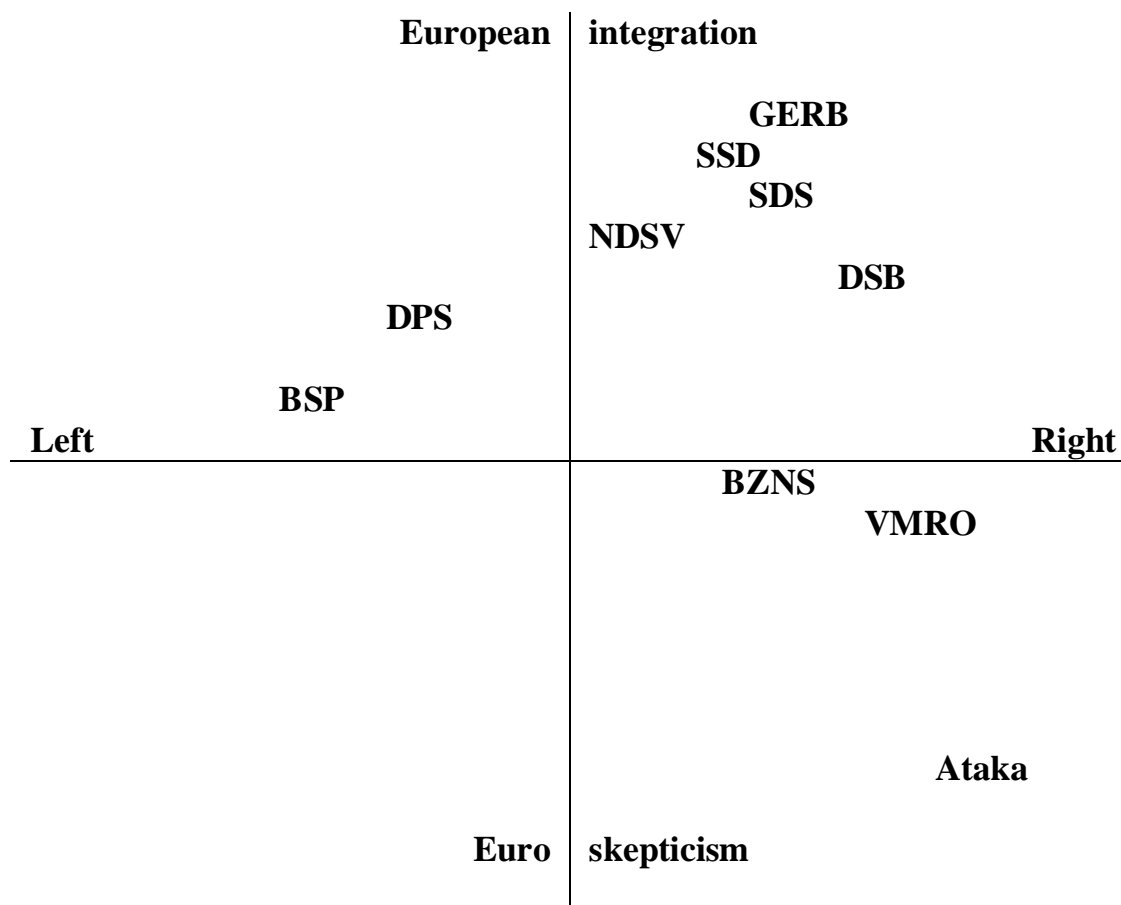[33] Karasimeonov, *The Party System*, 123.
[34] Ibid.

Figure 2

Public attitude to Bulgaria's accession to the EU

Source: Alpha Research: http://www.aresearch.org/european_union.html; accessed on May/15/2007

Figure 3. Two dimensions of the Bulgarian Party System

European | **integration**

GERB

SSD

SDS

NDSV

DSB

DPS

BSP

Left — **Right**

BZNS

VMRO

Ataka

Euro | **skepticism**

conservative. More intriguing is the case of Ataka. The party has left standings on economic issues, proclaiming even partial nationalization and expansion of state regulation, which contradicts with its rightist political positions.

The Influence of the European Party Families

The effect of European integration on the party system transformation in Bulgaria is even more salient when the influence of the European party families is taken into account. As Spirova argues, the Party of European Socialists (PES) was involved in the formation of the Bulgarian social-democracy since the very beginning of the transition[35]. Since the BSP was considered anti-integrationist and non-democratic, at first PES supported some smaller parties as well as encouraged the pro-European members of BSP to defect and join their social-democratic project. The greatest achievement of these efforts was the entry of the Bulgarian Euro-left (BEL) into parliament in 1997.

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[35]   Spirova, "Europarties," 11.

With the reformation of BSP and its pro EU positions, PES reformulated its policy toward it and recognized it as a potential partner. PES further pushed for unification of the left space in Bulgaria. It tried to bring together BSP, BEL and BSDP, but in vain. Consequently, the unification happened without the participation of BEL, which was marginalized. As a result, PES gave observer's status to BSP in 2002 and associate membership in 2005, leaving no doubts for its involvement in the formation of the left space in Bulgaria[36]. The desire of BSP to improve its legitimacy through membership in the Party of European Socialists accelerated its reformation and hence, accelerated the transformation of the party system itself.

Similar is the involvement of the European People's Party (EPP). In the early years of the transition, it recognized and incorporated the Democratic Party (DP) and the BZNS. Already in power, SDS received associated membership in 1998. Like PES, EPP also pushed hard for the consolidation of the right in Bulgaria. The success of these efforts was marked by the foundation of ODS – large right coalition around SDS, that won the elections in 1997. The major success was marked by the election of one of the SDS leaders Nadezhda

Mihaylova as Deputy Chair of EPP.[37]

However, the loss of the 2001 elections disintegrated the right union. SSD and DSB sliced from SDS. EPP tried to reunite the right again in 2004, but failed. In the 2005 elections DSB ran alone, SSD and BZNS together with VMRO formed a separate coalition – NS, while SDS and DP remained in ODS. As shown in table 1, the results were highly unsatisfactory. These five parties not only ran against the EPP initiative, but against the "expectations and the common sense" as well[38].

Unlike PES and EPP, the European Liberals did not recognize a kin party in Bulgaria. In the conditions of the bipolar party system, this was not a surprise. Bluntly put, in the Bulgarian party politics there was no room for the center. Yet, since the 2001 elections the situation has changed. The parties supported by PES and EPP were in opposition. For the first time since 1989, the government was neither left nor right. The coalition in power was ideologically non-aligned, and in domestic plan the two poles were discredited by the popular dissatisfaction. This was a convenient moment for the European liberals to intervene in Bulgarian politics. That is why the

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[36]   Ibid, 13.

[37]   Ibid, 16.
[38]   Ibid, 17.

candidacy of DPS for associated membership in the European Liberal Democrat and Reform Party (ELDR) was eagerly approved in 2001.

DPS was in power, so it was attractive to ELDR. On the other hand, the party was trying to blur its purely ethnic image in order to keep its pretensions to be a national and responsible for the government party. The membership in ELDR was the perfect tool for political legitimization and for delimitation from the discredited left and right.

After its foundation in 2001, NDSV tried to legitimize itself as a right party and applied for membership in EPP. However, SDS blocked its candidacy, which on its turn pushed NDSV into the centrist part of the political specter. The party, with the cooperation of its coalition partner DPS, became a member of the ELDR in 2003, which is determinative for the coalition potential of NDSV.

The stimulus for the Bulgarian parties to associate with the Euro-parties is not only the external and internal legitimacy they would obtain. The aid delivered by the rich German foundations supporting the right, left and center appeared to be a high esteem for its members, especially for the small ones. The Euro-parties did not only change the electoral behavior of their Bulgarian

members, but their values as well, since the foundations aimed at promoting specific principles and ethics.

In summary, the European party families have continuously influenced the behavior of the major Bulgarian political parties from the very beginning of the transition. Both PES and EPP pushed for consolidation of the left and the right specter respectively, with a varying success. When the right was united, the left was not and vice versa.

Effects of Europeanization

So far, I have presented arguments disclosing the substantial role of European integration for the transformation of the Bulgarian party system. Nevertheless, what is more intriguing is whether this phenomenon is positive or negative. Is it possible that Europeanization actually has caused negative effects over the party system? The answer is twofold.

On one hand is the civilizing effect of the European party federations over the Bulgarian parties. This effect was of great importance for democratization. Moreover, the influence of PES was one of the key factors for the reformation of the former communist party, which was a great improvement. Further, the Bulgarian party system is adopting

a Western model of organization: "more united left, more fragmented right."[39]

On the other hand, however, the Europeanization has caused some negative effects as well. They are denoted by the *populist drift* that is on the rise since the 2001 elections. This drift is characterized by the advent of political parties that share several common features: 1) they proclaim themselves against the present political elite, 2) they have no clear economic program, 3) their platforms are rather critical to other parties politics than offering any substantial developments, 4) they are leader-type parties, 5) they are catch-all protest parties, 6) they lose electoral support very fast. The first populist party in contemporary Bulgarian politics is the Bulgarian Business Block that obtained almost 5% of the vote in the 1994 and 1997 elections and disappeared subsequently.[40] The first considerable example of a populist party in Bulgaria was the advent of NDSV. The movement won the elections in 2001 upon the charisma of its leader – the former tsar and his solemn promise to significantly improve the lives of the people for 800 days through the economic program of his team. The latter did not take place and logically NDSV halved its electoral support in the 2005 elections.

At the same elections, a new populist party emerged – Ataka. The party was named after the TV show of its leader Volen Siderov, who gained the sympathy of voters dissatisfied with the transition by means of nationalistic, xenophobic and chauvinistic rhetoric. Ataka obtained considerable support in the elections. Furthermore, its leader was the main contestant of the current president in the 2006 presidential elections receiving more votes than the joint candidate of the right parties.

The *populist drift* boosted at the end of 2006 with the establishment of the party "Citizens for European Development of Bulgaria" (GERB). The party is created around lieutenant-general Boyko Borisov who started his political career as secretary general of the Ministry of Interior in the government of NDSV and DPS. Borisov ran in the 2005 parliamentary elections as a candidate of NDSV and was elected MP from two constituencies, but refused the seat and left the party. In the autumn 2005, he ran for the mayor elections in Sofia as an independent candidate and won the office.

Since as mayor he is not allowed to take party leadership, Borisov appointed his deputy mayor Tsvetanov leader of GERB. The party proclaimed as its fundamental principles "civil liberties",

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[39]   Enyedi, *"Europeanisation,"* 8.
[40]   Spirova, "Europarties," 9.

"Europeanization", "equal opportunities" and "prosperity"[41]. At the founding assembly, Borisov and Tsvetanov proclaimed themselves against the existing political elite. Borisov went even further by declaring his will to deliver the power directly to the people. GERB defines itself as a right party and a potential member of EPP. At the same time it keeps its distance from the rest of the right parties. Currently, the party appears to be the only alternative to the BSP domination in Bulgarian party politics (Table 2). Its growing support is explained by the charisma of its "informal" leader Borisov who personifies the fiction for a strong-hand in politics and of its criticism towards the present political elite.

The *populist drift* distorts the professionalization of the political elite and thus hinders the consolidation of the Bulgarian political process. The populist parties are a stepping-stone for newcomers in politics. Half of the present MPs are newcomers (Table 3). Only one of the Ataka incumbents has been Member of Parliament before. A dozen of the NDSV MPs are for the first time in parliament, 38 repeat their mandate

and only two of them have their third mandate. NDSV had 120 MPs in the previous parliament, out of which 80 are no longer in parliament or in politics.

The vast majority of the members of these parties have never dealt with politics before. They come from a wide range of professional fields. Most of them are well known lawyers, doctors, economists, engineers, university professors, and all have their careers outside politics. Their stay in parliament is temporary and not a serious occupation, nor is their party activities. All this questions the efficiency of the political process and leads to ineffective and incompetent law-making and governmental policies.

Paradoxically, it appears that the Europeanization of the Bulgarian party system along with its consolidation leads to an increase of populism which distorts the professionalization of the political elite. The Europeanization led to the reformation of the former communist party and to overall enlightenment of the political parties, but it provoked the populist drift as well.

Tentative Conclusions

In this article I argue that the transformation of the Bulgarian

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[41] Bulgarian National Radio (December 4, 2006), available at:
http://www.bnr.bg/RadioBulgaria/Emission_English/Theme_Politics/Material/gerbconstit.htm; accessed on May/20/2007

Table 2

Voters attitudes in Bulgaria August 2005 – March 2007

Vote Intentions	VIII.2005	IX.2005	XII.2005	I.2006	II.2006	IV.2006	V.2006	VI.2006	VIII.2006	XI.2006	XII.2006	I.2007	III.2007
BSP	23,0%	25,5%	24,3%	22,9%	23,5%	19,4%	21,4%	21,1%	23,3%	27,5%	25,5%	25,3%	21,5%
NMSS	12,2%	10,8%	9,7%	9,4%	8,6%	5,2%	4,8%	4,6%	5,1%	3,3%	2,8%	3,8%	2,9%
Attack	10,3%	8,7%	7,2%	7,9%	9,1%	6,0%	6,0%	5,7%	4,6%	8,9%	7,4%	7,8%	9,1,%
MRF	9,3%	8,3%	6,0%	6,5%	7,0%	7,5%	6,7%	6,7%	6,4%	7,1%	6,9%	7,6%	9,3%
UDF	5,2%	6,5%	5,0%	4,5%	3,5%	4,2%	4,0%	4,2%	4,5%	4,1%	3,3%	3,5%	2,1%
BNU	2,8%	2,5%	1,5%	1,5%	1,5%	1,1%	1,1%	1,1%	0,9%	0,6%	0,7%	0,6%	0,2%
DSB	2,7%	3,0%	2,9%	2,5%	2,8%	2,4%	3,2%	3,3%	2,3%	1,8%	1,0%	1,1%	1,3%
GERB			-	-	-	14,4%	12,4%	15,6%	14,2%	7,8%	14,2%	13,6%	17,4%
Other	1,3%	2,2%	4,5%	5,6%	5,6%	1,7%	2,5%	2,6%	1,2%	3,8%	3,9%	2,7%	2,0%
I will not vote	33,0%	32,5%	38,9%	39,2%	38,4%	38,1%	37,9%	35,1%	37,5%	35,1%	34,3%	34,0%	28,5%

Source: Alpha Research: http://www.aresearch.org/european_union.html; accessed on May/20/2007

Table 3.

Distribution of the Members of Parliament of the 40th National Assembly by parliamentary experience

1st term	50%
2nd term	32%
3rd term	18%

Source: National Assembly of the Republic of Bulgaria, http://www.parliament.bg/?page=ns&lng=en&nsid=4; accessed on May/20/2007

party system is a result of the European integration of the country. The existence of a pro/anti EU cleavage supports this proposition. The EU and NATO integration of the state was an issue determining the positions of the parties during the so-called first party system. The questionable support of the unreformed BSP for the EU integration and its firm opposition to the NATO membership was attractive point for its supporters who were susceptible to the nostalgia towards the old regime. At the same time this position was a mobilizing and unifying factor for the right parties who relied heavily on their integrationist image.

The end of the first phase of the party system occurred when the BSP changed its position towards the integration issue and declared pro-European. The right coalition lost its image of genuine guarantor of the European future of the country, since there was no threat for this future. However, the cleavage was not depleted and was utilized by Ataka, whose leader Siderov accused the political elite of being too yielding in the negotiations with the European Union and appealed for revision of the treaty chapters.

Apart from the structural importance of the pro/anti EU division, great influence over the transformation of the contemporary party system in the country is exercised by the European party families. Since the very beginning of the transition, the Euro-parties were trying to model their Bulgarian chapters. The way the parties entered coalitions, split or unite was in most of the cases denoted by the approval of the European partner. The EPP, PES and later ELDR along with the German foundations supporting them, played an enlightening role in the transformation of Bulgarian party politics.

However, it appears that the effects of Europeanization are not only positive. It provoked a drift of populism in Bulgarian party politics, which hindered the recruitment and professionalization of the political elite. Ironically, the process which caused the reformation of the former communist party and turned it pro-European, led to the advent of a party challenging the European integration of Bulgaria itself.

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U.S. POLICY TOWARDS ULTRANATIONALIST POLITICAL PARTIES IN SERBIA: THE POLICY OF NON-ENGAGEMENT EXAMINED

Marlene Spoerri
PhD Candidate in the Department of European Studies,
Universiteit van Amsterdam,
M.S.Spoerri@uva.nl

Abstract[1]

In Serbia, as in much of the Western Balkans, established democracies face both a moral and political dilemma: to acknowledge ultranationalist parties' democratic legitimacy as popularly elected actors or to isolate them as symbols of the region's authoritarian past. In Serbia, the US has opted for the latter, erecting a cordon sanitaire *similar to those employed domestically against ultranationalist parties in Western Europe. This article seeks to identify the goals underlying isolationist policies and in so doing, to gauge the extent to which such goals are being met. This is accomplished by examining current US policy towards ultranationalist political parties in the Republic of Serbia.*

Introduction

With the process of democratic consolidation in the Western Balkans now under way, the question of whether and how the governments of Western Europe and North America should approach the most conspicuous vestige of post-communist politics—the prominence of ultra-nationalist political parties—is becoming increasingly poignant. Policies aimed at isolating such groups by banning diplomatic, financial and other forms of contact have failed to deny them their popular appeal; to the contrary, ultranationalist forces are making electoral gains precisely where foreign opposition to their existence is most severe. Thus, despite a decade of intense international pressure, citizens in Bosnia-Herzegovina continue to vote along ethnic lines for parties that espouse intolerant rhetoric. While in Serbia, the ultranationalist Serbian Radical Party could very well be on the verge of forming a coalition government. Having failed to abolish support for ultranationalist forces in these countries, the time has come to review such policies.

This article takes an initial step in this direction. In addition to identifying the

goals underlying isolationist policies in the Western Balkans, it gauges the extent to which such goals are being met. It does so by examining current US policy towards ultranationalist political parties in the Republic of Serbia.[2] On the basis of interviews conducted with local politicians, US diplomats and aid-providers, the article concludes that the policy's impact is limited and is thus in need of revision. This argument is developed in three stages. First, the reader is presented with an overview of the current policy of non-engagement, along with an introduction to the ultranationalist parties in question: the Serbian Radical Party (SRS) and the Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS). Next, the goals of the policy are identified. Finally, these goals are examined in light of recent events in Serbia and conclusions regarding their effectiveness are drawn.

The *cordon sanitaire*: A policy of non-engagement

Since the fall of the Milosevic regime in October 2000, Serbia's ultranationalist parties have been met with markedly different fortunes. Long chastised for its anti-reformist and anti-democratic sentiments, the SRS is the only party in Serbia to have enjoyed a solid base of support since the pro-reformist coalition centered on the Democratic Party (DS) left government in early 2004. For over four years, support for the party has hovered at 30 percent, making the SRS "the most popular party in Serbia by a significant margin."[3] The SPS, by contrast, has witnessed little but setback following its heyday at the helm of Serbian politics in the 1990s. Following the extraditions of its former President, Slobodan Milosevic, to The Hague in mid 2001, its popularity has dwindled to the single digits. Whatever its losses, however, the SPS is one of just ten parties in Serbian parliament, occupying a total of 16 seats.[4] As a consequence, ultranationalist parties currently make up just under 40 percent of Serbia's 250-seat parliament. Although Serbia's ultranationalist parties have failed to form a governing coalition since reformist parties assumed power in October 2000, fear that they will do so in the future continue to challenge the longevity of Serbia's liberal trajectory.[5]

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[2]While this article focuses on US policy, it should be noted that the European Union also employs a *cordon sanitaire*. Given that the EU does not have a joint foreign policy, however, the implementation of the ban is not always run smoothly, a prime example being the divergent steps taken following SRS Deputy Nikolic's appointment as Speaker of Parliament. Notably however, none of the major European political party institutes target ultranationalist parties in their programs.

[3] Steven Woehrel, "Serbia and Montenegro: Current Situation and US Policy", *CRS Report for Congress* (June 21, 2006), 4.

[4] Four of the ten parties in Serbia's parliament are minority parties, each of which boasts no more than one to three seats in parliament.

[5] At the time of writing, Serbia's ultranationalist forces were in coalition talks with the Democratic Party of Serbia. It remained unclear as to whether such a coalition would actually be forged. Should these parties succeed, they would represent the first ultranationalist coalition government since Milosevic's ouster in 2000.

The parties' "quasi-fascist, populist program[s]"[6] combined with their refusal to renounce their roles in wartime atrocities have made both the SPS and SRS the bane of Serbia's pro-European majority. In Serbia, as in much of the Western Balkans, established democracies face both a moral and political dilemma: to acknowledge ultranationalist parties' democratic legitimacy as popularly elected actors or to isolate them as symbols of the region's authoritarian past. In Serbia, the US has opted for the latter, erecting a *cordon sanitaire* similar to those employed domestically against ultranationalist parties in Western Europe. *Cordon sanitaire,* literally 'quarantine line', refers to a policy of non-engagement through which extremist parties are politically isolated with the aim of circumventing their proliferation. Ultranationalist parties, here defined as organizations which advocate a brand of nationalism so severe that it calls a state's international interests and cross-border cooperation into question, often fall within this category.

Little has been written regarding the effectiveness of non-engagement but its record appears to be mixed. In Serbia, where a US policy of non-engagement with the SRS and the SPS has been the norm since 2000, the impact appears negligible: the SRS has more support today than it did when the policy was first implemented. Although the policy is reported to be 'unofficial' insofar as the origins of its mandate remain unclear and a paper-trail is lacking, interviews with US officials reveal that it is rigorously adhered to.[7] US diplomats and donors are not permitted to engage with representatives of ultranationalist parties or to support projects in which SRS officials partake. As one representative of the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI)—a US organization specialized in the provision of political party assistance—explained, "I can have no contact with the SRS, not even to send a letter."[8] As a result, none of the instruments typically employed to reform parties in new or struggling democracies–including diplomatic contacts and democracy assistance—are applied in connection with Serbia's ultranationalist parties. The following section examines these instruments in greater depth.

Strategies of engagement

Until recently, it was common practice to conceive of political transformation as an exclusively domestic affair. Only after the onset of the third wave of

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[6] This quote was made in reference to the SRS. See: Judy Batt, "The Question of Serbia", *Institute for Security Studies* 81 (August 2005), 8. Likewise, Balkans expert Sabrina Ramet labels the SRS "neo-fascist" in her article, "The Denial Syndrome and its Consequences: Serbian Political Culture Since 2000", *Communist and Postcommunist Studies* 40 (2007), 41-58, 48.

[7] I collected a total of 80 interviews in Serbia (March and June/July 2007) and the US (April 2007). Interviews were conducted with US diplomats and donors, Serbian politicians, academics, and journalists.

[8] Anonymous, National Democratic Institute, Interview conducted in Belgrade, Serbia, on March 9, 2007.

democratization in the late 1970s did exogenous factors receive systematic attention. To this end, established democracies have increasingly sought to support, and in some cases, impose, democracy in foreign contexts, a practice referred to as 'democracy promotion'. This article examines a subset of this field pertaining to political parties. It seeks to understand why and to what effect Western actors may opt *not* to work with select parties in new democracies.

In spite of their current malaise, political parties continue to fulfill unique functions which civil society cannot adequately perform.[9] Thus, in their quest to bolster democracy abroad, democracy promoters seek to strengthen political parties' democratic attributes, including their representative capacities, their legislative competence, and their ability to function cooperatively with their opponents. The US party institutes work to enable select parties to engage directly with the domestic electorate so that they may become more receptive to their voters' preferences. Western Europeans, by contrast, take pride in helping parties develop more ideologically coherent

programs.[10] Whatever their differences, the ultimate goal of all democracy promoters is clear: "To help strengthen or reform parties in new or struggling democracies all around the globe."[11]

There are a number of ways to work with parties. A combination of diplomacy and political party assistance forms the backbone of US efforts to promote the democratic development of Serbia's political parties and party system. While diplomacy aims to encourage, assistance aims to enable parties to implement the codes of conduct conducive to a democratic political party system. Each year, the US devotes over 60 million dollars to political party assistance.[12] Such assistance is meant to bolster parties' organizational structures, teach modern campaign techniques, and enable legislative competencies with the ultimate goal of facilitating the democratic process in newly democratizing countries[13] To meet these objectives donors' posses a toolkit

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[9] Some of the functions unique to parties include, though are not limited to: the aggregation and representation of citizens' interests, the provision of a structured vehicle of political participation, and the translation of policy preferences into public policies. For more on this see: Ivan Doherty, "Democracy Out of Balance: Civil Society Can't Replace Political Parties", *Policy Review* (April/May 2001), 25-35.

[10] The six German political party foundations, the *parteienstiftungen*, are trendsetters in this regard. They seek out ideological sister parties abroad in an effort to assist platform building in manner more in line with the classically left-right ideological spectrum witnessed in Europe.
[11] Thomas Carothers, *Confronting the Weakest Link: Aiding Political Parties in New Democracies* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment International Peace, 2006), 77.
[12] Thomas Carothers estimates the total figure spent in 2005 to stand at $68 million. See: Thomas Carothers, (2006): 85.
[13] "USAID Political Party Development Assistance", *United States Agency for International Development* (Washington DC, 1999).

consisting of consultancy, commodity assistance, trainings, seminars, workshops, and study tours.[14] In the US such activities are implemented by the two US political party institutes: the International Republican Institute (IRI) and NDI, both of which receive their primary support from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the National Endowment for Democracy.

How the US government chooses to employ diplomatic relations and political party assistance characterizes the strategy of engagement to which it adheres. For parties to which the US provides diplomatic support in combination with the full gamut of political party assistance, we can speak of *full engagement*. Where the US opts to exclude one or more of these tools and/or to employ them to different degrees, a policy of *limited-engagement* exists. The advantage of a policy of limited-engagement is that it allows one to straddle the line between cooperation and support. When carefully crafted, diplomacy and political party assistance may be employed in such a manner as to qualify as cooperation, rather than support, thereby thwarting accusations that the US is sanctioning a given party's policies. In rare instances, the US will employ a policy of *non-engagement*, which entails denying a party all forms of diplomatic support or contact and political party assistance.

Figure 1 provides an overview of what I term the 'engagement continuum'.

Serbian law prohibits political parties from accepting material and/or financial assistance from foreign states, foreign legal entities, and humanitarian organizations.[15] As such, most parties in Serbia enjoy a form of limited engagement which includes various degrees of diplomatic contact and an array of assistance programs focusing on capacity building, platform development, and voter outreach. In keeping with the *cordon sanitaire*, Serbia's ultranationalist parties—the SRS and the SPS—are denied even the most limited forms of cooperation. Given that diplomacy and assistance aim to *reform* political parties in new democracies, why are the SRS and SPS not included in US programs? To answer this question the following section examines each of these parties in greater depth.

The Serbian Radical Party

The SRS was founded in February 1991 as a union of two small, quasi-oppositional parties; the National Radical Party and the Serbian Chetnik Party. At outset, the SRS distinguished itself from Serbia's democratic opposition by appeasing Serbia's President, Slobodan Milosevic. While its program was ostensibly one of anti-Communism, the party consistently

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[14] Krishna Kumar, "Reflections on International Party Assistance", *Democratization*, 12 (August 2005) 4, 505-527.

[15] See Article 6 of the "Law on Financing of Political Parties" (Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia", No. 72/2003, 18 July and No. 75/2003, 25 July 2003).

supported the violent expansionist policies lead by Milosevic's SPS. The party's pro-regime sentiments, combined with its leader's manipulation of domestic sympathy for the Serb minority living abroad, ensured that by 1992 the SRS had won 73 of Serbia's 250 parliamentary seats.[16] The party's rapid rise to prominence owed much to the charisma of its leader, Vojislav

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[16] Vladimir Goati, *Partije i Partijksi Sistem u Srbiji* (Belgrade: OGI Centar, 2004), 250.

Figure 1: The Engagement Continuum

(Tool employed)

None   DC DC & Limited PPA   DC and PPA   D.S. & limited PPA   D.S. & PPA

Non-Engagement   ← Limited-Engagement → Full-Engagement
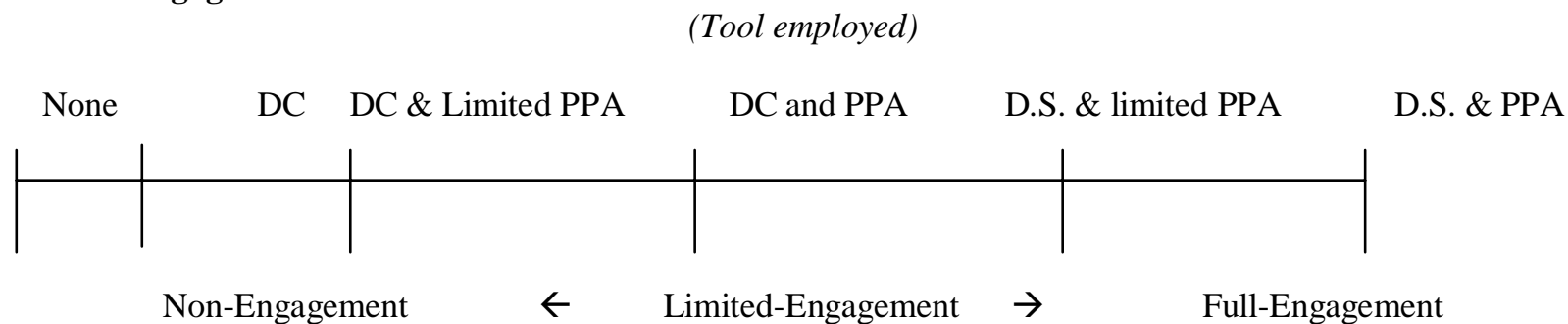
(Type of Engagement)

D.C. = Diplomatic Cooperation, D.S. = Diplomatic Support, PPA. = Political Party Assistance

Table 1: SRS Results from Republican Parliamentary Elections 1992 - 2007[17]

Elections	No. of MPs	% of total MPs
December 1992	73	29.2
December 1993	39	15.6
September 1997	82	32.8
December 2000	23	9.2
December 2003	82	32,8
January 2007	81[18]	32,4
May 2008	77	29,4

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[17] Ibid, 250. Data after 2004 is drawn from the Center for Free Elections and Democracy (CESID), at http://www.cesid.org/

[18] Although the SRS actually increased its share of the national vote by 1% from 2003 to 2007, legislative reforms lowering the electoral threshold required for minority parties to enter parliament meant that there were fewer seats to divvy up amongst the non-minority parties. Thus, despite increasing its share of the vote, the SRS actually lost one seat in parliament.

Seselj, whose affinity for nationalist rhetoric and populist tactics struck a chord throughout Serbia. By the late-1990s the SRS was the party of choice for many of those who questioned Milosevic's nationalist credentials in the aftermath of the Dayton Accords. Strong parliamentary results in September 1997 (see table 1) brought the party executive powers: the SRS formed a coalition government with Milosevic's SPS and Yugoslav Left; a party lead by Milosevic's wife, Mirjana Markovic.

The SRS's grip on power was short-lived. Domestic and international dissatisfaction with the Milosevic regime culminated in October 2000, when Milosevic was forced to step down from the federal Presidency. Pro-establishment parties met a similar fate in the parliamentary elections of December 2000, with the SRS taking in just nine percent of the popular vote.

In February 2003 Seselj was indicted for crimes against humanity and violations of the laws or customs of war by the ICTY.[1] The charges referred to two sets of activities: Seselj's close relationship to the paramilitary group, the *Seseljevci,* and his role as a verbal instigator of war crimes. Despite Seselj's indictment, the SRS refused to distance itself from its leader, opting instead to capitalize on public antipathy toward the ICTY by toting Seselj as a

victim of an anti-Serb agenda. With support for DOS coalition parties waning, the SRS achieved what the US government referred to as a "spectacular victory, becoming by far the largest party in the Serbian parliament"[2], taking in almost 28 percent of the vote in the republican Parliamentary elections of December 2003.[3] Regardless of its success however, the SRS was unable to assemble the parliamentary majority necessary to form a governing coalition. An alliance between several of Serbia's centrist parties ensured that the SRS would remain in the opposition. History repeated itself in January 2007, with the party taking in 29 percent of the vote, once again proving unable to form a governing coalition. Despite the party's repeated failure to obtain executive powers, Vojislav Seselj remains the formal president of the SRS.

Seselj's leadership is not the only source of continuity within the party. On each of the most pressing political issues the party's views remain identical to those it held over a decade ago. In fact, the SRS party program—issued in 1996—remains virtually unaltered to this day. Thus, the party is (officially) opposed to transatlantic integration[22], insists that Kosovo

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[19] To see the initial ICTY Indictment against Seselj, go to: http://www.un.org/icty/indictment/english/ses-ii030115e.htm.

[20] Woehrel (2006), 4.

[21] The party's greatest competitor at the time, Prime Minister Vojislav Kostunica's DSS, received just 18 percent of the vote.

[22] It should be noted that the SRS has wavered in its opposition to transatlantic integration, in particular its stance towards EU membership. (See for example: Jovan Komsic, "Politicke

remain an integral part of Serbian territory, denounces the ambitions of the ICTY, denies Serbia's complicity in the atrocities of the Yugoslav wars, and maintains territorial ambitions beyond Serbia's recognized borders[23]. Indeed, as Sabrina Ramet notes, the fact that "the neo-fascist" SRS remains "the most popular party in Serbia" continues to shed doubt on the direction of Serbia's democratic trajectory[24].

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stranke u Srbiji i evropske vrednosti – programi i praksa" in: Zoran Lutovac, *Politicke Stranke u Srbiji I Evropska Unija* (Belgrade:Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2007), 9-49.) In 2003, SRS Deputy Tomislav Nikolic stated that he fully supported EU membership. Again, in March 2007 he proclaimed himself *not* to be opposed to EU membership. In May 2007 Nikolic reversed his stance on the issue, expressing his transformation from a mere "Euro-skeptic" to a full-scale "EU opponent". See: "Nikolic: State of Emergency Could Put off Elections", *Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, 10 May 2007, available at: http://www.mfa.gov.yu/Bilteni/Engleski/b100507_e.html#N2. In recent months, the party's position has proven inconsistent, to say the least. During the run-up to Presidential elections in 2008, Nikolic campaigned on a moderately pro-EU platform, stating that Serbia's relationship with Russia need not preclude EU membership. Throughout the campaign, however, he was adamant that Serbia's interests in Kosovo would prohibit EU accession; should the EU accept Kosovo's independence, Serbia would refuse EU membership. Following Kosovo's declaration of independence in February 2008, the SRS leadership was a vocal critic of select EU member states' decision to recognize the declaration. It is worth noting that a similar position was also taken by Serbia's Prime Minister, Vojislav Kostunica, president of the Democratic Party of Serbia.

[23] These views were reiterated in Seselj's political testament, released in late 2006.

[24] Sabrina Ramet, "The Denial Syndrome and its Consequences: Serbian Political Culture Since 2000", *Communist and Postcommunist Studies* 40 (2007), 41-58, 48.

Socialist Party of Serbia

The founding of the SPS predates that of its ultranationalist counterpart. In the summer of 1990, the League of Communists of Serbia merged with the small, left-leaning Socialist Alliance of Working People in Serbia to form the Socialist Party of Serbia. Whereas the political successors of communist regimes had generally fared poorly against their pro-democratic opponents throughout Central and Eastern Europe (with the notable exceptions of Bulgaria and Romania), in Serbia the collapse of the communist party was in name only. The SPS proved victorious in Serbia's first-ever post-communist elections, winning 77.6 percent of seats in parliament (see table 2). Although it failed to attain a majority of votes' caste, the party's lead was decisive: its nearest opponent, the Serbian Renewal Movement (SPO), received 16 percent of the vote or 8 percent of seats in parliament.

The SPS's electoral success stemmed from its origins in the communist party. The monopoly on state institutions and national infrastructure that had once belonged to the League of Communists of Serbia was simply transferred to the SPS. Slobodan Milosevic, the party's charismatic leader, exploited this advantage to its fullest. It was largely in this manner that the SPS sustained its predominant position in parliament throughout the 1990s.

Table 2: SPS Results from Republican Elections 1990 - 2007[25]

Elections	No. of MPs	% of total MPs
December 1990	194	77.6
December 1992	101	40.4
December 1993	123	49.2
September 1997[26]	110	44.0
December 2000	37	14.8
December 2003	22	8.8
January 2007	16	6.4
May 2008[27]	20	7.6

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[25] Goati (2004), 250. All data after 2004 were drawn from www.cesid.org.

[26] The SPS ran for office in coalition with JUL and New Democracy.

[27] The SPS ran for office in coalition with United Serbia and United Pensioners Party.

The relationship between the SRS—the embodiment of Serb nationalism—and the SPS—the successor of the communist party—is something of a paradox. Though not always symbiotic (in late 1994 Milosevic even had Seselj imprisoned), the two parties found common ground on Serbia's so-called 'national question'. Writes Ognjen Pribicevic, "…although ideologically almost poles apart, Milosevic and Seselj shared very similar, sometimes identical, approaches to most of the problems related to the breakdown of the Socialist Federated Republic of Yugoslavia…"[28] More often than not, Seselj provided the mouthpiece for policies supported by Milosevic. By virtue of its association with its founder and President, the SPS should therefore not be considered any less nationalistic than its right-wing counterpart. Indeed, the party's ultranationist sentiments were on display when in May 1999 the ICTY launched what would be the first of three indictments against Milosevic for war crimes committed throughout the territories of the former Yugoslavia. Like the SRS, the SPS refused to break ties with its leader, despite his extradition to The Hague in June 2001. It was only after Milosevic's passing in March 2006 that the party elected a new president, Ivica Dacic. Perhaps not surprisingly, the party chose to commemorate Milosevic as a "hero",

whose aims were those of "defending the Serbian people."[29]

Like the SRS, the policies of the SPS have exhibited remarkable continuity since October 2000. Although the party introduced new programs in 2002 and 2006, its positions on the most pressing political issues, including the so-called national question and cooperation with the ICTY remain substantively unaltered.[30] During the run-up to Presidential elections in January 2008, the SPS candidate, Milutin Mrkonjic publicly stating that armed intervention in Kosovo was a legitimate means of defending state sovereignty. In his words, "We will defend every citizen of Kosovo by arms."[31] In the aftermath of Kosovo's declaration of independence, the party's president, Ivica Dacic, went so far as to propose national legislation explicitly forbidding domestic organizations, political parties included, from recognizing the territory's claims.[32] Indeed, whatever the party's

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[28] Ognjen Pribicevic, "Changing Fortunes of the Serbian Radical Right" in *The Radical Right in Central and Eastern Europe since 1989*, ed. Sabrina Ramet (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999), 193-212.

[29] "Dacic Takes over Socialist Party", *B-92 Radio and Television*, 4 December 2006, available at: http://194.109.152.234/eng/news/comments.php?nav_id=38375.

[30] See for example: "Programska Deklaracija Sedmog Kongresa SPS", *Socialist Party of Serbia*, 2006, available at: http://www.sps.org.yu/uploads/progdekl7.pdf.

[31] As quoted in: "Mrkonjic: Branicemo gradjane Kosova", *b92 Radio and Television,* January 15, 2008, available at: http://xs4.b92.net/info/vesti/index.php?yyyy=2008&mm=01&dd=15&nav_id=280668.

[32] "SPS Zabraniti one sto priznaju", *B92 Radio and Television*, Febuary 18, 2008, available at: http://www.b92.net/info/vesti/index.php?yyyy=20

rhetorical moderation, the SPS's perspective on the Yugoslav wars and Serbia's conduct therein has changed little since October 2000. Only when the party's stances on such issues are upturned, will the label 'ultranationalist' lose its validity.

Considering these parties' past and current practices, it comes as little surprise that the established democracies hesitate to embrace them as potential harbingers of a peaceful, democratic Serbia. That the US goes so far as to employ a *cordon sanitaire* is more so in light of its overriding aim to support democratic transformation in Serbia. Why, after all, refuse contact with ultranationalist parties if doing so might possibly bring about pro-democratic reforms within the party? Why not attempt to make these parties 'safe' for democracy? The following section answers these questions by assessing the goals underlying US policy towards the SRS and SPS.

The goals of the *cordon sanitaire*: Is it working?

US policy towards the Western Balkans is rooted in the desire to achieve peace and stability after a legacy of violent conflict and ethnic-strife[33.] Central to such aims are efforts to mitigate the power of ultranationalist forces (parties among them), bolster liberal democratic development, and finally, facilitate the region's future within a united Europe. Bearing these overarching goals in mind, what purposes might the *cordon sanitaire* serve? The following list includes goals which were explicitly articulated during my discussions with US representatives working in Serbia, as well as those which logically stem from the broader context of US policy in the Western Balkans. Such goals include:

- *Decreasing popular support for ultranationalist parties:* To lessen the likelihood that either the SPS or SRS enter government, the US may seek to ensure that public support for the parties decreases or, at the very least, does not increase. By erecting the *cordon sanitaire* the US sends a very clear message to Serbian voters that an SRS/SPS-lead government would leave Serbia politically isolated.

- *Keeping ultranationalist parties out of power:* By denying diplomatic contacts and political party assistance to ultranationalist parties, the US signals the consequences likely to follow cross-party cooperation with these groups. In demonstrating its antipathy towards ultranationalism, the US hopes to prevent center-right parties (namely the DSS) from establishing a coalition government which would provide ultranationalist forces with executive control.

08&mm=02&dd=18&nav_category=640&nav_id=285339.

[33] Woerhol (2006).

- *Limiting ultranationalist parties' influence on policymaking:* In outlining its aversion to ultranationalist parties, the US may also seek to lessen the extent to which these parties' programmatic preferences impact upon Serbian policy. The isolation of Serbia's ultranationalists could potentially serve to undermine their base of support, thereby challenging their grip on Serbia's political transformation.

- *Inciting change within ultranationalist parties:* By isolating ultranationalist parties, the US tacitly conditions its assistance on programmatic and ideological reform within these parties. Having been refused US assistance and cooperation, it is clear to SRS and SPS representatives that unless they reject ultranationalism, they will continue to be ostracized by the international community.

- *Maintaining ideological distance from ultranationalism:* By denying US assistance and contacts to the SRS and SPS, the *cordon sanitaire* may likewise seek to highlight US opposition to ultranationalism. In refusing to communicate with these parties, the US sends a clear message that it opposes a politics based on ethnic exclusion.

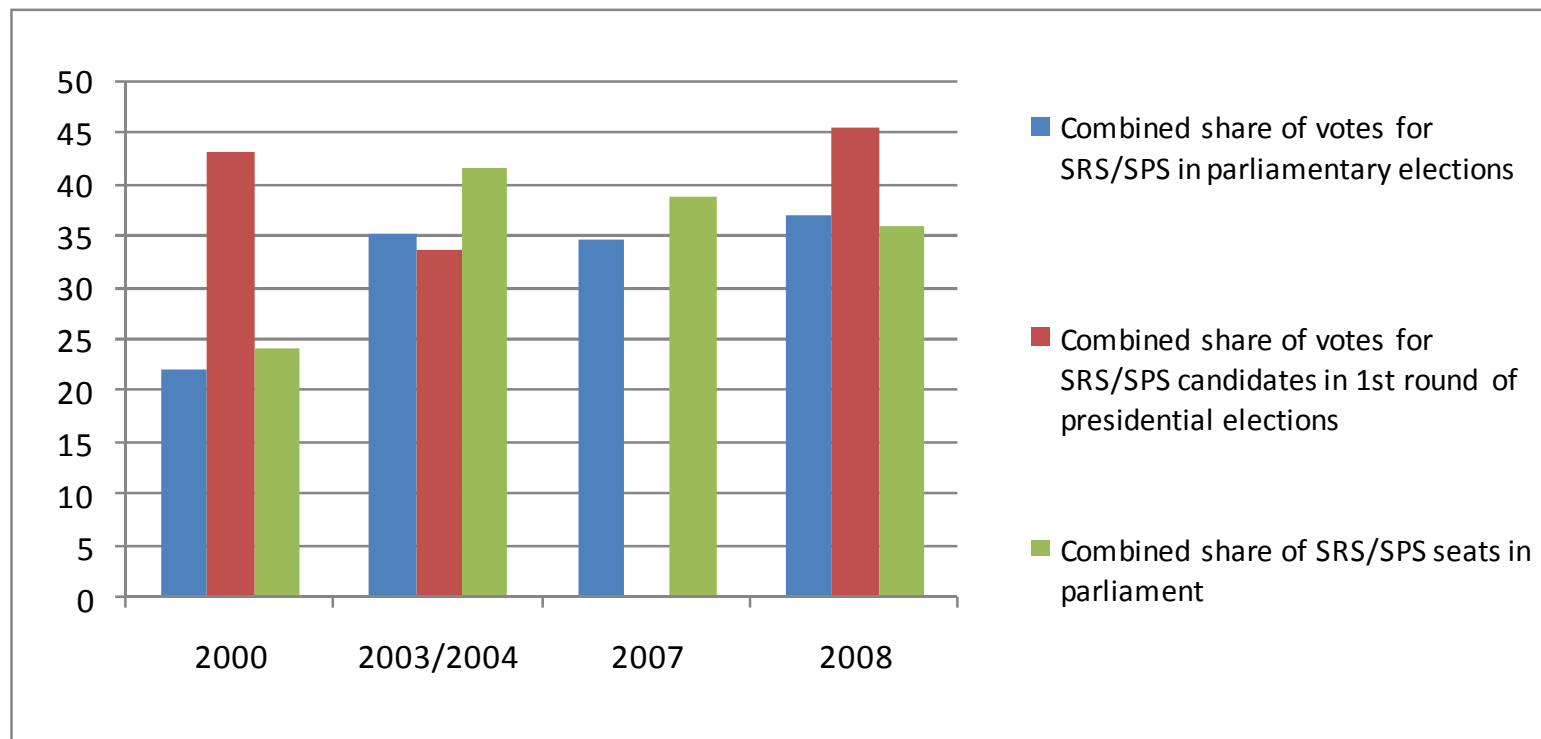In sum, it is conceivable that in its desire to bring peace and stability to the Western Balkans, the US employs the *cordon sanitaire* to serve a variety of purposes, each aimed at eliminating the relevance and prevalence of ultranationalist forces. The goals sketched above are therefore directed at cross-cutting levels: the Serb electorate, the party system as such, the republican parliament, ultranationalist parties themselves, and the US public at large. Given that the *cordon sanitaire* likely serves an amalgamation of the aforementioned purposes, to what extent are its goals being met? The following pages examine each of these goals in greater depth.

Decreasing support for ultranationalist parties

Perhaps the chief aim of the *cordon sanitaire* is that of quelling further support for Serbia's ultranationalist parties. Were this goal being met, one would expect support for ultranationalist parties to stagnate and, ideally, decrease, in the aftermath of the policy's implementation. The evidence indicates that the policy's record is mixed in this regard.

If comparing the evolution of the parties' cumulative popular support from the date of regime change (October 5, 2000) to today, we see that the policy has been largely ineffective: the parties' cumulative share of votes in both parliamentary and presidential elections, as well as these parties' combined share of seats in parliament, has *increased* since the policy was first implemented in 2000 (see figure 2). Although Serbia's ultranationalist

Figure 2: Combined SRS/SPS Party Strength 1990-2008[34]

Legend:
- Combined share of votes for SRS/SPS in parliamentary elections
- Combined share of votes for SRS/SPS candidates in 1st round of presidential elections
- Combined share of SRS/SPS seats in parliament

X-axis categories: 2000, 2003/2004, 2007, 2008

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[34] The Presidential elections held in September 2000 were at a Federal level, as opposed to the Republican level. It should also be noted that in the parliamentary elections of May 2008 the SPS competed in coalition with two small parties. As such, the share of votes for the SRS and SPS in parliamentary elections is slightly lower than is reflected in this graph. All data concerning election results were drawn from Goati (2004), 250 and CESID, available at: www.cesid.org.

Figure 3: Combined SRS/SPS Party Strength from 1990-2000 and 2000-2008[35]

parties fared minor cumulative losses from 2003/2004 to 2007/2008, the parties recently experienced a significant turn of fortunes in Serbia's Presidential elections held in January 2008, with their support increasing by more than ten percentage points. This suggests that the implementation of the *cordon sanitaire* has failed not only to diminish support for ultranationalist parties but also to stabilize that support at more modest levels.

If, however, the post-communist period is viewed in its entirety (and the results of 2000 are taken to represent an anomaly), the outlook is less somber. As figure 3 demonstrates, the combined share of votes for the SRS and SPS in parliamentary elections has decreased considerably from 1990 to the present. From 1990-2000 the combined share of votes for the SRS and SPS in parliamentary elections averaged 52.6 percent, while from 2000-2008 that figure was just 40.6. Viewed in terms of seats in parliament, from 1990 – 2000 the SRS and SPS occupied a combined average of 72.2 percent of seats in parliament, as compared to 2000-2008 when they held an average of just 34.8 percent of seats in parliament. There has also been a cumulative decrease in support for SRS and SPS presidential candidates.

Unfortunately, such divergent findings are ultimately inconclusive. While, on the one hand, support for ultranationalist forces has risen since the policy was first implemented in 2000, it has diminished, in some cases

considerably, since the 1990s. This speaks to a mixed record of success in what is perhaps the policy's chief goal.

Keeping ultranationalist parties out of power

At the time of writing, more than seven years have passed since Milosevic left office and Serbia's ultranationalist parties have yet to regain control of the republic's executive branch. Despite strong public support for the SRS, the party has failed to reassume executive powers. Likewise, the SPS has yet to partake in a coalition government. This indicates that at least one goal of the *cordon sanitaire*; that of effectively sidelining Serbia's ultranationalists, has been met.

On the surface, this is irrefutable. As of May 2008, the SRS and the SPS have failed either to form a coalition government or to obtain the Serbian presidency[36]. To date, the closest these parties have come to executive control was the silent support the SPS provided the government of the DSS, the G17 Plus, the Serbian Renewal Movement, and New Serbia. It is noteworthy, however, that the election results of May 11, 2008 have provided Serbia's ultranationalists with their first opportunity to form a post-Milosevic government. Although coalition negotiations were still ongoing at the time of writing, the SRS and SPS coalition had already achieved what had hitherto been beyond reach: a pledge of support from Kostunica's DSS. In fact, less than 24 hours after the election

results were announced, DSS and SRS spokesmen confirmed that the two parties were engaged in coalition negotiations[37]. By May 13—just two days after parliamentary elections were staged—the parties announced that they had drafted an agreement laying out the character and goals of Serbia's next "national" government[38]. Were the SPS coalition to agree to these terms, Serbia's ultranationalists would have the number of mandates necessary to form a governing majority. Such an alliance would place executive powers in ultranationalist hands.

By all accounts, the results of the May 11 elections have crowned the SPS as the next government's 'kingmaker'. It is uncertain whether they will chose to form a government with the SRS and DSS or opt instead to forge an alliance with the DS-lead coalition, "For a European Serbia". Regardless of their options, two things are now clear: 1) the DSS no longer opposes a republican-level alliance with Serbia's ultranationalists, and 2) the next Serbian government will most likely include at least one ultranationalist party: the SPS. Neither of these speaks to the *cordon sanitaire's* success.

Limiting ultranationalist parties' influence on Serbian policy

Intimately connected with the aforementioned goals is that of limiting ultranationalist parties' influence on Serbian policy. The *cordon sanitaire* has been less successful in this regards. Perhaps the clearest indication hereof is offered by Freedom House's *Nations in Transit* Index. As figure 4 illustrates, Serbia's transition to liberal democracy stagnated in the midst of 2002. This period corresponds to an upsurge in popular support for Serbia's ultranationalist parties, which briefly ebbed after Djindjic's assassination in March 2003 but increased markedly in the months thereafter[39].

As a consequence of ultranationalists' resurgence, the DSS-led government did not command the votes necessary to pass legislation on its own. To get its proposals accepted by parliament, it depended on the support on the opposition, including Serbia's extremist parties. According to the ICG, "The Kostunica government has also had to rely covertly on that extremist party [the SRS] to pass several key laws and has often acted as though it were a coalition partner."[40] Serbia's first post-Milosevic constitution adopted in 2006

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[37] "DSS, SRS discuss next cabinet", *b92 Radio and Television,* May 12, 2008, available at: http://www.b92.net/eng/news/politics-article.php?mm=5&dd=12&yyyy=2008.

[38] "Radicals, DSS come up with draft agreement", *b92 Radio and Television*, May 13, 2008, available at: http://www.b92.net/eng/news/politics-article.php?mm=5&dd=13&yyyy=2008.

[39] For polling data pertaining to popular support for Serbian political parties during this period, see: Strategic Marketing Research, available at: http://www.smmri.co.yu/code/navigate.asp?Id=65.

[40] International Crisis Group, "Serbia Spinning its Wheels", *Europe Briefing*, 39 (23 May 2005), 2.

Figure 4: Freedom House's Nations in Transit Score for Serbia[41]
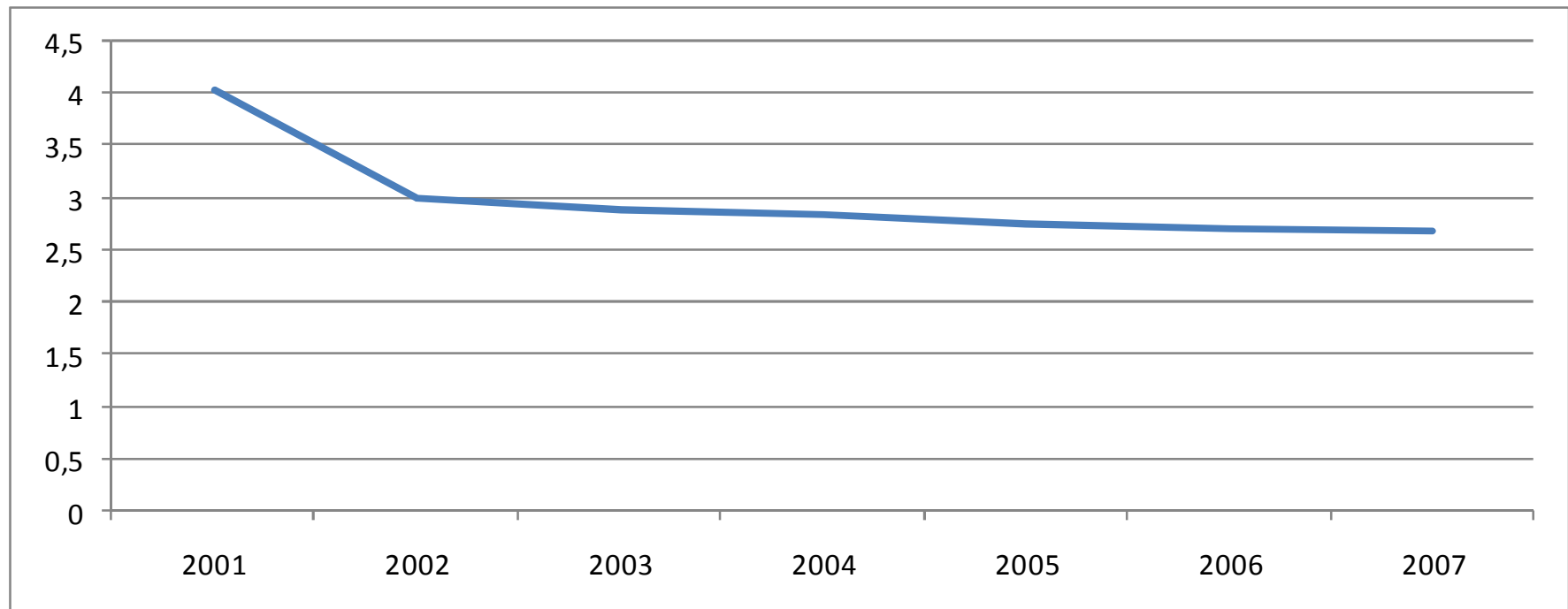
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is exemplary of this phenomenon. Not only has autonomy to the Serbian province of Vojvodina been limited, but it has become considerably easier for authorities to call a state of emergency, and the independence of the judiciary has been compromised. There is in fact little doubt that the constitution was the product of a bargain between the DS, the DSS, the SRS, and the SPS.[42]

Of perhaps even greater significance for Serbia's tardy trajectory was the silent support the SPS provided to the Kostunica government. In 2004, the DSS-lead coalition formed a minority government. To achieve the majority necessary for a working quorum, the coalition depended on the silent support of the SPS. It goes without saying that SPS support did not come without concessions. It was thus reportedly under SPS pressure that the government halted forcible (i.e. involuntary) extraditions to the ICTY[43]. Likewise, it was thanks to SPS demands that the governing coalition supported the controversial *Law on the Rights of Indictees in the Custody of the International Criminal Tribunal and Members of their Families*, entitling Serbian indictees and their families to free legal representation, accommodation in The Hague, and travel to and from the Netherlands. Additionally, SPS representatives were

awarded lucrative posts in state-owned firms as well as positions in public service. There is thus little doubt the third goal of the *cordon sanitaire*, that of limiting ultranationalists' influence on Serbian policy, has not been achieved.

Inciting change within ultranationalist parties

The *cordon sanitaire* has had even less success in facilitating transformation within ultranationalist parties. Although there is a marked decrease in inflammatory rhetoric, neither the SRS nor SPS has abandoned its ultranationalist sentiments. Both parties renounce cooperation with the ICTY, refuse to admit to Serbia's complicity in atrocities conducted during the Yugoslav wars, and have yet to renounce the use of violence in Kosovo. Thus, the SRS adheres to the same party program that it did in 1996[44] and its party magazine is tellingly entitled *Velika Srbija* (Greater Serbia). In fact the most radical version of SRS nationalism was put forth by Vojislav Seselj as late as 2006. In his political testament, Seselj instructed party members never to abandon their pursuit of a Greater Serbia and to "persistently fight to free Republika Srpska Krajina and Republika Srpska and to unite all Serbian territories."[45] The SPS, for its part, has publicly stated that violence is

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[42] International Crisis Group. "Serbia's New Constitution: Democracy Going Backwards", *Europe Briefing,* 44 (8 November 2006), 4.
[43] Despite this policy, the voluntary nature of DSS-lead extraditions, including that of General Sretan Lukic, was in question.

[44] Jovan Komsic (2006): 15.
[45] Seselj's testament available at: http://www.srpskinacionalisti.com/sadrzaj.php?tip=ves&is117328.

a legitimate means to maintain Serb sovereignty in Kosovo and most recently supported legislation which would effectively deny domestic organizations the freedom to recognize Kosovo's independence. A key indicator of these parties' ultranationalist sentiments can be witnessed in parliament, which both parties regularly exploit as a platform from which to hurl rhetorical abuse at colleagues from opposing parties. One widely reported example took place in late 2006, during the parliamentary proceedings for the nomination of Serbia's Deputy Prime Minister. SRS parliamentarian Zoran Krasic publically branded the G17 Plus' nominee, Ivana Dulic-Markovic, as an Ustasha[46]. The SRS proceeded to launch a virulent campaign against Dulic-Markovic, repeatedly questioning her loyalty to the Serbian state, as well as that of her brother and father. Indeed, both SRS and SPS MPs regularly resort to slanderous rhetoric, profanity, and similarly provocative behavior.

To be sure, the parties are also entertaining modest, if cosmetic, reforms. In recent years, each party has sought to target its public relations effort at the so-called 'losers' of Serbia's transition. Without substantively altering their policy preferences, the parties now emphasize socioeconomic issues such as pension reform, privatization, and college tuition fees, rather than high-profile (and highly divisive) issues such as the Greater Serbia project or cooperation with the ICTY. According to the SRS's socioeconomic program, for example, the fight "against corruption and criminals" ranks highest amongst its list of concerns[47]. During his Presidential campaign, the SRS candidate, Tomislav Nikolic, even refrained from wearing the standard party badge depicting a portrait of Vojislav Seselj. According to Nikolic, doing so would have served to divide Serbs; as a presidential candidate, his intention was to represent Serbia in its entirety. As for the SPS, it eagerly portrays itself as a run-of-the-mill left-of-center European party. As one member stated, "We are a left party. We want to be included in the left parties of Europe. Every country needs a party to take care of the losers of transition." [48] The SPS has also gone to great lengths to stress its pro-European orientation. It thus emphasizes its support for EU membership and has been markedly less emphatic about its opposition to NATO membership.

Unfortunately, such changes remain only skin-deep. Whatever its claim to European ideals, members of the Socialist International were

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[46]*Ustasha* refers to a nationalist organization aimed at securing independent statehood for Croats. They came to power briefly in World War Two, having allied with the Nazis. They are accused of large scale atrocities against Serbs and other minorities, including the establishment of numerous concentration camps.

[47] Party program as listed on the website of the Serbian Radical Party.
[48] Dejan Backovic, Socialist Party of Serbia, interview conducted on 10 February 2007 in Belgrade, Serbia.

unconvinced by the SPS's self-professed transformation; its application for membership was denied on the grounds of the party's unrepentant ultranationalism and its leading role in the Yugoslav wars. Moreover, despite these parties' alleged aversion to corruption and criminality, past practices on the part of the SRS and SPS call the veracity of such statements into question[49]. And, as stated above, the parties' positions on the so-called 'national question', including cooperation with the ICTY, have gone unchanged. Clearly then, the fourth goal of the *cordon sanitaire,* that of inciting change within ultranationalist parties, has gone unmet.

Maintaining ideological distance

The final goal of the *cordon sanitaire* is that of indicating US disapproval of ultranationalism. As regards this goal, there is little doubt that it has been achieved. Indeed, few have reason to doubt the sincerity of this conviction or the scope of the schism between US and ultranationalist policies. On virtually all fronts, US and SRS/SPS policies are irreconcilable: Where these parties' officials regularly invoke the Virovitica-Karlovac-Karlobag line US representatives consistently condemn

the Greater Serbia project[50]. While the US was one of the foremost advocates of an independent Kosovo, the SRS and SPS continue to insist on Serbia's territorial continuity. By refusing to devote taxpayers' money to the establishment of contacts with or the provision of assistance to Serbia's ultranationalists, the US has sent a clear signal that such positions will not be supported by the US administration.

Conclusion

In light of the assessment laid out above, what course of action should US democracy promoters take when it comes to ultranationalist parties in Serbia and the Western Balkans at large? Should they maintain the status quo or has the time come to consider possible alternatives to the *cordon sanitaire*?

As we have seen, in Serbia the policy can claim modest successes. Two goals of isolationism have thus far been met: at the time of writing, neither the SRS nor the SPS has gained hold of the executive branch and ideological distance from ultranationalism has been attained. Both are reputable achievements: executive powers would enable ultranationalists to determine the course of Serbian politics, while its condemnation of ultranationalism provides the US with clear moral authority. Unfortunately, the policy's

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[49] The links between both parties to Serbia's underworld has been well documented. See for example, Maja Miljkvic and Marko Attila Hoare, "Crime and the Economy under Milosevic and his Successors", in Sabrina Ramet, *Serbia since 1989: Politics and Society under Milosevic and After* (London: University of Washington Press, 2007), 192-226.

[50] The line is a euphemism for the Greater Serbia project referring to the geographical borders of a united Serbian nation.

successes end there. The goal of lessening support for ultranationalist parties has been only vaguely realized. Compared to the support these parties' boasted in the 1990s, their popularity has waned considerably. Yet since the implementation of the policy in 2000, support for these parties has actually increased, so much so that few would deny their corrosive impact on Serbia's liberal democratic trajectory. Notably, two of the policy's goals have not been realized: apart from cosmetic alterations, both parties exhibit remarkable continuity with the Milosevic era and, despite their lack of access to the executive branch, both parties continue to exert pressures on national policymaking. Such failures are significant, not least because of the growing likelihood of an SRS-DSS-SPS alliance and the numerous consequences such a government would have on Serbia's international standing.

Table 3: Goals Met and Unmet[51]

Goal	Result
Decreased party strength	2
Lack of power[52]	3
Policy influence	1
Change within party	1
Maintaining distance	3
Total	10

After all, when in May 2007 Nikolic was appointed Speaker of Parliament, the repercussions hereof were more than rhetorical: the Serbian Dinar fell to record lows against the Euro and the Belgrade Stock Exchange declined dramatically. Thus, if tallying the totals of successes and failures, one is forced to conclude that there is ample room for improvement (see table 3).

As has been demonstrated, the policy's inability either to promote change within ultranationalist parties or to negate their impact on national policy is worrisome, not least because the direction of Serbia's transition remains so precarious. It is telling that an increasingly vocal group of US government officials and assistance providers doubt the wisdom of maintaining this policy. One USAID official based in Serbia remarked that, "Personally, I think that we should be reviewing that policy." [53] Indeed, for many of those working in Serbia, the policy seems untenable, with one USAID employee calling the policy "ridiculous" [54] and another "silly" [54]. Whatever the policy's successes, its failures call its relevance into question. The task now is to devise a policy that would exert a moderating influence on Serbia's ultranationalist parties, without

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[51] 3 = goal achieved, 2 = state of ambiguity, 1 = goal unachieved. A score of 15 would represent total success and a score of 5 total failure. The score of 10 places the policy precisely in the middle, reflecting a state of overall ambiguity.

[52] At the time of writing, the SPS was on the verge of forming a coalition with either the SRS or the DS. Should they form either such coalition, this score would decrease.

[53] Anonymous, USAID Belgrade, interview conducted in Belgrade, Serbia on March 2, 2007.

[54] Anonymous, USAID Belgrade, interview conducted in Belgrade, Serbia on June 21, 2007.

[55] Anonymous, USAID Economics and Governance Office, interview conducted in Belgrade, Serbia on March 15, 2007.

compromising the achievements that have thus far been made.

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POLITICAL PARTIES AND THE STATE IN THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA – IMPLICATIONS FOR DEMOCRATIC CONSOLIDATION

Simonida Kacarska,
MA in European Politics
University of Sussex,
skacarska@yahoo.com

Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to highlight the importance of political parties for successful democratic consolidation in post-communist countries. The study looks into the role of political parties with respect to their relationship with the state both theoretically and empirically through the case study of Macedonia in the period 1990-2006. The research examines the question whether political parties have facilitated or delayed the process of democratic consolidation through performing their functions in relation with the state. Geoffrey Pridham's analytical framework on the role of political parties in democratic consolidation forms the conceptual boundaries of this research. In addition to secondary literature, the paper utilizes primary data of twenty-one open-ended interviews with high-level representatives from all major political parties in Macedonia. The study contributes to academic research primarily by addressing the absence of any recent contextual literature on the role of political parties in the process of democratic consolidation in Macedonia.

I Introduction

The development of political parties has been widely accepted as a vital element of a consolidated democratic order. As a result, among other elements, the advancement of democratization in post-communist countries has been associated to the progress towards the development of a functional multiparty system. The experience of the former Eastern bloc countries has indicated that although all of the new democracies have a multitude of parties on the political scene, they are not performing the same functions as parties in consolidated states. Moreover, despite general similarities between party developments in post-communist countries, contextual differences have given rise to various parties and party systems in terms of both their structure and stability.[1]

Existent literature on the role of political parties in democratic consolidation has in most cases been developed in the context of the South European and Latin American countries, and was later adapted on the case of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). The Western Balkans, as a separate analytical unit from CEE, has been largely neglected in academic

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[1] See David M.Olson, "Party Formation and Party System Consolidation in Central Europe," *Political Studies*, XLVI (1998): 432-464

research. Hence, theoretical and empirical analysis on the link between party development and democratic consolidation in post-communism in the case of the Western Balkans is largely missing.

Among the few academic studies in this area, the most comprehensive effort is Geoffrey Pridham's analytical framework designed for the analysis of the role of political parties in democratic consolidation.[2] The framework is structured according to the conceptual triangle state-party-society focusing on the essential role of parties as links between the citizen and the state. Pridham suggests the examination of the relationship of political parties with the state, inter-party relations and relations with society in order to assess the role of political parties in democratic consolidation.

This paper is a case study of the role of political parties in democratic consolidation in the Republic of Macedonia in the period 1990-2006, focusing on the political parties' relationship with the state.[3] The study, hence, applies Pridham's analytical tools to the case of Macedonia focusing

on the first element of Pridham's analytical framework - the party-state relationship. After the regime change, the numerous parties that were established soon came to dominate the political scene in the country. Due to the significance of the period of economic, political and social transition, political parties, as central actors in the public sphere, carried increased responsibility for the successful democratic consolidation of the country. Their influential position in society provided party elites with the opportunity for decision-making in a period of historical importance. The tasks these parties performed in relation to the state were numerous, ranging from recruitment of leaders for public office, organization of government and formulation of public policy. It was ultimately expected that through the effective accomplishment of their tasks, political parties would contribute to the legitimacy of the new regime in the eyes of the population and facilitate democratic consolidation. Accordingly, this paper examines the question whether political parties have facilitated or delayed the process of democratic consolidation in Macedonia, focusing on the political parties' relationship with the state.

In order to assess this dynamic process, the paper sets an ideal model of the party-state relationship, which is used as a benchmark for evaluating the role of political parties in democratic consolidation. In line with Pridham's framework, the relationship between the party and the state is assessed through

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[2] Geoffrey Pridham ed. *Securing Democracy-Political Parties and Democratic Consolidation in Southern Europe* (London: Routledge, 1990). See also Geoffrey Pridham and Paul Lewis, "Introduction" in *Stabilizing fragile democracies: Comparing New Party Systems in Southern and Eastern Europe,* ed. Geoffrey Pridham and Paul Lewis (London: Routledge, 1996).

[3] The research examines the period until the parliamentary elections in July 2006.

the following elements: the behavior of political parties in relation to structuring of government and state institutions, the level of displayed system supportiveness and the alternation of power within the system. Based on its findings, the study concludes that political parties in Macedonia have delayed the process of democratic consolidation through the increased dominance of the party in state institutions, low level of system supportiveness and problems of maintaining effective opposition within the system.

With respect to the choice of methodology and methods, existing research on the role of parties in democratic consolidation has been limited to a comparative examination within the countries of CEE. On the other hand, the political parties in the countries of the Western Balkans have been largely neglected as a focus of academic analysis. Moreover, the vast variety of individual cases led analysts toward the conclusion that common examination has lost its relevance due to the different outcomes of the democratic transitions in CEE and the Western Balkans.[4] As Bugajski points, owing to the diversification of the pace and content transformation, the region as a whole can be viewed as an ongoing experiment in pluralism and liberalism, the results of which continue to vary

from state to state.[5] Hence, the methodological review highlights the necessity of treating each country separately resulting from the differences in the form and impact of transitional reforms.

In response, this paper is a case-study of Macedonia and uses qualitative methodology. In addition to archive work, the study uses data from twenty-one open-ended interviews with senior political party members, intellectuals, journalists and university professors. The basic approach of this study is qualitative because it seeks to understand the experiences and practices of key informants and locate them firmly in context.[6] The collected data is subject to content analysis. The interviewees' responses are organized and analyzed in relation with the separate elements of the research and are correlated with primary sources and theoretical literature. The data is examined and grouped in relation to the agreements and disagreements between the respondents. The obtained data is also grouped in relation to the formal and substantive aspects of democracy. The formal elements are the legal documents such as party programs, statutes and officially presented data for party membership. On the substantive side, the study analyzes the interview

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[4] Jacques Rupnik, "The *Postcommunist* divide," *The Journal of Democracy*, Vol.10, No.1 (Jan. 1999): 57-62.

[5] Janusz Bugajski, *Political Parties of Eastern Europe – A Guide to Politics in the Postcommunist Era* (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2002): xv.

[6] Fiona Devine "Qualitative Methods" in *Theory and Methods in Political Science,* ed. David Marsh and Gerry Stoker (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002). 197.

data, public opinion surveys, newspaper articles and area studies. Correspondingly, the research makes a comparison between the formal and substantive elements, highlighting the differences between the two. The primary aim of this form of analysis is to point to the differences between the formal and substantive elements of the development of the party system and emphasizing the importance of the latter. The combination these two forms of data organization and analysis provides for extensive qualitative examination of the obtained information increasing the validity of the research findings.

The study is organized in four sections. The introduction is followed by the theoretical framework examining the major concepts used in the analysis. The following section presents the empirical analysis of the data, assessing the relationship between the political parties and the state and its impact on democratic consolidation. The last section summarizes the findings and conclusions of the article.

The study frequently confronts problems due to the absence of both a unified theoretical approach and relevant contextual literature. By highlighting these problems, this research establishes a fertile ground for further theoretical and empirical analysis of the role of political parties in democratic consolidation in the Western Balkans. The elements of the study provide ground for comparison with other transitional countries, especially countries from the Western Balkans, which have faced similar transformation problems as Macedonia. The study contributes to academic research primarily by addressing the absence of any contextual literature on the role of political parties in the process of democratic consolidation in Macedonia.

II Theoretical Considerations

Democratic consolidation and political parties

As an analysis of the question whether political parties in Macedonia are contributing to the process of democratic consolidation through the performance of their functions related to the state, this study stands on the crossing point between party theory and theories of democratization. The application of these concepts to the analysis of political parties in post-communist Macedonia, contributes to the research originality, as there is currently no empirical analysis of the linkage between parties and consolidation in this context. This section examines different conceptual arguments in democratization and party theories in order to provide an analytical framework for the study. Based on the theoretical analysis, it puts forward an ideal model of the relationship between political parties and the state, which facilitates democratic consolidation in post-communism, used in the following section.

Democratization as a term describes the overall process of regime change from the end of the previous authoritarian regime to the stabilization and rooting of new democracies.[7] The process of democratization is commonly divided into several phases, with the most common temporal division between the process of transition to a liberal democracy and its subsequent consolidation.[8] The term democratic consolidation, on the other hand, is used in several incompatible senses in scholarly literature, reflecting diverse understandings of the nature of democracy itself.[9] This research adopts a substantive view of democratic consolidation, which entails both the duration of a democratic regime with significant changes in the quality of its performance.[10] Despite definitional differences, democratic consolidation almost unavoidably entails a multitude of conditions, which Linz and Stepan in their commonly accepted analytical framework summarize in the following criteria: a free and lively civil society, a relatively autonomous political society,

rule of law, a usable state bureaucracy and an institutionalized economic society.[11]

The establishment of a political society denotes the area in which the polity specifically arranges itself to contest the legitimate right to exercise control over public power and state apparatus.[12] Key actors of the development of a political society are political parties, which according to Sartori are "any political group that presents at elections, and is capable of placing through elections, candidates for public office."[13] Research on parties and party typology has shown their changing character from mass parties into catch all parties and cartel parties as the works of Duverger, Kirchmeier and Katz respectively show. However, despite the inconsistencies in party typology due to the dynamic nature of the subject, parties have remained one of the essential elements of democracy.[14] Moreover, despite the existence of many powerful alternative forms of interest representation, none of them has been able to endanger seriously the role of political parties. Correspondingly, Huntington considers that "the vacuum of power in

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[7] Pridham and Lewis eds., *Stabilizing fragile democracies,* 2.

[8] Ibid. 2. For a discussion of approaches towards democratization in the post-communist world see Petr Kopecký and Cas Mudde, "What has Eastern Europe taught us about the democratization literature (and vice versa)," *European Journal of Political Research,* Vol. 37 (2000).

[9] See Stephen E. Hanson "Defining Democratic Consolidation," in *Postcommunism and the Theory of Democracy*, ed. Richard D. Anderson Jr. et al. (Princeton University Press, 2001).

[10] Don Chull Shin, "On the Third Wave of Democratization: A Synthesis and Evaluation of Recent Theory and Research", *World Politics,* Vol.47, No.1, (Oct 1994): 144.

[11] Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996). 7.

[12] Linz and Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition*, 8.

[13] Giovanni Sartori, *Parties and Party Systems,* (Cambridge University Press, 1976), 64.

[14] See Stefano Bartolini and Peter Mair, "Challenges to Contemporary Political Parties" in *Political Parties and Democracy,* eds. Larry Diamond and Richard Gunther (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001).

modernizing countries can be filled only by political organization. Either the established elites compete to organize the masses through the existing system, or dissident elites organize them to overthrow that system."[15]

Because of the numerous functions they perform in a democratizing setting, political parties have dominated the processes of democratic consolidation.[16] Schmitter summarizes the consolidating functions of parties in the following elements: structuring electoral competition, providing symbolic identity, forming governments and aggregating citizens' interests.[17] In multiethnic societies like Macedonia, parties are essentially agencies of mobilization helping to integrate local communities into the nation or the broader federation.[18] Overall, in a consolidating setting the political parties are vital not only for the functioning of the democratic system, but also for the creation of positive public attitudes towards the democratic regime. Hence, they are main societal actors vested with the task of legitimating the new regime among the

population. Legitimacy, for Morlino is a set of positive societal attitudes towards its democratic institutions, which are considered as the most appropriate form of government.[19] Hence, the relative success of parties in the exercising of their functions has direct implications on the legitimation of the new regime, placing political parties at the core of the process of democratic consolidation.

Regardless of the recognized importance of political parties in the process of democratic consolidation, democratization approaches have developed in isolation from party theory. Geoffrey Pridham's analytical framework designed for the analysis of the role of political parties in democratic consolidation in Southern Europe and CEE stands out as the most comprehensive effort in this field.[20] The framework is structured according the conceptual triangle state-party-society focusing on the essential role of parties as links between the citizen and the state. This study broadly utilizes Pridham's analytical approach applying the proposed research agenda to a consolidating country in the Western Balkans with regard to the party-state relationship. Even though Pridham's framework is created in relation to Southern Europe, it encompasses broad theoretical considerations and can be utilized for the analysis of the

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[15] Samuel Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies,* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), 461.

[16] Gianfranco Pasquino, "Party Elites and Consolidation" in *Securing Democracy,* ed. Pridham, 52.

[17] Schmitter, "Parties are not what they once were" in *Political Parties and Democracy,* eds. Diamond and Gunther.

[18] Seymour M Lipset and Stein Rokkan, *Party Systems and Voter Alignments: Cross National Perspectives,* (New York: The Free Press, 1967), 4.

[19] Leonardo Morlino, *Democracy between Consolidation and Crisis*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 26.

[20] Pridham ed., *Securing Democracy*. See also Pridham and Lewis eds., *Stabilizing fragile democracies*.

relationship between parties and democratic consolidation in different settings. For the purpose of this research, the core theoretical arguments of Pridham's framework are developed by incorporating literature on the problems of post-communist democratization.

Having in mind the dynamic nature of the subject and the continuous transformation of the Macedonian society, formal indicators can be misleading because of the common discrepancy between the procedural and substantive indicators of democratic consolidation. As defined by Kaldor and Vejvoda, the formal aspect of democracy embodies "a set of rules, procedures and institutions […] which represent an a priori safeguard against the abuses of power."[21] Substantive democracy embodies the formal mechanisms is a "way of regulating power relations in such a way as to maximize the opportunities for individuals influence the […] key decisions in society."[22] The progress in democratization of the post-communist world, in many aspects has been purely formal and not accompanied by substantive developments. Hence, practice highlights the need to study the two aspects simultaneously in order to

avoid the reliance on possibly misleading formal indicators.

Political parties and the state

In a consolidating system, political parties perform a central role in the functioning of the state above all through the structuring of government and other state institutions. This is ensured through the essential roles parties perform in the domain of the state through the recruitment of leaders for public office, organization of government and formulation of public policy.[23] The performance of political parties in this area has a decisive impact on the overall democratic consolidation of the regime. The party-state relationship in academic literature is operationalized through three interlinked elements: the ability of parties to structure government and institutions, the level of system supportiveness and the importance of the alteration of power.

Firstly, the ability of parties to structure government and institutions in a democratizing context conditions the effectiveness of the new regime. Considering the low level of legitimacy state institutions possess in post-communism, it is of utmost importance that political parties ensure the effective functioning of both government and state administration. Correspondingly, Schmitter considers the capacity of

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[21] Ivan Vejvoda and Mary Kaldor, "Democratization in Central and East European Countries" *International Affairs*, Royal Institute of International Affairs, Vol.73, No.1, (Jan. 1997): 62-63.

[22] Vejvoda and Kaldor, "Democratization in Central and East European Countries," p. 62.

[23] Anthony King, "Political Parties in Western Democracies: Some Sceptical Reflections," *Polity,* 2/2, (1969).

parties to make or unmake governments as the most distinctive function with respect to democratic consolidation.[24] Through their roles in government, parties play a central role in decision-making processes and provide stability by recruiting leadership. Moreover, parties control and guide the work of governments, and provide the opposition necessary for a democratic system. Hence, in order to facilitate the process of democratic consolidation political parties need to ensure the effective operation and stability of government and the state institutions.

Besides these core institutional functions, in a post-communist setting, political parties are also vested with the task of establishing an impersonal and professional state administration. The need for restructuring of state institutions was a result of the public distrust towards the inherited state structure due to their identification with the communist party. Similarly, Przeworski highlights that in the absence of a usable bureaucracy, the state is unable to implement either economic or political reforms.[25] Academic research, however, provides rather contradictory evidence over the role of the party in the structuring of state institutions. On the one hand, contemporary party theory considers that political parties are vested with the popular legitimacy in order to structure

the institutions of the state.[26] On the other hand, democratization literature puts forward the model of a usable and non-politicized Weberian type state bureaucracy.[27]

Still, in post-communist countries, the core reason for the ineffectiveness and distrust of the state administration are party-based appointments from communism, thereby emphasizing the need for de-politicization of state institutions. This has proven very difficult to accomplish because "the political class that is forming is much more likely to be composed of aspirant professional politicians, who intend to live from and not just for politics."[28] Patronage, in the sense of favoritism in appointments to government jobs continues to be a mainstay of political parties and may even have increased in importance under conditions of weak economic performance, as in the case of Macedonia.[29] Though present in some established democracies as well, the practice of partyness of the state is much more critical for a consolidating setting, because of the salience of the need to de-politicize state institutions.

Considering their formative influence on the state institutions and the monopoly over political discourse, the

[24] Schmitter, "Parties are not what they once were" in *Political Parties and Democracy,* eds. Diamond and Gunther, 78.
[25] Adam Przeworski, *Sustainable Democracy,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

[26] See for example, Richard Katz and Peter Mair, "Changing Models of Party Organization and Party Democracy", *Party Politics,* Vol. 1, (1995).
[27] Linz and Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition.*
[28] Schmitter, "Parties are not what they once were" in *Political Parties and Democracy,* eds. Diamond and Gunther, 80.
[29] Ibid. 80.

behavior and attitudes of political parties play a crucial role on the democratic consolidation of the regime. In order to facilitate democratization, political parties need to demonstrate a high degree of system supportiveness. The existence of sharp divisions within ethnically heterogeneous states, on the other hand, sets fertile ground for rooting of anti systemic tendencies. Therefore, it is of utmost importance to recognize that "the establishment of a stable democratic order and the development of party systems are more difficult in countries where the nature of the basic territorial unit remains a matter of conflict."[30] Still, though ethnically divided countries face formidable roadblocks to consolidation, they also provide large space for development of the organizational expression of the national sentiment— the ethnopolitical party.[31] The ethnopolitical parties can both function as a stabilizing or an anti-systemic force in democratic consolidation. In order to facilitate democratic consolidation, the leadership of ethnopolitical parties needs to exhibit continuous commitment to the new constitutional settlement. Though the existence of marginal anti-system parties does not per se mean failure of consolidation, the problem of powerful anti-system parties denotes a more serious and possibly deeper problem of system loyalty and may inhibit alternation of power.

In addition to the previous two indicators on the party-state dimension, the significance of political parties in legitimizing the new regime is demonstrated by the parties' behavior after an alternation of power. Alternation of power usually "indicates balanced party competition, and is commonly seen as signifying a healthy, functioning democracy, for it often stimulates leadership renewal— especially in parties losing power—and opens the way for policy innovation."[32] In academic literature this variable is instrumentalized through Huntington's "two turnover test". Huntington argues that after two cycles of peaceful leadership replacement, most political actors have both won and lost without revolting, which indicates that they have accepted the rules of the electoral game.[33] Though present in academic research, the two-turnover test has been criticized for reductionism of consolidation on a formal outcome rather than the process. Therefore, in order to assess the validity of the test as such, in addition to the formal turnover, the existence of opposition after the alternation of power needs to be examined.

Even with the upgrading of the turnover test through the analysis of both the

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[30] Pridham and Lewis eds., *Stabilizing fragile democracies*, 16.

[31] John T. Ishiyama and Marijke Breuning, *Ethnopolitics in the New Europe* (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998).

[32] Geoffrey Pridham, *The dynamics of democratization: a comparative approach* (London: Continuum, 2000), 155.

[33] Samuel P. Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century,* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), 266-267.

process and outcome of the alternation of power, the contextual peculiarity of the post-communist countries has imposed an additional academic disagreement over the desirability of stability and turnover. Przeworski stresses the need for stability of government in order to pursue economic reforms and avoid popular disillusionment with transition.[34] Opposite to this argument, authors like Orenstein emphasize the importance of turnover as a mechanism for policy reversal.[35] Though the countries of CEE have shown that the most radical reforms have been pursued in democratically most advanced countries, the rest of the post-communist countries are still subject to the academic debate over the need for stability or turnover.

As evident in the presented analysis, theoretical literature faces many difficulties in its application in the context of a multi-ethnic post-communist country. In order to set clear benchmarks according to which the role of parties in consolidation in Macedonia is assessed, this section puts forward an ideal model as a synthesis of the presented academic arguments, against which the political parties in Macedonia are assessed in the following section. First, in an ideal party-state relationship, parties structure and ensure the efficient functioning of both government and parliament. Second, parties have managed to create a usable impartial state bureaucracy through its de-politicization. Lastly, power has alternated twice between main political options, with the opposition and staying in the system.

III Political Parties And The State In The Republic Of Macedonia

As highlighted in the previous section, political parties perform essential roles for the functioning of state institutions in contemporary democracies. Even if academic literature has noted a relative decline in the representative functions of parties in established democracies, their great relevance still has to be stressed in relation to the roles they perform in government or as public office holders.[36] Correspondingly, this section assesses the performance of political parties in securing the effective operation of the state institutions in Macedonia. In line with the ideal model put forward in the previous section, the analysis focuses on three elements: the ability of parties to structure government and state institutions, the level of displayed system supportiveness and the alternation of power within the system.

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[34] Adam Przeworski, *Democracy and the Market: Political and Economic Reforms in Eastern Europe and Latin America*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

[35] Mitchell A Orenstein, *Out of the red: building capitalism and democracy in postcommunist Europe* (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2001).

[36] See Peter Mair, "Political Parties, Popular Legitimacy and Public Privilege", *West European Politics*, 18, Vol. 3, (1995).

Structuring of government and state institutions

Since political parties are main actors following the collapse of authoritarian rule, the party system emerges as a framework for and a guarantee of political pluralism.[37] When looking formally at the political parties' role in structuring of government in the case of Macedonia, it is evident that there have been no major disturbances in the political life. Governments, all of them coalition based, have been established meeting legal deadlines without any vital disruptions to political system. This capability of parties to reach consensus on establishing governments indicates the underlying elite consensus for the democratic system and understanding of important rules of the political game. Political parties in Macedonia, have therefore, proved mature for forging consensus on issue of key importance, such as institutional continuity and structuring of government.[38] Hence, from a formal perspective, the political parties have not had major problems with the performance of their role in creating governments and recruiting political elites.

The examination of the internal functioning of governments, however, highlights frequent government restructuring. Each of the governments established during the four parliamentary terms in the period 1990-2006, underwent at least three to four rounds of restructuring. The internal instability of governments in the case of Macedonia, although not a definite indicator of a problem with democratic consolidation, has impeded the progress of reforms by initiating policy reversal, rather than innovation. Thus, although from a formal perspective parties have been effective in structuring government, the continuous instability of government has impeded the progress of democratic reforms.

A close examination of the structure of governments since 1991 indicates that almost all prime ministers and the members of their cabinets were party oriented. The exception from this rule is the first transitional government, which came to power in March 1991 and consisted of experts with only two party affiliated ministers. Its time in office was extremely short, as it lost a vote of confidence in 1992, promoted by SDSM, Liberal Party (LP) and the Socialist Party (SP) who sought a political government.[39] Since 1992, all governments have been almost exclusively composed of party affiliated members. The evident dominance of political parties coupled with a weak civil society has contributed to the on-going control of the parties in the overall decision-making and

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[37] Pridham, *The Dynamics of Democratization,* 148.
[38] Author interview with Ljupco Jordanovski, former President of the Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia, June, 2005.

[39] Duncan Perry, "Macedonia-finding its way" in *Politics, Power, and the Struggle for Democracy in Southeast Europe*, ed. Karen Dawisha and Bruce Parrot (Cambridge University Press, 1999), 235.

policymaking process in Macedonia. In such a setting, party elites have the capacity for fostering the new regime's legitimacy and contribute to the process of democratic consolidation, essentially through effective government performance.[40] However, as the process of economic and political transformation in the case of Macedonia has been lingering, the public has continuously been dissatisfied with government performance. In such a setting of public disillusionment with transition, continuous party-oriented governments reinforced the public perception of the state as a tool of the dominant party, and weakened the potential of the population to identify with the state.[41]

In addition to the structuring of government, political parties are also vested with the task of reforming the state administration. As emphasized by Kitschelt, as a country with no pre-communist professional civil service, its state apparatus is likely to become a resource for parties and political leaders as a way to reward constituencies for their political support, thereby promote clientelistic practices.[42] Similarly, the

dominant trend in the case of Macedonia has been continuous party appointments not only on leading positions, but in the whole public administration. This has had an adverse impact on the effective division of power within society. The lines of separation among the executive, legislative, and judicial bodies become blurred as one political party gains control (after elections) of both the legislature and the executive, which in turn provides an opportunity for partisan changes in the judiciary.[43] Moving in the direction of partyness of society, parties have acquired their own vested interests in self-maintenance and self-enhancement and try to develop different forms of penetration, regulation, or even control of society.[44] Though academic literature has not reached consensus on the optimal level of party appointees in a consolidated democracy, the over-politicization of the state in a post-communist setting is inevitably a problem in the obtaining of the much-needed legitimacy of the state.

The partyness of the state has been a perpetual concern of the public in opinion polls and was stressed also by the research' interviewees. For example, a focus group research commissioned by the National Democratic Institute concluded that

[40] Pridham, *The Dynamics of Democratization*, 319.

[41] Gjorgji Ivanov, "The Power of the Powerless: Democracy and Civil Society in Macedonia" in *Democratic Reconstruction in the Balkans* eds. Margaret Blunden and Patrick Burke, Centre for the Study of Democracy, 2001.

[42] Kitschelt, "Strategic Conduct of Postcommunist Successor Parties" in *The Communist Successor Parties of Central and Eastern Europe*, ed. John Ishiyama and Andras Bozoki (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2002), 24 -25.

[43] 2005 Freedom House Nations in Transit Report on Macedonia. <http://www.freedomhouse.org/research/nattransit.htm> (15 August 2005).

[44] Morlino, *Democracy between Consolidation and Crisis*, 35.

both Macedonian and Albanians say that [among] the biggest problems facing the country are … the lack of rule of law [and a] system [that] favors those with personal connections and political party affiliation".[45] Senior researcher Aneta Jovevska suggested that the parties affect every aspect of one's life making it hard for people to stay neutral.[46] The result of the excessive partyness of the administration has been at the cost of expertise in many cases.[47] International observers and organizations have cautioned against this trend as well. The country reports from the International crisis group continuously highlight this problem. The 2002 report indicates that the "the system encourages autocratic administration while coexisting comfortably with inefficiency and politicization of the judiciary. It saps Macedonian morale, leaving civil society enervated and the population at large cynical."[48] A report from 2004 registers no development in this direction confirming that parties in Macedonia remain more mechanisms for distribution of patronage and

running election campaigns than real engines of democratic inclusion.[49]

The partyness of the state raises objective concerns for the consolidation of the democratic regime in Macedonia. Since the population has been largely disappointed with the process of transition and consider themselves as losers of the reform process, the partyness of the state administration has further strengthened the already existent distrust towards both the state and the political parties. Although by now, the dissatisfaction with transition has not been accompanied by disillusionment with democracy, the continuous distancing of the citizens from the state and parties questions the process of democratic consolidation.

System supportiveness

As emphasized by Morlino, the expression of fundamental attitudes by parties, movements or other political groups, in programmes, ideologies and their behavior in parliament and other democratic arenas has a significant impact on democratic consolidation, demonstrating the breadth of support for democratic institutions.[50] In a democratizing setting, it is essential that parties, as agents of the legitimation of the regime, are supportive of the new system both formally and substantively, or in Katz and Mair's terminology, both

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[45] Attitudes towards the Political, Social, and Economic Conditions in Macedonia, National Democratic Institute Research. <http://www.accessdemocracy.org/NDI/library/1336_mk_focusgrps_012902.pdf> (24 August 2005).
[46] Personal interview with Aneta Jovevska, Senior political analyst, June 2005.
[47] Personal interview with Natasa Gaber, Senior political analyst, June 2005.
[48] Macedonia′s Public Secret: How Corruption Drags The Country Down, International Crisis Group Europe Report No.133, 14 August 2002. <http://www.crisisgroup.org> (July 22, 2005).

[49] Macedonia: Make or break, International Crisis Group Europe Report, 3 August, 2004. <http://www.crisisgroup.org> (July 22, 2005).
[50] Morlino, *Democracy between Consolidation and Crisis*, 149.

through the official and real story.[51] Correspondingly, this section examines both the formal attitudes of parties and their behavior, through the examination of party programs and everyday politics.

The primary variable for examination of the parties' attitudes towards the system is their treatment of and attitude towards the constitutional settlement. The elite consensus over the constitutional settlement is of major importance because it is likely to encourage mass support for the same.[52] The formal expressions of party elite attitudes are the programs of political parties. In post-communist countries, however, the programs of political parties are underdeveloped and usually express aspirations, rather than means for operationalization of certain goals. Due to the instability of the political space, party programs do not serve as a basis for party identification. However, since they are the highest form of legal existence of the party, they indicate general directions for the development of parties in Macedonia. Overall, all parties support formally the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the state and are supportive of the establishment of a democratic system in the country. The programs of ethnic minority parties, primarily the parties of the Albanian population, however, contain anti-systemic elements. These parties focus on the rights of one segment of

the population and push forward the idea of consensual decision making instead of the majority decision making on all issues. They also support the deconstruction of the Macedonian state as a civic state, and its establishment as a bi-national state.[53] Moreover, all minority parties advocate radical decentralization of government. However, since the rationale behind the ethno political party is the advancing of the status of a specific segment of the population, one can expect to find contestation of majority decision-making practices and state organization, which do not necessarily signify a systemic problem. Overall, on the formal side, while the majority of parties do not display anti-systemic attitudes, the party programs of the minorities advocate changes in the basic organization of the state. However, considering the rudimentary development of political programmes as tool for parties, a corresponding analysis of the behavior of political elites is indispensable for the assessment of this variable.

The analysis of the parties' behavior points to significant anti-system tendencies on the Macedonian political scene. The Assembly adopted the new Macedonian constitution on the 17th of November 1991, with the abstention of Albanian deputies. This constitution defined Macedonia as the national state of the Macedonian people and other

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[51] Katz and Mair, "Changing Models of Party Organization and Party Democracy".
[52] Pridham, *The dynamics of democratization*, 319.

[53] Slavejko Sasajkovski, *Parlamentarni Izbori 1998* [Parliamentary Elections 1998], Skopje: Institute for Sociological, Judicial and Legal Research (1999) 119.

nationalities.[54] The status of a nationality was contested by the Albanian parties, which demanded the Albanians in Macedonia to be considered as a constituent nation. For the same reason the Albanian population had previously boycotted the referendum for independence of Macedonia. This problem has persisted during the post-communist period as a major obstruction in generating system supportive behavior by Albanian political leaders. Former minister Xhemal Saiti summarized this problem as a lack of supportiveness towards the specific Constitution, but not towards the Macedonian state.[55] Still, the behavior of Albanian political elites throughout the 15 years of transformation has been constructed on the basis of an anti-systemic discourse and in any case has had an adverse impact on the will of the Albanian population to integrate within the Macedonian state.

The culmination of these problems was the armed conflict in 2001, which concluded with the signing of the Framework Agreement (FA) leading to changes in the disputed constitution. The FA, signed by all major parties, sets the basis for further proportional representation of minorities and consensual decision-making. Although

in part enforced by international pressure, several interviewees have pointed to the FA as one of the biggest achievements of the Macedonian party system.[56] Nevertheless, the formal expression of support through the signing of the agreement was not always accompanied by corresponding behavior among political elites. In the aftermath of a crisis, the importance of elite behavior and attitudes of political parties is amplified due to the high level of insecurity among the population. In the case of Macedonia, after 2001, one would expect to note a higher level of system supportive behavior among political elites in order to facilitate the process of consolidation. In general, after the signing of the FA, political parties since have been supportive of the Agreement, fostering its legitimacy in the eyes of the public. However, there were also open expressions of contesting the purpose of the FA and the legitimacy of the Macedonian state in general by high-level party representatives of major parties. For example, the leaders of two of the biggest Macedonian and Albanian centre-right parties which were a governing coalition in the period since 1998-2002 and signatories of the FA have in 2003 openly called for partition of the country since there was no possibility for multiethnic coexistence.[57] Former Prime Minister

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[54] Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia, Official website of the Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia. <http://www.sobranie.mk/en/default.asp?vidi=ust av> (15 July, 2005).
[55] Personal interview with Xhemal Saiti, former Government Minister, June, 2005.

[56] Personal interview with Jani Makraduli, member of Parliament and Xhemal Saiti, former Government Minister, June, 2005.
[57] Ljupco Georgievski "Tezi za Spasuvanje na Makedonskata Nacija i Drzava" [Theses for savior of the Macedonian Nation and State], Daily

Ljubco Georgievski and DPA leader Arben Djaferi in April 2003 argued that there is no rationale in implementing the agreement, when a multiethnic country like Macedonia is not viable. Georgievski even proposed building a wall in Macedonia, like the one between Israelis and Palestinians.[58] The vehemence of the rhetoric and its direct challenge to an internationally brokered peace agreement are almost unprecedented in the region.[59] The rest of the party leaders were reticent in condemning this anti-system tendency, jointly with the international community at the time. Hence, though the anti-systemic parties have not yet threatened the young democracy in Macedonia, what is much more dangerous is the absence of a sharp demarcation line between the nationalist-populist extreme right wing and their centre-right allies.[60] The ultimate result of these events was an exacerbation of the already high sense of insecurity among the population.

Overall, the analysis of the system supportiveness dimension indicates a disparity between the formal attitudes and behavior of political parties in the case of Macedonia. While formally

only Albanian parties display anti-systemic tendencies, the behavior of all party elites in many significant instances demonstrates low level of system supportiveness.

Alternation of power

The third element of the party-state relation is the impact of the alternation of power on democratic consolidation. For Pridham, in a democratizing setting, the alternation of power has not only a functional importance, but also a symbolic one in what is still a fragile situation.[61] A minimal empirical indicator of the democratic consolidation is Huntington's two-turnover test, which considers that the best proof that parties have accepted the rule of the game is that they have been removed out of office. However, the difficulty with the exclusive examination of the result is the neglecting of the importance of a viable opposition within the system after the alternation of power. With the aim of examining both the process and the outcome, this section examines the significance of the formal transfer of power as well as the government-opposition relations.

Formally, Macedonia has passed the two-turnover test with the elections in 1998 and 2002 when alternation of power between two major coalitions of parties occurred. The first alternation of power in 1998 raised major popular

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newspaper Dnevnik, April 18, 2003. <http://www.dnevnik.com.mk/?pBroj=2130&stID =17187> (26 July 2005).
[58] Georgievski, *Dnevnik*.
[59] Macedonia: No Room for Complacency, International Crisis Group Europe Report No. 149, 3 October, 2003. <http://www.crisisgroup.org/> (29 July 2005).
[60] Agh, "From Nomenclatura to Clientura" in Pridham and Lewis eds., *Stabilizing fragile democracies,*, p.62.

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[61] Pridham, *The dynamics of democratization*, 155.

concerns of possible violence instigated by the political parties. Nevertheless, the transfer was peaceful. This transfer of power in 1998 was historic because it put in place the first government that did not incorporate SDSM. In this sense, it was an important step for the public practice of democracy and governance, indicating that the former communist party could be voted out of office as well.[62] The second alteration of power, which occurred in 2002, brought back the communist successor party in power with a newly created Albanian party - the Democratic Union for Integration (DUI). Hence, from a formal point of view, the country fulfils the turnover test, indicating that parties have accepted the basic rules of the democratic game. As a result, there is no contestation of electoral mechanisms as such, or political parties, which consider they could come to power in any other way except elections.[63]

Attempts to look beyond the formal aspect of the two alterations of power in Macedonia confront problems with the validity of the test as an indicator of democratic consolidation. A competitive party system is crucial to system legitimation and in ensuring that losers remain voluntarily within the system.[64] Therefore, looking at the role of the government-opposition relations

is of increasing importance for the successful alteration of power. In this direction, political parties in Macedonia have faced numerous difficulties in the maintenance of opposition, both within and outside Parliament. One of the most striking examples of the problems with opposition has been the functioning of the Parliament without opposition in the period 1994-1998. After losing the first round of the elections in 1994, the two main opposition parties Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization-Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity (VMRO-DPMNE) and Democratic Party (DP), accused the ruling coalition of an election fraud and decided not to participate in the second round of elections. As a result, in this period there was virtually no opposition in the Parliament, which allowed for the hold of absolute power by SDSM, as the main party in government.

Furthermore, since the political parties in post-communism do not compete on programmatic grounds, there is no space for the establishment of a constructive opposition within Parliament. Because of this diminished importance of the opposition, political parties have often left Parliament as a sign of protest, indicating major difficulties in maintaining the opposition within the system. Hence, on an institutional level, the organization of state institutions does not provide incentive for the survival or constructive influence of the

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[62] Personal interview with Vesna Janeva, Member of Parliament, July, 2005.
[63] Personal interview with Gjorgji Spasov, former Ambassador of the Republic of Macedonia to the United Kingdom, July, 2005.
[64] Schmitter, quoted in Pridham "Consolidation: the Role of Parties" in *Securing Democracy,* eds. Pridham and Lewis, 23.

opposition.[65] In response, the opposition has commonly concentrated on criticism of any government policy.[66] In line with this propensity for criticism, the public dialogue between the governments and oppositions has been increasingly hostile. Inappropriate and insulting rhetoric was a constant feature of the first 10 years of the transition, marking slow subsequent improvements in this direction.[67] This rhetoric was both present in the media and in the Parliament itself negatively influencing the perception of the population of this institution and the parties. Personal hostility and impatience has been in many cases the main rationale in the government-opposition relations and has had deleterious impact upon the parties and their leaders in many cases.[68] It is therefore evident, that the maintenance of an effective opposition in the context of Macedonia has been replete with problems, most of which can be attributed to the lack of democratic experience and practice.

The lack of an effective opposition in combination with the party occupation of the state can lead to possible disillusionment of the population with the democratic system. Pridham considers the presence of a viable opposition party with prospects of alternation as a possible safety valve for

disillusionment with the system and not merely the party in power.[69] Although so far there have been no indicators of disillusionment with democracy in Macedonia, there remains such a possibility due to the low visibility of an effective opposition within and outside Parliament. These findings highlight the problems of using the two-turnover test as an individual indicator of democratic consolidation, since the substantive examination of the process brings about contradictory conclusions.

IV Conclusion

Implications of the party-state relations for democratic consolidation

This paper has analyzed the role of political parties in democratic consolidation focusing on the political parties' relationship with the state. The research operated with the theoretical concepts of party theory and approaches to democratic consolidation in post-communist countries. In line with theoretical arguments, it provided an ideal model for the relationship between political parties and the state, which facilitates democratic consolidation in post-communism. The study employed qualitative methodology, through both archive and fieldwork. Open-ended interviews were conducted to allow for the extensive gathering of primary data. Moreover, the findings are based on a

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[65] Personal interview with Vladimir Gorcev, member of Parliament, June 2005.
[66] Personal interview with Gorgi Ivanov, university professor, June 2005.
[67] Personal interview with Jani Makraduli and Vesna Janeva, members of Parliament, June 2005.
[68] Personal interview with Natasa Gaber, senior political analyst, June 2005.

[69] Pridham, "Consolidation: the Role of Parties" in *Securing Democracy,* eds. Pridham and Lewis, 34.

simultaneous examination of formal and substantive indicators, due to the problems in measuring the progress of democratic consolidation. The study is original both with respect to its research question and methodological approach.

The findings of this study indicate that with respect to the established ideal model of political parties' role in democratic consolidation, the case of Macedonia has a mixed record. Concerning the party-state relationship, the political parties have been successful in structuring party governments and reaching consensus on building coalitions, thereby, providing institutional continuity. However, instead of creating an effective state administration, they have established a politically dependent public sector exacerbating the inherited problems from communism. With respect to system supportiveness, political parties also have a mixed record. While most of them are formally supportive of the new state and its organization, their behavior and attitudes display strong anti-systemic tendencies, primarily in the field of contesting the territorial integrity of the state. These anti-system tendencies have been noticeable both in the ethnic Macedonian and minority parties, highlighting the difficulties of consolidation in multiethnic states. The findings of the examination of the alternation of power, also point to a conflict of formal and substantive indicators. While formally Macedonia has alternated power twice, the existence and functioning of opposition in both of those periods has been

problematic. Most importantly, on each of the examined elements the political parties show a major disparity between the formal and official story of their functioning. The above findings indicate that in comparison to the ideal theoretical model, political parties are not a driving force of consolidation at the state level, primarily because of the overriding tendency to turn the state into a resource of the political party.

Overall, the analysis has shown that the political parties in Macedonia are distant from the ideally established model for relationship between the political parties and the state that facilitates democratic consolidation. Moreover, the examination of all substantive indicators has highlighted that the political parties in Macedonia stand in sharp contrast with the established model. Normally, dealing with ideal models is problematic since it usually involves the establishment of an artificially high benchmark for assessment. However, since all of the examined elements highlight increasing distance between the Macedonian parties and the ideal model without any recent improvements, the study concludes that the political parties in Macedonia have slowed down the process of democratic consolidation.

Parallel with the conclusions on the specific case study, this research draws specific attention to general problems of conceptualizing and measuring democratic consolidation. As demonstrated, the disparity between the formal and substantive indicators is a

major obstacle in the formulation of general criteria for consolidation. Conventionally used indicators are unreliable for assessment of the progress towards consolidation. On the other hand, substantive indicators are much more complex and difficult for examination, despite their greater usefulness in comparison to formal variables. Nevertheless, the increasing disparity between the two demands re-conceptualization of the variables used for the analysis of democratic consolidation.

The divergent expectations of party and democratic consolidation theories impose major theoretical caveats when examining the ideal role of parties in consolidating settings. The most critical ones, in relation to this study have been the lack of academic consensus on optimal party appointments on the state level in post-communist countries as well as the conflicting hypotheses over the desirability of turnover for consolidation. Such conceptual disagreements are a result of the development of party theory exclusively in relation to consolidated Western democracies decreasing its potential for application in the conditions of post-communism. In addition, theoretical divergence is pervasive in democratic consolidation literature, since authors have used various cases to draw potentially generalizable conclusions. Hence, contextual peculiarities have given rise to various outcomes decreasing the possibility of a development of a uniform model. Such problems are

important for identification as they set grounds for further research on the link between the functioning of political parties and democratic consolidation.

This study primarily contributes to the contextual literature on political parties in Macedonia and provides useful findings for comparison with other transitional countries. At the same time, its findings are beneficial for transitional literature with specific relevance for development of party systems in multiethnic countries with deep ethnic divisions.

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MIXED MEMBER ELECTORAL SYSTEMS IN TRANSITION CONTEXTS: HOW HAS THE SYSTEM WORKED IN ALBANIA?

Arolda Elbasani, PhD, Research Associate, Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, EUI,
Arolda.Elbasani@EUI.eu

Abstract[1]

Among the many factors that crucially shape democracies, electoral design holds a special fascination for both scholars and practitioners. The third "wave" of democratisation has spurred new interest on electoral engineering as closely related to issues of effective democratic design. Yet, a substantial body of the literature warns that miracles hardly follow from the change of the electoral system and it is but one of the factors that bears on the electoral results. This article subscribes to the body of literature, which questions whether electoral models can work in the same way in the new post-communist settings as in the old ones. The analyses draws on the case of Albania, which since the very beginning of the transition has borrowed almost by letter Germany's successful post-war mixed system. In order to analyse the working of the new electoral design in operational detail, the article focuses on the 2005 parliamentary poll. The article suggests that the Albanian elections have failed to reproduce the promised qualities of the original system mainly due to a plethora of electoral rules outside of the contours of the system itself and the application of parties' tactical strategies that ultimately worked to circumvent the spirit of the system. The article puts forth that electoral studies need pay more attention to the plethora of broad rules as well as the corrupt or semi-corrupt practices that infiltrate the process at various points when considering the consequences of systemic configurations to particular countries.

Introduction

The end of the Cold War and the global spread of democracy in various regions of the world have spurred a wave of institution building and related concerns on the best bespoke models for transition and consolidating "third wave" democracies.[2] Among those, electoral system design holds a special fascination for scholars, practitioners and the many agencies involved in various forms of democracy promotion activities. The common assumption is that the institutional structure in general, and particularly the electoral system, can be changed relatively quickly, usually amending the electoral law or occasionally the constitution. Most importantly, the electoral choices

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[2] Samuel Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratisation in the Late Twentieth Century* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991)

are commonly regarded as some of the most basic structures with crucial consequences for the political system. The available options were until lately confined to two broad models – majoritarian and proportional- both involving a set of pros and cons. The last two decades have signalled the emergence of compromised mixed models combining both principles and hence promising to offer the best of both worlds. The successful example of post-war Germany, for a long time the only example of mixed systems, was an inspiring model that had indeed delivered on the promise to temper the biases of pure models. Mixed systems proved to be popular also with new post-communist reformers looking for the best models to shape the new democracies

Yet, a substantial part of the literature on electoral design also warns that the electoral system is but one of the factors to bear on the electoral results and the broader consequences for the political system. The outcome of the elections ultimately reflects the interaction between electoral rules and the general socio-political context rather than rules alone. One should also distinguish between the crucial components of the electoral system and the plethora of the electoral rules that regulate various stages of the process from distribution of the polling places to the announcement of results. Hence, despite the accumulated evidence that certain systems are associated with certain results, the same electoral systems might not work in the same

way in different countries or time periods. New competitive environments are expected to be particularly susceptible to the influence of electoral design given the transitory nature of the overall political context.

This article subscribes to the body of literature which questions whether and why electoral models work differently in the new setting they are transplanted to. More particularly, it aims to explore the many ways the transitory settings can mediate the functioning of electoral systems and work to produce different results. The analysis draws on the case of Albania, which has borrowed almost by letter the German variation of a mixed system. Its rather troubled democratisation experience qualifies the country as one of the most suspicious transitory "contexts" to be shaped by institutional design. It can thus be seen as a critical case study[3] for testing assumptions on the working of electoral systems in transition contexts. The study focuses on the 2005 poll, but also uses some data from the previous contests. The article is organised in three parts. First, it reviews the literature on electoral design and the comparative appeal of mixed member models. Second, it explores electoral choices in the post-communist Albania. Third, it analyses whether the Albanian mixed member electoral system has replicated its promised benefits in the case of 2005 parliamentary poll. The analysis delves into the complex body

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[3] Robert Yin, *Case Study Research: Design and Methods* (second edition) (London: Sage Publications, 1994), 38.

of electoral rules and outright strategies that have ultimately distorted the working of the system. The article finally points at how the Albanian relevant actors have progressively learned to manoeuvre with the system and put its main attributes into question.

I. Electoral Design and Democratizations

The end of the Cold War and the global spread of democracy in various regions of the world including Latin America, Eastern Europe, Asia and Africa have created new opportunities and high expectations for political development. The flowering of transition and consolidating "third wave" democracies during the 80's and 90's has spurred a wave of institution building. Among the many factors that shape the character and viability of democracy, *electoral system design* holds a special fascination for democratic scholars, practitioners and the many international agencies involved with democracy promotion activities. In fact, there is no dispute that the last decades have witnessed growing interest in "electoral engineering" as a phenomenon closely related to issues of effective democratic design and its rising importance in the political agenda. David Farrell, for example, suggests that, "electoral systems are worth examining because they have become politically interesting. With the process of democratisation, important decisions had to be taken on which electoral systems to adopt in the fledging

representative democracies."[4]

Most of the factors that facilitate democratisation, be it political culture, active civil society, effective state and relatively developed economy among others change only slowly, while the institutional architecture of a country can be changed relatively quickly through amending the constitution or adopting a new one. Similarly, electoral systems can be changed with a stroke of pen. As Diamond and Plattner put it, "among the many structural and historical variables that affect democracy, few are more open to rapid and intentionally designed change than the electoral system."[5] Moreover, electoral systems are commonly regarded as some of the most basic structures, from which much else follows. In addition to being a minimal condition for democracy, elections provide regular opportunities for the public to select its representatives, to hold government into account and to kick out rascals when necessary. In short, electoral design can influence, at least in part, some fundamental questions about the functioning of political systems and has a decisive influence on the success or not of political reform.[6]

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[4] David Farrell, *Electoral Systems: A Comparative Introduction* (Hampshire and New York: Palgrave, 2001), 2.
[5] Larry Diamond and Marc Plattner, "Introduction," in *Electoral System and Democracy*, eds. Larry Diamond and Marc Plattner (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), ix.
[6] Sarah Birch, *Electoral Systems and Political Transformation in Post- Communist Europe*

1.1 The Menu of Choices and Criteria for Design

Debates about electoral design have largely evolved around the practical options, bewildering trade-offs and the desirability of particular choices for respective countries. The general consensus in the literature is that there are no "perfect" bespoke systems that fit every society. Most choices require trade-offs among desirable policy goals. As a study of electoral design puts it, "the trick in choosing (or reforming) an electoral system is to prioritise which criteria are most important and then assess which electoral system, or combination of systems, best maximises these choices."[7] One of the leading theorists of democratic institutions, Donald Horowits further warns that "each electoral system contains a different array of biases [ ] and those who decide among such systems can choose, in effect, to prefer a set of biases over another. And to prefer one over another is to make a policy choice."[8]

The available options evolve around a set of components that can be combined in different ways: the size of the representative body; the district magnitude (the number of representatives elected per district); the electoral formula (how votes are counted to allocate seats); and the threshold.[9] The ballot structure, categorical or ordinal, can be another distinguishing feature. The systems resulting from the combination of these components can vary enormously. As Farrell has noted, "the world of the electoral systems is crowded and complex: one country's electoral system is never the same as another."[10] However, electoral systems are commonly divided in two broad categories, majoritarian and proportional. Majoritarian systems usually employ single member districts (SMD) where candidates are elected with plurality rule (or sometimes a two round majority formula) and tend to give greater representation to the parties that receive most votes. Proportional Representation (PR) systems, instead, employ multi-member districts distributed through party lists and tend to produce multiple party representation. Although the effects of real life systems are usually located somewhere between fully proportional and highly disproportional, the electoral design tends to focus either on a "plurality principle" or "proportional principle."[11]

(Hampshire and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 3.

[7] Andrew Reynolds and Ben Reilly, *The International IDEA Handbook of Electoral Design* (Stockholm: International IDEA, 1997), 9.

[8] Donald Horowitz, "A Primer for Decision Makers," in *Electoral System and Democracy*, eds. Larry Diamond and Marc Plattner (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), 3.

[9] Arend Lijphart, *Electoral Systems and Party Systems: A Study of Twenty-Seven Democracies, 1945 -1990* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 10-12.

[10] Farrell, *Electoral Systems*, 4.

[11] Dieter Nohlen, "Two Incompatible Principles of Representation," in *Choosing an Electoral System: Issues and Alternatives*, eds. Arendt

Each of those ideal types has been associated with a set of pros and cons. The majoritarian systems have many points to sell: they are easy to understand; tend to create stable governments; and enable constituency representation.[12] But, even their advocates admit that majoritarian systems penalise smaller parties with nationally dispersed support and tend to create manufactured majorities, which can steamroll their policies without the need for consultation and compromise with other parties. By contrast, PR systems are superior to limit and share political power while featuring multiple parties and creating coalition governments.[13] The PR systems can, thus, be a key device for structuring consensual models of democracy, which can arguably better suit transition democracies and deeply divided societies.[14] The list systems have proved to be popular with many political reformers also because they give control to party headquarters to decide who will be included in the lists and provide leaders with safe chances to get elected. Yet, the PR systems are also criticised especially for lacking constituency representation, giving disproportionate power to minor parties

and sometimes breeding indecisive electoral outcomes and unstable regimes.[15]

1.2 On the Popularity and Benefits of Mixed Member Systems

For a long time, the field of electoral research was stagnant to analyse and contrast the two ideal models. The general worldwide phenomenon of democratisation and recent reforms of some of the established democracies (New Zealand, Italy and Japan) have contributed to add a new model to the electoral mapping - mixed-member (MM) systems. There is almost no dispute that the 90s have witnessed what can best be described an explosion of mixed systems and they are much in fashion at the beginning of the 21st century.[16]

MM systems are all multiple-tier systems with the specific proviso that one tier entails nominal allocation of seats and the other by lists.[17] The nominal tier usually consists of SMDs where votes are cast for party candidates and seats are allocated to the one receiving the majority of votes. The list tier typically consists of closed lists where votes are cast for a party and

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Lijphart and Bernard Grofman (New York: Praeger, 1984).
[12] Farell, *Electoral Systems*, 20.
[13] Arend Lijphart, "Constitutional Choices for New Democracies," *Journal of Democracy*, 1991 (2).
[14] Arend Lijphart, *Patterns of Democracy: Government Forms and Performance in 36 Countries*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999).

[15] Pippa Norris, *Electoral Engineering: Voting Rules and Political Behaviour* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 76.
[16] Mattheu Shugart and Martin Wattenberg, "Introduction: The Electoral Reform of the 21st Century?" in *Mixed Member Electoral Systems: The Best of Both Worlds?* eds. Mattheu Shugart and Martin Wattenberg (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 1-2.
[17] Shugart and Wattenberg, "Introduction," 10.

seats are allocated to candidates that are ranked prior to the elections by parties themselves. Although they merge majoritarian and proportional principles, MM varieties tend to lean towards one or another in their overall effects.[18] Accordingly, they qualify as either mixed member majoritarian (MMM) or mixed member proportional (MMP). The first consist of parallel (unlinked) tiers and tend to prioritise the principle of majoritarian systems to reward a large party. The second consists of linked tiers and tend to produce proportional results. Democratic designers can control these features and outcomes by choosing among a range of devices – the type of votes for each tier; the linkage between tiers; the percentage of seats in each tier; the magnitude of each tier; the formula; the threshold; and how the system deals with cases when a party's nominal seats exceed its total proportional entitlement.[19]

Many believe that MM systems proved to be popular in the last decades because they offer a wide array of combinations. Most importantly, by mixing majoritarian and proportional principles in one system, they provide a panacea to the failure of pure systems. As Diamond and Plattner assess,

> "the mixed system is growing in appeal, in part because it provides for some degree of proportionality while tempering PR's tendency to party fragmentation, and in part

because it enables countries to get some of the fairness and inclusion of PR along with some of the direct accountability to territorial constituencies that comes [ ] with SMDs."[20]

MM systems also reduce the range of trade-offs involved with one choice or another. The successful example of post-war Germany, for a long time the only example of a mixed system, holds at least part testimony of its achievements in terms of ensuring both individualised representation and proportionality, while enabling a relatively stable bi-polar party system as well as coalition governments.[21] Shugart and Wattenberg's comparative study of mixed systems have founded ample evidence to conclude that these systems have indeed delivered on the promise of offering the best of both worlds –proportional representation of small parties, aggregation of parties into two broad blocks, local accountability and promotion of parties of national scope.[22] Another theme underlying most studies of mixed systems is that they commonly emerge out of political

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[18] Ibid, 13.
[19] Ibid, 18-23.

[20] Diamond and Plattner, "Introduction," xii.
[21] Dieter Klingemann and Bernhard Wessels, "The Political Consequences of Germany's Mixed-Member System: Personalisation at the Grass Roots," in *Mixed Member Electoral Systems: The Best of Both Worlds?* eds. Mattheu Shugart and Martin Wattenberg (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 279-297.
[22] Mathew Shugart and Martin Wattenberg, "Conclusion: Are the Mixed-Member Systems the Best of Both Worlds?" in *Mixed Member Electoral Systems: The Best of Both Worlds?* eds. Mattheu Shugart and Martin Wattenberg (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 587-592.

compromises and therefore tend to foster a consensual type of decision-making. As Shugart and Wattenberg volume has found, "MM systems, in their myriad variations, offer especially fertile terrain for political bargaining. [ ] Most MM systems did not emerge as the experts' pick, but rather as a product of negotiation among parties with diverse preferences."[23] It is noteworthy to note that mixed systems proved popular with post-communist reformers because they seemed to be a sensible way of hedging bets under very volatile conditions when parties and leaders did not know their fortunes under new rules of competition.[24]

1.3 A Cautious Note on the Electoral Models and Transition Contexts
Although the electoral choices can shape important features of the political system, they are hardly the only factor to bear on the electoral results. As Horowitz warns, electoral systems [] are only one small part of the forces affecting the total constellation of behaviour []. Miracles do not follow from changes of electoral systems."[25] One must distinguish between the electoral system and a plethora of electoral laws that might impact on electoral results. The body of rules that govern the conduct of elections range from the calling of elections, to the stages of candidate nomination, party campaigning, and right up to the stage of counting votes and announcing the results. They also regulate a plethora of

administrative aspects. ODIHR's assessment of elections, for example, takes into account a comprehensive list of rules -the election administration; party, candidate and voters' registration; the electoral campaign and media environment; the complaints and appeals process; voting, counting, tabulation; and the announcement of the results.[26]

The electoral outcomes do also reflect the interaction between electoral rules and country specific factors that make up the general socio-political context. The International IDEA handbook outlines a comprehensive list of factors when assessing that,

> " [ ] the effects of a certain system type depend to a large extent upon the socio-political context in which it is used. Electoral system consequences depend upon factors such as how a society is structured in terms of ideological, religious, ethnic, racial, regional, linguistic or class divisions; whether the country is an established democracy, a transitional democracy, or a new democracy; whether there is an established party system; whether parties are embryonic and unformed, and how many serious parties there are; and whether a particular party's supporters are geographically concentrated together or

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[23] Shugart and Wattenberg, "Conclusion," 578.
[24] Birch, *Electoral Systems*, 32.
[25] Horowitz, "A Primer," 4.

[26] ODIHR, *Election Observation Handbook;* available at: http://www.osce.org/odihr-elections/17783.html, last accessed on 14 February 2008.

dispersed."[27]

New competitive environments are expected to be particularly susceptible to the influence of institutional design, especially when democratisation involves the establishment of new party systems. Post-communist contexts are similarly less prone to quick "engineering" because communism left in its wake a complex situation where the state, parties, constituents and the relations between them had to be reformed along new lines. Moreover, political parties in the region were brought into being by transition circumstances, which made the party systems in general both weak and instable.[28] One can also add the purposeful corrupt or semi-corrupt practices that infiltrate the process at various points and create their share of problems in transition countries.[29] Not surprisingly, studies of post-communist electoral design often assume that "the only thing that can be predicted with certainty about the export of elections is that an electoral system will not work in the same way in its new setting as in its old."[30]

II. The Vicissitudes of Electoral System in Post-Communist Albania

Albanian history of democratic elections from their launch in 1992 fits well to the expectation that the electoral system is adopted during extraordinary periods of politics and it is rather "sticky". [31] After adopting a new MMP system with general political consensus at the very beginning of regime change, the Albanian parties experimented with more majoritarian elements in the 1996 and 1997 polls but already by 1998 they chose to return to the system that enabled the first free and fair elections of March 1992.[32]

At the outset, the electoral system was negotiated among the main political parties, following the total failure of ex-communists to run the country after winning the first competitive elections held under a pure majoritarian system in March 1991. The widespread mass protests and general dissatisfaction with former communists ruling after the 1991 elections, was a clear sign of communists plummeting vote while in office. The parliamentary negotiations for a new electoral system were held, just one month before the fresh

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[27] Reynolds and Reilly, *The International IDEA* ,8.
[28] Jon Elster, Claus Offe, and Ulrich Preuss, Institutional *Design in Post- Communist Societies: Rebuilding the Ship at Sea* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 132.
[29] Sarah Birch, *Elections and Democratisation in Contemporary Ukraine* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000), 14.
[30] Sarah Birch, Frances Millard, Marina Popescu and Kieran Williams, *Embodying Democracy: Electoral System Design in Post-Communist Europe*, (Hampshire and London: Palgrave: Macmillan, 2002), 13.

[31] Dieter Nohlen, "Changes and Choices in Electoral Systems," in *Choosing Electoral System: Issues and Alternatives*, eds. Arend Lijphart and Bernard Grofman (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1984), 218.
[32] Arolda Elbasani, "The Impact of EU Conditionality Upon Democratisation: Comparing Electoral Competition and Civil Service Reforms in Albania," (PHD Dissertation, European University Institute, 2007), Chap. 6.

elections of March 1992, in very particular circumstances when the ex-communists were unable to govern and therefore open to the requests and pressures of the newly born Democratic forces that controlled popular movements. Both sides, ex-communists now under the name of Social Party (SP) and newly democratizing forces coming under the ban of Democratic Party (DP) had totally different preferences. Former communists were aware of their decreasing popularity after the breakdown of the communist regime and rightly believed that the proportional system would better represent their scattered support in the country. Most importantly, it would ensure the Party's main leaders, some of whom discredited former communists, would safely enter the parliament through party lists.[33] The new Democratic movement, which had criticised the majority system of the previous year, now believed that it could better translate its growing support into more legislative seats. The MMP system was founded as a compromised solution between the two conflicting positions and accommodated both sides' preferences. Moreover, the draft law owed much to the OSCE and CoE experts' advice.[34]

The 1992 elections were, in fact, the only ones in the history of Albanian elections to date which were widely accepted as free and fair.[35] They enabled a smooth rotation of power from the former communist to the newly created DP, which as expected won 90 out of a total 100 SMDs and two more seats from the compensatory lists, altogether 65% of seats with 62% of national votes. The former communists, the Socialist Party (SP), just as they feared, got only 6 SMDs and an additional 32 list seats, which corresponded to 27% of total seats with 25% of national vote. Other two small parties got altogether 8 seats from the compensatory lists. The new system thus provided for a fair proportional representation, while limiting the proliferation of the votes - only four out of eleven registered parties could make it in the parliament and the predominant majority of votes went for the two main parties. Latter on, the winning DP, confident on its newfound majority status tried to unilaterally change the system towards a MMM system – it increased the weight of SMDs and shifted to a parallel system of voting -, which was in part responsible for the heavily criticised and contested polls of June 1996 and June 1997.[36]

2.1 The Constitutionally Entrenched Electoral System

When it came to drafting a new

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[33] Elez Biberaj, *Shqiperia ne Tranzicion (Albania in Transition)* (Tirane: Ora Botime, 2000), 161.
[34] Ibid., 202.

[35] Blendi Kajsiu, Aldo Bumci and Albert Rakipi, *Albania –A Weak Democracy a Weak State: Report on the State of Democracy in Albania* (Tirana: Albanian Institute for International Studies, 2002).
[36] Miranda Vickers and James Pettifer, *Albania from Anarchy to a Balkan Identity* (London: Hurst and Company, 2000).

constitution, following the chaotic political and economic crisis of 1997 and rising concerns with institutional building as the missing element of the Albanian transition, the Albanian relevant actors chose to return to the system adopted on the eve of the first real competitive elections in 1992. They also chose to make it difficult to change by sanctioning the main components of the system in the new post –communist constitution.

The 1998 constitution was designed amidst of tense political bickering between the two main parties. The drafting process excluded the DP opposition altogether, but it also benefited from several legitimising devices. First, the constitution was designed in cooperation with various international actors and profited from their positive evaluation. The final text owes a lot to the international expertise offered mainly, but not only, by the Council of Europe's Venice Commission. In addition, a tri-parliamentary mission from the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly and the European Parliament, was assigned to provide political support to the process.[37] The Albanian authorities were keen to acknowledge the international assistance and emphasise the positive international comments as a source of legitimacy. The text of the

constitution was distributed to the public together with an explanatory text, including a statement from the Venice Commission assessing that the constitution was "in full agreement with the European democratic standards."[38] In addition, the drafting commission had worked in close cooperation with a Centre for Coordination of Assistance and Public Participation, sponsored and organised by OSCE, with the main task to assemble public and expert opinion on the draft proposals. The centre had organised several open debates on the constitution, which make it possible to assert that the drafting commission had widely consulted the public.[39] Finally, the Albanians were given the possibility to say their last word in a national referendum that recorded a 90% 'yes' among the votes cast.[40] Most importantly for the legitimacy of the electoral system included in the constitution, all of its elements, except for the slightly changed threshold, were borrowed from the electoral system adopted with general political consensus back in 1992.

The 1998 constitution guaranteed that governance was to be based on a system of "free, general and periodic elections" (first part, article 1). Article 64 of the constitution set the main architecture of the electoral system -the number of parliamentary deputes was fixed to 140;

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[37] ODIHR, *The Republic of Albania: Referendum on the Constitution, 22 November 1998* (Warsaw: February 1999) 6; available at: http://www.osce.org/odihr-elections/14384.html, last accessed on 15 February 2008.

[38] Albanian Centre for Coordination of Assistance and Public Participation, *Albanian Constitution and Explanatory Materials*, (Tirana: 13 December 1998), 5.
[39] Ibid., 5.
[40] ODIHR, *The Republic of Albania*, 5.

of those, 100 or 71% of the seats were to be distributed through SMDs; the remainder of 40 seats (29%) were to be distributed through closed party or coalition' lists according to the order of names furnished by each party; the list seats were to be distributed among the parties and coalitions that had obtained at least 2.5% and 4% of the valid votes, respectively. The constitution also specified that the total number of a party or coalition' seats should be "to the closest possible extent, proportional to the valid votes won by them in the first round on the national scale." The provision on the proportionality between a party's national votes and seats alluded to the use of a MMP system, whereas the list seats were intended to compensate for the dis-proportionality that often arises between a party's total national votes and SMD seats.[41] Article 68 specified the need for adopting an electoral code to regulate "the registration of candidates, the organisation and administration of election, the establishment of electoral zones and the conditions for their validation."[42] The constitution also envisaged the creation of a permanent Central Election Commission (CEC) responsible to "oversee, direct and verify all the aspects that have to do with election and referendums and to announce their results."[43]

2.2 *The Promised Benefits of the Electoral System*

The MMP system, thus adopted, borrows most of its elements from the German system.[44] It similarly aims to produce proportional results, which was actually explicitly stated in the constitution. To this aim, the list seats were related to the SMD layer and were intended to compensate for the dis-proportionality that surfaced from the SMDs voting. The adopted system, thus, shared both the proportionality benefits of PR systems, while also ensuring that voters had constituency representation. The voters were also given the benefit of two votes, one for the party and one for their local MP.

Some self-interested actors might have preferred the PR system because of the uncertainty inherent in the SMDs, which reward only the first candidate. However, we might interpret the transition period when the system was first adopted as akin to Rawls' veil of uncertainty and hypothesize that under such conditions of uncertainty many self-interested Albanian actors that had no experience with competitive elections preferred a system that was fair to all actors in general: faithful to the votes they received, more inclusive and better representative. As a matter of fact, the MMP system in Albania was chosen with wide political consensus at the very beginning of the transition and in the midst of uncertainty about the

[41] Reynolds and Reilly, *The International IDEA,* 74.
[42] Albanian Centre for Coordination of Assistance and Public Participation, *Albanian Constitution.*
[43] Ibid., Art. 48.

[44] Reynolds and Reilly, *The International IDEA, 74-78.*

electoral outcomes it would produce. Therefore, we can assume that, at least initially, the system was chosen because of the parties' common perception on its fairness and benefits.

III. Electoral System, Instable Rules and Circumventing Strategies

The poll of 3 July 2005 was the sixth in the recent history of Albanian elections. They followed one and a half decades of experimenting with competitive elections, which were all together assessed as "failing to fully meet OSCE commitments and other international standards for democratic elections."[45] As such, the 2005 poll was significant for tracing possible changes in the problematic pattern of electoral reform in the country. Moreover, they were the third elections after the ones in 1992 and 2001 to be held under broadly the same electoral system, and therefore rather embedded in the political system in which they operated as political actors had all the time to learn about the electoral rules and outcomes. As Pippa Norris puts it "the first "founding" contests held under any revised rules may prove anomalous and unstable as citizens and parties learn the ropes, but their effects can be assessed more reliably after a decade of elections held under the revised arrangements."[46]

In addition, by the time of these elections, the whole international community was mobilised around the significance of the free elections for the future of Albania's weak democracy. The Freedom House Report, for example, suggested that, "after a series of elections that were continuously improving but did not qualify as completely free and fair, the international community made it clear that Albania's EU integration will proceed only if the country can show that it can hold free and fair elections."[47] Did these elections meet the expectation that they needed be a path-breaking point for holding free and fair elections in the country? And most importantly, did these elections replicate the benefits of the MMP system as suggested by the experience of the very first competitive elections in 1992 and also the common held assumption that the system offers the best of both worlds?

3.1 Re-negotiated Rules and Issues

The inclusion of the main attributes of the electoral system in the new constitution had certainly assured some stability for the "rules of the game". In fact, for the first time the 2005 parliamentary elections were conducted under the same system as the previous elections held in 2001. The system as described above contemplated an overall proportional distribution of

[45] ODIHR, *Needs Assessment Mission Report, 12-16 April*. (Warshaw: April 2005), 6; available at: http://www.osce.org/odihr-elections/14376.html, last accessed on 15 February 2008.
[46] Norris, *Electoral Engineering*, 5.

[47] Blendi Kajsiu, *Nations in Transit. Country Report: Albania*. [Freedom House Reports] available at: http://www.freedomhouse.hu/pdfdocs/albania2005.pdf, last accessed on 18 February 2008.

mandates: 140 parliamentary seats distributed through SMD contests (71%) and the rest through compensatory multi-name lists of parties or coalitions that received more than 2.5% or 4% of the national vote, respectively, in the first round of elections.

Although the electoral system was not among the contested issues, the political actors persisted to quarrel over various electoral rules. They also resorted to modifying the electoral code until shortly before the elections. Similar to all the parliamentary elections this far, the 2005 elections were also held under a substantially amended electoral code, first adopted in June 2003 and subsequently amended in October 2004, January 2005 and finally April 2005, just two months before the July 2005 elections.[48] The amendments were adopted through a bi-partisan process including agreement at a first technical working group headed by the OSCE representatives in Albania; and voting in an ad hoc parliamentary committee co-chaired by the two main political parties, SP and DP. Most of the changes touched upon long-standing contentious issues in the Albanian elections.

The first issue dominating the political agenda was the political balance of the CEC. The constitution had established that among its 7 members, 2 were appointed by the assembly, two by the President, and three by the High Council of Justice. Despite the constitutional provisions, the 2003 electoral code had given a substantial role to political parties with the result that the ruling party, the SP, dominated the CEC by controlling 5 out of its 7 members.[49] Since this domination had generated a lack of confidence during both the 2001 parliamentary poll and 2003 local ones, the main opposition, the DP, demanded the ruling party to surrender one seat and reduce its control of the CEC. The OSCE finally brokered an agreement between the main parties whereby the SP agreed to give up one seat to the DP representatives. The agreement altered the "political balance" of the commission, but it failed to comply with the ODIHR recommendations for more professionalism and less politicisation within the CEC.[50] The solution to the problem regarding the CEC membership showed that the political actors refused to make the leap forward towards an electoral administration free of political intervention and control. The negotiations were, in fact, first and foremost focused to balance CEC's political representation rather than strengthening it as an independent institution in charge of implementing electoral law. The same goes for the re-organisation of the lower level election

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[48] ODIHR, *Republic of Albania: Parliamentary Elections, 3 July 2005* [final report] (Warshaw: November 2005); available at: http://www.osce.org/odihr-elections/14376.html last accessed on 15 February 2008.

[49] ODIHR, *Needs Assessment*, 10.
[50] ODIHR and Venice Commission, *Joint Recommendations on the Electoral Law and Electoral Administration in Albania* (Warsaw and Strasbourg: Novermber 2004), 6-9.

commissions, which were filled with party members and were largely subject to parties' political control. ODIHR was indeed suspicious that "such privileges [would] enable parties, particularly the two larger ones, to exert a high degree of influence on the stability, professionalism, independence and impartiality of the election administration."[51]

The second prominent issue in the political agenda was the re-drawing of electoral constituencies. The zone boundaries inherited from the 2001 elections were based on the figures of the 2000 voter lists which were considered both unreliable and permitting over-representation of Southern Albania at the expense of Northern and Central Albania. They were seen as favourable to the SP whose base of support is mostly in the South.[52] After months of negotiations, at times quite acrimonious, both parties agreed to a solution whereby the South lost two zones, and one zone was added to Northern and Central Albania. The agreement reached in December 2004 became the basis of a new law "on the establishment of the electoral zones", which was finally adopted in March 2005. The solution was again prised as an improvement over the past situation, but not fully respecting the requirements of the law.[53]

The third main issue was creating

reliable voters' lists, which had long been a source of controversy in the Albanian parliamentary and local polls. The opposition had raised well-founded accusations on the manipulation of voter lists during the previous local elections, which had further been transformed into a list of OSCE recommendations for the central authorities.[54] The new legislation adopted between October 2004 and January 2005 reflected some sort of political agreement to improve the accuracy of the lists. Accordingly, the local government units would replace CEC as the main authority for compiling the voters' lists on the basis of information from civil status books rather than voters registers. The central authorities of local government would be responsible for checking the final data. The implementation of the new legislation implied both the overhaul of the civil registry, allocation of addresses for each citizen as well as the design of new computerised lists on the basis of the civil registries.[55] The lack of a proper address system, the significant movement of the population, the lack of time and resources to accomplish the new tasks, and most importantly, the continued inaction of Albanian authorities were still listed among the reasons that most probably affected the very doubtful quality of the final lists.[56]

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[51] ODIHR, *Republic of Albania: Parliamentary Elections*, 6.
[52] ODIHR, *Needs Assesment*, 9.
[53] Ibid., 10.

[54] ODIHR and Venice Commission, *Joint Recommendations*, 14-16.
[55] ODIHR, *Republic of Albania: Parliamentary Elections*, 11.
[56] Ibid., 12.

3.2 Tactical Strategies to Circumvent the System

Another crucial issue rating high among the items recommended by the OSCE reports was the simplification of the seats allocation formula as elaborated in the electoral code.[57] The 2003 code facilitated the allocation of SMDs whereby the winner needed a simple rather than an absolute majority, thus removing the provisions for a second round of voting in the majoritarian elections. However, the code still remained complex regarding the allocation of proportional seats. Most problematically, it allowed parties to submit different party agreements for the re-ranking of the mandate recipients even after the casting of ballots.[58] It also allowed the differentiation of votes, whereby each person had one vote for SMDs and one for the party lists. On the basis of these provisions, the political parties could use different strategies that enabled them to "distort the allocation of supplementary seats."[59] Although similar strategies had also been condemned back in 2001, the parties chose to keep unchanged the complex provisions regarding the allocation of the supplementary mandates. In fact, ODIHR made clear that the very complex legal framework "can serve as a basis for democratic elections if [it is] implemented in good faith by state authorities and political

parties."[60] The OSCE would, thus, draw attention to the implementation stages and the necessity that political actors showed good will for respecting the rules and the spirit of the electoral system.

Yet, the 2005 poll proved that, as feared by ODIHR, both main parties opted to use at their advantage the most vulnerable parts of the system. In these elections, Albanian parties tried and even improved some of the strategies that were used during the previous elections, but on a smaller scale.[61] One should add that strategic voting is a common feature of MM systems and it builds in the incentives of the system itself. The possibility of distinct votes for the two tiers allows voters to diversify their vote -vote for one party in SMDs and, if they want, for a different party in list seats. According to Klingemann and Wessels, both well-known students of the German MMP system, strategic voting raises from the possibility of voter's ticket splitting between two parties that the voter would like to see form a government.[62] They also add that there are at least two conditions for calling ticket-splitting strategic voting: first, voters must know the coalition preferences of political parties, which can be safely assumed as most parties announce their coalition preferences long before the elections;

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[57] ODIHR and Venice Commission, *Joint Recommendations*, 17.
[58] ODIHR, *Republic of Albania: Parliamentary Elections*, 5.
[59] Ibid.

[60] Ibid.
[61] ODIHR, *Republic of Albania: Parliamentary Elections 24 June-19 August 2001* (Warshaw: October 2001)
[62] Klingemann and Wessels, "The Political Consequences," 279-297.

and second, voters must take the coalition preferences into account and cast their votes accordingly, which is to say that they should give the nominal vote to a major party and the list vote to the smaller coalition partner. The possibility of strategic voting has been a concern also in the German elections especially when exploited with success by particular parties. Some researchers have even suggested that in a few elections, strategic voting "looked too much like blatant political manipulation to receive much support."[63] Yet, despite the distortions, the overall level of disproportionality between a party's percentage of votes and seats in the German elections does not exceed –3.8%.[64]

Albanian Parties have relied on the same strategic ticket splitting, but taken to an extreme and with similarly extreme results of disproportionality. During the 2005 poll, these strategies were used by both main Parties and their small allies. Both the SP and DP, during the electoral campaign, asked their supporters to vote for their own party candidates in SMDs, and for their small coalition parties in list voting. Thus, the big parties could inflate their seats by including small coalition parties that could pass the threshold and profit from list seats only thanks to the votes of big party supporters. The results of the 2005 poll confirmed the wide-scale manoeuvres with list votes. The DP got 56 or 40% of SMDs but

only 7.67 % of the national votes, which meant that most of the list votes had gone to its coalition parties that would most probably would not have made it into the parliament without big party's voters. The coalition of 7 small parties close to the DP, got 33.46% of national votes and 18 supplementary mandates, although none of the small parties could get any SMDs. Similarly, the SP came second receiving 42 or 30% of SMD mandates, but only 8.89% of the national votes, which gave it no supplementary seats as well.[65] The SP allies, 5 small parties, profited another 18 supplementary seats, although they could not get any SMDs either. The DP could thus get 32% more seats than votes and the SP 21% more. The significant difference between each party's seats and respective national votes clearly contradicted the constitutionally set principle that "the total number of deputies for a party should be to the closest possible extent proportional to the votes won by them on the national scale".

In addition to strategic voting, the different parties seemed to have used the complexity of the system to fabricate more seats at the expense of the legal framework. The coalition of parties near to the DP, had included in its list 30 DP members although the DP had its own separate list. Furthermore, both the SP and the DP in SMDs had registered members of the allied parties under their own ban.[66] Thus, parties'

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[63] Farrel, *Electoral Systems*, 103.
[64] Ibid. 107.

[65] ODIHR, *Republic of Albania: Parliamentary Elections*, 30.
[66] Ibid., 10.

schemes, in addition to distorting the principle of proportionality made it difficult to differentiate between different parties' seats in the parliament and resulted in fewer mandates for the parties, which did not engage in similar strategies.[67] It also made possible for small parties to enter the parliament without matching support and get disproportional power in the subsequent parliament and coalition government, which disrupted at least in part, the mixed member system claim to a clear line of government accountability and effectiveness.

Similar strategies, which were utilised by the SP back in 2001, were assessed as "attempts to deliberately circumvent the objective of proportionality by testing the law beyond acceptable limits without actually violating the letter of the electoral code."[68] Whereas during the 2001 elections these strategies were only blamed on the ruling party, the SP, during the 2005 poll, both main parties and their small allies engaged in tactic-voting strategies. Furthermore, the use of the strategies was not limited in one zone alone as in 2001, but it was applied on a nation-wide scale. The engagement of both main parties and the better coordination of these strategies at a national level fitted well to the fears of an Albanian analyst for "improved manipulations"[69] In fact, the results showed that the two main parties had improved their strategies to circumvent the system in their favour,

to the extent that the same system had produced increasingly more seats than votes for them. When the same system was used in 1992, the difference between the percentage of seats and total national votes was 2% for the SP and 3% for the DP. In 2001 the same difference was 11% for the SP and – 4% for the DP. In 2005 the difference was as high as 32% for the DP and 21% for the SP.[70]

Conclusions

The analysis of the 2005 parliamentary shows that the MMP system, which borrows most of its elements from the German system, has failed to reproduce the main attributes it is praised for, both proportionality and individual representativeness. Those elections can be remembered as "the case", among MMP systems adopted so far, for failing to deliver on its expectations and produce highly dis-proportional results when comparing party's seats with their respective national votes. Moreover, rates of disproportionality have obviously increased when compared with the previous polls held under the same electoral system, mainly due to the main political parties improvement of tactical strategies worked out to increase their number of seats.

The article puts forward that the distortion of the main attributes of the system was made possible by a range of rules outside of the electoral system that have allowed wide political discretion

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[67] Ibid., 5; 8.
[68] ODIHR, *Needs Assesment*, 7.
[69] Prec Zogaj, *Finalja* (Tirane: Dita, 2004), 336.

[70] Elbasani, "The Impact", chapter 6.

for parties to play out according to their narrow political interest and increase their number of seats. In addition, the irregularities regarding zone boundaries and voters' list, when coupled with the authorities' inaction to improve the situation have certainly influenced the fairness of these elections, although it is hard to establish whether they have directly contributed to the electoral results. Most importantly, tactical voting, which is an inherent feature of the mixed systems and has been explored also in other countries as a way to increase party's seats, in the case of Albania has informed electoral strategies that have ultimately worked to circumvent the spirit of the system. The analysis of 2005 poll, thus, reinforces the argument that the electoral system might not produce the intended benefits depending to the particular country context, especially when it allows for tactical voting that can be easily exploited by relevant political actors.

The article, thus, puts forth that the electoral system is but one of the factors that bears into the final distribution of parliamentary seats. The range of the electoral rules and especially the final conduct of the elections are important factors that mediate between the system configuration and electoral results. Last but not least, the article emphasises the importance of agency actions, when considering how electoral models work in practice. The electoral systems are rather broad frames of reference that leave ample space for political action. Hence, electoral studies need pay more attention to the plethora of broad electoral rules as well as the corrupt or semi-corrupt practices that infiltrate the process at various points when assessing the consequences of particular systemic configurations in specific countries.

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THE SUCCESSES AND FAILURES OF GREEN PARTIES: THE JOINT EFFECTS OF ELECTORAL SYSTEMS CONSTRAINTS AND PARTY STRATEGIES IN FRANCE, ITALY, GREAT-BRITAIN AND GERMANY

Mathieu Petithomme
European University Institute, Department of Political and Social Sciences
mathieu.petithomme@eui.eu

Abstract

The emergence of Green parties has long been explained by the development of post-materialist values in advanced democracies. This article takes a somewhat different perspective, by analysing the joint effects of electoral systems constraints and party internal and external strategies. The comparison between the French, the Italian, the British and the German cases reinforces the idea that post-materialist values might be considered as characteristics of the Green electorate more than independent variables of the emergence of Green parties. This paper shows that it is the joint effects of the characteristics of electoral systems and Green parties' overall strategies which can explain their successes and failures. The institutional features of a given system can multiply or reduce the possibilities of entry and of coalition building of a new party. In contrast, from a strategic point of view, the internal organisation of a given Green party and its position toward the questions of intra-party democracy, institutionalisation, and incorporation into the parliamentary game are determinant. Therefore, important institutional factors and strategic choices can explain the failure of the Green Party, the weaknesses of Les Verts and i Verdi, as well as the emergence and the conversion of Die Grünen to classical political liberalism.

Introduction

The understanding of the root causes of the emergence of new parties in established democracies constitutes a core element in the comprehension of change in political competition structures. Indeed, the development of a new party implies a reorganisation of the electoral competition by limiting the votes of well-established parties. The emergence of a new party constitutes the result of a potential conflict within the political system between existing parties and the political group interested in constituting a new party. This paper seeks to investigate the following research question: *Which factors determine the emergence of Green parties in established political systems? Why do some Green parties succeed while others fail to gather stable electoral supports and restructure competition within their political systems?* For the ecologists, the choice to form a movement, and in some cases an autonomous political party has been motivated by ambitions to create a new relation between civil society and political parties through the installation of participatory democracy. The Green theory argues that an active involvement of citizens in political life

would balance the negative effects of "professionalization" in political life. In that respect, following the inspiration of the new social movements, the Greens all over Europe have tried to "do politics differently".

Nevertheless, Green parties have presented different political strategies and multiple positions toward the crucial questions of institutionalisation, electoral competition and ideological renovation so as to become institutionalized political parties. This paper develops a systematic comparison of four Green parties, following the methodology of process tracing which consists in balancing the effects of different explanations by selecting relevant analytic factors, while methodically comparing their effects through an historically grounded analysis. In terms of case selection, four Green parties in different party systems have been chosen, Les Verts in France, i Verdi in Italy, the Green Party in Great Britain and Die Grünen in Germany. Seeking to identify the main factors which influence the successes and the failures of Green parties, this comparison will follow a "most different design". Our main underlying concern is to explain why Green parties have witnessed almost similar developments, that is, a general difficulty to emerge as stable political actors and restructure political competition in political systems, which have nevertheless very different characteristics. In fact, the "most different" perspective to comparative politics seeks to elucidate the causes of convergent developments in spite of

diverging starting conditions.[1] In the "most different" system design, the aim is to think about similarities while controlling for differences.

Indeed, the French, Italian, British and German political systems are quite different in terms of electoral rules, access to state institutions or relations to party finance. Electoral constraints are arguably less important in Germany and Italy than in France, and even less in Great Britain. The comparison between the four Green parties is especially interesting as they have a number of common characteristics in relation with the social context that led to their emergence, in terms of electorate and of party ideology, but they also present different strategic trajectories. This paper is constructed in four sections as follows: the first section presents the theoretical framework and the main puzzle related to the emergence of Green parties in consolidated party systems. The three other sections always successively present the French, Italian, British and German cases before concluding with the main comparative findings. The sections deal with the constraints of electoral systems (section 2), the internal strategies of Green parties in terms of intra-party organisation, ideological and programmatic change (section 3), and with their external strategies in relation with social movements, the broader society and with other parties (section 4). The

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[1] G. B. Peters, *Comparative Politics. Theory and Methods* (New York: New York University Press, 1998), 28.

conclusion leads us to answer our initial research question in comparative analysis.

Theoretical Framework: The Emergence of Green Parties in Perspective

Explaining the Emergence of New Parties in Consolidated Party Systems

In terms of perspective, the emergence of new parties has been analysed in relation to a given national context or following a comparative approach.[2] This literature can also be classified following the type of emerging party considered, with research done on regionalist parties, on Christian-democratic, on right-wing parties, or on left-wing libertarian/ecologist parties.[3] In terms of explanatory factors, even if the empirical operationalization of existing theories is sometimes partial,

the emergence of new parties has been explained following (1) social, (2) institutional or (3) strategic variables. (1) The social approach argues that the emergence of new parties is intrinsically linked with the socio-economic mutations of a given society and the consequent transformation of individual values.[4] The development of new social values would favour the electoral success of new parties promoting the politicization of these new issues. (2) In opposition, the institutional approach emphasizes that the probability for the emergence of new parties depends on the characteristics of political institutions and the existence of a favourable structure of opportunities for new party entry. The decision to get involved within the electoral competition would be affected by the costs of entry, the perceived benefits of the access to public office and the probability of receiving electoral support.[5] (3) Finally, the theory of strategic entry highlights that the emergence of new parties might be related to elitist decisions to contest the existing electoral scene.[6] Following this paradigm inspired by rational-choice theory, political elites would enter within the process of electoral competition following three types of objectives: the desire to maximize their

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[2]   S. J. Rosenstone, L. B. Roy & E. H. Lazarus, *Third Parties in America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984); S. Hug, *Altering Party System: Strategic Behavior and the Emergence of New Political Parties in Western Democracies* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001).

[3]   On regionalist parties, see L. De Winter & H. Tursan, *Regionalist Parties in Western Europe* (London: Routledge, 1998); on Christian-democratic parties see S. N. Kalyvas, *The Rise of Christian Democracy in Europe* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996); on right-wing parties, see R. Harmel & J. D. Sväsand "Formation and Success of New Parties", *International Political Science Review*, 6(4) 1996: 501-23, P. Ignazi, "The Silent Counter-Revolution: Hypotheses on the Emergence of Extreme Right-Wing Parties in Europe", *European Journal of Political Research*, 22(1) 1992: 3-34. Finally, on left-wing libertarian/ecologist parties, consult H. Kitschelt, *The Radical Right in Western Europe: A Comparative Analysis* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998).

[4]   R. Inglehart, *El cambio cultural en las sociedades industriales avanzadas* (Madrid: CIS, 1991), 11.

[5]   M. Tavits, "Party System Change: Testing a Model of New Party Entry", *Party Politics*, 12(1) 2006: 99-119.

[6]   G. Cox, *Making Votes Count: Strategic Coordination in the World's Electoral Systems* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

control on political positions, the willingness to influence the definition of public policies and the objective to maximize their electoral results, either for becoming a coalition partner of the government, or to access a blackmail position within the redefined political system.[7] Following this third stream of explanatory variables, the emergence of new parties would be related to the strategy of interested political entrepreneurs.

Post industrial Society, Post materialist Values and the Emergence of Green Parties

Since the 1970s, western European party systems have experienced processes of change and reconfiguration. For instance, the relative decline of the militant-party type, the weakening of partisan identification, the tendencies of a higher degree of electoral volatility, the progression of "emotional", "affective" or "protest" voting and the increasing complexity of political competition resulting from the emergence of left-wing libertarian/ecologist or right-wing/authoritarian parties, have all contributed to party system change.[8]

However, these dynamics are not directly connected with a weakening of the traditional functions of parties to aggregate popular demands and make public decisions. Nevertheless, they support the analysis of a growing crisis of political representation. In this context, the emergence of Green parties within established political systems will be assessed. The classic hypothesis regarding this issue states that the structural socio-economic mutations experienced by Western European democracies since the 1960s have favoured the development of new post materialist values emphasizing political participation, power decentralization, individual self-realization, quality of life and environmental preoccupations.[9] Theoretically, following this model, the progression of post materialist values would represent an independent variable of the emergence of Green parties. In fact, following Inglehart's indicator, many Southern European countries like Portugal, Greece, Spain, and Italy can still be considered as "materialist" with a low degree of social identification for post materialist values.[10] Green parties are also very

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[7] K. Storm & W. C. Müller, "Political Parties and Hard Choices", in *Policy, Office or Voter,* ed K. Storm & W. C. Müller (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 23-52.; G. Sartori, *Parties and Party Systems. A Framework for Analysis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976).

[8] P. Mair, "Political Parties, Popular Legitimacy and Public Priviledge", *West European Politics*, 18(1) 1995: 40-57; H. Schmitt & S. Holmberg "Political parties in Decline", in *Citizens and the State*, ed H. D. Klingemann & D.

Fuchs (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 95-132.

[9] R. Inglehart, *El cambio cultural en las sociedades industriales avanzadas* (Madrid: CIS, 1991), 12.

[10] The thesis of post materialism developed by Ronald Inglehart defends that the growth of financial incomes and the relative absence of war leads to a shift in citizens attitudes, which become less preoccupied with material welfare than by individual subjective welfare. The degree of post materialism is measured by the following question: "There is a lot of talk these days about what (OUR COUNTRY)'s goals should be for the

weak or even nonexistent within these countries, which would confirm *a priori* the theory linking the emergence of Green parties with post-materialist values and socio-economic changes. However, an important critique of this model argues that the socio-economic transformations which characterize the post-industrial society have facilitated the development of two, and not only one, set of new systems of values, post-materialism on the one hand and neo-conservatism on the other hand.[11] Furthermore, even if we admit to the development of post-materialist values, a direct link with the emergence of Green parties does not seem to exist.

Indeed, how can the theory explain that two countries like Germany and Great Britain present similar levels of social identification towards post-materialist values (43% PM-55% M and 44% PM-53% M respectively), yet the emergence of Green parties is not constant between the two countries?

Following Sartori's definition, Die Grünen can be considered as a significant party as it presents a "coalition potential", being involved in governmental decisions with the German SPD in 1998, for instance. Die Grünen has also "blackmail potential" within the German political system, because its positioning has forced other parties to realign themselves and ideologically renovate their programmes.[12] However, the British Greens have never obtained significant electoral support and failed to apply sufficient social pressure to modify established parties' tactics of competition and propose new themes to the political agenda. As a result, we will try to solve the puzzle of Green parties' emergence by looking at other explanatory variables than the degree of identification with post materialist values in four different cases. In contrast with the Great Britain and Germany, the Italian case is characterized by the emergence of a Green party even though there is a low degree of identification to post-materialist values in the population. (31% PM-67% M). The existence of post-materialist values themselves in a given country does not seem to be a necessary condition for the emergence of Green parties. Rather, we know from the literature that independently from the success or failure of their national Green parties, post-materialists voters are always over-represented in the electorate of Green parties. In other words, post-materialist values

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next ten or fifteen years. On this card are listed some of the goals that different people say should be given top priority. Would you please say which one of them you, yourself, consider to be most important in the long run?": (1) Maintaining order in the country; (2) Giving people more say in important Government decisions; (3) Fighting rising prices ; (4) Protecting freedom of speech. Following Inglehart, people who choose the second and the fourth items are post materialists and those who choose the first and the third items are materialists. Those who choose an item of each composed a mix group. *Cf. L'Opinion Publique dans l'Union Européenne* (European Commission: Eurobarometer 64.2, 2002), available at http://europa.eu.int/comm/public_opinion/index_fr.htm (consulted 15/12/2006).
[11]   P. Ignazi, *Op. Cit.,* 1992: 5.

[12]   G. Sartori, *Op. Cit.*, 1976: 148-49.

characterize the electorate of Green parties, but there is no direct link between the degree of post-materialism of the broader electorate and the success or failure of a Green party.

Hence, from the three theories on the emergence of new parties and from the argumentation outlined above, we can deduce that the social variables are neither determinant in explaining the emergence nor success or failure of Green parties. Thus, the paper is built on two complementary hypotheses derived from the literature which defends that the emergence of new parties is linked to institutional and strategic variables and that the consolidation (success or failure) is linked with the joint effects of the two variables. It is true that institutional factors can include the constraints or opportunities of the electoral system, the degree of access to state institutions or to public funds. However, the access to state institutions or to public funds is only possible after a previous electoral support. It can help the consolidation of a Green party but cannot explain its emergence. In that sense, the first hypothesis defends that while other variables can also play a minor role, electoral rules and party strategies are the two determinant factors which can explain the emergence of Green parties. While electoral rules refer to the system of electoral representation, party strategies are twofold: on the one hand, parties have to position themselves internally regarding their own institutionalization, the degree of autonomy of their executive and the extent of intra-party democracy; on the other hand, parties have to determine external strategies regarding party alliances, the ways they organize political competition and how they try to convince the broader electorate through their programmes and party discourses. The second hypothesis is related with party consolidation and states that it is the joint effects of electoral systems constraints and party strategies which can explain the successes or failures of Green parties. In the short term, a Green party can succeed with only one of the factors playing to its advantage. In other words, even without a coherent strategy, a party can emerge because of a very permissive electoral system. On the contrary, through a coherent strategy of alliance and electoral mobilisation a Green party can potentially obtain representation even if the electoral system is highly restrictive. However, in the long term, a given Green party will succeed to become a stable political competitor only if it is able to act strategically to benefit the joint effects of both factors. If the electoral system is highly restrictive, the party will not only have to be disciplined and coherent in its policy proposals, but it will also have to design a pertinent strategy for bypassing the effects of the electoral system. Yet, even though the electoral system is much more permissive, the party will only emerge and succeed in the long term with a coherent electoral strategy.

The Decisive Constraint of Electoral Systems

The structure of opportunity for new parties to restructure the lines of competition of a given party system is decisively constrained by existing electoral rules which can be permissive or restrictive factors. In France, the institutions of the Fifth Republic have been designed in order to assure the primacy of the executive. The French political regime is parliamentary but with important presidential tendencies. The power of the Parliament and of opposition parties is quite weak, while the electoral system is very cruel for small parties. In theory it seems quite open, but it is not in practice. The general elections are held with a two round uninominal majoritarian ballot. Small parties can obtain important electoral supports at the first ballot as voters can choose from a large number of parties.[13] Yet, only the first two parties compete with one another on the second ballot. Thus, while it seems that electoral rules favour the development of a multiparty system, historically, voters have always elected one of the governmental party.[14] The main paradox of the French system is that a small party can obtain a large number of votes at the first round of the presidential elections without possible representation at the National Parliament.[15] The French electoral system favours bipolarization, and consequently, Les Verts cannot have MPs as long as they do not forge an alliance. As the parliamentary elections have two rounds, for being elected, a potential MP needs to win a majority in a given constituency. A utility vote for the PS or the UMP usually happens, because voting for Les Verts would reduce the overall chances of the left to win parliamentary seats, as a MP can be automatically elected if he obtains more than 50% of the votes at the first round. Given that Les Verts face the concurrence of the PS on the left, it is almost impossible that the Greens can obtain more votes than the PS in the first ballot. The French electoral system reduces the opportunities of emergence of small parties unless they choose to become part of a coalition: "the French party system places a high value on parties able to construct alliances, but penalizes those that through choice or necessity remain without allies".[16]

In contrast, in Italy, it could be said that electoral rules have been more

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[13] All the parties which have managed to obtain at least 500 signatures of mayors from French cities or villages can compete for national elections.

[14] Since 1958, only three parties have been able to win the Presidency, either with a majority, or with a governmental coalition: (1) the left-wing *Parti Socialiste* (PS), (2) the party of the center *Union pour la Démocratie Française* (UDF), now *Mouvement Démocrate* (Modem), (3) and the dominant right-wing party *Rassemblement pour la République* (RPR), now *Union pour la Majorité Présidentielle* (UMP).

[15] For instance, in the recent elections held in June 2007, the UDF of François Bayrou obtained 18,57% of the votes at the first round of the presidential election. Thus, in theory, his party should be the third political force in France. However, as the party refused to enter in an alliance with the PS or with the UMP, at the parliamentary elections, only three of his candidates were elected.

[16] A. Cole & B. Doherty "Pas comme les autres: the French Greens at the Crossroads", in *The Green Challenge*, ed. D. Richardson & C. Rootes (Routledge: London, 1995), 54.

permissive for the emergence of I Verdi, especially since 1994. From 1945 to the beginning of the 1990s, the Italian party system was quite stable with a bipolar confrontation between the left and the right. The first Republic was characterized by majoritarian trends, but corruption scandals in the financing of political parties prompted a change of electoral system, which finally entered into force in 1994. Following the new ballot electoral rules of the second Republic, 75% of the seats of the parliamentary elections are now granted with the majoritarian system, while 25% of the seats are obtained through proportional representation in a list ballot in which parties have to win at least 4% of the votes for obtaining representation.[17] While during the I Republic, the right-wing Christian Democratic Party was able to govern by itself and the Communist party lead the opposition, the introduction of the II Republic has coincided with a new necessity for governmental parties to find allies. In such a system, smaller parties could play a greater blackmail potential and could even become pivotal elements in some cases for transforming a minority coalition into a majoritarian one. The Italian party system has witnessed a high degree of political fragmentation since 1994. For instance, 32 parties were in Parliament after the 2006 elections. It is true that i Verdi have

benefited from the new electoral regulations and have been able to obtain an almost constant parliamentary representation and even some governmental offices. Yet, as paradoxical as it could be, I Verdi's electoral results have remained quite modest during the 1990s, with a support usually oscillating between 2 and 3%. In brief, in spite of a permissive institutional context, they have never been able to bypass the constraints of the electoral system.

While in the Italian case, a redefinition of electoral rules might have helped i Verdi, the British ballot electoral system might constitute one of the most constraining factors for The Greens. The use of the uninominal one-round majority ballot in general elections, known as the electoral system of the "first-past-the-post" favour the already well-established parties. The impossibility for a second decisive round between government parties and the very low probability of victory of an emerging party at the first round almost always leads to a "utility-vote" from the electorate, to the detriment of new parties. In addition, the ballot creates a high disproportion between the number of votes and the number of seats obtained, encouraging the over-representation of the most popular party.[18] Thus, the "Westminster system", intrinsically related with the British two-party system is a reflection

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[17]   P. Martin, "Les Principaux Modes de Scrutin en Europe", in *Le Mode de Scrutin fait-il l'élection ?* ed. P. Delwit & J. M. De Waele (Université Libre de Bruxelles: Bruxelles, 2000), 39-51.

[18]   I. Crewe "Parties and Electors", in *The Developing British Political System: The 1990s*, ed. I. Budge & D. McKay (London: Longman, 1993), 83-111.

of a conservative political culture, which favours bipolarisation, reinforces a dynamic of centripetal competition and sanctions extremism. Contrary to the Grüner, the political isolation created from an unfavourable ballot system may have contributed to the development of a peripheral culture within the British Greens and as a result, stimulated the triumph of the radical stream of the party.[19]

Finally, in Germany, important constitutional parameters constrain political parties, such as the federal structure of government and the autonomy of political parties from their extra-parliamentary organizations. These institutional factors have fostered the fragmentation of German political parties in federations of organisations within a system of multi-level governance constituted by the federal, the Länd and the local level. Consequently, the German federal system may have augmented the possibility for strategic entry of the German Greens into the political system, thereby creating a favourable political opportunity structure for emergence. Additionally, the proportional ballot with compensation used in Germany presents a dual advantage: it enables a representation of proximity of the electorate (each one having a MP in its circumscription), and at the same time, equally represents

political forces.[20] This system with a proportional finality gives two votes to the electorate and mixes a uninominal ballot (with one round for the designation of half of the MPs) with a list ballot in order to determine "the global proportion of seats that each party bypassing 5% - or obtaining more than three MPs at the uninominal ballot – has the right to".[21] The effects of majority created by the uninominal ballot are compensated by the election of half of the Bundestag MPs at the list ballot. The idea is to mix the supposed effects of the proportional and majority electoral system. Contrary to the British system, the personality of the leader and the proximity with the electorate might play a more important role at the local level. Finally, the electoral ballot favours the development of a multiparty system, and reinforces the potential for new parties, like the German Greens, to emerge on the political scene.

In the end, what can be said on the influence of electoral systems constraints on the emergence of Green parties? While the British system is majoritarian with a two-party system at the parliamentary level, the French case is also majoritarian but with multiparty tendencies, the German and the Italian cases are mixed systems, which ally majoritarian and proportional representation. From the comparison it can be said that a favourable electoral system is a necessary but not sufficient condition to explain the success of Green parties. In fact, the failure of the

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[19] M. Douglas & A. Wildasky, *Risk and Culture. An Essay on the Selection of Technological and Environmental Dangers* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 208.

[20] P. Martin *Op. Cit.,* 2000: 41.
[21] P. Martin *Op. Cit.,* 2000: 41.

British Green Party has a lot to do with the "first-past-the-post" which is decisively cruel for third parties. Yet, the constraints of the electoral system are not the only variables at play. For instance, two counterfactual arguments could be provided. First, if the Green party is a confederation of local associations, it could have concentrated its campaigns on strategic constituencies where its local support is high enough to bypass the effects of the electoral system as nationalist parties have done. Second, the Liberal-Independent is a relevant nation-wide third party in British politics that is always able to obtain parliamentary representation. Why are the Liberals able to obtain representation while the Greens are not? As we can see, in both cases, the constraints of the electoral system are important but do tell us the whole story. This point is even more reinforced by the French and the Italian cases. In fact, while the French electoral system is rather restrictive, Les Verts have always been able to bypass its effects when they have designed a coherent strategy of alliances for doing so. On the contrary, in Italy, i Verdi have failed to broaden their electoral support even though a favourable electoral system has initially played in their favour. In opposition with the Italian Greens, Die Grünen have not only benefited from possibilities of access to representation, but they have also designed a coherent strategy to do so. The next sections will explore the two faces (internal and external) of the strategic aspect in more details.

III. Internal Strategies of Party Organizations

Party Institutionalization and Intra-Party Organization

While electoral rules can play the role of important "exogenous" factors which constrain parties, the internal strategies of party organizations are central "endogenous" factors, both in terms of (1) party institutionalization and (2) party programmatic change. In France, the intra-party organization of Les Verts is quite different from that of traditional political parties. In the late 1970s, most of the sympathizers of the ecologist movement rejected the creation of a centralized and hierarchical party structure. The conflict over the opportunity to create a national political party was the main bone of contention between ecologists, and it has remained a central line of fracture for a long time. The party remains highly decentralized nowadays and the militants have large powers of control over the executives. Originally, the accumulation of mandates was prohibited. The strong opposition towards the institutionalization of a party autocracy has led to a preference for four spokespersons (two women and two men) rather than a single leader. Regional and local organizations have a large autonomy and play a pivotal role in the decision-making processes. Contrary to traditional parties in which the executive is generally chosen by a limited number of militants, all the militants of Les Verts are electing the members of the "National Inter-Regional Council", the local party

representatives as well as the presidential candidate. Since the mid-1990s, the party has reformed its organizational structures. The general assembly is now two-tiered with a regionally based congress of representatives, as well as a national assembly. A more centralized college of executives has been introduced, the rotation of posts has been relaxed, while multiple office holding is now possible but with important restrictions.[22] Thus, in opposition with its original democratic radicalism, the party structures of Les Verts are gradually becoming closer to that of traditional parties.

As for Les Verts, the organization of I Verdi has been a complex process, as some activists are openly left wing, while others have a more centrist attitude. In organizational terms, a major problem was constituted by the autonomy of the ecological associations at the local level and the concurrence that has risen between several of them. The introduction of the principle of "biodegradability" of the Green lists has created major difficulties for assuring a responsible leadership in the eyes of the public. Once elected, a list was impeded to be elected again. The rotation of its representatives following the alphabetical list was also instituted for promoting internal democracy. This deliberated organization had the objective to limit the personalization of power within the party and to impede

the emergence of an autocracy. With the politics of the "biodegradability" of their own lists, I Verdi wanted their party to reflect the image of the radical democratic politics they wanted to defend. Nonetheless, it has created exactly the reverse effects. In the absence of visible public leaders, citizens have not been able to understand what their programme was really. The credibility of the party for participating into government activities has been consequently questioned.

In terms of party institutionalisation, it could be said that the British Green Party has deliberately opted for a strategy of cultural revolution as an antecedent to an electoral revolution, by insisting on a necessary mutation of citizens' political mentality and values, even if it should be associated with an impossibility to conquer political power in the short term. The Green Party has preserved statutes which permit the survival of a weakly structured and egalitarian movement reticent toward party institutionalisation. The resulting dynamic of the permanent opposition between the realists and the fundamentalists has led to the victory of the latter, which are sceptical toward party hierarchies and social change through parliamentary means. Consequently, intra-party decentralisation has been reinforced while the strategy of competition against other parties has become marginalised. Moreover, in order to avoid the control of political offices by an oligarchy of militants, the Green Party has institutionalised a system of rotation of the executive offices of the

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22   B. Doherty & F. Faucher, "The Decline of Green Politics in France", *Environmental Politics*, 5(1) 1996: 114.

party every three years, prohibiting in the same way the accumulation of mandates. This trend is comparable to the "biodegradability lists" of i Verdi and has created a regular shortage of experienced leaders. In terms of internal functions, the decision-making process is even more long and complicated now that the party tries to promote equal participation of all its members. The willingness to promote intra-party democracy and to control the leadership has led the Greens to be incapable of reacting to external constrain and to develop a clear political message.[23] The executive decisions of the party must always be accepted *a priori* and *a posteriori* by the militants, the absence of which led reformists Sara Parkin, Jonathan Porritt and Paul Ekins to leave the party in 1992.[24] In the end, the promotion of "collective leadership" and the rejection of all hierarchies might have diminished the possibility to transform the movement into a political instrument.

Finally, in comparison with the three other cases, Die Grünen have been much more effective in institutionalizing their party structures. They have progressively merged the numerous social movements of the late 1970s while marginalizing the radical militants to the benefit of the "realists". It is true that the German system, for

instance its financial incentives, has played a permissive role in the progressive institutionalisation of the Greens.[25] Yet, in spite of initial divisions, Die Grünen have gradually reinforced the primacy of their electoral and office-seeking strategy at the local, regional or national level of the German federal system. Even if the strategy of power conquest requires a normalisation of party structures, the German Greens have tried to balance this effect by involving the social movements in their internal decision-making procedures. Trying to find an alternative to SPD's trade unions traditional support and to the CDU/CSU support from business circles, the Greens have tried to attract all social movements, making them count within the internal structure of the party in an innovative manner. This social anchorage has certainly facilitated to

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[23] R. S. Katz & P. Mair "The Evolution of Party Organization in Europe: The Three Faces of Party Organization", in *Parties in an Age of Change, American Review of Politics*, ed. W. Crotty, 14(4), 1995 : 611.

[24] F. Faucher, *Les Habits Verts de la Politique* (Paris: Presses de Sciences-po, 1999), 218.

[25] In contrast to the British case, in Germany, the public funding of Bundestag parties has constantly progressed since the end of the Second World War. Public subventions already represented between 60 and 80% of the federal parties total incomes in the early 1990s. Since their first electoral victory in 1983 and their entry to the Bundestag, Die Grünen have benefited from this public financing, which has undeniably helped to consolidate the formation of the party. Contrary to the British Greens who exclusively depend on their membership fees, in 1993, only 10% of Die Grünen total budget came from its members. T. Poguntke & B. Bernhard, "Germany" in *Party Organizations: A Data Handbook on Party Organizations in Western Democracies*, 1960-90, ed. R. S. Katz & P. Mair (London: Sage, 1992), 317-88. See also T. Poguntke "Parties in a Legalistic Culture: The Case of Germany", in *How Parties Organize. Change and Adaptation in Party Organizations in Western Democracies* ed. Katz, R. S. & Mair, P. (London: Sage, 1995), 185-216.

legitimize the party and encouraged its influence on the German political agenda.[26] In fact, Die Grünen have preserved a participatory approach and high levels of intra-party democracy, but the party has refrained from over-controlling the executive and constraining the definition of policy positions. Arguably, in comparison with other Green parties in Western party systems, the internal structures of Die Grünen are more similar to those of traditional parties.

In the end, it can be said that the four Green parties have faced similar intra-organizational dilemmas. They have been divided between their initial ideal of creating new political organisations that are more decentralised and democratic on the one hand, and on the other, by the realistic requirements of political life which involves the politicising of social issues, making decisions quickly, and opposing government effectively. The comparison between i Verdi and the British Greens shows how the extensive control of the leaders by party members and the lack of autonomy of party executives has certainly reinforced intra-party democracy, but to the price of an externally coherent political strategy. Apart from the German case, which has almost become a traditional party in terms of internal organization, Green parties have been characterized by their internal divisions and factionalism, which has enabled them to provide a coherent message to the

electorate. Even in the case that they have bypassed their divisions, as for Les Verts, the party has paid the late emergence of an internal party discipline, as it is nowadays difficult for him to compensate the image forged in the 1990s of a minor party with unrealistic governmental ambitions.

Ideological and Programmatic Change

Second, the internal strategies of Green parties could be understood in the light of ideological and programmatic change. On that point, the French ecologists were initially only focused on environmental concerns, mainly at the local level. The nuclear disaster of Chernobyl in 1986 helped them to bypass local issues to politicize global environmental debates. In the 1980s, Antoine Waechter directed the party and defended a distinctive "autonomous" ecological perspective. In a 1988 survey concerned with the attitudes of its militants, Prendiville showed that 47% of its party activists supported a focus on the "natural" environment, and only 25% of them favoured the prioritising of "social" concerns.[27] Nonetheless, following the relative success in the 1989 European elections and in response to the popular criticism that they were nothing more than a single-issue pressure group, Les Verts have formulated a more comprehensive political programme including anti-militarism, North-South relations or the insertion of migrants in

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[26]   H. Kitschelt, *The Logics of Party Formation* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989).

[27]   B. Prendiville, *Environmental Politics in France* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1994), 109.

French society.[28] This transition was even more evident in the party's 1997 election campaign, which claimed to focus "beyond environmental issues to a wider political revolution for a new mode of development". Les Verts asked for the "democratization of French institutions" through the introduction of proportional representation and a larger power for the Parliament. They have also introduced in the public debate the questions of a higher degree of decentralization in favour of the regions, of gender equality and of the reduction of the weekly working-time to 35 hours. Such ideas have been incorporated into the programme of the Socialist Party since 1998. Yet, it is far from clear that they have been successful in transmitting their ideological message, as even in the 2008 electoral campaign, French media tended to present them as primordially and sometimes exclusively concerned with environmental issues.

In Italy, when the political regime evolved towards the second Republic in 1994, the political power of i Verdi was rather weak. Environmental concerns were excluded from the political agenda to the benefit of more "material" issues as corruption, the development of immigration or the high level of unemployment. In order to bypass the effects of the electoral system, i Verdi have been co-founder of the alliance of center-left, the *Margherita*. This new role has obliged them to modify their original project, abandoning the "biodegradability" of their own lists for privileging a more traditional political strategy.[29] They have chosen to personalize their political action which has undeniably contributed to the gradual "professionalization" of their party. While at the beginning of the 1990s, the Greens were criticized for their amateurism, the creation of a more hierarchical and responsible leadership has also helped them to strengthen their political programme beyond exclusive environmental concerns. They have introduced new issues such as the enlargement of civil rights, the fight against corruption, and racism. Nonetheless, even more than for Les Verts, it is a favourable relation with the broader society which i Verdi have been unable to create. While the Italian society is almost indifferent to environmental concerns, i Verdi are almost exclusively perceived through this lens. Little is known about their other proposals and consequently they can only gather a very weak level of popular support. In that sense, 75% of *I Verdi* voters have made this choice only occasionally and less than 25% have voted for them several times. The motivations of these loyal voters are quite homogeneous. The protection of the environment is always their first priority. On the contrary, the majority

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[28] J. K. Proud, "Ecology Parties in France", in *French Political Parties*, ed. N. A. Addinall (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1995), 137.

[29] They also choose to nominate a well-know leader, a spokesperson which can be recognized by the electorate: Luigi Manconi, a journalist, and sociologist which was the partner of the TV journalist Bianca Berlinguer, herself daughter of Enrico Berlinguer, the general secretary of the Communist Italian Party from 1972 to 1984.

of occasional voters justify their choices not to always vote for *I Verdi* because of their attachment to another party (30%), the weak political power of the Greens (23%) or because of what they consider as the limits of a too restrictive political programme (12%).[30]

The main problem of i Verdi, that is to say, the perception of it as a "single issue" political party, is even truer in the British case. Not only is the Green Party seen as exclusively concerned with ecological issues, but it is also presented by the British media as an unconventional party, closer to a radical NGO than to an office-seeking party. The Greens have to face a high degree of ostracism from public televisions and national newspapers so that even though they might want to broaden their policy programme, they have virtually no opportunities to let the public know it. Indirectly, their *de facto* occupation of the margins of the political system has reinforced their intransigent strategy and the relative absence of internal ideological change.[31]

In opposition with the British Greens, in Germany, it is the realists which have conquered the internal battles, leading the ecological movement to "renounce a part of its original radicalism in order to obtain concrete proofs of the 'ecologisation' of society".[32] The emergence of the German Greens seems essentially related with the ideological evolution of the party from its 1980 *Bundesprogramm* to the programmatic renovation promoted by the *Grundsatz* of April 2002. Die Grünen have evolved from a radical eco-socialism towards a political position which could be assimilated to that of classical political liberalism. Die Grünen has become a classical third party trying to exercise its blackmail potential and searching to enter in governmental coalitions. From the "limits to growth" rhetoric and the willingness to incarnate the new social movements of the period in the late 1970s, the Greens have been progressively incorporated into the political game, entering the Bundestag in 1983 with 5,3% of the vote share and in 1987 with 8,3%.[33] The German Greens have successfully transformed ecology into a political concept and instrumental tool for politicizing new social issues and renewing the political agenda of established parties, trying to promote nowadays a radical democratic politics in favour of minorities, social justice and multiculturalism. Moving from an anti-establishment position toward an active role in the politization of the public agenda might have constituted a key factor in their successes, reinforcing a realignment of part of the SPD electorate to the benefit of the Greens. After its 7,3 % of the vote share in 1994, the Greens have become involved in a governmental coalition with the SPD in 1998,

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[30] Survey realized by the Institute Directa, January 1994.

[31] L. G. Bennie, M. N. Franklin & W. Rüdig "Green Dimensions: The Ideology of the British Greens", in *Green Politics Three*, ed. W. Rüdig (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1995), 217-39.

[32] F. Faucher, *Op. Cit.*, 1999: 218.

[33] E. Papadakis, *The Green Movement in West Germany* (London & Canberra: Croom Helm, 1984), 48.

renouncing progressively to its founding objective to foster the "politics from below" towards a motivation to "reinforce the constitutional liberalism".[34] The German Greens have moved from the defence of collective rights to that of individual rights, "the democratisation of democracy, conceived previously in terms of politization of the social is now perceived in terms of institutional reform".[35]

In conclusion, it can be said that Green parties have presented three types of attitudes in relation with ideological and programmatic change. First, the British Greens are those which have been more confined has a "single issue" political groups. Yet, this position is a sign of their failure because they originally wanted to broaden their programme but have never been able to be seen beyond environmental concerns by the British public. It is even truer when we think that they have been confined to environmental issues while a majority of British NGOs and environmental groups do not support the Green Party. In general, they have remained at the margins of the British political sphere, in the incapability to bypass their radical outlook. Second, both I Verdi and Les Verts have shown a more

important willingness to broaden their political programmes, but the electorate has not perceived these transformations. In other words, while in theory they have tried to become parties with a broad political programme of "democratic radicalism", in practise, voters are generally not aware of their positions over other issues than environment. More importantly, even if their positions are known, their expertises are only considered as credible for environmental issues. Finally, and in contrast with the three other cases, Die Grünen have not only broadend their policy programmes, but the German public has also perceived this mutation. Die Grünen have actively politicized new issues such as gender equality or minority rights within the German society, creating and defending a distinct political space for themselves within the German political spectrum.

IV. External Strategies of Party Competition

Party Relations with Social Movements and Societal Change

In addition to the constraints of electoral systems and the centrality of internal organizational and ideological positions, Green parties' external strategies of party competition are determinant factors in the explanation of their successes or their failures. Two elements will be considered in this section, (1) Green parties' relations with social movements and societal change, (2) and Green parties' influences over party system change.

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[34] *The Future is Green, Alliance 90/The Greens: Program and Principles* (Bündis 90/Die Grünen, 2002) available at www.gruene.de/grundsatzprogramm-english.pdf (consulted on 26/12/2006), 7.
[35] G. Talshir, "A threefold ideological analysis of Die Grünen: from ecologized socialism to political liberalism?", *Journal of Political Ideologies*, 8(2), 2003: 157-184.

In the French case, environmental protection and new concerns linked with an increased urbanization were politicized in May 1968 and created a favourable social context for Les Verts. At that time, the vast majority of environmental campaigns were linked with local issues, such as the protection of a national park (*Parc national de la Vanoise*), against the construction of a nuclear reactor (*Fessenheim, Plogoff*), or for denouncing ecological disasters (*the Amoco Cadiz affair*). In the 1977 town council elections, some thirty Green councillors took up office.[36] Yet, contrary to the German case where the Green movement soon became predominant, the French ecologists had to share the political stage with other movements.[37] Thus, when René Dumont contested the 1974 presidential elections, only a small minority of militants supported him. In 1979, the *Mouvement d'Ecologie Politique* (MEP) tried to support the emergence of an ecological party that would focus on electoral politics. Nevertheless, the *Amis de la Terre* did not support the process, and a few months later, the *Confédération écologiste* (CE) was created to challenge the MEP's monopoly.[38] The two groups finally merged into a united national party called *Les Verts-Confédération écologiste* in 1984. However, the process of unification of a national Green party was soon disrupted by competing personal strategies. At the 1984 European elections, Brice Lalonde presented a rival ecology list, *Entente Radical Ecologiste* (ERE), which contributed to split the green vote. During all the 1980s, and even in the beginning of the 1990s when he founded a new party called *Génération Ecologiste* (GE), Lalonde's personal ambitions divided the ecologists. While in the early 1980s conflicts aroused along the question of the *institutionalization of the party*, in the early 1990s, it was on the *position on the left-right dimension*. GE defended a centrist "*ni gauche-ni droite*" position, while *Les Verts* progressively positioned themselves on the left of the political spectrum. In the 1992 regional elections, *Les Verts* received 6.8 % and GE 7,1% which could have been a very good result for a unitary ecological list.[39] Not only have the French ecologists been unable to gather the support of social movements and of the broader civil society, but also they have required more than a decade to eliminate their internal divisions. When they finally overcame them in 1996, the French public had lost its initial support.

While in France, Green social movements emerged quite early, in the

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[36] J. K. Proud, "Ecology Parties in France", in *French Political Parties*, ed. N. A. Addinall (Cardiff: University of Wales Press 1995), 133.

[37] J. Burchell, *The Evolution of Green Politics. Development and Change within European Green Parties (*London: Earthscan, 2002), 60.

[38] The internal divisions within the ecologist movement were even deepened when the MEP changed of name to become *Les Verts – Parti écologiste* in 1982. Indeed, it failed to unite the ecology movement and only six months later, in May 1983, the CE also changed its name to become *Les Verts – La Confédération écologiste*.

[39] A. Cole & B. Doherty, *Op. Cit.,* 1995: 54.

mid-1970s, but the institutionalization of a unified Green party took more than two decades, in Italy, ecological movements themselves emerged more recently, in the mid-1980s. In the 1985 elections, numerous Green lists were present in 12 Italian regions and obtained a total of 648 832 votes. Even though those lists were not yet unified, they managed to present several candidates under the same name, the "Green list". In order to capitalize on those early successes, in November 1986 a national federal organization was constituted. In 1987, thirteen Green representatives entered the national assembly for the first time, and two senators were elected, while the party obtained 2,5% of the overall national vote. The same year, a referendum convoked by I Verdi and approved by a large majority of the population prompted the abandonment of the Italian nuclear programme, which has enhanced the public visibility of the party.[40] Yet, more than twenty years later, it can be said that this early success has unfortunately remained one of the only examples of I Verdi's influence on policy-making. As in the French case, the institutionalization of the party has been complicated by internal divisions which emerged in the 1989 European elections, splitting the ecologist vote between the *Green list-European Greens* with 3,8% and the

Rainbow Greens, with 2,4%.[41] The ecologist vote was even more divided at the 1990 regional elections between three concurrent lists: the *Green lists* obtained 2,3%, the *Rainbow Greens* 1,3% and the *United Greens* 1,2%. Even though the Italian Greens originally wanted to represent an alternative to the existing party system, they never managed to capitalize on the rejection of traditional parties, as they were themselves divided for the national leadership and have lately unified their party to form *I Verdi.* Consequently, as for the French Greens, the electorate of *I Verdi* is still fluent. All electoral deceptions have been followed by a loss of precious militants. Finally, one major factor that could explain the failure of I Verdi is that their values are quite distinct from that of the broader Italian society. The relation that Italians entertain with environment is ambivalent. In a 2005 Eurobarometer survey, the Italians have the highest score in Europe on those that associate environmental concerns with the problems of pollution in the town. Nonetheless, they have the lowest score when environment protection is associated with individual responsibility: 4%. Italy is the last but one country when it is a question of asking for more information on environmental issues. While *I Verdi* have only lately tried to promote a broader political programme, through this survey it can be understood how the

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[40] R. Biorcio, "Les verts en Italie: Marginalité et Pouvoir", in *Les partis Verts en Europe*, ed. P. Delwit & J. M. De Waele (Bruxelles: Complexe 1999), 184.

[41] D. Boy & J. Chiche, "La Gauche radicale et les Verts" in *Le Vote européen 2004-2005*, P. Perrineau (Paris: Presses de Sciences Po, 2005), 64.

Italian electorate has not been very convinced so far by their strategy.[42]

The same pattern of marginal social support seems to apply to the British Greens. The Green Party is largely considered as a radical party with no real power not only to gain seats and offices but also to influence policy. What is a real sign of the failure of the Green Party is that it has not managed to become the political branch of the powerful British environmental movements. Britain is in fact the European country with the major number of environmental NGOs and with the major number of individuals affiliated to environmental groups. Organizations like Greenpeace or WWF are very powerful in Great Britain. Yet, NGOs or individual supporters of environmental groups do not see the Green Party as the representative of environmental concerns.[43] For the Green Party, political renewal has to become a reality not only in reforming political institutions in the long term, but also through the realization of direct

and intra-party democracy in the short term.[44] In that sense, the centrifugal dynamic of competition of the Green Party has reduced the prospects for compromise and electoral coalitions with third parties. The Greens have not only been unable to represent environmental social movements, but their discourse has also been in cleavage with the broad values of the conservative British society, while in political terms, they have failed to transfer the ecological issue from the social to the political sphere.

Finally, out of the four cases, Die Grünen seem to be the only ones to know relative success, both in including environmental social movements within its party structures and in creating a new electoral niche within German society. At the beginning of the 1980s, the citizen movement in Eastern Germany had the objective to create a *Gegenöffentlichkeit*, a "counter-public sphere", promoting democratic reform and the defence of human rights in the former GDR. This ideological platform constituted the basis for the future synthesis between citizen movement and party structure around the reunified Greens *Alliance 90/Die Grünen*. Since 1988, more than 325 groups such as the "Initiative for Peace and Human Rights" (IPHR) created by Wolfgang Templin in January 1986, the movement *Demokratie Jetz*, "Democracy Now" (DN) created by

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[42] Italy has witnessed tremendous social mutations since the 1950s. From a relatively poor country, it has become a consumerist society, and this tendency has been reinforced by the "Berlusconi moments" in 2004 and again in 2008 which have glorified individual merits and the cult of money. In such a context, Italian society is not willing to accept the more altruistic values proposed by the Greens. *Cf.* Eurobarometer Survey, *Attitudes of the Europeans towards Environment Protection*, April 2005. http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_217_fr.pdf.
[43] W. Rüdig, "Green Dimensions, The Ideology of the British Greens", in *Green Politics Three*, ed. W. Rüdig (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1995), 217-39.

[44] P. M. Saward "Green Democracy?", in *The Politics of Nature. Exploration in Green Political Theory*, ed. A. Dobson & P. Lucardie (London: Routledge, 1993), 24-46.

Reinhard Lampe and the *Neues Forum,* the "New Forum" (NF), were insisting on the necessity to mobilize citizens for political change after decades of apathy and mass demobilization. Hence, this highly politicized political context might have favoured the dynamics of new party institutionalisation in response to renewed societal demands. From the beginning, the citizen movements have tried to stimulate the creation of a public forum of deliberation, decentralised and promoting the *Basisdemokratie,* the democratisation of politics through the social basis.[45] Even if the strategy adopted was essentially extra-parliamentary, the citizen movements became progressively aware that party institutionalisation could permit them to play the role they wanted as a new intermediary between civil society and the state. Therefore, the initial electoral coalition Alliance 90 (IPHR, DN, NF) has also incorporated the social movements. In the aftermath of the 3rd October 1990 Unification Treaty, the process of coalition-building was fostered by the fusion of the Greens of the West and of the East in one single political party, *Alliance 90/Die Grünen* in May 1992. On that point, the strategy used differs radically from that of the British Greens. The Green critique of *Parteiendemokratie,* the "democracy of party" became suddenly obsolete with the institutionalisation, and only the ideal of participatory democracy

constituted the specific feature of the new party in relation with established ones. The same trajectory as the British Greens has also existed in Germany, as the NF movement lead by Klaus Wolfram, Bärbel Bohlev and Ingrid Köppe has refused the incorporation in the parliamentary game and the creation of parliamentary coalitions, but in the German case, this strategy has been marginalised within the party.[46] The new party has adopted a more transversal or "catch-all" political position, less radical than the British Greens, which has been better accepted by German society.

To conclude, this brief assessment of the relations between Green parties, the social movements and the broader society can show four major points. First, when Green parties as in France and Italy have suffered from their internal divisions, they have not been able, or only lately, to unify a coherent Green party. This late unification of the diverse Green movements has engendered a constant loss of militants after each electoral defeat and a major difficulty for Green parties to be seen as a real alternative. Second, in the British case, the internal divisions of the party have not been the main factors in the explanation of its failure, given that internal opponents, mainly the realist fraction, have been expelled from the party. Yet, the major dilemma of the British Greens has been their inability to gather the support of environmental

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[45] C. Olivo, *Creating a Democratic Civil Society in Eastern Germany. The Case of the Citizen Movements and Alliance 90* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 92.

[46] S. Markovits & P. S. Gorski, *The German Left: Red, Green and Beyond* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 257.

groups even though they are quite powerful in Great Britain and could have facilitated the success of the party. Third, all the three French, British and Italian parties have been penalised by their inability to broaden their social base. In fact, as could be highlighted in the Italian case, their positions have remained in cleavage with the broader society so that their electoral appeal has only attracted a minority of citizens. Last but not least, the German Greens, in contrast with the three other cases, have been much more successful, in bypassing their internal divisions, in benefiting from their links with social movements and in constantly mobilising a new segment of the electorate.

The Influence of Green Parties on Party System Change

To finish, looking at their overall influence on party system dynamics can better assess the successes and failures of the external strategies of Green parties. For Green parties to be successful, they need to defend and represent a stable electoral niche, which leads political competition to be organized in new terms. Thus, the emergence of Green parties cannot only redefine the format (the number of relevant political parties), but also the mechanic (the type of interaction between parties) of a given party system.[47] Originally, in France, Les Verts maintained a strong ideological opposition to an alliance with any other political party, which has strongly

limited their chances of becoming a coalition partner for government. While environmental groups were originally quite reluctant to the formation of a new party, their willingness to do so progressed alongside the failure of the Parti Socialiste (PS) to champion ecological issues when François Mitterrand reached the Presidency in 1981. Indeed, the PS opted to continue the national nuclear programme, which indirectly led the ecologists to organize themselves autonomously. Taking into account the important constraints of the electoral system, Les Verts can only obtain parliamentary representation through alliances. After the victory of the pragmatists within the party in 1993, Green executives have agreed to negotiate an electoral alliance with the PS. During the 1998 parliamentary elections, in some constituencies, Les Verts did not present candidates in order to support the victory of the PS, and in others, it is the PS that did not present candidates. In such constituencies, Les Verts have become the de facto representatives of the left. This system of alliances has proven beneficial for the Greens, for instance in 1996-97 when eight of their candidates were elected and Dominique Voynet was nominated environmental minister in the government of Lionel Jospin.[48]

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[47] G. Sartori, *Op. Cit.,* 1976: 43.

[48] A largely unexpected change occurred during 1996-97 as Voynet's left-leaning strategy culminated in an electoral agreement with the PS as a part of a broader left alliance. She argued that there was no other way for the party to move forward that by allying with the PS to obtain stronger parliamentary representation. Under the Red-Green accord, *Les Verts* and the PS agreed to a process of electoral cooperation in 100

Yet, the major problem is that the party suffers the consequences of its decades of internal divisions with generally low electoral results at the presidential elections. Consequently, far from being equal with the PS, they are not able to negotiate a large number of constituencies, but only a few.

In Italy, after a withdrawal of popular support to the Berlusconi government in 1996, I Verdi entered in the center-left coalition, obtaining 14 representatives at the Parliament as well as 14 senators. Even if their representation is still minimal, they have been able to exercise certain blackmail potential within the governmental coalition. After the re-election of Romano Prodi in 2006, three Green representatives were still present in the government: Pecoraro Scanio in the ministry of environment, Paolo Cento is secretary of state for the economy and Stefano Bocco is secretary of state for

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constituencies. *Les Verts* agreed to support Socialist candidates in 70 of these constituencies while in exchange, the PS made a promise not to stand candidates in the remaining 30 constituencies where *Les Verts* had strong levels of support. President Chirac's decision to call parliamentary elections a year early resulted in a surprised victory for the left. While *Les Verts* still only gained an average of 5.12% of the votes in the first round, the alliance ensured a renewed public visibility which enhanced their blackmail potential. In 2002, Noël Mamère obtained 5,25% of the vote at the presidential election, but in the last 2007 elections, the result of the Green party was again depressive. Dominique Voynet obtained only 1,57% of the votes, probably paying the price of a "utility vote" for Ségolène Royal, the candidate of the PS against the announced victory of the right-wing Nicolas Sarkozy. More than ever, *Les Verts* are entering a renewed phase of crisis.

agricultural politics. Yet, they completely disappeared from the political landscape and lost any parliamentary representation in the recent elections of April 2008. I Verdi have been rather unsuccessful in their strategy of revitalization of the Italian political scene through the promotion of new political practices. Indeed, a survey from January 2007 emphasizes that contrary to their original objective, their level of trust within Italian society is rather weak. Only 34% of the people questioned declared to trust *I Verdi*. All the leading parties have a higher level of trusts: the National Alliance (46%), Forza Italia (44%), the Left Democrats (42%) and the previous Margherita coalition (39%). In the end, i Verdi have been rather unable to redefine the political landscape.

This failure to influence party system change is even truer for the Green Party, which has played virtually no role in the last decade over British political life. While the Scottish and the Welsh nationalist parties have been able to create a regional electoral niche and influence the devolution of power in British politics, no such effects can be found for the Greens. The fact that the conventional relations between the British political institutions and the Green Party are not in favour of the latter has reinforced the party strategy of external lobbying. Trying to mobilize the public through extra-parliamentary demonstrations and unconventional political means is the only way for the Greens to compensate the "institutional sclerosis" of the system, and be able to

signal its political existence.[49] Thus, it enhances the strategy of party conflict and the vicious circle of "political marginalisation – political radicalisation".[50] Thus, the debate for the Greens has been structured on the question of the strategic option of institutionalisation more than on the political positioning in relation to other political parties. Nevertheless, the rupture chosen in searching electoral coalitions to incarnate the confluence of social movements (which itself has not been successful) seems diametrically opposed with that of the German Greens, and does not appear to bring real success. In fact, the transition of the Greens toward unconventional forms of political participation shows its impotency in front of a multitude of factors, thereby reducing the probability of its emergence. The decision to focus on an extra-parliamentary strategy is the direct result of the breakdown of its parliamentary strategy. Indeed, even if the Greens have focused on the elections and have tried to obtain seats since the beginning, their repeated electoral failures and the militants' sentiment of impotency have favoured the emergence of radical members

within the party at the beginning of the 1990s. Then, the new political line of the party has become that of a politization of non-electoral activities, an enlargement of its political strategy to direct non-violent actions and the construction of networks of citizens and associations.

In contrast, it can be said that Die Grünen have relatively restructured the German party system. Even if the German political system tends to favour established parties, it does not prevent minor parties from accessing public responsibilities and offices at the local or Länd level, facilitating the institutionalisation of new parties. For instance, the German Greens first entered the government of different Länders during the 1980s before becoming a real national party.[51] In addition, the fact that the achievement of an absolute majority at the federal level was only once possible since the Second World War (in part because the post-Nazi political system aimed to reduce the possibility of tyranny by a majority), has consequently fostered the process of coalition-building, and therefore extended the blackmail potential of minor parties. Thus, Die Grünen became a governmental party in the aftermath of the 1998 general elections, creating a coalition with the SPD while the Greens obtained only 6,7% of the vote share. Recently, the new Linksparteit has emerged at the left of the SPD and has directly paralleled the Greens. Yet, Die Grünen has

[49]   E. Grossman & S. Saurugger, *Les groupes d'intérêt. Action collective et stratégies de représentation* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2006), 87.

[50]   W. Coxall, *Pressure Groups in British Politics* (Harlow: Longman, 2001), 20; S. Tarrow, "States and opportunities: the political structuring of social movements", in *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures and Framing*, ed. D. McAdam, J. McCarthy & M. Zald (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 41-62.

[51]   T. Poguntke & B. Bernhard, *Op. Cit.,* 1992: 317-88.

remained a stable coalition partner for the SPD at all levels of the German political system, and even recently, they have entered into coalitions with the Christian Democrats. This new trend shows that much more than the other Green parties in Western Europe, Die Grünen have restructured the German party system, acquiring a pivotal role for themselves.

From the above comparison, four elements can be outlined on the influence of Green parties on party system change. First, when Green parties have completely excluded electoral alliances as in Britain, they have remained marginal to the party system and their influence on its restructuring has been virtually nonexistent. Second, when Green parties have organised electoral alliances, whether in a majoritarian system as in France, in a semi-proportional as in Italy, or in a mixed system as in Germany, they have always benefited from them. From the French case, it could even been said that the predominance of a conjunction more than a consistent strategy of alliances has penalised the potential success of the party. Third, in Germany, Italy or France, alliances have opened the doors of government office to Green parties when they have jointly won national elections with social democratic parties. However, as could highlight the German case, Green parties have only been able to restructure the existing cleavages and the structures of national competition when they have been able to secure an electoral niche for themselves.

116

Conclusion

To conclude, we can come back to our initial research questions: *Why do some Green parties succeed while other fail to gather stable electoral supports and restructure competition within their political systems?, Which factors determine the emergence of Green parties in established political systems?* In this paper, we have developed two complementary hypotheses. First, that electoral rules and party strategies are the two determinant factors, which can explain the emergence of Green parties, and second, that it is the joint effects of the two factors that explains the successes of Green parties in the long term. Following the lights shed by the comparative perspective, we find some important evidence for validating our two initial hypotheses that the emergence of Green parties is fundamentally related with institutional and strategic factors. The post-materialist factor, once conceived as a decisive variable, might constitute a sociological characteristic of the Green electorate more than an explanatory variable of Green parties' successes. It is clear that the British electoral system has drastically restrained the possibilities of emergence of the Greens, while the German system has encouraged the development of a multi-party system and the equitable representation of political forces. Yet, even though the electoral system is also highly restrictive in France, Les Verts have been able to obtain electoral victories and even enter in governmental-coalitions when they have succeeded in being coherently

organised. As we have seen, the constraints of electoral systems can be decisive but can also tell us just a part of the story. Indeed, the Italian case provides a counterfactual comparison, as even though the electoral system is permissive, it does not necessarily lead Green parties to success. In that sense, party strategies play an internal role to surrender internal divisions, to select leaders, to design a coherent policy programme and to react to the socio-political context. Strategies are also crucial determinants of party institutionalisation, of its position towards alliances with mainstream parties and of its ability to appeal to the broader electorate. In the end, while in the late 1970s, a great deal of expectations emerged in relation to Green parties' capacity to restructure established party systems and to provide an electoral alternative. Thirty years later, it might be said that Green parties have certainly been able to appeal to the European electorate, but they have failed to broaden their support and to design coherent strategies over time. The only really successful case, the German one, depicts quite well how the thesis of the complementarity between a permissive structure of opportunity and a coherent party strategy can lead to important successes.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Spirova, Maria (2007).. *Political Parties in Post-Communist Societies. Formation, Persistence, and Change* **Houndmills: Palgrave MacMillan, 214 p. + index.**

Author: Sergiu Gherghina
MPhil Student, Political Science Department, Leiden University
sergiulor@yahoo.com

A significant bulk of literature is dedicated to political parties in states that move from (almost) one-party to multi-party system. Studies focused on the nature of party organizations, institutional and behavioral legacies of previous regimes or emphasized the role of party elites in establishing transition tracks. In this context, Maria Spirova's book continues the tradition of analyzing political parties as endogenous institutions and sees their formation and persistence in the system as ways of achieving political goals defined by rational actors. Based on existing theories of party development, this book investigates how features of political parties (i.e. ideology and development) and how exogenous factors (i.e. public financing and transnational parties) influence the electoral strategies. In doing so, it accounts for the linkages between parties on the political scene and advances a theoretical model of party formation that is tested for six parties in Bulgaria and Hungary.[1]

This research fulfills both structural and quality requirements that makes it a model to follow. Divided into six chapters, the study begins by summarizing the broader theoretical framework within which it falls and by providing a theoretical model of party evolution. The latter is seen as a repeated process in which politicians define goals, translate them into electoral targets, and choose accordingly electoral strategies. The latter choice is taken on the basis of multiple factors: the electoral threshold, electoral volatility, ideological crowdedness, ethnic heterogeneity, party financing, and party organizational development. All these are included in nine specific hypotheses to be found in the second chapter, the direction of each relationship between the choice of an electoral strategy and each factor being carefully argued. Based on interviews, party documents and statistical data, the following two chapters provide detailed comparisons and analysis of relationships for each selected party.

The fifth chapter shifts the level of the analysis to system level and besides Bulgaria and Hungary the statistical analysis includes 10 other post-

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[1] The parties chosen for Bulgaria are: Bulgarian Socialist Party, Bulgarian Euro Left and the Movement for Rights and Freedoms. The ones in Hungary are: Alliance of Free Democrats, Federation of Young Democrats, and Socialist Workers' Party.

Communist party systems, chosen on their similarities in democratization. When testing the impact of expected volatility, stability of support, electoral threshold, financing regulations, and electoral system on party behavior, the author finds support for all but the electoral volatility hypothesis. The key findings, displayed in the last chapter, show that at party level the ideological position of parties and the crowdedness of the ideological spectrum, the explicit and implicit threshold of the electoral system, party financing, the expected electoral volatility, and Europarties' opinion influence the choice of an electoral strategy. At the same time, this choice appears not to be influenced by party organization. At systemic level, this study does not provide significant evidence regarding the expectation that electoral volatility is linked to the number of parties in the system, the latter being predicted by ethnic heterogeneity.

Spirova's book brings significant contributions to the literature on post-Communist political parties through its analytical and methodological approaches. In identifying the reasons and incentives for parties to compete in elections, the study raises a few relevant points. Unlike most previous studies in post-Communist world, the author argues that the system level changes are the effects of interactions among individual parties (a good reason to consider the latter as unit of analysis). Furthermore, the study discusses two often neglected factors in party development literature – party financing

and external influences. The former is operationalized, in contrast to the previously used dichotomies, as four different types ranging from least permissive to most permissive in terms of its role in the existence of independent political parties (p. 174). The evidence supports the hypothesized relationship according to which party financing type, rather than its simple presence, has to be taken into account in understanding party competition. Regarding external influences, Spirova emphasizes the role played by Europarties that provided both accession and direct and personnel assistance to national parties, thus influencing latter's electoral behavior. A more specific analytical contribution rests in considering the Bulgarian parties as central object of study. If many of the Central and Eastern European states benefit of English language literature, this study is the first to take a compared in-depth look at three important parties in the Bulgarian party system.

Methodologically, the study is complex, innovative and empirically rich in useful data for further research. They consist of the combination of 16 interviews with party leaders in 2002-2003, primary archival sources (programs, statutes, and conference and congress materials), and secondary sources in the form of statistical data. All are employed in a two-phased research design, with consecutive specific methods used for each level, which deals with both individual and party system levels in the attempt to

provide a better picture of electoral strategies. Most of the explanatory variables for electoral strategies are visible at individual party level and are qualitatively analyzed in a *small N* design. By selecting cases that differ both on independent and dependent variables, the author seeks to identify specifics of the relationships she advances in the theoretical framework. The second level of analysis, party system, is relevant as the ideological spectrum, party funding and organizational strength can be evaluated only in relationship with other players in elections.

One specific methodological issue could have been addressed more explicit by the author in order to make the case selection more comprehensive. When expanding the discussion to more post-Communist party systems, selected on the relative similarity in experience with democracy, Spirova includes Ukraine. This case is particularly different with respect to the political system as political parties did not have equal treatment during Kuchma's regime, their life and activities being closer to what we register in the other 11 cases only after 2000 (and especially after 2003). Consequently, the life of the party system is shorter and might make the cases less comparable.

The relevant theoretical elaborations, empirical tests, and analytical underpinnings and findings make Spirova's book a major contribution to the literature on party behavior in newly emerged democracies. The close

analysis of Bulgarian and Hungarian parties provides valuable insights and evidence to distinguish between factors that influence parties and party systems. In this respect, the volume is useful for both academics and practitioners as it represents a valid source of information regarding party behavior, and rational strategies.

Harald Wydra (2007). *Communism and the Emergence of Democracy.* **New York: Cambridge University Press, 314 pp.**

Author: Izabela Kisilowska
PhD candidate, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Cambridge University
ik258@cam.ac.uk

The sudden collapse of communism and the subsequent spread of democracy in Central and Eastern Europe came as a surprise and led to considerable confusion among social scientists: How could have this have happened? How could we have failed to foresee this? Perhaps the surprise would have been smaller if one looked deeper into the communist past. In his new book *Communism and the Emergence of Democracy,* Harald Wydra aims to do what might seem paradoxical: to bring communism back into the study of democracy. Casting doubts on dominant structural and system-oriented perspectives on democratisation, he offers a fresh view on the active role of communist experience in shaping the post-communism order in the region.

At the core of his argument lies the idea of democratisation as an ongoing, potentially endless process of meaning-formation, in which significant role is played by transformative experiences. Such experiences reshape existing and generate new symbols, meanings, memories and expectations that contribute to the formation of sustainable democratic consciousness within the oppressed societies. The author presents an extensive analysis of such events, from the Russian Revolutions of 1917, to the Hungarian uprising of 1956, to the Prague Spring of 1968, and Polish 'self-limiting' revolution in 1980-1981. Even if, as he notices, they did not bring about democratic transitions as a new constitutional form of government, their afterlife constituted a powerful element in the political spirituality of democratisation (p. 242).

For example, the October Revolution, in the author's view, not only institutionalised a new type of political regime, regarded later as totalitarian, but also gave rise to an entirely new form of political society. In workers' perception, democracy and social revolution were both directed at the same goal, namely the political rejection of the "bourgeois" state. As Wydra notices, "it would hardly have occurred to any observers in late 1916 to dispute the socialists' claim to belong to the 'democratic club'" (p. 132). In a similar vain, the Hungarian, Czechoslovakian and Polish struggles, constituting existential crises for the

societies at hand are seen by the author as instrumental in creating a dissident 'second reality', or anti-politics, that at a later stage provided models, beliefs, and the spirit for overcoming autocratic rule.

Such an account goes far beyond the prevailing Cold-War perspective on communism as an essentially undemocratic, 'wrong' experience, or merely a burdensome legacy of totalitarian repression that preceded a new, democratic stage of political development. Moreover, the author eloquently juxtaposes the logic of outcome, dominant in 'transitology' studies that treat democracy as a developmental goal, a common destination or an imperative of convergence with the logic of experience that appreciates the multi-level links between a new order and the previous one.

In his critical analysis, Wydra also questions the declared triumph of both Western values and efficiency of institutional design in Central and Eastern Europe. Establishing democracy in the region, he claims, resulted rather from a "double rejection" – of external domination and of communism as a system of power based on dehumanizing violence and oppression. The author rejects the simplistic, in his opinion, interpretation of democratisation as a one-time, deliberate choice made by former communist societies at the beginning of the 1990's based on "stable individual preferences for a well-articulated model of 'liberal democracy'" (p. 255)

developed through reflection and rationality. Instead, he suggests, the success of democratisation was possible thanks to the lengthy formation of popular meanings and articulation of freedom in the situational logic of transformative events that took place back in the communist times. "Before democracy becomes a system in which all players play according to the rules, (…) the people in the community need to transform their spirit." (p. 280) As the author convincingly argues, we should see democracy as occurring not after the fall of, but 'within' communism.

Undoubtedly, the most valuable contribution of the book to both studies of democratisation and political inquiry more generally is the experiential approach to social reality the author introduces. It challenges a traditional way of classifying extraordinary, transformative situations that societies occasionally face as intangible disruptions to an otherwise predictable, measurable and peaceful reality. As he notes, "the crucial point is to recognise that structure and order are pregnant with disorder. This is because disorder is not brought from outside but because orderly structures bear inside themselves the potentiality of dissolution of order" (p. 43). Order-threatening, chaotic and hazardous as they are, transformative situations with their accelerated rhythms, intensified emotions, and bodily participation, the author argues, create an ontological openness in human beings and can profoundly alter cognitive frames. As a

result, they lay the ground for outcomes that are unthinkable before dramatic circumstances actually occur. The task of critical understanding, Wydra aptly remarks, should then aim at unravelling how the situational premises shift, develop, and transform from the rapture to the redress of a crisis.

The most confusing point of Wydra's work seems to be linking his well-articulated concept of democratisation as a long-term process of meaning-formation with a separate idea of democracy as a civilising process understood as the elimination of violence from power relations. Accurate as such a framing might be, it does not seem particularly novel. In particular, it can be tracked back to the analysis of the formation of modern Western societies. The concept is also influential in the theories of a state formation. Moreover, its elaboration seems confusing in the context of Central and Eastern Europe, where democratic ideas gained popularity even before communism. Finally, the argument goes beyond the central theme of the book, making it unnecessarily complicated and sometimes indeed difficult to comprehend.

Wydra's book can be of great importance given today's still unfulfilled search for the answer to why democracy works in some parts of the world and not in the other. Specifically, it provides a great insight into why democracy has endured in Eastern Europe: as its legitimation developed long before it actually appeared in a

form of constitutional government. Accordingly, we should not limit our perception of democratisations to merely setting institutional arrangements, but see them as longer processes of formation of popular democratic consciousness that take place in autocratic regimes. After all, as the author convincingly shows, democratic institutions – like medicines – succeed not only because of their quality or dosage, but also because of the nature of the body to which they are applied.

Rein Taagepera (2007). *Predicting Party Sizes: the logic of simple electoral systems.* **Oxford: Oxford University Press.**

Author: Jelena Dzankic
PhD Candidate at the Centre of International Studies,
University of Cambridge (New Hall College)
e-mail:dzankic@gmail.com

Building on Taagepera and Shugart's *Seats and Votes* (1989), *Predicting Party Sizes* (2007) aims to cast a new light on the voluminous and ever-expanding literature on electoral systems. Inspired by the lack of a paradigm in academic literature that would enable a consistent analysis of party systems, the author uses the simple electoral systems (First-Past-The-Post and List Proportional Representation) in order to create a model for predicting the number and magnitude distribution of political

parties. Taagepera's model stresses multiplications and power functions as the grounds for determining the relationship between the components of the electoral systems. In calculating the size of the party, Taagepera largely relies on the product of district magnitude and size of assembly, while the seat allocation formula and the ballot system - which he considers core components of electoral systems - are irrelevant to the model. *Predicting Party Sizes* is divided in three parts, with each of the chapters structured around the potential scope of interest of the three types of target audience: practitioners of politics, students of political science and researchers.

The first part of *Predicting Party Sizes* focuses predominantly on the rules of the game, emphasizing the idea from his 1989 book – that electoral systems are the Rosetta Stone for understanding some branches of the political science. The elaboration on the importance, origins and components of the electoral systems, helps understand the logic of functioning of simple and complex electoral schemes. By using the system of elimination, the subsequent chapters provide tools for understanding the deviations, the proportionality profiles, and the seat product in simple electoral systems. The first part ends with the analysis of the models constructed prior to data inputs –'quantitatively predictive models' – which are used for calculating the 'functional form of relationship among variables' (pp.95). These models - a novelty compared to *Seats and Votes* - give an introduction

into the second part of the book, dealing with the logic of the simple electoral systems.

In the second part of the book, Taagepera develops a paradigm that defies the Duvergerian Agenda (explaining the logics of third party votes decline over the years), which was used for calculating the average seat and vote share distributions for over five decades. Instead, Taagepera advances a model that is able to describe the seat shares of each of the parties, the tenure of cabinets, the thresholds of representation and the institutional impact on votes. Aside from representing another novelty compared to the 1989 book, this paradigm offers a good lead into the last part of the book: expectancies from the electoral laws. There, the author focuses on the logic of designing electoral laws, and explains to what extent the party systems can be affected by institutional or 'politicized social cleavages', such as geography or ethnicity (pp. 277-8).

According to the author, the model makes a connection between the institutional inputs (electoral rules, etc.) and political outputs (composition of parliaments, tenure of governments), capturing the attention of a wider audience. Taagepera claims that his model will assist the practitioners of politics understand the mechanics and rules of the game, thus helping countries with short cabinet duration implement long-term policies. Certainly, he also pays attention to the pathologies of the electoral systems

(malapportionment, gerrymander, bipartisan gerrymander), yet treating them only as minor deviations, i.e. 'sources of increased noise' (pp. 36-37) in analyzing the regularities across the electoral systems. This might result as a problem for his second and third target audience - students of political science and researchers - both of whom would require a more elegant elaboration on the upshots of these pathologies on the model and their subsequent effect on the reality of party systems.

Yet, the lack of variables within the model and the substitution of theoretical deliberation with a model based on logics of sequential progression might be a direct consequence of Taagepera's academic background in natural sciences. Using the methods closer to physics than to political science makes the book appealing primarily to the analysts or scholars developing rational choice schemes. In fact, linear analysis of simple electoral systems is considered only one stage in constructing the wider model that would establish the correlations among numerous variables affecting the party sizes and seat distribution. In its final stage, this model would develop into an important tool for informed institutional design.

Similarly, the author's political activism in Estonia may have contributed to the form of the book, since each chapter initially starts with pragmatic advice for the practitioners, bullet-pointed for the purposes of clarity. The chapters further continue to explain more in detail the logical reasoning behind model, and

give it practical application in several countries, thus targeting students of political science and researchers. However, the attempt of drawing artificial lines between the three types of audience appears slightly exaggerated in the book, which might peter out the flair of Taagepera's model.

Overall, Taagepera's book is an interesting piece of reading – which still fails to address all of its target audience to the same extent. While the practitioners will probably find the extensive mathematical models tiresome, and will probably focus on the bullet-pointed summaries; the students and researchers of political party systems are likely to find these models interesting, yet they are likely to be dissatisfied by the conclusions the model proposes, as these hardly offer anything pristine. A further setback of the model is its way of dealing with the problem of endogeneity, whereby politicians decide on an electoral system which eventually reproduces the party system and congeals it in a certain form (p.7). Although Taagepera constructs a two-way relationship between the electoral system and the political parties, his model fails to consider the exogenous variables that could disturb this two-way relationship. As such, it has a higher value in description of the existing electoral systems than in analyzing or predicting the outcomes of fluctuations within those systems. Yet, as announced by the author, this model is only one stage in finding a better formula for more complex deliberations. This is likely to

occur after the adjunction of variables, which Taagepera considers important denominators for more precise predictions. Most readers of *Predicting Party Sizes,* thus, will be keen on finding out how the model develops with the inclusion of new variables.

Aliza Marcus (2007).. *Blood and Belief, the PKK and the Kurdish Fight for Independence*. **New York and London: New York University Press, pp. 395**

Ali Kemal Özcan (2005). *Turkey's Kurds, a theoretical analysis of the PKK and Abdullah Öcalan*. **London and New York: Routledge, pp. 310**

Author: Joost Jongerden
Assistant Professor
Social Sciences Group-Wageningen University & Research
joost.jongerden@wur.nl

The Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) is one of the most important secular insurgent political movements in Kurdistan[2] and maybe even the Middle East. Unlike most Kurdish political parties, which adopted a rather conservative outlook and were organized around tribal leaders and structures, the PKK originated in the 1970s from the radical left in Turkey and drew its leaders, members and militants from the disenfranchised. Its

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[2] Kurdistan refers to a geographical region in the Middle East covering large parts of Southeast Turkey, Northern Syria, Northern Iraq, and Northwestern Iran.

undisputed leader, Abdullah Öcalan, was born in 1947 to a poor family in Ömerli, a village in the southeastern province of Urfa, bordering Syria. The PKK's fierce stance, strong convictions, and disciplined but decentralized organization contributed to a steady rise and growing effectiveness of the party through the 1980s. After years of training, the guerrilla war for the political liberation of Kurdistan and a social revolution in Kurdish society was initiated with simultaneous raids on the gendarmerie stations and officers' apartments in the Eruh and Semdinli districts of Hakkari on the night of August 15th, 1984. When the PKK began its guerrilla campaign, the organization had no more than a couple of hundred armed fighters—within ten years this number had increased to 15,000–20,000. Today, the party is believed to have a guerrilla force of about 6,000 men and women, but its political influence on the Kurds and politics in the region exceeds this number. The PKK has been seriously understudied,[3] but recently two books on the PKK have been published.

Turkey's Kurds, a theoretical analysis of the PKK and Abdullah Öcalan written by Ali Kemal Özcan takes as its starting point the question of how the PKK turned from a group of university students into a mass movement. Özcan wrote his book with inside knowledge. He received PKK educational training

in both London and the Party Central School at the Mahsum Korkmaz Academy in the Beka'a valley in Lebanon. As a trainee he interviewed Abdullah Öcalan twice. In Syrian-Kurdistan he spoke with family members of PKK guerillas who had lost their lives, and for his study in political sciences at the University of Kent he did field work Turkish-Kurdistan.

Özcan starts his analysis with a brief history of the PKK before it assumed its name, roughly the period 1971-1978. He discusses Öcalan's initial sympathy for the People's Liberation Party of Turkey THKO and the process underlying the formation of a party for the liberation of Kurdistan. This is followed by a rather extensive discussion of the PKK's political discourse and objectives, and alleged changes in these, during the two-decade period from the party's establishment in 1978 to the abduction of Abdullah Öcalan in 1999. A brief comparison of two party programs, that of 1995 and 2000, leads the author to the conclusion that the PKK has gone through a metamorphosis (p. 135). Özcan concludes that in this period the PKK emerged from (not to say threw off) its Workers Party of Kurdistan heritage, fundamentally transforming from a party of Kurdistan to a party of Turkey. This represents a profound shift indeed, certainly a metamorphosis, implying a recognition of Turkish national sovereignty (within which the claim is made for regional autonomy), rather than a fight for national independence (for what is currently Turkish

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[3] An exception is Paul White, *Primitive Rebels or Revolutionary Modernizers, the Kurdish National Movement in Turkey*, London & New York, Zed Books.

Kurdistan). However, such a conclusion needs more support than some evidence obtained from a comparison of two party programs. Moreover, this so-called political turn is already present in interviews with Öcalan from as early as 1993. This implies that the so-called metamorphosis is not a radical turn in politics following the detention of Öcalan, as is argued.

The discourse analysis is followed by a brief discussion of the relationship between the individual and the PKK, which revolves around the concept of ideology and party organization. The PKK, Abdullah Öcalan argues, is primarily a movement of articulating an ideology, and through this ideology the people is created. In the PKK, the Party Leadership, an abstraction referring to Abdulah Öcalan, is the ideological center. The great challenge and task every member and militant of the PKK faces is to understand Öcalan, and through him 'becoming PKK'. Ideological commitment thus becomes subordination to Abdulah Öcalan. The relation between the individual and the party is also treated through the strong commitment expected from party members. PKK membership is *all-day membership*, as it is termed, which, rather more than the name suggests, goes beyond full-time membership, abolishing the difference between public and private. Unfortunately, the author does not go beyond raising the issue. There are other points where Özcan stops just as the discussion becomes interesting. For example, he mentions incidentally that when

husband and wife join the party, the responsibility for children is taken over by the PKK, and various arrangements exists for 'party children', depending on the condition in a particular country (pp. 158, 289). But this is all he says, no further elaboration on the kind of arrangements, the particular conditions, how the party takes over responsibility and the way these 'party-children' grow up.

Although the author has interesting data and raises interesting issues, *Turkey's Kurds* is ridden with incomprehensive language and bold generalizations. In addition to assuming, for example, that tribes are historically unchanged phenomena, the author also simply states several times that the PKK is a Marxist organization. The PKK's relation to Marxism has always been complex and it is a simplification just to hold up the PKK as Marxist. The long exposé on nation and nationalism in the beginning of the book and intended as a theoretical framework lacks clarity and focus, and only takes us to simple assertions such as: a nation is 'the population of a modern state' (p. 32) (while the fact that there is a Kurdish issue itself proves that a nation is not just the population of a state) and a nation 'is made of ethnicity' (where there is general consensus among scholars that nations are defined by culture) (p. 45).

Pertinently, Ernest Gellner, one of the leading scholars on nationalism and referred to several times in *Turkey's Kurds*, overtly rejects the idea that the

nation is an updated version of the 'ethnos', arguing to the contrary that nations depend on the abolition of the ethnos, with two empirical exceptions on this rule, the Somali's and the Kurds. This would have made an engaging starting point for analysis, but is passed over. All in all, it is to be regretted that Özcan put so much effort into summarizing different notions of nations and nationalism, which keeps on popping up in the book, rather than putting more effort into building up a case from his potentially rich empirical data.

Blood and Belief is written by Aliza Marcus, former international press correspondent who covered the PKK for more than eight years, first as a freelance reporter for the Christian Science Monitor and later as staff writer for Reuters. Through the eyes of participants, Marcus discusses PKK milestones, including: the foundation of the party in 1978 in a village called Fis, in the district of Lice, north of Diyarbakir; the struggle in Hilvan, where the PKK engaged in a fight with a tribe loyal to the state, but disliked among the local population; and the assault on Mehmet Celal Bucak, a high-ranking member of the conservative Justice Party and exploitive landlord in Siverek. The planned assassination was not only a spectacular example of propaganda-of-the-deed, in this case to announce the establishment of the PKK, but also revealed much about the PKK philosophy and *modus operandi*. It was a declaration of war against the *comprador*, the landlord class

collaborating with the Turkish state. Somehow missing, unfortunately, is a treatment of the killing of Haki Karer, in his student years a housemate of Abdullah Öcalan. Not a Kurd but a Turk from Ordu, Haki Karer belonged to the small group of confidants from which the PKK emerged. He was killed in Antep in 1977, allegedly by members of a rival Kurdish group. In the party's historiography, the death of Haki Karer is related to the decision to deepen and strengthen the struggle and to establish a party: the PKK. Yet his brother and co-founder of the PKK, Baki Karer, later claimed his brother had been killed after a disagreement with Abdullah Öcalan.

Even though *Blood and Belief* includes a small section treating the period 1999-2007, the book actually ends in 1999. This explains why the split of the PKK-Vijin group led by Mehmet Şener and Sari Baran is discussed, in interesting detail, but an internal struggle within PKK-KADEK in the period 2000-2004 is unfortunately not. The latter saw some high ranking PKK cadres trying to reform the party from within, and end the situation in which Abdullah Öcalan directed the party from the prison-island of Imrali through meetings with his lawyers. Following their failure to reform the party, this group of PKK cadres left the party – among them Nizamettin Taş, Central Committee member since 1986, and after Sari Baran's departure the highest commander of the ARGK and Osman Öcalan, the brother of PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan. They established a

new party called the Patriotic Democratic Party (PWD).

Most striking is the section on the course of the war after 1993, when the army changes its strategy and the PKK begins to lose ground, literally. The new approach, referred to as the 'field domination doctrine' implied, among other things, that the armed forces would abandon the approach of garrison-line-of-defense and went instead for hot-pursuit. This new doctrine was also associated with the evacuation and destruction of thousands of rural settlements, according to many experts a constitutive part of the counter-insurgency of the Turkish Armed Forces. Quoting guerilla commanders at that time, Marcus gives ample evidence of how the new war strategy of the Turkish armed forces changed the relations in the field. Not only was the guerilla cut off from its support and supplies, the units were also immobilized. The PKK couldn't move around as easily as before (p. 223). Yet Abdullah Öcalan wanted his fighters to speed up the fight and increase the size of battalions to create liberated areas. The conditions of war have changed, however, and this strategy only resulted in more losses (p. 241) Not before PKK commanders have commented on this phase of the war, making their reflections among the most important in the book.

Aliza Marcus got most of her data from PKK dissidents. The list of interviewed dissidents is impressive, among them activists who already had joined the organization before it became the PKK in 1978, and field commanders of the PKK's armed wing, the ARGK. The interviews with these dissidents are an important source of information and it may be a good idea to publish their transcripts, perhaps as an annex to the book in a second edition. If it comes to recommendations, a map of the Kurdistan region indicating the location of some of the frequently mentioned places, such as the Haftanin or the Lolan camps, would have been rather useful (in addition to the map of Turkey already included). A shortcoming for a book about the PKK is that no (senior) PKK member loyal to the party has been interviewed (e.g. Murat Karayılan, Duran Kalkan, Ali Haydar Kaytan, Zübeyir Aydar, and Cemil Bayık)

Blood and Belief has a clear structure, telling the story of group and party-formation, development and growth, and the major set-backs the PKK experienced. Nevertheless, the book does not follow a simple 'rise and fall' pattern. On the contrary, Marcus discusses how the PKK again and again succeeds in reinventing itself, coming back after virtual defeat. To its merit, the book is a good read, compelling and vivid, mainly because Marcus approaches her subject through the stories of those who once played a role within the PKK. As a result, *Blood and Belief* is a rich source and valuable contribution to the social and political history of the PKK in particular, and to the Kurdish national movement and Kurdish studies in general. Notwithstanding the omissions, it is

highly recommended to all those interested in the PKK and its wider context, guerrilla politics and the ongoing situation in the region.

Finally, the publication of these two books brings to our attention the fact that so little is written about the PKK in English. This is an enormous demerit of Kurdish and Turkish (and Middle Eastern) studies, since the PKK has been and still is one of the most important secular insurgent movements in the region.