

Restructuring the Party Systems in Central Europe

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Only five years have elapsed since the fall of the Berlin Wall in late 1989 and the collapse of communist party rule in central and eastern Europe. During these five years, each of the former communist countries in this region held one or more elections. In contrast to nearly fifty years of experience in these nations since World War II, the post-1989 elections were more or less free and all featured multiple parties competing openly for votes--which was unknown during communist rule. Many questions arise from this abrupt change in electoral politics, but this paper addresses only three dealing with the restructuring of the party systems in these countries. (1) To what extent are individual parties in central and eastern Europe becoming institutionalized? (2) How stable (or how volatile) are the voting patterns for parties across elections? (3) How does the experience of these "postauthoritarian" elections compare with the first elections in Western Europe following the end of World War II? This paper will offer some answers to these questions with specific reference to the political experience of four central European countries: the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia. It begins with an overview of the political situation in central and eastern Europe following the collapse of communism.

Overview of Elections and Party Politics Since 1989¹

From World War II to 1989, most of the communist nations in Eastern Europe were ruled by a single Communist Party (as in Albania, Hungary, Romania, and the USSR) or by a Communist Party that dominated one or more satellite parties in a hegemonic multiparty system (as

¹This section draws heavily on Janda (1993b).

in Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Poland, and East Germany). Falling somewhere between these categories was Yugoslavia, which was governed by a League of Communists composed of parties reflecting its several ethnic republics. Following the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989, these party systems were entirely transformed. By 1990, each country (Albania in 1991) quickly held relatively free elections that shattered the old regime. In most cases, power was transferred to those with little connection to the old leadership or to those who had been dissident Communists. In all cases, the former Communist parties soon disbanded or reformed under different names to compete with new parties for votes and political influence.

The first wave of elections (1989-1990) tended to go heavily against Communist candidates and toward candidates backed by mass popular movements. In Poland, for example, Lech Walesa's labor-based Solidarity movement swept nearly all the offices it contested in 1989. In Czechoslovakia, Vaclav Havel's Civic Forum (and its Slovak counterpart, Public Against Violence) decisively defeated the Communist candidates in the 1990 parliamentary elections. Old line Communist rulers were also ousted that year in Hungary and East Germany. Although communist governments were reelected in Albania and Bulgaria in 1990, even these hardline regimes were defeated by opposition forces in the second round of elections--Bulgaria in 1991 and Albania in 1992. In Russia itself, only the Communist Party was allowed to participate as a party in 1990 elections for the 1,068 seats in the Congress of People's Deputies. Nevertheless, many candidates were backed by popular fronts, interest groups, and political clubs that had arisen under glasnost, and "Democratic Russia," a loose organization of progressive forces, claimed 190 seats after the election. In Russia's historic popular election for president in 1991, Boris Yeltsin won 57 percent of the vote against five other candidates, some of whom were backed by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Only in Romania did voters keep former communists in power through 1992, although old-line Communists also won elections in Ukraine, the largest republic after Russia. However, three small Baltic republics (Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania) ousted their former

Communist leaders, most convincingly in Lithuania, where the mass popular movement Sajudis won about 65 percent of the parliamentary seats in early elections.

Despite the initial landslides toward mass-based democratic movements in some cases, the most characteristic feature of elections in these former communist nations was the proliferation of political parties, as political entrepreneurs sought to take advantage of an uprooted electorate. For example, Poland quickly had over 100 registered parties, Romania over 80, and Bulgaria over 50. A survey of parties in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union published in 1991 listed over 500 different parties. Most of these parties were called "couch" parties (the entire membership would fit on a sofa), and they had little structure or staff. The proliferation of ephemeral parties produced political confusion, as voters faced a bewildering array of choices in an unfamiliar market. In Romania, citizens who were new to free elections could choose among the National Democrats, Romanian Democrats, Free Democrats, Social Democrats, Liberal Democrats, Constitutional Democrats, and Christian Democrats--to name a few that appropriated the "democrat" label. One consequence was disillusion with elections and a decline in voter turnout. In Poland, for example, only 42 percent of the eligible electorate voted in the parliamentary elections of 1991, which saw 29 different parties elected to the lower house, including the Polish Party of the Friends of Beer (Beer Lovers Party), which won 16 seats in the lower house of parliament in 1991.

In general terms, the nascent parties that sprouted in the former Communist countries can be classified into seven types.² First, there were the parties of mass democratic movements--Solidarity in Poland, Civic Forum in Czechoslovakia, and Sajudis in Lithuania, for instance--that were often instrumental in forcing the communist authorities to schedule free elections. However, most parties of this type dramatically lost support in the second wave of elections. Second were the remnants of the former Communist Party operating with names like the Socialist Party (Albania, Bulgaria, and Hungary) or the National Salvation Front (Romania). These parties sometimes

²This classification is adapted from Szajkowski (1991), p. viii.

changed their names to improve their image and competitive position. In Lithuania, for instance, the former Communists--reorganized as the Democratic Labour Party--outpolled the Sajudis in the November 1992 parliamentary election and regained the government. In July 1993, the Democratic National Salvation Front in Romania was relabeled the Party for Social Democracy.

A third type consisted of parties that took up the mantle of pre-World War II parties, such as various farmers and liberal parties. Sometimes, as in the case of the Polish Democratic Party and the Christian Democratic Union in East Germany, these parties had functioned as satellite parties under Communist hegemony. A fourth kind represented nationalist parties pushing ethnic interests, as for example, the Hungarian National Democratic Union in Romania and three different Hungarian parties in Slovakia. Fifth were religious parties, typically Christian Democrats. A sixth category consisted of parties modeled after Western political values, such as environmentalism, feminism, and capitalism. Finally, there were the frivolous parties, like the Beer Lovers' and the Volcano parties in Poland.

The number of parties winning representation to parliament in these aspiring democracies depended heavily on the nature of the country's electoral system. Countries using proportional representation and having few electoral barriers to discourage minor parties spawned severely fragmented party systems.³ Poland, for example, did not require parties to achieve any minimum vote (threshold) to gain representation in 1991, and none of its 29 parliamentary parties had more than 13 percent of the vote. This fragmentation in the Polish parliament hindered the formation of a governing coalition. Hungary, on the other hand, required that parties win 4 percent of the national vote in 1990, and only six out of more than 65 registered parties entered parliament.

³Countries that did not use proportional representation for parliamentary elections, such as Russia, usually required that candidates win an absolute majority of the vote or face a runoff election. This contrasts with the practice in Anglo-American democracies of requiring only a simple plurality of the vote, which tends to produce two-party systems. The majority requirement and the two-ballot system (also used in France, but not widely elsewhere in the West) favors party fragmentation. Minor parties often form for the purpose of denying the leading candidate a majority on the first ballot and thus costing him or her immediate election. The minor parties can then bargain their support on the second ballot, usually held within one month of the first ballot, in exchange for political favors.

Following Hungary's example, Poland established a 5 percent threshold for the 1993 election, and only seven parties won parliamentary seats. The new democracies in central and eastern Europe are certain to experiment with different electoral systems in restructuring their party systems.

Assessing Party Institutionalization⁴

Institutionalization is the process by which organizations become established and acquire value and stability (Huntington (1965, 394). In this process, Panebianco says, "The organization [the party] slowly loses its character as a tool: it becomes valuable in and of itself, and its goals become inseparable and indistinguishable from it. In this way, its preservation and survival become a 'goal' for a great number of its supporters" (1988, p. 53). As Welfling (1973, 13) pointed out, institutionalization is not only a process but a property of an organization at a point in time. As a property, party institutionalization can be defined as the extent to which a party is reified in the public mind so that it exists as a social organization apart from its momentary leaders while regularly engaging in valued patterns of behavior (Janda 1980, 19). Sartori incorporates this concept of party institutionalization in his definition of a "structured" party system as "a state of the system in which the major parties become 'solid' and more 'real' than the personalities" (1968, pp. 28). Thus a structured party system is marked by the presence of mature, established parties that have survived leadership changes. The former communist parties were highly institutionalized in the old party systems in central and eastern Europe, and the new parties formed in these countries are only beginning the process of institutionalization. How long it takes for them to become institutionalized and the party system in these countries to be restructured remains to be seen.

The state of party institutionalization has been measured in various ways. Like all complex concepts, it should be measured using multiple indicators but rarely is. One attempt to measure party institutionalization in the 1950s and 1960s employed a scale built from measures of party

⁴This section draws on Janda (1993a), pp. 167-168.

age, electoral stability, legislative stability, and leadership change.⁵ Dix (1992) later measured party institutionalization in Latin America on a variety of dimensions originally proposed by Huntington (1965). More often, the concept has been tapped with simple counts of splits and mergers (Lane and Ersson, 1991) or measures of minimum election strength and minimum durability. Rose and Mackie, for example, said, "a party is judged to have become institutionalized if it fights more than three national elections. A group that fails to do this is not an established political party, but an ephemeral party" (1988, 536). Applying their criterion to 19 democratic countries from electoral origins through 1983, they uncovered 369 parties that contested at least one national election and won at least 1 percent of the vote, but barely more than half of these became institutionalized.

According to the criteria used by Rose and Mackie, none of the present central and eastern European parties are institutionalized, for none have fought more than three national elections. One expects parties in central and eastern Europe to suffer by comparison with those in established democracies, but they also compare poorly with other parties in developing regions. Consider the case of Latin America, which has had decades of experience with multiparty politics but a spotty record concerning democracy. Since the 1970s, however, countries in this region have moved fitfully but steadily toward democratic government (Diamond, Linz, and Lipset, 1989). Dix, who has systematically studied the relationship between democratization and the institutionalization of political parties in Latin America, determined that "on the whole, Latin American party systems, as well as many individual parties, were somewhat more institutionalized as the 1990s began than they were during Latin America's previous democratic heyday around 1960" (1992, p. 505)

To illustrate his point with the indicator of party age, Dix stated that the average age of the "significant" parties "climbed modestly from 40.2 years in 1965 to 45.5 in 1989" (p. 491).

⁵Intercorrelations among indicators of age, leadership competition, legislative stability, and electoral stability produced a single factor solution for 150 political parties and a scale with a Cronbach reliability coefficient of .79 (Janda 1980, 143-144, 155).

Nevertheless, he concluded, that "most parties and party systems in most Latin American countries have a long way to go to meet the levels of institutionalization attained by most parties in the so-called developed nations. For the most part, they are still far from becoming fully institutionalized" (p. 505). Although party age is only one indicator of party institutionalization, it is sobering to realize that the new parliamentary parties in central and eastern Europe (most of which were born in 1990 or later) are mere babes compared to the average age of 45.5 for prominent Latin American parties in 1989.

Clearly, the numerous new parties in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union face a challenge of institutionalization. In the 1989 Polish elections, the Solidarity Civic Committee (with roots back to 1980) swept nearly all the parliamentary offices it contested, but Heyns and Bialecki (1991) and Jasiewicz (1992) attributed its success to anti-government voting rather than to pro-Solidarity sentiment. By the spring of 1991, Solidarity had split and it fell to only about 5 percent of the votes and seats in the October elections to the Polish parliament. Reflecting on the 29 parties represented in the 460 seat chamber, Jasiewicz said, "With the exception of the renamed communists and a few veteran opposition groups ..., the parties are brand new. They have no tradition, no apparatus, no organizational history, no established rules of conduct" (1992, 66).

The situation was comparable in the former Soviet Union, which, according to Kelley (1992), demonstrated "behavioral" pluralism in 1991 by spawning more than 60,000 political organizations. However, Kelley said the Soviet Union lacked "institutionalized" pluralism and certainly was not a multiparty system,

at least inasmuch as that description commonly implies that the party structures channel political conflict, accurately reflect the views of and speak for particular constituencies, and take part in the functioning of government or opposition. In many ways, the evolution of the party and group structures has not reached that level of maturity (1992, 31).

McFaul held that party development in Russia was hampered by citizens' obvious reasons to distrust and disdain political parties and by the new parties' reluctance in discarding old attitudes about the purposes and functions of political organizations. "Finally," McFaul said, "there are simply too many parties; democracy has been hindered by too much democracy" (1992, 32).⁶

As we will see, the picture is not all negative, certainly not in central Europe--not even in Poland. In the next section, we will look more closely at the electoral patterns in the postauthoritarian period for four central European countries--Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Hungary--the so-called Visegrad group created to press for membership in the European Union (Weiner, 1994, pp. 158-159). Although party politics in each of these nations have evolved along quite different paths, each country shows some tendencies toward party institutionalization and restructuring of its party system.

Electoral Volatility

In democratic governments, political parties gain power through competing for citizens' votes in free elections. One indicator of the institutionalization of political parties, then, is the extent to which the same parties command consistent support from the electorate. The change in the party vote cast in successive elections has become known as electoral "volatility" and measured by a formula proposed by Przeworski (1975), popularized by Pedersen (1979), and analyzed by Bartolini and Mair (1990). The standard formula for aggregate volatility calculated over all N parties in a system is

$$(\text{Volatility}) V = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^N |p_{i(t)} - p_{i(t-1)}|}{2} \quad \text{where } p_{i(t)} = \% \text{ of vote for party } i \text{ at election } t.$$

⁶Given the proliferation of parties in the former communist countries, one needs a reference guide to party politics, and some have already been published. Szajkowski (1991) listed more than 500 parties in 12 countries in the region, and other books by Pribylovskii (1992) and Abramov and Darchiyev (1992) described hundreds of parties and proto-parties in Russia alone.

Because votes lost by one party are gained by another, the difference in percents in the numerator is divided by 2 to avoid double counting, which allows the volatility score to vary between 0 and 100. A score of 0 means there was *no* change in percentages of votes cast for the parties in successive elections. A score of 100 means there was *complete* change: the existing parties at time *t-1* won no votes, and all votes went to new parties at time *t*.

Bartolini and Mair (1990: 68-75) present volatility scores calculated for 303 pairs of elections in thirteen Western European countries from 1885 to 1985. Their histogram of the distribution of volatility scores is given in Figure 1. The mean volatility score for this period is 8.6, which indicates that--in an average pair of adjacent elections--the vote cast for the existing parties between elections shifts by a total of only 8.6 percentage points. According to Bartolini and Mair, "the most striking characteristic of the actual range of levels of electoral volatility across this century is that they reflect a *fundamental bias towards stability* " (p. 69, their emphasis). But they also identify a small group of "deviant" elections outside the normal patterns (p. 69):

Twelve of these highly volatile elections stand out markedly from the rest: Denmark in 1973 (21.2 volatility); France in 1906 (31.1), in 1910 (30.5), and in 1958 (25.7); Germany in 1920 (32.1), in 1924 (27.1), in 1930 (22.0), in 1932 (21.2), and in 1953 (21.2); Italy in 1948 (23.0); and Switzerland in 1917 (22.8) and in 1919 (23.4).

Refer to Figure 1

The historical record of electoral volatility in Western Europe provides us with some standard for assessing volatility between early elections in the Visegrad countries. We will take up each country in turn, beginning with Poland, the first nation that rejected its communist rulers

through the electoral process.

Poland: After years of active opposition from the Solidarity trade union movement, the ruling communist party (the Polish United Workers' Party, PZPR) agreed to so-called Round Table negotiations that aimed at a gradual transition to political democracy and a market economy (Sanford, 1991, p. 177). Meeting from February 6 to April 6, 1989, the protagonists agreed on a "mixed" system of voting in elections to parliament on June 4 and 18. Under the agreement, the opposition was allowed to contest 161 (35 percent) of the seats in the lower house or Sejm and all 100 seats in a newly constituted Senate. To the surprise of both sides, candidates backed by the Solidarity Civic Committee won *all* of its Sejm seats and all but one of the Senate seats in an election marked by 62 percent turnout (p. 184). The effect of Solidarity's astounding victory was to demonstrate that the emperor had no clothes--that the communist party had virtually no public support in Poland. In fact, the 1989 Polish election was widely interpreted that communist parties elsewhere also had no public support.

Because of its negotiated nature, the 1989 election is not treated here as a truly free election for the purposes of calculating electoral volatility--neither is Lech Walesa's victory in the 1990 presidential election (held in two ballots on November 25 and December 9). Instead, electoral volatility is figured on two later parliamentary elections: (1) the infamous 27 October 1991 election that had no threshold for representation and resulted in a plethora of parties in parliamentary, and (2) the 19 September 1993 elections, which was governed by revised electoral laws that established a 5 percent threshold to limit the number of parties.

Table 1 reports the distribution of votes and seats among the parties contesting the 1991 and 1993 Sejm elections in Poland and the volatility score, calculated by the above equation as the summed differences in percentage of votes won by each party in both elections. The volatility score for 1993-1991 is 22.78, which places the 1993 election (for convenience we will refer to the

election pair by the most recent year) in the midst of the twelve most volatile elections in 100 years of voting in Western Europe.⁷ Nearly all the major parties experienced major changes in their votes, despite the fact that only two years intervened between these two elections. However, only five of the 1991 parties were returned to the Sejm in 1993. The drastically reduction in the number of parties (and the fact that five returned) suggests some movement toward party institutionalization.

Refer to Table 1

Czech Republic: In Czechoslovakia, as in Poland, the communists were thoroughly routed in the 8-9 June 1990 elections by grassroots movements--Civic Forum in the Czech Republic and Public Against Violence in the Slovak Republic. But the Polish problem of extreme party fractionalization was avoided by imposing a 5 percent threshold that prevented the proliferation of parties in the federal and republic assemblies. Right after the election, there were only four parties in the National Council.⁸ But as in Poland, the victorious grassroots movement that headed the assembly in 1990 fell apart prior to the second round of elections on 5-6 June 1992, and the number of parties increased to eight. By the end of 1992, the nation itself would also divide along the lines of its two major republics.

Table 2 reports the distribution of votes and seats among the parties contesting the 1990 and 1992 elections to the National Council in the Czech Republic. The demise of Civic Forum,

⁷Due to the absence of 1993 data for the 19 parties that were the least popular in 1991, the calculated volatility score is actually lower than whatever is the true volatility score.

⁸Analyzing party strength in Czechoslovakia prior to its split into two nation in 1993 is complicated by the existence of two separately elected chambers in the Federal Assembly with seats allocated to the Czech and Slovak Republics and separately elected National Councils in each republic (see Olson, 1994). Fortunately, the votes cast for the parties track rather well over all three chambers for each republic. The subsequent analysis is based only on elections to the Czech and Slovak National Councils.

which had received nearly 50 percent of the vote in the 1990 election, and the consequent rise of Vaclav Klaus' Civic Democratic Party, which gained nearly 30 percent of the vote in 1992, contributed mightily to the high volatility score of 60.03 calculated for the first two free elections in the Czech Republic. This score is nearly twice as high as the most volatile election ever in Western Europe. Moreover, there were eight parties in parliament after the 1992 election, and only three of these had returned from the 1990 election. So five of the current Czech parties had contested only one election. Nevertheless, the Czech party system in 1994 is not threatened by instability, as the country is prospering and Prime Minister Klaus remains very popular.

Refer to Table 2

Slovakia: Following the 1990 elections, Slovakia had seven parties in its National Council, and the number actually decreased to five after the 1992 elections. As in the Czech Republic, the collapse of the anticommunist movement, Public Against Violence, was matched with the meteoric rise of a new party. The Movement for a Democratic Slovakia, grouped around Vladimir Meciar, became the leading party and Meciar the Slovak prime minister. Meciar's aggressive program for national sovereignty found a willing listener in Vaclav Klaus, the Czech prime minister. The two leaders of their republics struck a deal to divide Czechoslovakia into two separate nations, despite poll data that showed public opinion against the separation.

As shown in Table 3, the Slovak experience was similar to that in the Czech Republic in the evolution of its party system. The Slovak volatility score of 46.7 for the 1990 and 1992 elections far exceeded the highest volatility score for the Western nations. However, on September 30 and October 1, 1994, Slovakia became the first of the former communist countries to hold its third free election--due to a split in Meciar's party and his loss of office. All five of the previous parliamentary parties were returned, but in the company of two new ones--meaning that seven

parties were now represented in the 1994 parliament. Although the 1994 election generated a substantially lower volatility score of 24.68, it ranked among the twelve highest volatility scores ever for Western nations. Moreover, Meciar, whose party won the most seats but lacked a parliamentary majority, found it difficult to assemble a governing coalition. Slovakia may well be on its way to a fourth election before the other Visegrad countries have their third.

Refer to Table 3

Hungary: The transition to democracy in Hungary was quite different from that in the other three Visegrad countries. First, the ruling communist party (Hungarian Socialist Workers Party) was more open to reform, recognizing the existence of opposition parties and accepting the concept of a multi-party democracy as early as February, 1989 (Swain, 1991, p. 130). During the summer of 1989, the communists held "Round Table" negotiations with the main opposition parties (led by the Hungarian Democratic Forum, the Alliance of Free Democrats, the Young Democrats, and the Smallholders' Party) and other organizations (primarily labor unions). By October 1989, the ruling party was reorganized and renamed the Hungarian Socialist Party (dropping "Workers"), the country was renamed the Republic of Hungary (dropping "People's"), and parliament passed a law that subsidized registered parties according to the size of their membership (Ágh, 1994, p. 227). Consequently, there was no need in Hungary for an omnibus organization to chase the communists out of power as in Poland and Czechoslovakia. The climate was conducive to real change coming out of the Round Table negotiations and for the early emergence of a structured party system.

Viewing its party opposition as badly splintered, the Socialists proposed an electoral system based on single-member districts and plurality vote, which tends to exaggerate the parliamentary representation of dominant parties. In contrast, the opposition parties favored a

proportional representation system that would more faithfully reflect their pockets of support (Hibbing and Patterson, 1992, pp. 432-3). The negotiations produced a compromise system that combined single-member districts with multimember county elections based on proportional representation, similar to the German system. (For a description of the Hungarian electoral system, see Hibbing and Patterson, 1992.) In its first election in March-April 1990, Hungary avoided the Polish problem of extreme party fractionalization by requiring parties to receive at least 4 percent of the vote for party lists before gaining representation in parliament. Despite the fact that 42 of Hungary's 65 registered parties ran candidates in the election, only six were admitted to parliament. For its second election in May 1994, Hungary raised the threshold to 5 percent (fearing representation by a right-wing group), and again only six parties were returned to parliament--most notably the *same* six.

Table 4 reports the distribution of votes and seats among the parties contesting the 1990 and 1994 parliamentary elections in Hungary. Although both the number and the identity of the winning parties was limited in both elections, the volatility score was still very high, at 27.97. This score was achieved mainly to the voters' rejection of the nationalistic Hungarian Democratic Forum, which presided over a badly deteriorating economy during Hungary's first years as a democracy, and the restoration to power of the Hungarian Socialist Party, which voters chose as a party that proved it could run a government. Despite its high volatility score for the first two elections, the emerging Hungarian party system has taken what Ágh regards as "an essential step" in the process of institutionalization, "the parliamentarization of the major parties" (Ágh, 1994, p. 229). However, even the Hungarian parties have not entered the final stage of development, becoming more closely linked to social groups and interest groups that underpin a civil society. Ágh says that the new parties have operated in a sociological vacuum that "has weakened their 'conversion' function; i.e., they have not been really able to articulate and aggregate social demands into programme packages as political alternatives (p. 230).

Refer to Table 4

Elections in Central Europe as Postauthoritarian Elections

If we view the first parliamentary elections in central Europe following the fall of communism as the first postauthoritarian elections, we are encouraged to compare the results in central Europe with elections elsewhere after a period of discontinuity under an authoritarian regime. Turner (1993) has prepared the way for this comparison with his study of eleven parliamentary elections in ten nations--listed in Table 5. Turner states, "Democratic processes were interrupted by indigenous authoritarian regimes in five countries: Germany, Japan, Italy, Spain, and Portugal. In four countries, discontinuities resulted from German occupation before and during World War II: Austria, France, Norway, and the Netherlands" (p. 332).

Refer to Table 5

Noting that most scholars of party system change have excluded the first postwar elections from their analysis because of the presumed abnormal character of these postauthoritarian elections, Turner designed his study to test whether these elections actually differed from others in terms of three characteristics: (1) turnout, (2) number of parties, and (3) votes received. Concerning turnout, he notes that most authors expect turnout levels in postauthoritarian elections to be high, because of the drama of the event. He tests turnout within each country by comparing it with the country's average turnout for a series of elections before the postauthoritarian election and for subsequent elections. He concludes that "postauthoritarian elections generally show little difference from turnout levels in preceding and subsequent parliamentary elections; if anything, it tends to be lower" (p. 341).

Concerning the numbers of parties in elections, the literature notes that postauthoritarian

elections draw a large number of parties, and the number declines in subsequent elections. Unfortunately, Turner found it impossible to test this proposition adequately due to the unavailability of lists of all parties contesting those distant elections.⁹ He dealt with this problem by computing measures of the distribution of votes among the larger parties, termed as the number of effective parties.¹⁰ He concluded that for these elections, there was only a slight decline in the number of effective parties in this earlier set of postauthoritarian elections. The volatility scores discussed above also do not deal specifically with the proliferation of parties, and the volatility score is not the same thing as the number of effective parties. Nevertheless, the findings from these 1990s postauthoritarian elections in central Europe--which show extremely high volatility scores--imply that they are highly deviant.

Concerning the outcome of the election, Turner looked to see who won postauthoritarian and subsequent elections. Recognizing that the winner of the first postauthoritarian election was likely to inherit a large set of problem, he asked whether winning the first election meant losing the second. In this test, the results were clearly negative: "Every single postauthoritarian election winner won the next parliamentary election. Five of the eleven postauthoritarian election winners [even] gained votes in the next election" (Turner, p. 346). On this criterion, the recent results from central Europe are starkly different. *None* of the four winners of the first elections in the Visegrad countries won the second election. Indeed, three of the four winners split or dissolved before the second election. The only winner in the first election that made it to the second was the Hungarian Democratic Forum, and its parliamentary representation fell from more than 40 percent of the seats to less than 10 percent.

⁹In fact, data on minor parties was seldom published in secondary literature for central European elections in the 1990s. As a consequence, Tables 1 to 4 do not report all the parties that contested the elections, and there may be errors in the entries for some of the smaller parties.

¹⁰He used a measure proposed by Laakso and Taagepera (1979).

Summary and Conclusions

What are the prospects for restructuring the party systems in central and eastern Europe after the fall of communism? The immediate problem facing these countries is that of party institutionalization, which means developing parties that endure from election to election and that provide voters with a stable set of alternative choices for government. But mainly because major parties split after the first election, the volatility scores associated with the first postcommunist elections in the Visegrad countries are extraordinarily high in comparison with a century of electoral experience in western Europe. These volatility scores document the ephemeral nature of political parties in these nations--which are thought to be further along in the transition to democracy than most other countries in central and eastern Europe. One might be tempted to dismiss the results from these early elections as typical in countries that try to establish democratic government following a period of authoritarian rule, but a careful analysis of other postauthoritarian elections suggests that they were not so different from nonauthoritarian elections.

In central Europe in the 1990s, however, the first elections after communism were quite unusual by historical comparison. Not only were they highly volatile, but the winning parties soon disintegrated or became losers in the next round. As Mackie and Rose have stated, the first requirement of institutionalized parties is that they stay around to contest elections and win representation in parliament. With continued existence and acquired experience, parties at least have a chance to evolve to the next step of democratic development, improving their conversion function--articulating and aggregating social demands into policies and political alternatives. Identifying the needs of the Hungarian party system, Szarvas says that they "should present more equivocal electoral options towards which democratic 'voters' may orient themselves" (1994, p. 135). This is good advice for parties everywhere, but it is especially needed for restructuring the party systems in central and eastern Europe.

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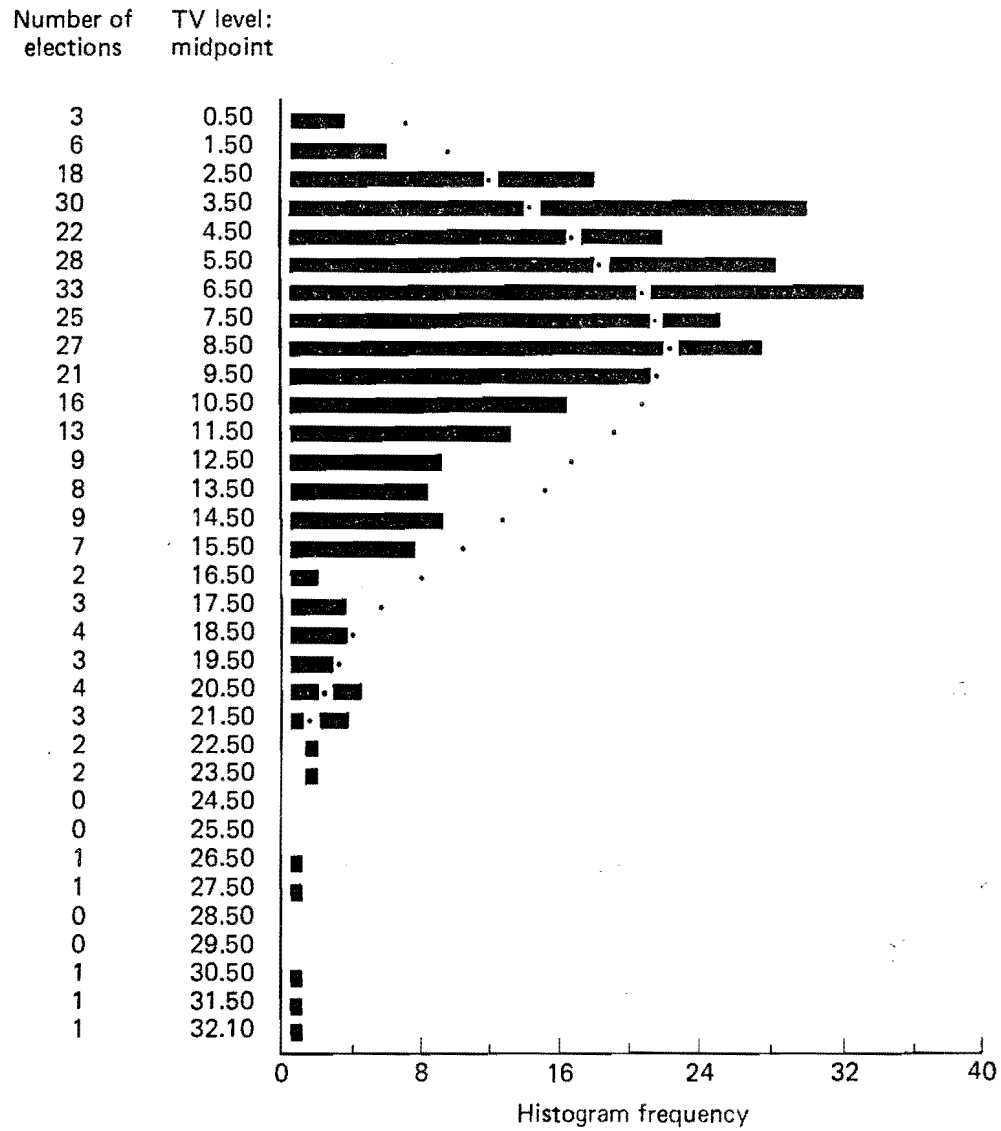
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Figure 1

Frequency Distribution of Total Electoral Volatility (TV level) for 303 National-Level Elections in Thirteen Western European Countries between 1885 and 1985



Mean = 8.62 Median = 7.4

SOURCE: Stefano Bartolini and Peter Mair. *Identity competition, and electoral availability: The stabilisation of European electorates 1885-1985*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990, p. 69.

Table 1

Distribution of Votes and Seats Won in the 1991 and 1993 Parliamentary Elections in Poland

Political Parties	Percent of Votes		Percent <u>Difference</u>	Number of Seats	
	<u>1991</u>	<u>1993</u>		<u>1991</u>	<u>1993</u>
Democratic Union (UD)	12.3	10.59	-1.71	62	74
Alliance of Democratic Left (SLD)	12.0	20.41	8.41	60	171
Catholic Elector Action (WAK)/Christian National Federation	8.7	6.4	-2.3	49	132
Polish Peasant Party (PSL)	8.7	15.4	6.7	46	22
Civic Alliance 'Center' (POC)	8.7	4.4	-4.3	44	
Liberal-Democratic Congress (KLD)	7.5	4.0	-3.5	37	
Agrarian Alliance (PL)	5.5			28	
Independent Self-governed Trade Union 'Solidarity'	5.1	4.9	-0.2	27	
Polish Beer-Lovers Party (PPPP)	3.3			16	
German Minority	1.2	0.7	-0.5	7	4
Christian Democracy (ChD)	2.4	0	-2.4	5	
Solidarity of Labor (SP)	2.1			4	
Party of Christian Democrats (PChD)	1.1	0	-1.1	4	
Polish Western Union (PZZ)	0.2			4	
Union of Real Politics (UPR)	2.3			3	
Party X	0.5			3	
Movement for the Autonomy of Silesia	0.4			2	
Democratic Party (SD)	1.4			1	
Social-Democratic Movement (RDS)	0.5			1	
Agrarian Electoral Alliance 'Past'	0.4			1	
Cracow Coalition 'In Solidarity with the President'	0.2			1	
Union of Podhalanie	0.2			1	
For Wielkopolska and Poland	0.2			1	
Agrarian Unity	0.2			1	
Electoral Committee of Eastern Orthodox	0.1			1	
'Solidarity '80'	0.1			1	
Union of Wielkopanie	0.1			1	
Alliance of Women Against the Hardships	0			1	
Union of Labor (UP)		7.3	7.3		41
Non-Party Block to Support Reform (BBWR)		5.41	5.41		16
Others*		<u>14.7</u>			
Totals	<u>92.9</u>	<u>99.98</u>	<u>45.56</u>	<u>460</u>	<u>460</u>

$$\text{Volatility} = 45.56/2 = 22.78$$

SOURCES:

- Krzysztof Jasiewicz, "Poland," *European Journal of Political Research*, 22 (1992), pp. 488-491.
Elections Today: News from the International Foundation for Electoral Systems, 4 (April, 1994), p. 35.
 Aleksander Smolar, "The Dissolution of Solidarity," *Journal of Democracy*, 5 (January, 1994), p. 72.

*This analysis is complicated by the inability to obtain data for "Others" in both 1991 and 1993. In 1993, this group included were smaller parties that were able to gain parliamentary representation in 1991 by winning only small fractions of the vote. This tabulation remains tentative until those data are obtained.

Table 2

Distribution of Votes and Seats Won in the 1990 and 1992 Parliamentary Elections in the Czech Republic

Political Parties	Percent of Votes		Percent Difference	Number of Seats	
	1990	1992		1990	1992
Civic Forum OF	49.50		-49.50	127	
Communist Party/Left Bloc LB	13.30	14.05	0.75	32	35
Society for Moravia and Silesia HSD-SMS	10.00	5.87	-4.13	22	14
Christian and Democratic Union KDU-CSL	8.40	6.28	-2.12	19	15
Civic Democratic Party ODS-KDS		29.73	29.73		76
Czechoslovak Social Democracy CSSD		6.53	6.53		16
Coalition for the Republic-Republican Party SPR-RSC		5.98	5.98		14
Liberal Social Union LSU		6.52	6.52		16
Civic Democratic Alliance ODA		5.93	5.93		
Civic Movement OH		4.59	4.59		14
Movement of Pensioners for Life Security HDZJ					
Party of Czechoslovak Entrepreneurs SCPZR					
Club of Active Non-partisans KAN					
Others*	18.80	14.52	-4.28		
	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
Totals	100	100	120.06	200	200

$$\text{Volatility} = 120.06/2 = 60.03$$

*This analysis is complicated by the inability to obtain data for "Others" in both 1990 and 1992. It is difficult to get detailed breakdowns of the vote for parties that do not make the threshold for representation. This tabulation remains tentative until those data are obtained.

- SOURCES: Gordon Wightman, "Czechoslovakia," in Bogdan Szajkowski (ed.), *New Political Parties of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union: A Comprehensive Reference Guide*. (London: Longman, 1991), p. 63.
- Lubomir Brokl and Zdenka Mansfeldova, "Czechoslovakia," *European Journal of Political Research*, 24, pp. 411-412.
- David M. Olson, "The Sundered State: Federalism and Parliament in Czechoslovakia," in Thomas F. Remington (ed.), *Parliaments in Transition: The New Legislative Politics in the Former USSR and Eastern Europe*. (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1994), p. 113.

Table 3

Distribution of Votes and Seats Won in the 1990, 1992, and 1994 Parliamentary Elections in Slovakia

Political Party	Percent of Votes Won			% Difference 1992-1990	% Difference 1994-1992	Number of Seats Won		
	1990	1992	1994			1990	1992	1994
Public Against Violence	29.34			-29.34		32		
Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (HZDS)		37.26	34.96	37.26	-2.30		74	61
Christian Democratic Movement (KDH)	19.20	8.88	10.08	-10.32	1.20	21	18	17
Slovak National Party (SNS)	13.94	7.93	5.40	-6.01	-2.53	15	15	9
Democratic Left (SDL), (SV)	13.34	14.70	10.41	1.36	-4.29	15	29	18
Coexistence	8.66	7.42	10.20	-1.24	2.78	9	14	17
Democratic Party (DS)	4.39		3.42	-4.39	3.42	5		
Green Party (SZ)	3.48			-3.48		4		
Others	7.7	9.37						
Social Democratic (SD)		4.00	0.24		-3.76			
Civic Democratic Union (ODU)		4.03			-4.03			
Democratic Coalition (DS-ODS)		3.31			-3.31			
Slovak Christian Democratic Movement (SKDH)		3.10			-3.10			
Communist Party of Slovakia (KSS)			2.72		2.72			
Democratic Union of Slovakia (DU)			8.57		8.57			15
Association of Workers of Slovakia (AWS)			7.34		7.34			13
Christian Social Movement (CSU)								
Totals	100.05	93.59	93.34	93.40	49.35	100	150	150

Volatility = $93.40/2$ = 46.70
 = $49.35/2$ = 24.68

SOURCES: Gordon Wightman, "Czechoslovakia," in Bogdan Szajkowski (ed.), *New Political Parties of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union: A Comprehensive Reference Guide*. (London: Longman, 1991), p. 63.
 Lubomir Brokl and Zdenka Mansfeldova, "Czechoslovakia," *European Journal of Political Research*, 24, pp. 412-413.
 David M. Olson, "The Sundered State: Federalism and Parliament in Czechoslovakia," in Thomas F. Remington (ed.), *Parliaments in Transition: The New Legislative Politics in the Former USSR and Eastern Europe*. (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1994), p. 113.
 Slovak Elections 1994; electronic data downloaded from the Slovak Store Home Page on World Wide Web using Mosaic software.

Table 4

Distribution of Votes and Seats Won in the 1990 and 1994 Parliamentary Elections in Hungary

Political Parties	Percent of Votes		Percent Difference	Number of Seats	
	1990	1994		1990	1994
Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF)	24.73	11.73	13.00	165	37
Alliance of Free Democrats (SZDSZ)	21.39	19.76	1.63	91	70
Independent Smallholders (FKGP)	11.73	8.85	2.88	44	26
Hungarian Socialist Party (MSZP)	10.89	32.96	22.07	33	209
Alliance of Young Democrats (FIDESZ)	8.95	7.00	1.95	21	22
Christian Democratic People's Party (KDNP)	6.46	7.06	.60	21	20
Hungarian Socialist Workers Party (HSWP)	3.68	3.18	0.50		
Hungary's Social Democratic Party (HSDP)	3.55	0.95	2.60		
Agrarian Alliance	3.13	2.10	1.03	1	1
Entrepreneur's Party	1.89	0.62	1.27		1
Hungary's Green Party	0.36	0.16	0.20		
National Smallholders Party	0.20	0.82	0.62		
Patriotic Electoral Coalition	1.87		1.87		
Hungarian People's Party (HPP)	0.75		0.75		
Somogy Christian Coalition	0.12		0.12		
Hungary's Co-operative and Agrarian Party	0.10		0.10		
Independent Hungarian Democratic Party	0.06		0.06		
Freedom Party	0.06		0.06		
Hungarian Independence Party	0.04		0.04		
Republic Party		2.53	2.53		
Justice and Life Party		1.58	1.58		
National Democratic Alliance		0.52	0.52		
Conservative Party		0.04	0.04		
Market Party		0.01	0.01		
Other				10	
	100	99.87	56.03	386	386

Volatility = 56.03 = 28.02

SOURCES: Nigel Swain, "Hungary," in Bogdan Szajkowski (ed.), *New Political Parties of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union: A Comprehensive Reference Guide*. (London: Longman, 1991), p. 134.
 "The Vote," *Budapest Week*, May 12-18, 1994, p. 5.
 "Hungary: Socialist Election Victory," *Keatings Record of World Events* (May, 1994), p. 40015.
 Edith Oltay, "The Former Communists' Election Victory in Hungary," *RFE/RL Research Report*, 3 (June, 1994), p. 2.

Table 5

Eleven Postauthoritarian Elections Studied by Turner (1993)

<u>Country</u>	<u>Last Free Election</u>	<u>Postauthoritarian Election</u>	<u>Discontinuity in Years</u>
Japan	April 30, 1937	April 10, 1946	8.94
Netherlands	May 26, 1937	May 17, 1946	8.97
Norway	October 19, 1936	October 8, 1945	8.97
Greece 1946	January 26, 1936	March 31, 1946	10.18
France	April 26, 1936	November 10, 1946	10.54
Greece 1974	February 16, 1964	November 17, 1974	10.75
Austria	November 9, 1930	November 25, 1945	15.04
Germany	March 5, 1933	August 14, 1949	16.44
Italy	May 15, 1921	April 18, 1948	26.93
Spain	February 16, 1936	June 15, 1977	41.33
Portugal	1926*	April 25, 1975	49.00

*Although dates and reliable voting figures are not available, at least one election occurred in 1926 before the military coup. Therefore, 1926 is used as the year for last free elections in Portugal.

SOURCE: Arthur W. Turner, "Postauthoritarian Elections: Testing Expectations about 'First' Elections," *Comparative Political Studies*, 26 (October, 1993), p. 333.