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LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

WHO'S ATTENDING THE PARTY?
ELECTIONS, PARTIES, AND DEMOCRATIZATION
IN POSTCOMMUNIST STATES

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

PROGRAM IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

BY

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CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

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ABSTRACT

The record of democratization in the postcommunist states indicates that there is a relationship between the type of electoral system they adopted and the success of their democratic development—countries which instituted proportional representation (PR) elections have achieved greater success than have those countries which instituted single member district (SMD) elections. The record also shows a second relationship existing between type of election method used and the development of political parties as important political actors—PR methods promote party politics whereas SMD methods do not. A third phenomenon—significant numbers of ambitious office seekers who have no party affiliation competing in SMD elections—strongly suggests that political parties are the key intervening variable in the equation.

My thesis is that the institutional incentives produced by the electoral system affect whether office seekers form parties in order to pursue their ambition, and that in turn affects how constrained they are in pursuing their self-interest as opposed to the common good. PR elections require that office seekers compete in groups. Parties develop collective interests, goals, and objectives which their members need to adhere in order to pursue their own interests; party competition makes politics more coherent and transparent to the electorate which facilitates effective voting and government accountability; parties provide the cooperation and collaboration necessary for a legislature to function effectively and independently; and parties strive to guard against one group gaining permanent control over the political system. SMD elections emphasize

individual competition without incentives to form into parties which does not constrain pursuit of individual self-interests, and it does produce a political landscape that is incoherent to the electorate, incapable of functioning collectively, and is susceptible to manipulation by powerful interests and elites. The study performs a large-N quantitative analysis and qualitative case studies of Moldova, Kyrgyzstan, and Russia.

CHAPTER ONE
AN INTRODUCTION TO ELECTIONS AND PARTIES
IN POSTCOMMUNIST STATES

No institutions have been more intimately associated with democracy than elections and political parties. Ideally they are the means for establishing popular sovereignty over government and holding government accountable to the public will. Elections are a complex set of interacting rules and procedures, which have a direct bearing on the political behavior of both state and society. Ever since Duverger first made his observations in 1954 that the single member district (SMD) plurality (first-past-the-post) electoral method produces two party systems and the proportional representation (PR) method tends to favor party systems of more than two parties, political science has invested considerable effort in studying the relationship between electoral systems and parties. The last quarter of the twentieth century has also experienced a renaissance in democratization research as a large number of countries underwent transition to democracy in a relatively short period of time (e.g., see Huntington 1991) providing researchers with a wealth of new cases to study. A substantial portion of these cases, approximately one-third, resulted from the end of communist rule, beginning with the Eastern European states in 1989, continuing with the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, and ending with Mongolia less than a year later. They include (in alphabetical order) Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech

Republic, Estonia, Georgia, Hungary, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Moldova, Mongolia, Poland, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan. These postcommunist countries are the cases chosen for this study.

There are several reasons why I have done so. The reason most specific to this study is that approximately half of them have displayed significant candidacy for and election to public office by political actors with no affiliation to political parties. This presents a rare opportunity not only to examine the phenomenon of independent, or nonpartisan, politicians as a regular rather than unusual occurrence, but also to compare these cases with postcommunist countries in which party affiliation is the norm. Seldom has such large scale non-party politics presented the opportunity to reveal the role of political parties in democratization through direct comparison of such disparate cases. Additionally, it offers the chance to examine the little-studied role of electoral institutions on the formation of parties as political actors in new democracies

A second reason for selecting these cases for study is that it is consistent with a niche of academic study that treats the postcommunist region as a laboratory for testing propositions about political life using cases with similar beginnings but divergent trajectories in their success at developing democracy (Breslauer 2001: 3-4). Fish (2006b: 7) also observes that

they all underwent regime change at virtually the same time, but their new constitutions varied greatly as to how they distributed power. These countries' subsequent experiences in terms of democratization also cover a broad spectrum. Thus the postcommunist region is a good laboratory for examining how constitutional provisions affect democratization.

Fish emphasizes the constitutional distribution of power, because he was studying the results of choosing between two institutional arrangements—presidentialism and parliamentarism—yet much the same may be concluded regarding other institutions such as electoral systems and party systems.

Thirdly, Fish (1998: 213-4) also points out that the large number of postcommunist cases permits studies that overcome difficulties which have plagued medium- and large-N democratization studies of the past. The former have not normally been able to apply quantitative analysis using countries as units of analysis due to the problem of “many variables, small number of cases” (Lijphart 1971: 685); and the latter, presented with a fairly limited pool of democratizing countries at any one time, have compared such dissimilar cases that the validity of the comparisons is open to question. By testing hypotheses suggested by small-N studies in a broadly comparative context that avoids these weaknesses, my study will help correct the imbalance between small- and large-N studies of postcommunist democratization to the benefit of both.

Results of the massive transition from communism in twenty-eight countries confirm that not all elections are created equal, for while all of these countries hold elections for public offices, not all serve the ends of democratic governance. This may be an obvious observation, but what is much less obvious is that there has been a pattern between the type of electoral method used and the success of democratic development: the postcommunist states with proportional electoral systems have been generally much more successful in building democracy than those with majoritarian electoral systems, with those having mixed electoral systems falling somewhere in between. Doubtless the

impact of electoral systems on the quality of democracy in newly democratizing states is not direct, else the link would have been revealed long before now. But an additional clue is to be found in the substantial and successful participation in electoral politics of office seekers without any party affiliation in some cases but not others, which reveals another complementary pattern: participation and election of independent candidates is high in majoritarian elections, but very low to nonexistent in proportional elections, again with mixed electoral systems falling somewhere in between.

This strongly suggests that the answer to the puzzle of this connection between electoral system and democratization involves political parties as intermediate institutions. In the past, parties have been just as intimately associated with elections as elections are with democracy. Elections are the *raison d'être* for parties and as Duverger's observations indicate, electoral systems play a significant role in shaping parties and party systems. Beyond this, the role of parties in contesting elections is considered to be so important that "modern democracy is unthinkable save in terms of the parties" (Schattschneider 1942: 1). Parties aggregate and channel interests and provide communication between political actors and society necessary for establishing representation and accountability in government (Sartori 1976). However, what has been long overlooked is the idea of democracy and elections without parties. As Hale (2006: 8) writes, political scientists "have tended to assume that parties are an exclusive and natural product of political institutions and social cleavages given electoral competition. . . . The fundamental question of how a political system becomes a *party* system in the first place remains remarkably underresearched and undertheorized [*italics in original*]."

The objective of this study is to provide explanations for the puzzle of how different electoral methods affect political party creation and how does this affect democratic development. The puzzle's own emphasis on institutions calls for an institutionalist research approach. The thesis of this study to be tested is that the answer is to be found in the structural incentives of key political institutions and their affect upon the choice of political elites whether to adopt or reject party politics, and in how the incentives of party politics contributes to democratic development. Structure is used here in the same sense as in the old institutional theory's examination of the structure-functionism of institutions, how are they constituted (what are the rules and procedures) and what functions are they created to perform; but with the new institutionalism's assertion that function can only be explained in terms of structure and may resemble what was intended. New institutionalism argues that "broadly speaking, institutions are important because they *shape or influence* the behaviour, power and policy preferences of political actors" and the central concern of this theory is "how the behaviour of political actors is shaped and conditioned by the institutional contexts in which they operate [*italics in the original*]" (Bell 2002: 2-3). Function returns to the analysis strictly as outcome, as the result of actors' behavior within the context of specific sets of incentives and disincentives. The postcommunist states offer an opportunity for such a study, because their political elites have demonstrated an aversion to joining political parties and tend to avoid doing so when possible, which increases the importance of external factors on their choice to become party members making them more discernible than in cases where parties may be seen as a natural component of democracy.

Definitions: Elections

Elections are the core institution of representative democracy. They represent the single most significant form of popular political participation, source of what constitutes representativeness, and means of exercising accountability. Elections are a political market (Downs 1957; Schlesinger 1994: 12), in which seekers' of office compete for the electorates' votes by offering their positions, proposals, and promises regarding issues and policies. The logic of supply and demand works in elections as well. By exchanging their votes for candidates, the electoral "consumers" determine not simply which candidate "producers" win office, but what issues are most salient to voters and what policy options they prefer. This establishes what constitutes representativeness at any point in time, and periodic elections allow the electorate to assess the success or failure of elected officials to meet expectations and "spend" their votes accordingly.

The general incentive structure of electoral markets resembles that of economic markets as well—to earn more electoral currency (votes) than their competitors in order to win control of office. The strategic response of office-seekers will be to adopt those policy positions that will maximize their return in votes, i.e., those that are more representative of the interests of a significant proportion of the electorate. Office winners will respond to the incentive of retaining office in subsequent elections by being sufficiently diligent in realizing policy objective that address those interests. Thus, the incentive structure of democratic elections fosters a linkage between the interests of voters and the interests of elites. This is the result, at least, where democratic processes have become institutionalized.

Political Parties

Political parties are not the only form of political association, but what distinguishes them from all others is their purpose—to gain control of the government through victory in competitive elections (Schattschneider 1942: 35-36; Downs 1957: 25; Schlesinger 1994: 6). They are the “producers” of policies targeting popular issues and interests which are “marketed” to the public with the expectation that they will attract enough votes to “earn” them public office. It is important to clarify also that in a democracy parties exist in the public sphere, but are autonomous from government. Otherwise, they would function to dictate the government’s desires to the public rather than represent the public’s interests within the government. Transitioning from the former role to the latter is one of the key structural changes necessary for democracy building in postcommunist states, getting out from under the former without having to become entwined in the latter is the desire of new elites. The Downs’ (1957: 25) definition of party as “a team seeking to control the governing apparatus by gaining office in a duly constituted election” is especially relevant to this study, because it specifies the team nature of parties. Aldrich (1995) argues that parties originated as the means for overcoming collective action problems so that political actors could work together to advance their ability to win elections. Similarly, this study argues that democratization is advanced when political actors adopt cooperative relationships pursuing group goals; i.e., when they form into teams.

These definitions also imply that partisan constituents are not part of what comprises a party, but stand outside with the overall electorate as choosers of parties in

competitive elections (Schlesinger 1994). This presents the apparent paradox of advocating parties as a link between elites and society while at the same time implying that parties do not have roots in society. According to Mainwaring and Scully (1995: 5) these roots are one of the key features of an institutionalized party system, precisely because they constitute these linkages. However, partisan identification represents an advantage for parties. It reduces the competitive demands of elections to have a core of loyal constituents whose votes can be relied on. Thus, treating voters as consumers, rather than negating the need for roots in society, provides the incentive for parties to establish them. It is the opposite extreme of party-as-constituency, where partisan identification becomes pervasive and frozen, hyperinstitutionalized (Mainwaring and Scully 1995: 22) that is the greater concern. Electoral competitiveness disappears as rigid identities predetermine outcomes, and the perpetually winning party or parties have no need to rely on popular appeals or worry over accountability. This situation is functionally equivalent to the problem of winning elites with no party ties being addressed by this study.

This definition is also heuristically useful because it approximates conditions in newly democratizing states, particularly those such as the postcommunist states, with little or no prior experience of competitive party politics.¹ The norm is newly formed political parties with few roots in society. Without loyal partisan voters, most votes are potentially available to be won by all parties, thus they face more demanding competitive elections until partisan alignments form, making establishing roots in society a desirable

¹ Nor, one should add, the chance for a more graceful evolutionary transition as experienced by Western European states, in which public inclinations toward the parties may have the opportunity to form while the parties themselves are forming, and possibly even prior to the extension of universal suffrage.

early goal of parties. This should clarify that considering parties as separate from partisanship does not negate the importance of electoral behavior studies. Certainly they offer significant insights into the prospective electoral fortunes of parties as they strive to form and maintain links with society. However, political parties are still to be considered as parties even before they form these links. This study argues that parties do play a critical role for the electorate by dramatically simplifying their choices, reducing the range of choices from among thousands of individual office seekers to among a few groups of office seeking teams professing particular ideological positions and policy priorities. But just as consumers prefer certain products without being part of the corporations, party-society linkages are not really direct connections between parties and electorate but rather “brand loyalties” formed by voters. It is not the electorate’s membership in parties that matters; it is the membership of elites in party teams that is most important.

Institutions and the New Institutionalism

The Oxford English Dictionary (2012) offers a broad definition of an institution as “an established law, practice, or custom.” This definition indicates two fundamental aspects of institutions. First, their essential function is to guide human behavior. They exist to reduce the uncertainties involved in human interaction, uncertainties arising as a consequence of both the complexity of problems to be solved and the limitations on human problem solving capabilities (North 1990: 25). Second, institutions may be either formal or informal in nature. They may be specific prohibitions and/or requirements, or they may involve informal and self-imposed constraints (North 1990: 36). Bell (2002: 1)

adds to an understanding when he suggests that “it is probably best not to think of an institution as a ‘thing’ but as a process or set of processes which shape behaviour.”

Institutions then are formal or informal processes guiding human behavior to cope with the complexities of human interaction.

Elections are an obvious and well-recognized political institution, but some readers may question whether parties are institutions as well. Bell (2002: 1) states that “analytically, there is not a large distinction between institutions and organisations.” Moreover, North (1990: 4) states that an institution is “any form of constraint that human beings devise to shape action” and one of the main theses of this study is that parties constrain political behavior in particular ways advantageous to democratic development. Political parties, as a concept at least, are proper subjects for institutional analysis.

Institutions can be studied in terms of their structure and their function. The old institutional analysis was mainly descriptive analysis of how an institution is designed and what is its function; it made the erroneous assumption that institutions actually functioned as they were intended to. The New Institutionalism corrects this by recognizing that the design of an institution affects human behavior and thereby affects to what ends an institution functions. In other words, “Structural-functionalism only works if it gives causal priority to structure rather than to function” (Hall 1986: 7). New institutional analysis focuses on the sets of incentives created by institutional structure and how they shape the behavior of human actors who are acting through the institutions.

Collective Action

Aldrich (1995) presents three types of collective action² problems faced by political actors that parties can resolve, and this study adopts his framework for analysis. First is the need to manage the personal ambitions of the team members in order to reduce conflict by providing mechanisms for them to pursue ambition by moving up within the party ranks. This links personal and party interests with emphasis on the latter since personal ambitions are pursued by serving the party's interests, and the person who places himself first will not rise far in the party. This is the essence of the hackneyed expression that there is no "I" in team. The second type can be called the cooperative action problem resulting from the dilemma of the commons (Olson 1971). This is the most pervasive and furthest-ranging of these problems (Aldrich 1995, 23) and should be expected to occur often in combination with the other collective action problems. By linking party and individual interests, parties overcome the free rider behavior that results in the breakdown of cooperation which is the dilemma of the commons.

The third problem is explained by Arrow's famous Possibility (aka Impossibility) Theorem (1963) which states that there is no equilibrium outcome for a group decision involving three or more choices, one consequence of which is the inability for a group to arrive at a stable ranking of priorities. This can be described as a coordination failure, that is, the inability to coordinate one set of priorities between the members of a group which in practical terms means that the group will not be able to arrive at a decision. Parties

² The term collective action problem usually refers to the dilemma of the commons; but for the purposes of this study, I (and not Aldrich) am using the term collective action generically to refer to all three of these types of problem. Each of them is associated with a particular theoretical explanation and is named according to each particular theory's name. To reiterate, the names are Ambition Problems, Social Choice problems, and Cooperative Action problems.

provide the means to create stable and (hopefully) enduring majorities needed to do so, for instance when the group is an electorate or legislature. Smyth (2006a: 37) also points out that coordination does not require interaction or working together. For instance voters with similar views on issues but who have never met nonetheless can coordinate their votes by choosing to support the same political party. This reflects the role of parties to communicate information (even if it is only via party label) necessary to judge which choice will best serve an individual's interests which are then coordinated into a majority choice, and when political space is structured by parties political decision-making is simplified and clarified for all political actors.

Democracy

Contemporary democracy is a political system in which the polity rules itself indirectly through a representative government, the conduct of which is subject to scrutiny by a public capable of expressing its interests through political participation and of holding government accountable for its responsiveness to those interests; and moreover, the public possesses all the resources and institutions necessary to do so. In recognition that a public's interests are diverse, even regarding individual issues, to this definition of democracy can be added the requirements that the definition of citizenry (those granted rights of participation) be substantially inclusive of the public as a whole³,

³ However, even allowing that reality only approximates an ideal, this requirement may not be able to withstand empirical scrutiny. For example, Germany and Japan are considered to be established democracies, even though they both exclude segments of their population on ethnicity-based citizenship requirements; whereas there have been critical assessments of democracy in Estonia and Latvia because they have similar requirements. Moreover, there appears to be more discontent regarding this situation expressed by the unrepresented Turkish and Korean minorities in Germany and Japan respectively, than by the Russian minorities in Estonia and Latvia.

and that responsiveness requires resolution of conflicting interests to achieve results as satisfactory as possible to all interested parties. This definition emphasizes that what democratic institutions are intended to do is logically prior to consideration of what they are. As a practical matter, the institutions necessary to accomplish these ends are, broadly speaking, essentially the same list of “usual suspects” found in most procedural definitions, that at a minimum presume “fully contested elections with full suffrage and the absence of massive fraud, combined with effective guarantees of civil liberties, including freedom of speech, assembly, and association” (Collier and Levitsky 1997: 434).

The concern of this study, however, is not full-fledged democracy but rather democracies in-the-making without guarantees of success and it is necessary to determine the minimal features of transitioning to democracy essential for its success. Fundamentally, successful transition requires a structural change reducing the scope of state power restricting it to the necessary functions of government while also opening politics to broad participation by society through which popular choice determines who wields power and influences to what ends it is used. This requires building a political society⁴ in which the political activities surrounding participation are conducted outside of government operation and substantially autonomous from government power and interference. This transformation is not sufficient for developing democracy, but it is certainly essential to it.

⁴ Linz and Stepan (1996: 3-15) develop the concept of political society as one of five arenas of a consolidated democracy. The others are economic society, civil society, the rule of law, and the state apparatus. Note that in moving to a consolidated democracy the state moves from a dominant position above the other arenas to a co-equal position alongside them.

Overview of the Study

Democratization in the postcommunist states has offered new phenomena for study which presents opportunities to ask and answer new questions. Chapter Two presents a review of the literature relevant to studying the role of elections and parties in democratization in order to show how my study of the postcommunist countries adds to this body of literature. There are two major gaps in this literature to be addressed. First, while various ways in which electoral systems affect party systems has received considerable attention, almost no studies of whether and how electoral systems affect the actual existence of parties have been performed. Second, nonpartisanship and the absence of parties have received very little attention especially in the context of democratization. I address this by comparing postcommunist countries with large numbers of nonpartisan political actors to postcommunist countries with little or no manifestation of nonpartisanship. By combining these two analyses into one model, I present a new perspective on how electoral system structure affects democratization through party politics.

Chapter Three addresses these gaps by developing this perspective in a theoretical model which explains how legislative electoral systems impact party development and how this affects democratization. First, the model demonstrates how variation in certain structural features of electoral systems can either encourage political actors to join together in parties in order to participate in elections, or can permit them to do so individually. Second, I show how, as a means of solving collective action problems,

parties encourage elections and government institutions to function more democratically whereas nonpartisanship hinders this development. The additional idea that party system nationalization is also a factor in promoting this development is also examined. Chapter Four develops the methodology for testing this model using both a large-N quantitative analysis and three case studies. It develops a quantitative model of my theory and lays out the measures for democratic development, partisanship, and electoral systems being used, including a measure of electoral incentives and party creation designed for this study which is expected to perform better than the standard District Magnitude. Case study selection process and approach to qualitative analysis are also explained. Chapter Five presents the results of the quantitative analysis, including model redesign and testing for the data's goodness-of-fit.

The next three chapters examine one case study each to see if they offer qualitative evidence in support of my model, especially regarding the role of parties in solving collective action problems which is difficult to model quantitatively. Chapter Six studies Moldova which is the case expected to have the highest party and party system development and democratic development of the three. Chapter Seven examines the case of Kyrgyzstan which has used the electoral system⁵ least like Moldova's and therefore is expected to have high nonpartisanship, no party system, and low democratic development. Chapter Eight studies Russia which has used a mixed electoral system that combined the relevant features of both Moldova and Kyrgyzstan and therefore serves well as an intermediate case. Russia is expected to show some development of party

⁵ Actually, both Kyrgyzstan and Russia have made significant changes to their electoral systems over time, which is covered in the analyses of these cases.

politics but also significant nonpartisanship, and the negative effects of nonpartisanship will likely prevail resulting in low development of democracy. Finally, Chapter Nine summarizes the study's findings, including drawing comparisons across cases, and offers suggestions for further studies.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Democracy has been inextricably linked to political parties. It is worth repeating Schattschneider's (1942: 1) claim that "modern democracy is unthinkable save in terms of the parties." Weber (1946: 15) has considered democracy without parties to be "unimaginable" and Aldrich (1995: 3) has called it "unworkable." Duverger (1963 [1951]: xxxiii) has stated that "On the whole the development of parties seems bound up with that of democracy" and Leon Epstein has pronounced "it a waste of time to wonder whether democracies can get by without parties" (Colton 2000: 1). Party development has also been viewed as a natural outcome of elections held once transition to democracy has begun (O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986: 57). The persistence of independent political actors in Post-Soviet Russia and Ukraine has led some to question the inevitability of parties. This is distinctly separate from the literature regarding whether parties are declining in established democracies, "in new democracies like those that came into being in the former Soviet Union in the 1990s, the issue is not whether parties are an endangered species but whether they will take root in the first place" (Colton 2000: 2). Studies by Birch (2000), Moser (1999a, 368; 1999b 2001a), Millard (2004), Moser and Scheiner (2004); Thames (2007: 462), and Ferrara and Herron (2005, 23) have examined the phenomenon of independents within the larger context of party system development, but so far only Hale (2006) has focused his research on it directly in his aptly titled book

Why Not Parties in Russia? My study also focuses on independents which places these two works within a much smaller body of literature studying nonpartisanship in politics, although as this chapter demonstrates no other works in this literature tackle the issue of why not parties in new democracies.

My study differs from Hale's though, because I do not restrict it to the Russian (or Ukrainian) case. In this regard my study differs from much of the relevant postcommunist literature. In his study of the literature on postcommunist voting and elections from 1990 to 2000, Tucker (2002) finds that during this period the literature has lacked a genuinely comparative perspective, focusing primarily on case studies, and that the preponderance of single-case research (85%) has focused on Russia. The literature on elections and parties has been similar. Most of the few studies attempting to present a more broadly comparative perspective are multiauthored collections of single case studies without offering a unified approach or cross-national perspective (Meleshevich 2007: 1-2). Kitschelt, et al's (1999) path dependent analysis of communist-era effects on party system development in all of the postcommunist states stands out as the most prominent exception. Regarding independent political actors, they exist in other postcommunist states as well as in Russia, and the phenomenon is a suitable subject for a broadly comparative analysis which I provide by performing a quantitative analysis of the phenomenon in twenty-six states.

Findings regarding independents in Russia do make a suitable beginning point for my large-N study, but it will add much more to this issue by comparing cases having both the presence and absence of independents in their politics. By taking this approach, my

research identifies electoral system variables affecting whether significant nonpartisanship exists, and reveals a connection between nonpartisanship as a variable affecting the relative success of democratic development. This places my study also within the very substantial literature on electoral systems and parties which has been a subject of research for over six decades. So far though, it has not given consideration to the possibility of democracy without parties. Historically, the contemporary discipline of political science began only after the first two waves of transitions to democracy (Huntington 1991) had come and gone, so much groundbreaking work on parties was conducted by studying the stable patterns of party systems in established democracies in which parties have been ubiquitous. Not until the commencement of Huntington's (1991) third wave of democratization in 1972 does this literature become more explicitly democratization-oriented, but it wasn't until the 1990s when the collapse of communism gave rise to party systems so formless that absence of party began gained some attention, although it remains nearly unstudied.

The remainder of this chapter is organized in the following way. First, I discuss the literature on factors affecting the origin and nature of party systems, examining what research contributes to my study and how my study adds a new perspective by not assuming parties always exist, but rather tackling the more fundamental issue of *whether* parties will exist. This will focus on the institutional analysis of how electoral systems affect the existence of parties. Second, I look at the relatively newer perspective on parties as the response to collective action problems and how my study adds to this literature by using it to explain how the presence or absence of party politics affects the

course of democratization. Finally, because this study concerns both the presence and absence of parties, I discuss the nonpartisan literature to see what insights on this topic it offers and what missing insights my analysis adds to it.

Do Elections Provoke Parties?

According to Frances Millard (2004: 3-4), explanations for the development of political parties fall into three traditions, each of which can be associated with a seminal work in the literature: sociohistorical explanations beginning with Lipset and Rokkan's "Cleavage Structures, Party systems, and Voter Alignments" (1967), institutional with Duverger's *Political Parties* (1954), and actor-centric with (in my assessment) Aldrich's *Why Parties?* (1995). None of these explanations are mutually exclusive; however, they do not offer equal explanatory power in the postcommunist context and so they must be discussed in turn.

Sociohistorical

The core of Lipset and Rokkan's argument (See also Rokkan 1970) is that the historical development of salient social cleavages structuring society also structure the composition of the political party system. The historical processes determining results are which cleavages emerged as dominant, the timing of their emergence, and how the conflicts were resolved (Reeve and Ware 1992). In short, the party system comes to reflect the cleavage structure that is the historical legacy of the society's evolution. Certain key features of this argument are 1) party system origins come from "below," from its evolved social context, 2) as the society matures—increased political participation in government affairs and extension of the franchise—the party system stabilizes, party arrangements "freeze" into place, reflecting the dominant cleavage

structures that had developed to that point, and 3) this places considerable emphasis on the past, on historical legacies that are influential in this process. Additionally, while Lipset and Rokkan present a nondynamic model of stabilization, Sundquist (1973) has applied the model to party system change, where cleavage structure change transforms the party system as the new cleavages now cut across party lines rather than between them. In the American case, he demonstrates how in America the intensity of the slavery debate became a new line of cleavage, dividing and destroying the Whig party which was divided on the issue, and giving rise to the anti-slavery Republican Party.

Many of the relevant studies in the postcommunist literature are traditional electoral studies seeking to uncover what influences are driving the vote. Studies have found the following factors to affect voting behavior: economic considerations (Pacek and Radcliff 1995; Roberts 2008; Stegmaier and Lewis-Beck 2009; DeBardeleben 2003; Evans and Whitefield 1998; Fidrmuc 2000; Kopecky 2000; Lawson, Rommele, and Karasimeonov 1999), Social position/class (White, Rose, and McAllister 1997; Whitefield and Evans 1999; Whitefield 2001 Klobucar and Miller 2002; Vlachova 2001; Anderson, Lewis-Beck, and Stegmaier 2003), political and social rights (Evans and Whitefield 1998; Anderson, Lewis-Beck, and Stegmaier 2003), ethnic heterogeneity (Ordeshook and Shvetsova 1994; Moser 1999a), religion (van der Brug, Franklin, and Toka 2008), ideology or values (Toka 1998), and the historic legacy of political culture (Hesli, Reisinger, and Miller 1998; Roper and Fesnic 2003; Duch 1998; Kachanovski 2006).

Scholars in this tradition tend to be optimistic (Hale 2006) in their assessment of postcommunist party development (but see White, Rose, and McAllister 1997; Roberts 2008). They see cleavages producing stabilizing voting patterns (Whitefield and Evans 1999; Whitefield and Rohrschneider 2009), and find more similarities than differences between new and established democracies in how voters respond to socioeconomic influences (McAllister and White 2007; van der Brug, Franklin, and Toka 2008). They find that voters do assess and make decisions in elections based upon the current issues, and find that stable patterns of partisan identification are forming as an important factor in voting (Miller and White 1998; Brader and Tucker 2001; Colton 2000; Miller, Reisinger and Hesli 2000; Miller and Klobucar 2000; Colton and McFaul 2003; Whitefield and Rohrschneider 2009; Birch 2000).

The reason for this optimism comes from their definition of political party, which can be described as Key's (1964) party-in-the-electorate, and their penchant for mass survey data (Hale 2006). This finding is the diametric opposite of the extensive and contemporary body of work in the nonpartisanship literature on partisan dealignment: the declining salience of political parties in the electorate (Wattenberg 1982: 216) In 1972, David Broder declared that "The party is over" in America, because the partisan attachments and subsequent influence on voting was decreasing in the American electorate. Many scholars have agreed with this assessment (Beck 1984; Wattenberg 1981, 1987a, 1987b, 1998; Clarke and Stewart 1998; Coleman 1996; Dalton 1984; Ferejohn 1986; Nie, Verba, Petrocik 1976; Norpoth and Rusk 1982 Teixeira 1992, Fiorina 2002), although many have also disputed the validity of their conclusions (Price 1984;

Sabato and Larson 2001; Bartels 2000; Keith, et al; 1992; Green, Palmquist, and Schickler 2002; see also Fiorina 2002 for a discussion of the debate.) or they have argued that parties have made a comeback by adjusting to the new realities (See volumes edited by Maisel 1998; Green and Shea 1999; Green and Coffey 2011) which usually means focusing more on service to elites and less on connecting to the electorate. It did not take long for the debate to extend to advanced industrial democracies in general (Gray and Caul 2000; Klingemann and Wattenberg 1992; Selle and Svasand 1991; Togeby 1992; Dalton and Wattenberg 2000a; Webb, Farrell, and Holliday 2002; Schmitt and Holmberg 1995 Rose 1983; Mair, Müller, and Plasser 2004).

Studies of partisanship in established industrially-advanced democracies tend to conclude that it is declining, whereas this appears to be the most developed aspect of parties in the postcommunist states. In Russia's severely underinstitutionalized party system, the electorate appears to be *attempting* to be structured by social cleavages, it is capable of identifying its interests and casting votes consistent with its interests (Pammett and DeBardeleben 2000); but the elites have not created a system of parties that presents their electorate with clear choices which are consistent over time (Hale 2006: 8-9; Smyth 2006a; Smyth 2006b; White, Rose, and McAllister 1997; Rose, Munro, and White 2001; Rose and Munro 2002). On the other hand, studies have shown that in advanced democracies, party as organization and party in government appear to have survived dealignment without significant weakening by adjusting to new realities (Dalton and Wattenberg (2000b); Webb (2002); Mair, Müller, and Plasser (2004). In short, parties in the postcommunist states have shown more development where parties in advanced

democracies have experienced weakening, whereas postcommunist parties are less developed where parties in advanced democracies have maintained their relevance. Dalton and Wattenberg (2000b) have called dealignment “*Parties without Partisans*” while Smyth (2006b) has referred to Russia’s party system as “Partisans without Parties,”¹ and White, Wyman, and Kryshchanovskaya (1995, 183) called it “a ‘party system without parties.’” Independent elites, not independent voters present a challenge to democratization in these new democracies.

Hale also points out that if party systems do mirror social structure then optimism may be warranted; but if institutional structures and/or elite actions define parties then the picture is bleaker for party system development. Rose (2000) and Birch (2000) have both noted in Russia and Ukraine respectively that political parties are divided: there is the developing party-in-the-electorate, but over this sits an unstructured and weak “floating” party system (Rose 2000) of weakly organized elites, frequently switching alliances and party labels, or not adopting any label, and with no roots in the society. Rose also calls the situation “supply-side” because there are plenty of elites vying for government positions, but without connecting with the “demand-side” which is the electorate. This disconnection means that although partisan identifications may be forming and influencing voting choices in society, political elites appear to be paying little attention to the public’s interests. The appearance of party roots in society may misrepresent reality since the links between elites and political parties and those between parties and society may be tenuous at best, and therefore such a party system cannot be called

¹ This was the original title for Smyth’s 2006 article, but was changed to *Strong Partisans, Weak Parties?* (2006b).

institutionalized (Mainwaring and Scully 1996). This helps explain why Brader and Tucker (2001) felt it necessary to redefine partisanship in Russia as the voters' ability to identify which parties serve their interests, because Russia's party system bore little continuity from one election to the next. Voter sophistication is a good sign, but cannot compensate for the missing connection between voters and elites which would otherwise serve as a mechanism for developing links of representativeness and accountability between the two.

This picture of party system underdevelopment of course does not apply to all postcommunist cases, which cover the spectrum from successful democracies to untransformed authoritarian regimes. Indeed, it should be noted that many of the above conclusions on party development, both optimistic and pessimistic, come from analysis of one case, Russia, which falls into an intermediate category since Russia's democratic transition was genuine but a failure. Thus, if positive signs of cleavage formation and party identification have formed in Russia, then these developments must not have played a significant role in Russia's democratization. Additionally, the fairly gradual and evolutionary processes whereby social cleavages mold the party systems are no longer options in the twenty-first century with technology that enables people to affect much greater changes much more rapidly than ever before, making political elites much more capable of short-circuiting developments they dislike (Diamond 2002). Moreover, there is still the fact that in Russia and several other countries independent candidates have won political offices on multiple occasions over multiple elections. This raises the question, how can social cleavage-structure affect both partisanship and *non*partisanship, with the

latter (ostensibly) having no structure. It appears that we will have to look elsewhere for factors influencing party system development.

Institutions

Over sixty years ago, Maurice Duverger spawned an entire body of literature on the relationship between the institutions of electoral and party systems with two seemingly straightforward propositions (Gaines 1999)², first that “*the simple-majority single-ballot system favours the two-party system* ([1951] 1963: 217)”, and second that “*both the simple-majority system with second ballot and proportional representation favour multi-partism* [italics in the original]” ([1951] 1963: 239). Labeled “Duverger’s Law and Duverger’s Hypothesis respectively (Riker 1982; 1986), these propositions opened up political party research to the study of parties as institutions. Duverger ([1951] 1963: 207) gave recognition to historical and socioeconomic influences, but he pays particular attention to the “technical factor” affecting party system development, being what he called the “mechanical” effects (i.e., rules of the game) and “psychological” effects (i.e., the resulting incentives) deriving from the design of the electoral system ([1951] 1963: 224; see also Riker 1976; 1982; 1986). Since then, “no problem in the research on electoral systems has occupied so much attention as the question of how different electoral rules shape a nation’s political party system” Benoit (2001a: 203).

A large portion of this massive literature has focused upon disproportionality in converting votes to seats in a legislature and its relationship to party system size. Major research efforts have assigned responsibility for variance in proportionality to such

² These notions did not begin with Duverger. Riker (1982) gives an excellent review of the pre-Duvergerian literature. Duverger did, however, subject the ideas to historical analysis (Riker 1982: 758) and thereby introduced these ideas and the idea of testing them empirically to the modern political science community.

mechanical factors as district magnitude (Rae 1967; Taagepera and Shugart 1989; Lijphart 1994; Cox 1997; Katz 1997; Powell 2000), electoral formula (Rae 1967 1995; Lijphart 1994; Katz 1997), ballot structure (Lijphart 1994), effective threshold and assembly size (Lijphart 1994; Taagepera 2002; Lundell 2012).³ The increasing popularity of combining majoritarian and proportional characteristics in mixed-member electoral systems has added analyses of how mixing systems affects the proportionality of results (Bochsler 2007a, 2007b, 2007c, 2009a; Dunleavy and Margetts 1995; Masicotte and Blais 1999; Nishikawa and Herron 2004) and cross-system contamination effects (Shugart and Wattenberg 2001a; Karp 2009; Maeda 2008; Cox and Schoppa 2002; Herron and Nishikawa 2001; Hainmeuller and Jens 2008).

Duverger's psychological effects are the ways in which electoral system mechanics shapes the strategies adopted by voters (Birch 1998: 98), and is often discussed in terms of the "wasted" vote, or sincere versus strategic voting. Rational instrumental voting for someone other than their first choice is strategic voting, whereas straight preference voting for the favored candidate regardless of the outcome is sincere voting. Duverger argues that plurality (first-past-the-post, winner-take-all) elections (i.e., SMDP) encourage people who otherwise support a third (or fourth, or fifth) party to vote for one of the two front-runners in order not to waste their vote on a likely loser, which leads to formation of a two party system (1963). Conversely, PR systems (and the first round of a double ballot majoritarian system) have no such incentives because of the

³ Lijphart considers the factors identified with him to have important interactive effects and are best treated together. Also see Nteo and Cox (1997) for an analysis combining both institutions and social cleavage structures as factors influencing party system size.

possibility (pre-election) that all votes will count, therefore the electorate is free to vote sincerely and multiple party systems result (Duverger [1951] 1963; see also Birch 1998).

Since then studies have supported Duverger's ideas (Endersby and Shaw 2009; Cox 1997; Grofman, Blais and Bowler 2009; Singer and Stephenson 2009), either rejected them or found exceptions (Shively 1970; Grumm 1958; Rae 1967; Blais et al 2001; Clough 2007), shown that strategic voting also occurs in PR and other nonplurality systems (Shikano, Herrmann, and Thurner 2002; Abramson et al 2009; Lago 2008; Cary and Shugart 1995; Reed 1990; but see also Hsieh and Neimi 1999) or conversely does not occur in certain electoral systems, e.g., STV (Bartholdi and Orlin 2003), have focused on specific cases such as Canada, (Blais et al 2001;), India (Choi 2009), Germany (Fisher 1974), Italy (Reed 2001), New Zealand (Karp et al 2002), Hungary (Nikolenyi 2004), and Russia (Meirowitz and Tucker 2007), have argued that other factors must be included in the model such as ideological orientation (Birch 1998), threshold (Anckar 1997, Kostatinova 2002), coalition potential, or local versus national level influences (Birch 1998; Choi 2009; Blais et al 2001), and have applied the idea of strategic voting to novel situations such as U.S. primary voting (Chen and Yang 2002) or using a vote in a legislative contest in order to send a message to the candidates in the upcoming presidential contest (Meirowitz and Tucker 2007).

One characteristic of this body of research is its use of quantitative analysis, since so many institutional features of electoral systems are readily quantifiable, and the development of measures for these features and formulae modeling their effects. The simplest and possibly best known formula is the M+1 rule in which the maximum

number of political parties in the party system is equal to the district magnitude (M) plus one (Cox 1997). Scholars have also developed measures for the disproportionality in translating votes into seats in varying electoral systems. Such indices have been calculated by Rae (1967); O'Leary (1979); Mackie and Rose (1991), Mudambi 1997; Taagepera and Shugart (1986); Loosemore and Hanby (1971), Gallagher (1991); and Woodall (1986). And in order to test these indices, it is necessary to have a party-counting formula, particularly after Sartori (1976) argued that only the number of *effective* parties should be included. Such counting formulae have been developed by Laakso and Taagepera (1979), Sartori (1976); Golosov (2010); Molinar 1991; Dunleavy and Boucek 2003; and Taagepera (1997). Additionally, formulae for calculating the effective threshold (the minimum number of votes needed to gain representation in the legislature) and threshold of exclusion (the maximum number of votes that can be won and still not gain representation) have been developed by Lijphart (1994) and Taagepera (1998, 2002).

The literature specifically concerning democratization has drawn from this literature to study how disproportionality affects the success of the democratic venture, primarily to develop normative arguments of how new democracies should design their electoral systems. Those who favor some form of PR argue that all votes need to have fair value (Lakeman and Lambert 1970) and that representation needs to be inclusive. Lijphart (1984, 1996a, 1996b, 1999, 2004) has long advocated for elections favoring power-sharing and consensus decision making particularly in countries with divided societies, because it encourages cooperation between various political groups which

facilitates trust-building. Norris (2009) also argues that structures facilitating power-sharing elections, including PR election rules, offer the best chance for successful democratization. Others see PR elections creating a fragmented party system, emphasizing the divisions between ethnic groups, and promoting conflictual rather than consensual relations among them, whereas majoritarian rules consolidate political space into stable two-party systems (Horowitz 1985, 1996; Reilly 2001; 2002; Quade 1996; Lardaret 1996).

The problem with this disproportionality literature is that it does not adequately explain nor can it be used to study the presence of independents. Few studies that have sought to identify empirically a connection between electoral systems and success of democratic development. Studies by Blais and Dion (1990) and Bohrer (1997) both find connections between proportional systems and democratic failure, but their results are inconclusive and their data excludes many cases transitioning to democracy since the mid-1980s (Birch 2005: 282). After studying SMD systems and the success of democratization in seventy-eight new democracies around the world, Birch (2005) concludes that the relationship between SMD elections and the incidence of democratic failure in these countries is significant, and that it is due to the SMD system's mechanical effect which magnifies the seat share of the largest party so that it that holds a controlling majority. This enables it to take actions to prevent development of an effective opposition, thereby preventing genuine multiparty competition. Birch argues that in an unstructured, uninstitutionalized party system, SMD elections do not promote stability

because they produce many regionalized parties permitting the best organized political force, usually a holdover from the previous regime, to take control.

Birch's study and mine agree that SMD electoral systems are associated with failed democracy⁴, but disagrees in other respects. Birch looks to the disproportionality effect of SMD elections to favor development of a major party representing the wrong people: those who are also the most likely to undermine democracy. What really stands out in several studies on institutional effects and Duvergerian equilibrium in Russia and Ukraine is virtual lack of any party formation contributed by SMD elections. Both countries have elected legislatures with one-half PR and one-half SMD methods creating laboratory conditions for analyzing their effects (Moser 1995, 1997) and in all cases the PR election has produced less party system fragmentation (Moser 1997 2001a; White, Rose, and McAllister 1997; Birch 2000) and greater influence on party system formation than have the SMD elections. Fragmentation was compounded by the large numbers of independents gaining entry into politics via the SMD contests (Moser 1995; Rose and Munro 2002; Birch 2000; Norris 2004; Ferrara and Herron 2005; see also Benoit 2001a), which is something Birch herself noted in Ukraine (2000) but did not give it consideration in her larger study. My study shows that the lack of party attachment altogether is a significant factor in promoting the retrenchment of authoritarianism and the end of the democratic experiment.

These cases defy the expected outcomes of proportionality studies which indicates that the associated mechanical and psychological effects due not provide answers for

⁴ I also agree with Birch's later argument (2007) that it is easier to manipulate the results of SMD elections and that they therefore are more susceptible to manipulation.

absence of parties. It is difficult to see the tools developed for quantitative analysis being applied to this study either since they are not designed to take independents into account. For instance, how does one count the effective number of parties when there are also an effective number of nonparties to be accounted for (Likhtenchtein and Yargomskaya 2005)? Fortunately, there is another perspective regarding electoral institutions and parties which examine a more suitable set of psychological effects and measures more appropriate to my study.

Katz (1980) was the first to develop and test a theory that the characteristics of parties are influenced by electoral laws because they influence what choices rationally-acting candidates take in order to maximize their chances of victory. He theorizes that PR electoral systems encourage ideologically-oriented campaigns and parties whereas SMD systems encourage candidate-centered campaigns and parties. Carey and Shugart (1995) go a step closer to the issue of party existence by rank-ordering electoral systems according to their incentives to cultivate a personal as opposed to a party vote. Norris (2004: Chapter 10) and (Shugart 2001a; 2001b) also identify electoral features that affect “the extent to which legislative candidates depend on their own personal reputations, as opposed to the reputation of their parties, to gain election” (Shugart 2001b: 35). It is not difficult to see that in new democracies the personal vote incentives could become incentives to eschew party affiliation altogether, and that these rank-ordering schemas could be the basis for measuring these electoral system incentives. Note that most of them are needlessly complex for my purposes in their original form. They incorporate the assumption that parties already exist and the political elites are already members; they

treat the phenomenon being measured as falling along a spectrum of tension between individual and party interests (Carey and Shugart 1995: 418) rather than the dichotomous question of whether to join parties or not; and they attempt to accommodate every major electoral system design. Carey and Shugart (1995) arrive at a ranking list of thirty-three categories of relevant electoral rules, for example.

Brancati (2008) has developed both a simplified categorization and has applied it in her study of the relationship between electoral systems and electoral participation by independents in thirty-four countries around the world between 1945 and 2003. Electoral formulae are categorized from most to least likely to produce independents: SMD plurality, SMD majority, mixed systems, open-list PR, and closed-list PR. Besides the electoral formula, measures of ballot access requirements (e.g., petition signatures, deposit), threshold, and age of the democracy. Briefly, her findings support the theorized effect of the electoral formulas, show that age of democracy (measured by whether it is a first election) is significant, that threshold has a small effect, but that ballot access requirements do not deter independents.

Brancati's study has broken ground on this issue, but this work does not suit the purposes of my study for several reasons. First, cases having less than a 5 on Polity IV's democracy dimension were excluded which included many established democracies but excluded all but eight of my twenty-six cases. This criterion eliminated cases necessary for my study to test whether participation by independents is a significant factor in the failure of democratization. This underscores a basic difference between the studies: Brancati seeks to separate out (by using the age of democracy measure) the influences of

democratization on the incidence of independents, my study argues that the incidence of independents significantly affects democratization. Second, in Brancati's study electoral formula is actually three separate dichotomous variables (1=yes, 0= no), one each for plurality/majority, mixed system, and open list PR which are interchanged in multiple models for analysis. I have developed one measure for all formula categories which captures their effects relative to each other and can be used in a single model. Third, mixed electoral systems should not be treated as a separate category because it does not capture the separate influence of each of the formulas being used or what proportions of the whole each method constitutes.

Robert Moser's analysis of electoral systems and party formation in Russia (1995; 1999b) is one of the very few to study directly the phenomenon of independents while considering elite strategy as an intervening variable in party formation. In his first study, Moser (1995: 377) reveals that the vital impact of the electoral system in postcommunist conditions is that the plurality system allows for the penetration of independent candidates into politics. In the later study his interest appears to be in uncovering the impact of social cleavages, but he nonetheless concludes that the presence of independents "depends more on rules and elite actions and decisions than on deep social structures and cleavages" (Moser 1999b: 162). Moser makes the important observation that PR elections require that candidacy is achieved only through political parties, whereas there is no such restriction inherent in SMD rules. SMD systems also favor the local orientation of electoral contests, creating a considerable advantage for well-known

local political elites to become candidates and run on their personal reputation using local (especially state) resources available to them, rendering parties superfluous.

Henry Hale (2006) has also studied nonpartisanship among elites to find out why parties are not forming in Russia. Although less concerned with Russia's cleavage structure than Moser, Hale nonetheless reaches similar conclusions. One important contribution he makes concerns what he calls "party substitutes." He goes further than Moser in emphasizing the localizing effect of SMD contests, places greater emphasis on the role of local elites, assigning to them not just the role of candidate, but also that of "Kingmaker," the one who makes electoral victory in the local Duma SMD contest possible, the local power base substituting for backing from a political party. These substitutes are not necessarily only the regional governors/mayors, they can be locally important manufacturing, energy, agricultural, and food-processing enterprises, or whatever the locus of power is in a district. Overall, Hale argues that in district elections there is neither institutional impetus nor personal desire for office seekers to join parties, and lower opportunity costs to seeking support directly from local power elites than from political parties. As a result, many independents are elected in SMD contests whose only accountability is to their backers. There is no reason to doubt Moser's and Hale's findings; however, there is also no reason to assume that their observations only apply to Russia, an idea that will be tested in this study's large-N analysis of postcommunist electoral systems.

Political Actors, Parties, and Democratization

When John Aldrich entitled his study of the origins of political parties *Why Parties?* (1995), he signaled a significant change in perspective. Cleavage and institutional structures are explanations of *how* party systems are formed, but he offers an answer to the logically prior question of what reasons there are for political parties to exist. Parties may seem ubiquitous in democracies, but they would not exist if they didn't serve a purpose. The question of "how parties" is still important to answer, but its weakness is that it simply assumes that parties will exist and offers little insight into the "why" of parties. It therefore offers little explanation for the question being asked here, "why not parties?" (Hale 2006).

In many respects, the answer Aldrich offers is simplicity itself: political parties exist because political elites create them to overcome problems that they experience in both electoral competition and governance. Among these are two common and familiar problems encountered in many aspects of politics: the problem of sustaining collective action and the public choice problem of strategically coordinating (Cox 1997) this activity. Parties not only organize the collective action of like-minded actors working toward common goals, they also identify this group and declare to all (particularly the voters) who its members are, thereby increasing the costs to the individual members of abandoning the group in difficult times. In public choice theory, the problem (exemplified by Arrow's Possibility Theorem (1963)) is that the group may not be able to reach agreement on what are its optimum interests and goals without strategic coordination to have everyone arrive at the same conclusions and then move the whole

group in that direction. Party organizations provide this coordination. Thus parties exist, not because they express the wants and desires of key societal groups or because they are objects of affective loyalties, but because they are instruments that political elites use to overcome collective action and coordination problems that they encounter.

A key point of Aldrich's work is his emphasis on parties as endogenous institutions, but this is not important to my study. What I draw from Aldrich is not only that parties enable people to act collectively, but also that where collective action through parties is the mode for competing in elections, democratic development benefits. In the postcommunist states the electoral system is a more significant motivator of party creation than collective strategies, but institutions promoting collective behavior are significant for successful democracy.

In a similar vein, Cox (1997) elaborates on the human factor by interpreting elections as coordination games involving strategic voting of the electorate and strategic entry of competitors in order to prove the truth of Duverger's equilibrium and the maximum party system size of district magnitude plus one party. Gunther's analysis of Spain's party system formation (1989) represents a case study of "the perceptions, calculations, strategies, and behavior of party elites (1989: 836)" as an intervening variable between the structural incentives of the electoral rules and the party system structure. These studies show how parties enable small or large numbers of individual decisions to become meaningful outcomes. Voting is an excellent example. The theoretical benefits of these studies also include accommodating the roles of imperfect information, uncertainty, and error, and allowing for coordination failure as well as

success in the model. Moreover, this also explains the disequilibria results typical of early elections in new democracies which Cox presents as a circumstance with the least information or understanding regarding expectations and the greatest uncertainty regarding strategies and outcomes (1997: 158-9).

Regina Smith (2006a) has made a direct connection between candidate strategies and failed democracy (See also Gunther 1989; Mainwaring 1999; Ames 2001) in her important study of Russia⁵ She argues that the democratization literature has paid too little attention to asking when does electoral competition *fail* to provoke elite investment in democratic institutions and behaviors that transform elections into mechanisms of representation and accountability (2006a: 2). Her theoretical explanation reasons from the strategic actions of individual candidates and elites to national-level outcomes and concludes that

Russia lacked the formal and informal structures and patterns of behavior that secure democracy at the point of founding elections. There is no question that Russian elections changed the strategies of prominent politicians. However, factors such as *institutions that privileged individual politicians over collective actors*, the diffusion of political resources, and the profound level of uncertainty that surrounded the electoral process led politicians away from behaviors that would help to create an accountable, efficient, or responsive government [emphasis added] (2006a: 3).

These three factors are Smith's independent variables explaining what leads elites to choose strategies that short circuit elite incorporation and interest aggregation (2006a: 10), which are the proper functions of political parties in democratic polities. An important element in Smyth's work is that cooperative action is beneficial for democratic development and that the most elemental cooperative decisions office seekers and office

⁵ Smyth states that her arguments are not Russia-specific.

holders have is whether to join a party (Smyth 2006a: 41). If we disagree on anything, it is the central importance I place upon the presence or absence of independent politicians as a factor affecting the course of democratization by affecting other strategies pursued by political actors. Significant numbers of independents indicate that a party system is inchoate (McFaul and Markov 1993), that its parties are incapable of constraining elites and incorporating them into the new democratic regime.

I argue that incorporating elites is one of the important yet overlooked functions of parties in the democratization process. Political participation organized by parties not only enables group action, it requires it. The fundamental structure of political parties as institutions is their collectivity and the incentive is for political actors to pursue their individual interests by also pursuing the organizations' interests. Parties' primary interest is to gain control of government by winning elections and once transition to democracy makes this possible it is also in the interest of all parties to preserve the viability of this path to power by periodic competition. Additionally, tension between individual and party interests is not avoidable. Carey and Shugart (1995: 419-420) point out that the tension between personal and party reputation strategies (which is also a tension between candidates and party officials) presents a collective action problem for politicians. As long as parties are not irrelevant, and especially where elections emphasize participation of party over individual as in PR systems, then party interests will counterbalance those of the individual (Swindle 2002).

I also argue that politics without parties is a serious threat to democratization. Hale (2006) makes the important observation that creating a political party has high

opportunity costs. Besides the actual organizational costs, there is a great deal of effort, difficulty, risk, and uncertainty in successfully creating anything involving the cooperative action of a large group of people. Kreuzer (2000) also makes the similar argument that candidates are motivated by 1) a desire to minimize career uncertainty, and 2) a desire to minimize electioneering costs. Hale observes that those political actors in Russia able to choose to remain independent of party politics have the lower cost option of aligning themselves with people who have access to state resources and power. This is what Hale means by party substitutes. Shugart (2001a; 2001b) points out that while a benefit of SMD elections is the closer link it fosters between representative and constituency, at the extreme this relationship becomes highly personalistic, based on clientalism or machine politics. It is hard to imagine a more extreme connection than that between office holders with no organizational ties and the people who can readily supply them with the resources and influence which minimizes the office holder's regard for public interests. Personalism and pursuit of particularistic gains at the expense of the common interest is one of the dangers nonpartisan politics presents to new democracies.

Other than Hale's analysis, there has been remarkably little study focusing on how nonpartisanship hinders democratic development in new democracies. One segment of the relevant literature focuses on the very opposite argument made by the American Progressive movement that parties need to be eliminated from local levels of government, because parties were considered to be the source of machine politics prevalent at the time (Lee 1960; Carney 1964; Hawley 1973). The argument goes like this: Parties rely upon patronage to keep them functioning, breeding corruption and inefficiencies (Adrian 1952;

McFarland 1968; Wright 2008), which they then inject into government administration which should be purely a matter of technical expertise (Adrian 1952; Hawley 1973). Removing partisan cues from the voter's decision-making requires them to seek out other information about candidates which should be more material to assessing candidates' qualifications for office (Lee 1960; Schaffner, Streb, and Wright 2001: 7; Wright 2008: 13). Divorcing partisanship from the process of choosing officeholders, "leads to the triumph of independent candidates who are interested only in governing the community in the most effective ways" (Hagensick 1964: 117; see also McFarland 1968). Nonpartisan elections also "insulate" local politics from the undesirable influences of state and national party influences, divisions, and issues (Adrian 1952; Williams and Adrian 1959).

The first problem with this literature is that much of it has no relevance to my study. A question that has received attention concerns whether there is partisan bias in nonpartisan elections. Scholars have argued that they favor Republicans (Williams and Adrian 1959; Lee 1960; Rogers and Arman 1971; Salisbury and Black 1963; Hawley 1973; Lascher 1991; Ji 2008), Democrats (Crotty 1986; Krebs 1998; Regalado 1991), neither consistently (Browning, Marshall, and Tabb 1984; Welsh and Bledsoe 1986; Bledsoe 1993; Gilbert 1962), or even whichever party is in the minority (Schaffner, Streb and Wright 2007). this focus reflects the drastically different context of the United States being an established democracy with high institutionalization of political, economic, and social structures, whereas the postcommunist states began as fragile, newly democratizing countries struggling through the multiple transformations of their political,

economic, and social spheres (Offe 2004; Fish 1994) to create institutions established democracies take for granted. Which leads to the literature's second problem: its arguments run exactly counter to my research findings that independents represent a real danger to democratic development.

Some of the studies, especially the critiques of the progressivist argument, do at least hint at negative aspects of nonpartisanship deserving greater attention. There are indications that participating even in local-level elections imposes organizational demands. In the U.S. cases studied, civil society (e.g., labor unions, business, professional, and other interest groups, and "citizen's committees") has often been ready to provide some of the organizational roles formerly performed by parties, such as candidate vetting, endorsement, campaign support, and funding (Adrian 1952; Williams and Adrian 1959; 1055; Gilbert 1962: 354; Dubois 1984: 406-11). Multimember contests often prompt the creation of party-like slate groups to support slates of candidates rather than individuals (Adrian 1952 1959; Freeman 1958; Gilbert 1962; Davidson and Fraga 1988; Trounstein 2006, Schaffner, Streb, and Wright 2001; Wright 2008).⁶ This suggests that calling these political actors "independents" is a misnomer, it is really a matter of who they are "dependent" on.

An element of conservatism in the outcomes of nonpartisan elections offers an answer. As Ji (2008: 297) concludes, "Nonpartisan elections favor the political group that is strong and advantageous on candidate recruitment and representation in candidacy" which means that the advantage goes to existing interests with resources, which in the postcommunist cases often means access to state resources. This is not only consistent

⁶ This also supports the connection between PR contests and party formation.

with Hale's analysis (2006), it suggests a natural affinity between nonpartisan actors and those who are politically powerful that goes beyond the Russian context and that could be a general threat to democracy posed by independents.

The literature also offers some justification to my argument that parties are necessary to performing collective actions that facilitate democratic development, otherwise a democratic political system functions poorly without parties. Nonpartisan elections are widely acknowledged to confront voters with information costs that are very high, which causes significant problems. Adrian (1952: 773) points out that protest voting (throwing the bums out) is limited because it is difficult for voters to determine who they should choose to replace the incumbents (see also Harder 1960: 25). He demonstrates how this restricts strategic coordination among voters, citing the example of the popular Minnesota governor who never had a legislative majority since voters could not determine who to vote for in order to give him one (Adrian 1952: 774). Moreover, collective responsibility cannot be assigned in a nonpartisan body without a unifying organization or symbol to inform voters of how the body is structured around issues and policy positions (Adrian 1952: 775). Without collective responsibility, legislative bodies will lack a comprehensive program. This often results either in much wasted effort with little result (e.g., see Harder 1960: 26; Wood 1964: 68; Carney 1964) or in power passing to the executive (Adrian 1952: 775).

Nonpartisan politics has also been called elitist both in its origin and in its nature. The progressives advocated for more direct citizen involvement in choosing their public officials, but felt that governance should be left up to the experts (Hays 1964: 176-78;

Hays 1967; Rogin 1967; Hawley 1973: 10-11). In their perspective, “the shortcoming of the party system was its constant susceptibility to influence from the grassroots community” (Hays 1964: 176). “In an atomized population, thought the progressives, the experts and the unorganized middle-class could rule” (Rogin 1967: 196). Taken together, these several observations “suggest” that nonpartisanship removes many features of parties and party systems that so many scholars consider to be crucial to successful democratization—aggregation of interests, informed citizens, electorate–party linkages, assignment of responsibility, and accountability at election time (see for instance Sartori 1976; Mainwaring and Scully 1995; Lawson 1980; Przeworski, Stokes, and, Manin 1999; Alvarez 1998).

These observations point to three aspects of cooperation and coordination enabled by parties which are important to democratization, the absence of which has not received sufficient attention. First, Parties provide information necessary for the thousands or millions of individual vote choices to be coordinated into a result that represents a judgment of performance that assigns blame, reward, and other various means by which elections become a mechanism of accountability. Second, in democracies, setting policy is performed by the collective legislative body and party alignments greatly facilitate coordination of policy choices and the cooperation necessary to enact them (it also aids the voters’ ability to identify and assign responsibility collectively). An ineffective legislature is often an invitation to concentrate power in the executive just to get things done. For this reason, the inability of legislatures to maintain a proper balance of power with the executive branch is the third consequence of no parties.

Not everyone saw political parties as the villains of American politics. An alternate vision diametrically opposed to that of the Progressives, proposed by E. E. Schattschneider in 1942 and later labeled the Responsible Two-Party system (American Political Science Association 1950), believed that parties were the solution not the problem. Highly disciplined parties can offer clear program alternatives to which all party leaders adhere, to which they all pledge their support, and for the success or failure of which they all can be held responsible in the next election. In essence, everything the voters need to know to make well-informed decisions is provided by the party label. The campaign promises are clear, and each candidate can easily be assigned responsibility and held accountable for their parties' collective actions. I argue that this is doubly important in new democracies, and that without parties there is nothing else to perform this function which threatens the success of democratic development.

It is instructive to note that the only point upon which Schattschneider and the Progressives agreed was that it was at the local level that politics could be captured by elites and turned to their own purposes, but he argued that the solution was to make local party organizations responsible to their national leadership. This is perhaps the first observation that party nationalization is beneficial to democracy while locally oriented politics can be deleterious, a notion that has remained virtually unstudied. The issue of the nationalization of parties—how evenly distributed electoral support for parties is across geographical regions—has in general been understudied (Kasuya and Moenius 2008; Jones and Mainwaring 2003; Bochslers 2006). Research first focused on the American party system (Kawato 1987; Brady 1985; Claggett, et al 1984; Stokes 1967),

but is becoming a topic of comparative analysis (Cox 1997, 1999; Moenius and Kasuya 2004; Kasuya and Moenius 2008; Chhibber and Kollman 1998 2004; Jones and Mainwaring 2003; Caramani 2004). Only a few have applied their studies to countries other than the advanced industrial states (Jones and Mainwaring 2003) including fewer focusing on democratizing states (Golosov 2003a; Bochsler 2006, 2009b).

Additionally, all of these comparative studies emphasize explaining and/or measuring party nationalization rather than on consequences. Diamond (1988); Reynolds (1999); and Stepan (2001) have posed the argument in democratization studies that nationalization may attenuate the pull of ascriptive societal divisions in new democracies, whereas weakly nationalized parties may aggravate conflict between multiple ethnic, national, or religious groups, threatening the country's democratic development (see also Jones and Mainwaring 2003). My study adds a modest contribution to this literature by offering a qualitative comparison of the consequences of different degrees of party nationalization in the postcommunist states. Nonpartisanship is relevant because it represents the extreme of weak nationalization. I argue that at this extreme, society does not need existing cleavages for politics to become fragmented into separate fiefdoms undermining democracy to serve their interests and preserve their power. On the other hand, nationalized parties bring political actors and elites together in the cooperative endeavors that parties are spreading the value of collective goals and the legitimization of elections as the means parties use to achieve their goal

CHAPTER THREE

INSTITUTIONS AND DEMOCRATIZATION:

HOW ELECTORAL SYSTEMS AND POLITICAL PARTIES AFFECT POLITICAL
DEVELOPMENT IN POSTCOMMUNIST COUNTRIES

Electoral Systems and Party Development

If political parties are a response to the need to overcome collective action problems, then we must look for electoral system structural features that vary according to whether they encourage cooperative behavior. Given that parties have not been popular in the postcommunist countries, the encouragement should be strong in order to overcome this aversion. The PR election method of apportioning votes provides such encouragement, because it requires that the candidates themselves seek office in groups and the success of the individuals depends on how well their group performs. This practically demands that they form into parties. The SMD method, in contrast, is a zero-sum contest where all candidates compete with each other and there is a strong disincentive for cooperation between any of them. Each contest is also geographically separate and distinct from the rest requiring no connection between them and therefore no incentive across district lines. As Aldrich (1995) shows, all campaigns require organized effort by a group of people which offer two advantages, brand naming and organizational economies of scale, which are important regardless of the election method. However, this

type of cooperation involves support functions, and as Hale (2006) shows in the Russian case, these functions can be performed by other (less democratic) means than parties.

It may not appear so initially, but district magnitude is not nearly as important a factor as it is in many studies of how electoral systems affect party systems. Consider an admittedly hypothetical case in which two electoral systems both have a magnitude of five; however, one uses the PR method whereas the other essentially consists of five parallel single member contests in one district. They do not offer the same incentives for cooperative-group participation even though their magnitudes are the same. This latter method has been used to elect city council members specifically because it allows the candidates to be elected city-wide while at the same time keeping the election nonpartisan.¹ Or take the single nontransferable vote method formerly used in Japan: the district magnitudes ranged from seven to twelve, but the voter could only cast one vote and the candidates had to vie with each other for that one vote, which ended up pitting even members of the same party against each other. The key structural feature here is not the number of candidates elected in a district, but rather whether votes are accrued by individuals or by groups.

Each of these two electoral methods has a feature which is expected to act as a secondary influence on party formation. For PR elections, this concerns whether the contest is closed-list—voters only vote for the party’s candidate list as a whole while the party leadership controls the candidates’ order on the list (the higher on the list the more likely to gain a seat)—or whether it is open-list—voters can both vote for a list and

¹ I have personal knowledge that the city of Worcester, Massachusetts has used this method for this reason in order to elect its nine-member council.

specify what rank ordering they prefer. An open-list encourages candidates to distinguish themselves individually as well as cooperate as a group which may reduce the incentive for partisanship. For SMD contests, this concerns whether victory requires a plurality, most votes wins, or a full majority of over 50 percent to win with a second round runoff contest if necessary. McFaul (2000b) argues that requirement for a majority victory creates an additional disincentive for candidates to belong to parties. Candidates who compete in a second round of voting cannot expect to win by relying upon a partisan base, since it could not provide them with the requisite votes in the first round. With that in mind, candidates are more likely to try to broaden their voter appeal beyond party boundaries in order to avoid a second round or, barring that, be positioned to broaden their appeal even more in order to win a two candidate runoff contest. Party membership may be seen as detrimental to this strategy thereby further reducing incentives for partisanship even lower than in a simple plurality election.

All of this suggests that the electoral systems' incentive structure promoting party creation can be expressed in four categories which can be rank-ordered from most to least likely to do so: PR closed-list, PR open-list, SMD plurality, and SMD majority.

It is also important to consider the fact that many of these countries use a mix of proportional and majoritarian systems to elect their legislatures. Or, to reiterate Shugart and Wattenberg's definition (2001b: 10), they use a mix of systems in one of which candidates are elected via voting for *party-list* (proportional), and in the other they are voted for *nominally*, i.e., as individuals (majoritarian). I hypothesize that the larger the percentage of legislative seats elected by a party-list system, the more the legislature will

be composed of deputies who are party members, whereas the more seats are elected via a nominal system, the greater will be the percentage of nonpartisan deputies. There is also the question of whether there is a linkage between the two (or more) tiers which has arisen with the increasing occurrence of mixed-member systems. Such linkages as the transfer of majoritarian votes to the proportional tier to compensate for disproportionality add a strategic incentive for voters to choose partisan candidates since a vote for an independent in the majoritarian tier wastes the opportunity to affect the proportional tier results. This leads to the additional hypothesis that linked tiers are more favorable to party formation than are unlinked tier mixed-member systems.

Nationalization of political parties is one of the key intervening structural influences that focuses politics more outward toward national issues and generates strategic coordination across districts as parties pursue strategies for winning control of the national government. However, SMD systems offer no incentive to even utilize parties, which elites generally prefer to avoid, let alone offer any influences toward nationalization. In contrast, PR systems offer incentives for both. A DM of more than one complements PR systems' encouragement of party development by encouraging nationally coherent (Katz 1980) parties. This is most certain when one nationwide PR district is adopted as the district structure, which is a country's maximum attainable DM, because the nation becomes the natural political arena.² Where multiple PR districts exist, the positive-sum nature of district-level contests reduces the risk of investment in district

² Events in Russia have raised the opposite concern (McFaul, 2000a) that nationwide PR elections produce parties so centralized that they exist primarily in the capitol with too little grassroots presence. The prior concern here, however, is whether parties even exist as viable political actors substantially outside the reach of regional elites.

elections by increasing the opportunity for even smaller parties to win a seat. This produces incentives for parties to campaign in all districts since each district offers an improved chance of winning over all-or-nothing SMD contests in which many of these parties otherwise might not bother to compete (Katz 1980; Cox 1997).³ This increases the probability that accumulating even small gains per district will produce greater representation in the legislature than would be as likely in SMD systems. Paradoxically, large parties, in the sense that they are nationally organized, are better suited for competing in this environment in which more parties may gain some seats by broadening their focus to include the whole nation. Thus, PR systems, unlike SMD systems, have not only endogenous incentives favoring party development, but also endogenous factors promoting strategic interaction and coordination between political actors across districts (Cox 1997).

Political Parties and Democratic Development

Why have political parties developed in some countries but not in others? Aldrich (1995) has developed a theory designed to answer the first part of this question in regard to the origins of party development in the United States. He argues that where political offices are filled through elections ambitious office-seekers will rationally choose to do whatever they can to advance their chances of winning office. As they gained electoral experience, America's office-seekers came to understand that working together would improve these chances, and they chose to create parties as a means of resolving the collective action problems they were encountering. Aldrich (1995, 28) states that parties

³ According to the formula for within-district party system development, $DM+1$, which in SMDs is two, third- and fourth-ranked parties have virtually nil chance of victory.

are not the only such means available, but he does not elaborate nor does the American case offer any additional options. I would argue that American office-seekers did not entertain other options, because parties are the option most compatible with democracy and the Americans were intent on establishing a democracy. The same has certainly not been true in the postcommunist countries. This study intends to show that here office-seekers chose party politics when the PR election method is used, because it is their best option if they are serious about pursuing their ambitions. PR elections involve competition between groups of allied office-seekers cooperating to advance the group's success in order to advance their personal success. This makes collective action problems a major concern to which parties are a natural response. Conversely, SMD elections favors individual over group competition and in the postcommunist countries where parties are not the preferred choice, they are not created.

Why do countries with party development experience more successful democratization? Aldrich's explanation for why parties are created actually offers a framework for understanding why party politics is related to successful democratization and establishes the link between successful democratization and elections. Collective (i.e., party-based) participation encourages political behavior compatible with democracy and promotes political actors' "buying-into" the democratic system. Individual participation does not encourage structures for coping with collective action problems even though as the American case shows these problems still occur. This study argues that in these countries political actors are more likely to deal with collective action

problems using the method much more familiar to them, that of eliminating collective action and restoring an authoritarian power structure.

According to Aldrich, elections are collective activities that suffer from at least three problems. One is the problem of ambition and elective office-seeking which relates to the need to determine who gets to pursue their ambition when there are many people chasing after far fewer offices. Another is the problem underlying social choice theory derived from Arrow's Impossibility Theorem that when faced with three or more choices there is no equilibrium outcome to collective decision-making. According to Aldrich (1995:23), this means that "no method of choice can solve the elective officeholders' problem of combining the interests, concerns, or values of a polity that remains faithful to democratic values." Stated another way, there must be some means of dictating an order of preferences for a group as a whole that does not rely simply upon tallying its members individual preferences. A third problem is related to the well-known dilemma of the commons, how to get people to behave cooperatively. Regarding elections, how do office seekers get supporters to the polls and to contribute the resources and labor needed to win?

Aldrich argues that parties are institutions created by office seekers in order to overcome these problems. Parties offer the means to regulate conflict among its many ambitious members, the means to order preferences of its members by coordinating their decision-making toward a common objective, and the means to acquire and utilize resources as well as to mobilize their supporters to vote. They are the result of a rational decision by office seekers to maximize their chances of success and are therefore

endogenous institutions. Aldrich also acknowledges that this does not mean that parties are the only means of solving these problems.

This theory offers a very promising explanation for why parties exist, but its framework needs adjusting in order to fit the context of postcommunist democratization. First, in the case of America the issue of whether parties are the only solution to these problems is theoretical since they represent the only one chosen, but in the postcommunist states elections without parties is a reality in many cases. Assuming that the three problems associated with collective action in elections exist in all cases, solving these problems cannot be the whole answer to why parties exist. Here a theory must find answers for both Aldrich's question of "why parties?" and Hale's question (2006) of "Why not parties?" or to rephrase the question, why parties in some instances but not in others? This study posits that the (at least initial) reason why parties do exist in the postcommunist cases is the structural incentives of the electoral system used. PR electoral systems emphasize the collective nature of electoral competition by requiring that office seekers compete for office as a group; whereas the winner-take-all nature of SMD electoral systems shifts the emphasis from group to individual. This is important, because at the most general level democracy is collective in nature: the electorate as a group determines who takes the reins of government, legislative bodies enact policy, and power is more diffused among various actors throughout government. PR electoral systems therefore have a direct influence on democratization by promoting a complimentary collective approach to contesting elections.

Democracies are also the most susceptible to Aldrich's three problems for this reason and one of the great concerns of democracy building is how they are addressed. Collective action problems are an inherent part of the difficulties experienced by new democracies. The increased inefficiency and ineffectiveness of government is associated with the chaos of a lack of coordination among officials who cannot agree on priorities, and with the consequences of free riding officials who pursue individual self-interest at the expense of the common good. However, an even greater threat to democracy is how these problems are dealt with, because most approaches to addressing these challenges threaten to undo democracy itself. The most direct way to cope with problems related to collective action is to eliminate them by eliminating the collective nature of the political system, by taking power out of the hands of the many and concentrating it in the hands of a few. This is the most familiar approach to take in countries that have only recently exited from authoritarianism. It may also become a more popular approach as people discover that freedom does not mean greater prosperity or better governance and they become more accepting of re-concentrating power so long as it means greater stability.

Political parties on the other hand are the best known means of coping with collective action problems that is consonant with democracy, because they provide the means for arriving at group interests that supersede the members' individual interests. From this perspective, the ideal-typical party provides one overriding objective by which all actions are measured: gaining (or retaining) control of government by winning elections. The ambitious work their way up the party's career path which rewards those who are more successful at moving the party toward its goal with leadership positions

and candidacy for ever higher offices. These leaders manage the party's decision-making processes to order its policy preferences according to what ordering appears most likely to attract the most votes. The party coordinates messaging, strategies, and resources for greater effectiveness of the whole campaign effort in order to maximize the chance of gaining its objective. A party also reduces the threat of free-riding by linking individual interests to the common objective since it is able to offer a variety of rewards to its members if the party does gain control of government, and by offering to make its campaign promises a reality if the electorate will come out to vote for it.

Another important aspect of democracy is that the various activities of a society are separate from the state and possess a significant degree of autonomy. This is the antithesis of the Soviet state which subsumed all but the most private activities within it. Linz and Stepan (1996) specify three such arenas or "societies" which are necessary for consolidated democracy: civil society, economic society, and political society. These concepts are well-known. Civil society refers to the activities of voluntary associations of citizens to pursue a variety of social interests, and economic society refers to the associations, institutions, and their activities involving the exchange of goods and services for a profit. The third, political society is the most relevant to this theory and it refers to the associations, institutions, and activities involving the periodic contest to assign the legitimate right to control the state apparatus and to exercise state power. According to Linz and Stepan (1996: 8) "the core institutions of a democratic political society—political parties, elections, electoral rules, political leadership, interparty

alliances, and legislatures—[are the means] by which society constitutes itself politically to select and monitor democratic government.”

These three societies and the state are not isolated from each other, they interact and are interconnected, but their autonomy is an essential element if democracy is to succeed; and furthermore, political society should have a certain primacy in its interaction with the state since it is through political society that the public’s wishes are translated into government action. A person may be both a government official and a party leader, but these are different roles that must remain separate at least with regard to exercising state power. It is a party’s role to promote certain policy choices by the government, because this is why the electorate chose that party to govern and doing so represents the winning interests in society; therefore it is appropriate for the party leadership role to guide a government official’s decisions. It is not appropriate, however, for an official to use state power to benefit his/her role as party leader, such as by passing any laws that give that official’s party an advantage over the other parties. In short, in democracy the power of the vote flows through the institutions of political society onward to government, but the power of government does not flow in reverse into the voting booth.

To further clarify the role of parties, it is useful to think of political society spatially, that it encompasses that space in society in which politics occurs. Furthermore, in a democracy this space is not only occupied by parties but structured by them, dividing it up among the competitors in the electoral contests that are fundamental to its purpose. The representative composition of a legislature is a concrete manifestation of the

divisions in a country's political space forming a party system. A very important instance of democracy's collective nature occurs within the parties themselves. They organize their members, foster cooperation among them toward common goals, and coordinate their activities for best results for all. It is between parties that political competition occurs, the boundaries between parties are the battle lines, and it is victory in contestation between parties that is served by the collective activity within them.

A sports metaphor may help to present my theory of the role that political parties play in democratization and why their absence is detrimental to its success. Downs (1957) has already described parties as teams engaged in an electoral contest and this is a useful description taking into account that a party's ultimate objective of winning control of government requires multiple candidates compete to fill multiple public offices. In other words, elections are a team sport. Political society is the arena in which the sport is played and it must have autonomy from government, because government represents the prize, one that is periodically contested for anew and if those who currently hold the prize also control the game then they will never be the losers. This would be as if one of the teams also acted as referees. Political space can be likened to a playing field that is divided up among the teams with each team possessing a piece of the field, and within each team's territory each player possesses a portion of it. Ultimate control of the field belongs to the spectators and the object of the game is for each team to persuade the spectators to give it control over as much of the field as possible which determines each team's power and influence within government. It is the team's role to coordinate the activities of the players in order to obtain the best result for all of them.

To reiterate the basic argument so far: PR rules require that players contest elections as teams—parties—thereby emphasizing cooperative behavior and putting party objectives ahead of individual player’s objectives. This fosters development of team cohesion since individual players cannot achieve anything on their own. Political parties originated as a means of dealing with the problems of the collective action that is concomitant with a democratic political system, without which the tendency would be to deal with these problems by eliminating collective governance. Since the rules of the game emphasize team play, political actors are more likely to use parties as they are intended, preserving democratic collective action rather than undermining it. Moreover, parties are institutions of political society and it is in each party’s “self” interest to preserve the autonomy of political society from the state rather than risk the chance that one of the other parties will use state power to take permanent control over—i.e., capture—the political system. Having parties structure political space makes the game clear for everyone, who occupies which ideological positions and what are their priorities, which enables voters to make choices most in line with their preferences and to evaluate clearly the performance of the players in power in order to hold them accountable in future elections.

The opposite scenario results from elections using the SMD method. At the district level, this method emphasizes the individual over the collective, engaging in “single combat” competition without need for cooperative effort. Nationally, it fragments the political space into isolated contests and offers no structural incentives for office seekers to come together in nationwide organizations. These contests occur in

geographically smaller (usually much smaller) districts than do PR elections with a more parochial orientation which is the situation least conducive to developing party politics. Localized contests fragments the representation of interests by elected officials, the common good suffers as more attention is paid to local and even self-interests (Sartori 1994: 57-58); and even more relevant to new democracies is the susceptibility of local politics to capture by local bosses or specific interests (Schattschneider 1942).

Returning to the sports metaphor, without parties this game becomes a team sport played without teams. For the spectators, confusion and uncertainty reign in such a game, because it is so difficult for them to figure how their choices will affect the outcome, whose policies will prevail in government and how will they be affected. Much the same is true for the players since on their own they cannot gain control over any more of the field than anyone else so there are no clear winners. The field—political space—becomes fragmented and anarchic without a clear set of winners. Very likely the game's outcome is determined by the players themselves after the spectators have made their choice, wheeling and dealing with each other on the field to construct a "team" after the fact. This can spell the end of genuine competition, because the gain for each independent player from controlling a minor piece of the prize can be greatly increased if each one gives control of their piece to the one player who is gaining the most ground. This ensures that he wins control of the field and the others receive a share of the spoils. Winning the game is bought not earned.

The question still remains of how to identify parties' contributions to democratic development and contrast that with the effects of a deficit of parties, and the answer is to

be found in how collective action problems are resolved by parties contrasted to how they are resolved without parties. Four such circumstances important to democratic development have been selected for analysis in this study, although these certainly do not exhaust all possibilities. The first involves how politically ambitious people choose to pursue their ambitions and it is one of the major questions of this study—do they join parties or not. Also, in the postcommunist cases many office seekers initially believed that just having their own party is sufficient in order to be a serious candidate, which explains the proliferation of parties in the beginning, especially the phenomenon of “taxi” or “sofa” parties, as in either could contain the party’s entire membership. No parties and many minor parties both place the burden of rewarding ambition directly on the voters who have to perform this difficult and confusing task by choosing from a hoard of candidates without sufficient knowledge to judge who was more suitable.

The expectation regarding the problem of ambition narrowly defined is two-fold. In countries where parties occupy all political space, the party system will coalesce due to party mergers or alliances, because some party leaders will recognize that their ambitions are likely better served if they join forces even if it means giving up the top position in the party. This can be considered the process of bringing ambition management back into the party. In countries where parties do not occupy all political space, office-seekers will likely either fall in line behind the few who have acquired power and/or popularity, or they will remain unaffiliated and marginal figures. The difference between this and more enduring party formation is that this represents personal attachment is to an individual rather than allegiance to a group identity. If power and popularity shift from one person

to another, the office-seekers will then fall in behind the new guy. A party is likely to develop some consistency and identity whereas the other office seekers will act more like an amoeba changing shape with shifting circumstances. Personalism is likely to be reflected in many of the parties that do exist. They tend to appear and disappear with each election, because they are created to support the ambitions of major political figures and their followers for each electoral contest.

The second collective action problem involves voting, but goes beyond that of getting out the vote. Cox (1997) points out that there are many coordination problems in elections, among which is the problem of voters coordinating their votes strategically in order to arrive at a desired outcome. One example that resonates for democratization scholars of this problem is the inability of pro-democracy voters to coordinate their votes around a particular choice, because they are offered too many options, too many parties created by the many ambitious people seeking entry into the country's newly opened political opportunities, thereby fragmenting political space in the ideological center. This problem resulted in the collapse of all center party governments formed during the short period of democracy known as Weimar Germany and led eventually to the creation of a government by the extreme right Nazi party and the eventual end of democracy. The initial trend of post-Soviet Russia's politics was similar enough for scholars to wonder if they were witnessing the development of "Weimar Russia" (e.g., Starovoitova 1993; Yanov 1995; Ryavec 1998). The problem of coordinating votes to make them count is important for electing a government that reflects the electorate's vote choices, and this is also true regarding the ability to hold the government accountable in the next election as

well as to elect the most suitable replacement. If success in voting coordination is made difficult by a fragmented party system, it must be made virtually impossible by the presence of unaffiliated independent office seekers.

On the other hand, parties facilitate the effective coordination of votes, because of the value of party labels as shortcuts to information on the parties' values, ideologies, and policy preferences. Additionally, parties offer transparency to politics by making it more visible. Party labels identify the players, what they stand for, and what they have or have not accomplished. Voters are able to make assessments that are necessary to effective accountability and more clarity regarding where to direct their votes should they choose to punish the current government. Coordination is bound to be less effective in the beginning due to the excessive number of parties, but frustration over this is an incentive for party leaders to join forces and attract a larger vote share, contributing to party system consolidation since there is nowhere for votes to go but to parties.

The expectation in cases where parties occupy all political space is that party systems will coalesce and show signs of institutionalization as partisan affiliation gains increasing value. Voting patterns and patterns of party representation will show increased regularity, and partisan affiliation will be high even in the most local offices as well as in executive positions which are by their nature elected via SMD election. Even better evidence would be that a change of regime has occurred by means of legitimate elections. In countries where parties do not occupy all political space, the expectation is that there will be much less regularization of patterns and the persistent presence of independent office holders especially where PR contests are not used at all. Personal reputation will

count for more than a party label and parties may seek to improve their electoral success by linking themselves to popular personalities thereby drawing upon the reputation of these personalities, who may not themselves be members of any party, rather than the reverse. Parties will not offer any check on these individual's ambition and may serve them instead. Important information necessary for assigning responsibility, holding officials accountable, and judging how to cast their next votes will not be readily available to, or will even be hidden from the electorate. Elections will be manipulated by those who have acquired the power to do so and the party system will be incapable of resisting it.

Another problem that is addressed by parties involves the coordination of legislative activity. Legislatures are collective bodies that are assigned responsibility for formulating government policies and making other decisions that affect a polity, and therefore must resolve the social choice problems that obstruct their ability to arrive at majority decisions. The amount of negotiating, bargaining, and compromising necessary is hard enough to accomplish when it is being conducted by a manageable group of party leaders, who must likewise be engaged in these activities with the rank-and-file in their own parties, it would be virtually impossible in an amorphous unorganized legislature comprised of independents. Organization is necessary if a decision-making process is to move from a varied even conflicting jumble of preferences to agreement on specific policies.

Legislative capability to function effectively also becomes important in the context of presidential or semi-presidential systems⁴ in which the chief executive is a separate institution filled by popular election, because in this context the legislature is expected to provide some balance of power with the executive administration. While legislative power is measured primarily by constitutional provisions, it would also stand to reason that, all other things being equal, the more effective legislature would be the legislature more capable of defending its autonomy; therefore I argue that a legislature which is structured by political parties is more likely to be able to act as a counterweight to presidential power.⁵ Conversely, an unstructured legislature is likely to be less capable of exercising its constitutional powers and more susceptible to outside influence since individual members can be “seduced” one by one with appeals to their individual self-interests, or they may already be under the control of local elites.

The expectation in cases where parties occupy all political space is that legislatures will prove to function more effectively particularly in asserting their independence from presidential encroachment on their prerogatives. In countries where parties do not occupy all political space, the expectation is that the legislature will be fragmented, even atomized by many independents, and dysfunctional. Such legislatures will not be able to assert themselves or to prevent presidents from increasing their power

⁴ Semi-presidential government combines both a popularly elected president as head of state with real powers and a prime minister as head of government. Parliamentarism is not mentioned here because only one country in this study has a truly parliamentary government. Additional comments regarding the fusion or separation of powers are included below.

⁵ Fish’s argument (2006b: 17-18) adopts the reverse logic, stating “The evidence suggests that vesting power in a legislature spurs party development, which in turn bolsters democratization.” Causality is most likely to flow both ways, but if the link between electoral method and party development can be established then it is more likely that initially the presence or absence of parties affected the strength of the legislature.

and taking the upper hand in government and politics generally. Moreover, no government can simply ignore a dysfunctional institution and presidents are likely to seek to take charge (whether out of frustration and/or seizing an opportunity) in reaction to a legislature's inability to act.

The fourth problem involves the collaboration and cooperation of politics nationally. Localized politics is fragmented and clientalistic, and dominated by local political personalities (Caramani 2004: 2). Historically, before nationalization in Europe politics was fashioned around local notables and politics' local orientation prolonged control by local elites (Caramani 2004: 2). In the United States, machine politics was enabled by the parochialism of local interests (Schattschneider 1942). This localism involves the geographic fragmentation of political space which divides it into "bite-size pieces" that much more easily dominated by the local powers-that-be through dispensing patronage and favors which appeals to various self-interests over the common interest.⁶ And a national government is no more likely to tolerate the dysfunctionality of such fragmented and disconnected politics than it would an ineffective legislature. If the autonomous institutions of political society cannot provide a national structure to politics, then the national government will probably seek to do so by eliminating political society and re-establishing a hierarchical authoritarian power structure over the nation. Success is not assured though, and local elites may retain much power. When politics is nationalized, however, the pluralist structure of political space overlays the entire nation, parties coordinate activities at all levels and promote cooperation of all levels in the

⁶ Parties are also less necessary to politics overall in small geographic areas. See Anckar and Anckar 2000.

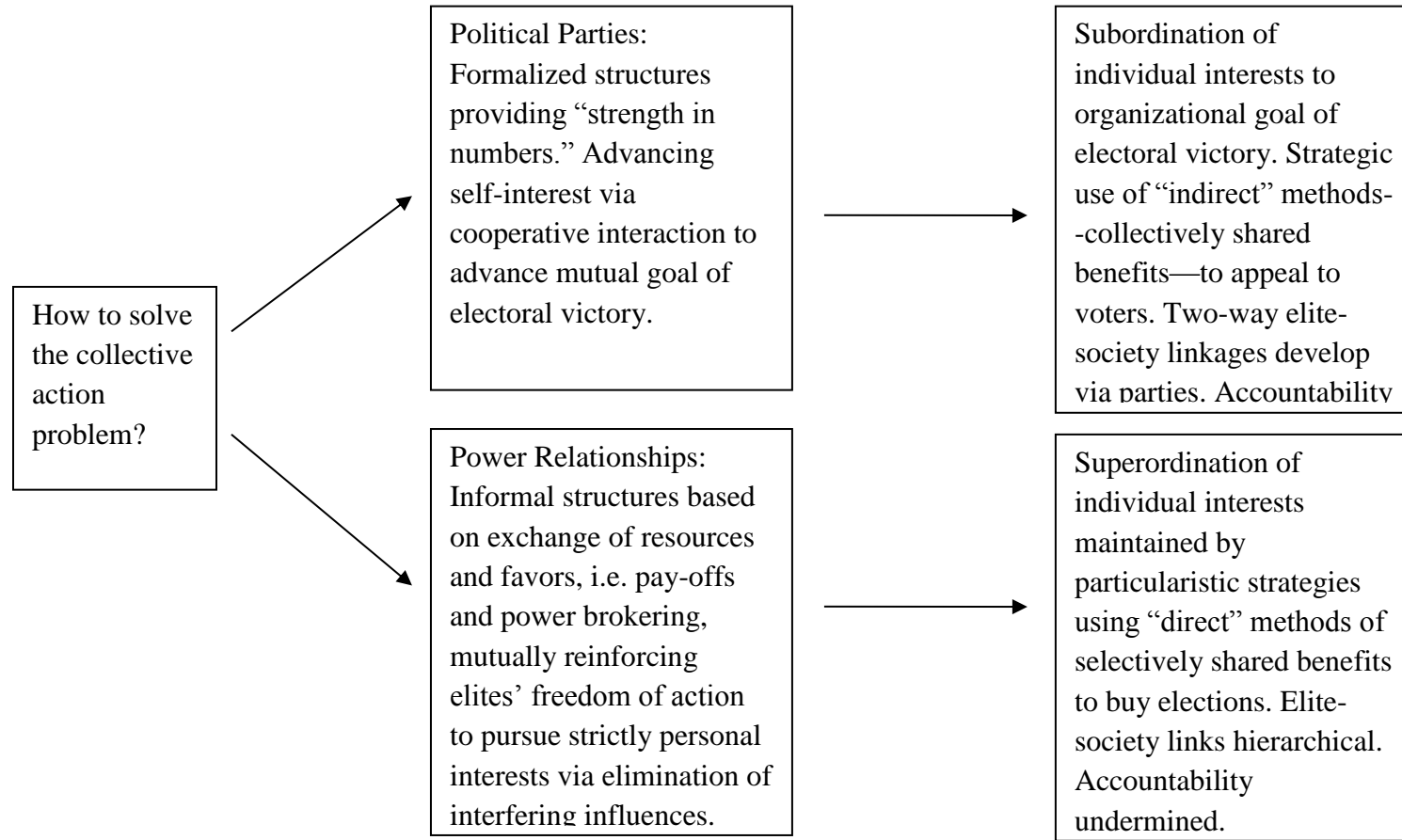
service of the team's goals competing with each other for control of government within an autonomous political society. Just as individual office seeker's self-interests become linked to serving the party's interests, localized and particularistic interests become linked to serving the nation's interests.

These comparable results are also due to the same institutional incentives of the electoral method that influence party development. PR methods favor nationalized campaigns on national issues, because they occur on a broad geographic scale (in one or just a few large districts with high district magnitudes) and they are positive-sum contests in which parties seek to maximize their total tally of votes by campaigning as broadly as possible (Duverger 1954; Katz 1980; Cox 1997). Conversely, SMD methods emphasize local campaigns and local issues in zero-sum contests held in as many districts as there are seats to fill. These contests are geographically isolated from each other; results in one district have no bearing on any of the other districts so there is no incentive for parties to compete in districts in which they have little chance of winning (Katz 1980; Cox 1997). This last point is highly significant, because Duverger's Law only applies at the district level and a two-party party system develops in a country only if politics is already nationalized; otherwise nothing ties these district contests together nor encourages development of nationalized parties to do so.

It should be expected that the multiple district contests will be fought by localized parties and party substitutes with few connections to each other, thereby producing a highly fragmented and inchoate party system composed primarily of minor regional parties as well as encouraging participation by independent office seekers. Any party

system formation that occurs, which is possible especially if a mixed-member election method is used, is not likely to extend into other levels of government and the lower the level at which elections are held the less likely that parties will matter. Additionally, because SMD elections make all politics local they also make them more susceptible to the influences of personal connections and to manipulation by powerful local elites. Political space is likely to be a disunited amalgam of centers of power formed around the personal control of the areas' elites over which the national government has a partial or tenuous hold based as much on patronage as on granted powers, although its will seek (successfully or not) to extend its control over the whole at democracy's expense. PR electoral methods are expected to produce a more structured party system providing for a uniform structure of competition that encompasses politics at all levels. Parties coordinate the behavior of candidates and officials nationwide and facilitate the homogenization of interests nationally in place of the atomization of local interests (Caramani 2004: 2), thereby reducing the importance of personalized power and focusing more instead on the common good of the whole. The nationalization of political space occurs within political society and emphasizes team competition which supports rather than negates its autonomy since teams tend to uphold the rights of team competition.

Figure 1. Collective Action With and Without Parties



Presidentialism

Debate over constitutional design and democracy has mostly focused on structuring the relationship between executive and legislative branches (Fish 2006b: 5). Linz warns of the perils of presidentialism (1994; 1996a) in which powers are divided between separate institutions, and the virtues of parliamentarism (1996b) in which the powers and institutions are fused (although see Horowitz 1996 for the argument that this view is simplistic). The concern has mainly focused on executive power. O'Donnell (1996) argues that presidentialism can lead to delegative democracy in which presidents, perceiving that their unitary position and direct election grant them a mandate as the sole legitimate leader of the nation as a whole, believe that this delegates to them, as opposed to the legislature dominated by particular interests, the role of acting for the nation. Shugart and Carey (1992) consider presidentialism to be more troubling for democracy than parliamentarism, because it, unlike parliamentarism, offers no constitutional mechanism for democratically resolving conflicts between president and legislature.

Fish (2006a, 2006b) advances a newer perspective that “focuses upon the strength of the legislature and its consequences for the advance of democracy. The evidence from his research shows that *“the presence of a powerful legislature is an unmixed blessing for democratization”* (2006b: 5). This is compatible with my finding that the legislative electoral system structure is related to democratic development. Fish (2006a) argues that strong legislatures promote party development whereas weak legislatures de-emphasize the importance of parties allowing them to drift and stagnate which adversely affects democratization. However, a party's primary purpose is to compete in elections; it makes

more sense that elections have the greater influence than legislatures on party development. Moreover, if parties solve collective action problems then it seems more likely that they would strengthen legislatures (being collective bodies subject to collective action problems) rather than the reverse. My theory argues that stronger parties make for a more effectively functioning legislature which is more likely to be capable of holding its own and advancing its interests in its relationship with the executive.

There is also the possibility that executive partisanship may have an influence on democratization. Presidents are essentially elected by a SMD method and serious contenders for the office are usually the most visible political figures in the country, so they do not need to resort to parties to give voters a clear choice. It may be possible that executive partisanship plays a role in horizontal accountability of executive to legislature, although this may only apply when they belong to the same party. Belonging to different parties may only generate antagonism between these institutions. Linz (1996a: 127) claims that political parties tend to exacerbate rather than moderate conflicts between president and legislature, because (for reasons that are unclear) parties enhance the legislature's counterclaim that they are also the legitimate representatives of the people. It is worth including executive partisanship in the analysis to see what the results may be.

Hypotheses

The above theory leads to the following conceptual hypotheses. The first two concern the main argument that the legislative electoral system affects party development which affects democratization. They will be operationalized for quantitative analysis.

Hypothesis 1. The greater the emphasis on group versus individual in a country's electoral system, the greater will be the number of its elected legislative officials having party affiliations.

Hypothesis 2. The more important partisanship is to a country's politics, the more democratic development it will experience.

The next three hypotheses concern executive partisanship, but are expressed as null hypotheses to reflect Fish's theory that emphasizes the importance of the legislature for promoting democratization. They will also be operationalized for quantitative analysis.

Hypothesis 3. The type of executive election method used is not related to executive partisanship.

Hypothesis 4. Executive partisanship is not related to democratic development.

Hypothesis 5. Levels of executive power are not related to democratization.

The next step of this study is determining if empirical analysis provides support for these assertions. This requires operationalizing appropriate measures and hypotheses, and specifying the correct analytical model, which is the purpose of the next chapter. The next chapter will present the methodology for the quantitative analyses performed in chapter five. It does the same for the qualitative case study analyses performed in chapters six, seven, and eight, including case selection methodology and descriptions of expected findings where politics is structured by parties and where it is not.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY

In 1942, E.E. Schattschneider (1942: 1) wrote in *Party Government* that democracy is unimaginable without political parties. There is virtual unanimity in accepting that parties are a necessary (though not sufficient) feature of democracy. This notion is more an assumption than a tested conclusion of empirical study. This is understandable, given that parties became ubiquitous as actors in electoral politics before modern political science developed as an academic discipline. Until fairly recently, there have been few opportunities to put this premise to the test, which is what this study seeks to remedy by taking advantage of the nonpartisan nature of politics in several postcommunist countries. The theory presented in the previous chapter supports rather than challenges the prevailing view of parties. Based on the assumption (previously supported) that postcommunist political elites share an antipathy toward parties and so will be disinclined to join one without some incentive. Its main argument is that certain structural features of the electoral system are the source of this incentive, and that the collective structure of parties restrains elites' ability to act out of self-aggrandizing self-interest at the expense of the public good because they will need to put party interests (i.e., winning elections) ahead of their own in order to promote their own ambitions. Parties also resolve collective action problems which strengthens democratic institutions such as elections and legislatures. Therefore, party-based politics is more supportive of

successful democratization. This theory offers hypotheses which are now testable in the postcommunist context to see if the prevailing view of political parties is warranted. The present chapter lays out the methodology that will be used in the later chapters for the analyses of the quantitative and qualitative empirical evidence. The following sections will describe the data, variables, and hypotheses of the quantitative analysis, as well as the framework for analyzing the qualitative evidence.

The relationship between electoral and political party *systems* as well as the importance of such mechanical effects measures as district magnitude, electoral threshold, vote-counting methods, turnover, and the like have been studied extensively, but mostly in terms of the structure of party systems: are they two-party or multiparty, stable or fluid, focused or fragmented? The focus here is not on the structure of parties and party systems, but *whether* parties and party systems *exist at all* as important actors in arenas of political competition, and whether it matters for the quality of democracy. The measures for analyzing these issues are different from the usual, and it is an important objective of this chapter to elucidate how electoral structures offer incentives for parties or not. Postcommunist democratization offers the advantage that this can be conveniently measured by the extent of nonpartisanship among legislative members, since they show a strong disinclination to form or join parties; when they do so it is less by personal choice than some other factor, hypothesized here to be the incentive structures of electoral institutions. Moreover, it also serves as a handy measure for analyzing whether there is any relationship between parties and the quality of democracy.

Therefore, one of the important methodological issues to be dealt with here is how to operationalize these measures.

This study combines quantitative and qualitative analyses. Focusing primarily on laying out the elements of the former method—operationalizing variables and hypotheses—this chapter should also make clearer what are the relevant qualitative characteristics to be found under the varying conditions important to this study. The remainder of this chapter will proceed as follows. First will be discussion of the data being used and the operationalization of the variables, followed by operationalization of the hypotheses discussed in the previous chapter, the analytical models to be utilized, and finally issues related to the three case studies: case selection and discussion of expected findings.

Case Selection

Selecting postcommunist countries for this study not only offers the opportunity to study the phenomenon of genuinely nonpartisan politicians; it also offers a sizeable pool of twenty-eight cases which, considering their number, share much in common. They have all experienced at least four decades of Marxist-inspired authoritarian rule in relative isolation from the noncommunist world; they all abandoned communism for ostensibly democratic polities which necessitated an extensive retransformation of their political, economic, and civil societies with the accompanying painful economic and social dislocations; and they all have experienced more than one round of national elections since that time. While one should not make too much of these similarities, scholars recognize that they do offer the advantage of reducing the need to control for

past influences affecting their political development. Many, though not all, of these countries have also experienced considerable violence usually involving confrontation with ethnic groups desiring to create their own independent homeland. However, two of these countries—Bosnia and Serbia—have experienced violent confrontation with NATO forces to the extent that this could be considered an overriding influence on the course of their political development. The design of Bosnia’s electoral system resulted from the US-led negotiations resolving their conflict, and US military action against Serbia over the fate of Kosovo led to the overthrow of the autocratic and corrupt Milosevic Regime in favor of more authentically and competitively functional democracy. For this reason, these two cases have been excluded from this study leaving inclusion of the twenty-six cases listed as follows:

Albania	Croatia	Kazakhstan	Moldova	Slovakia
Armenia	Czech Republic	Kyrgyz Republic	Mongolia	Slovenia
Azerbaijan	Estonia	Latvia	Poland	Tajikistan
Belarus	Georgia	Lithuania	Romania	Turkmenistan
Bulgaria	Hungary	Macedonia	Russia	Ukraine
				Uzbekistan

Data

The quantitative analysis uses data gathered for every election held within these countries for the period from their first post-transition election (held somewhere between 1989 to 1991) to 2010. For computing purposes, two datasets have been constructed, one containing data for analysis of legislative elections and the other for analysis of executive elections. There are 128 observations of legislative elections and 113 observations of executive elections.

Legislative Variables

Most of the following variables are well known to this field of study or their purpose is readily recognizable; however, the first two variables are not. Electoral systems have been measured in a host of ways relating to how they affect the political party system, but mostly they relate to measuring what is the impact on party system structure: are there one, two, or multiple important parties in the system? The issue here is not the structure of the party systems, but *whether* parties and party systems exist at all as important actors and arenas of political competition. Answering this question requires a measure that is similar to those commonly used, yet represents an unusual examination of the incentive structures of electoral systems. Therefore, the first variable below is an index designed for this study. The second variable is unusual in that nonpartisanship is not a common phenomenon, thus is not often measured and so a suitable measure has had to be developed here.

Electoral System Index Variable

Of primary concern is legislative electoral system structure; i.e., whether candidates are elected by zero-sum winner-take-all method commonly known as Single Member District (SMD) contests or by the positive-sum method known as Proportional Representation (PR) in which electoral districts have multiple winners. What are being measured here are these electoral methods' structural incentives for party creation and I know of no existing measure that does so. In order to develop this measure, it is first necessary to develop a hierarchical ranking of these systems based on incentives favoring party politics. As has been discussed in both the literature and the theoretical basis for

this study, SMD contests provide no incentives for party development among political elites whereas, in contrast, PR requires contestation by groups rather than individuals and thus favors party formation. An additional structural feature involves additional features for candidate choice. Regarding SMD contests, they can be decided either by who must get the most votes (plurality or SMDP) or by whose vote share must exceed 50 percent (majoritarian or SMDM) and often requires multiple rounds of voting until a candidate attains this objective. These two methods are known for providing different incentives for party system size: Duverger's Law states that SMDP elections produce two party systems whereas SMDM produce party systems with more than two parties (Duverger, [1954] 1963: 239). However, it is not the number but the viability of parties that matters here, and a straight head-to-head plurality contest offers little advantage for party building unless no other options (e.g., elite or corporate backing) are available. Regarding majoritarian methods, somewhat conflicting arguments have been made regarding party-building incentives. On the one hand, organization of support via parties can offer an advantage when seeking to surpass this higher 50 percent hurdle; however, there is McFaul's argument (2000b) that achieving victory requires appealing for broad popular support whereas party boundaries can limit the breadth of candidates' appeal to more than 50 percent of the electorate in the first round, particularly since SMDM does not limit the party system to two parties and results in division of the issue space among more parties. Additionally, holding a second round of voting in a contest between the top vote getters reinforces the need to appeal beyond party in order to gain support from voters who backed someone else in the first round. In the end, the incentive for candidates to

appear above partisan politics in order to broaden their appeal in SMDM contests constitutes a disincentive to party-building and therefore SMDM will be ranked as having less party-building incentive than SMDP.

PR contests can also be divided into open-list method in which voters have the ability both to select their preferred party and to express their preference for individual candidates by rank ordering them on the party list, and closed-list method where the voters have only the choice of party list without ability to express preferences for individuals. Obviously the former offers more opportunity for individual candidates to appeal directly to the voters, whereas the latter is a straight party vote in which the party leaders reserve the right to determine the individual candidate preferences themselves. Thus, while PR systems in general rank higher in terms of incentives to form parties, party discipline is weaker and individual reputation more important in open-list versus closed-list methods, and therefore Closed-list PR ranks above Open-list PR. Thus, all four electoral methods can be rank ordered from least to most party-building incentives, with numerical values as follows:

- 1= SMDM
- 2= SMDP
- 3= PR open list
- 4= PR closed list

This constitutes only half of the calculation for this variable (named *lesfindx*) since several postcommunist states adopted mixed-member electoral systems; therefore the rank values need to be weighted according to what percentage of the overall number of legislative seats are filled according to which electoral system methods. In cases where only one method is used, the other is coded as zero. This results in the following formula:

$$\text{lesfindx} = (\text{SMD Rank} * \text{SMD Proportion}) + (\text{PR Rank} * \text{PR Proportion})$$

For example, until 2007 Russia split its electoral system 50 percent SMDP and 50 percent PR Closed List and thus Russia's Index value is

$$(.50 * 2) + (.50 * 4) = 3$$

whereas Turkmenistan uses 100 percent SMDP and its index is calculated as

$$(1.00 * 2) + (0.0 * 0) = 2.$$

The literature on mixed-member systems indicates that the possibility of linkage between electoral “tiers” (each portion of the electoral system utilizing a different method constitutes a tier) creates “cross-contamination” of incentives. For instance, Albania has a mixed-member system in which voters cast only one vote in an SMD contest, but then these votes are recalculated according to which parties the chosen candidates belong and are then applied to the PR contest. This enhances the party-building incentive of the PR tier since casting a vote for an independent SMD candidate wastes that vote in respect to the PR tier. To determine if this makes a significant difference an adjusted index (*lesfiadj*) will also be created by adding “one” to the index value calculated as above in cases involving cross-tier linkage, otherwise a zero will added.¹

NonPartisanship Variable

This variable represents the importance of party identity, and constitutes the percentage of elected legislators (out of the total number of legislators) who chose to associate formally with a political party as part of their campaign strategy. Because this

¹ As it turns out, there are only two cases of linkage, Albania and Hungary, so this adjustment may not contribute much, but it deserves the attempt.

choice was voluntary, and because the campaign was successful, this is a suitable measure of how important political parties are as actors. In accordance with my theory, *nonptpct* is treated as the intervening variable which connects electoral system structure to party system development and then to the level of broader democratic development. In its capacity as dependent variable, *nonptpct* will be used to measure the influence of *lesfindx* (and *lesfiadj*) on the importance of partisan affiliation in each election; and in its role as independent variable, *nonptpct* will be used to determine what influence political parties have on the quality of democracy. This variable has a minimum possible value of zero and there is a cluster of cases at zero, therefore this data appears the same as data left censored at zero, which must be taken into account in any analysis using *nonptpct* as a dependent variable.

Total Average District Magnitude

District magnitude (*M*) is an aspect of electoral system structure of some considerable importance in the literature as determinant of the maximum number of parties in a party system. As such, it reflects at least some of the structural difference between SMD and PR contests, and thus it makes theoretical sense to include it in the analytical model. District magnitude is the number of legislative seats elected within each electoral district. By definition, SMD contests have $M = 1$, but PR contests always involve more than one and can be anywhere from a few elected in several districts to all elected in one nationwide district. Because PR districts can vary in magnitude within the same country and mixed-member systems utilize more than one type of electoral district, average *M* must be calculated for each type of district then added together where

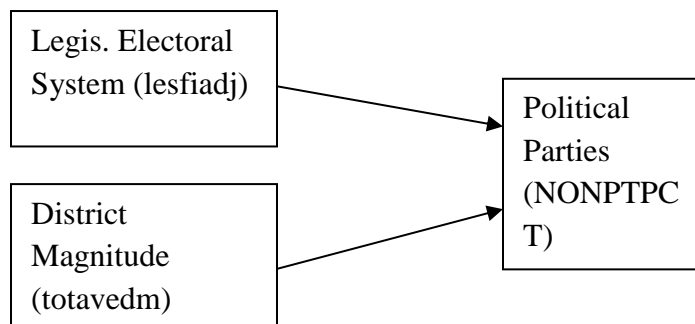
necessary to arrive at a total average. The decision was made to use the formula developed by Wallack, et al (2003) because it emphasizes the incentives that individual legislators face due to disparities in the geographical size of districts better than the typical calculation. Their formula weights the district magnitude for each election method used by multiplying the district magnitude (M) for each by the total number of legislatures elected by each method (T). The formula for calculating total average district magnitude is:

$$totavedm = (M1*T1 + M2*T2)/(T1+T2)$$

For example, in a country in which a 300 member legislature is elected using one 200-member national district (M=200 and T=200) and 100 single-member districts (M=1 and T=100), the formula would be $(200*200+1*100)/300$.

The basic model for testing legislative influences on partisanship is:

Figure 2. Legislature Partisanship Model



The Executive Office Variables

Although emphasis rests on legislative institution, the executive (i.e., President or Prime Minister) cannot be ignored as a factor in virtually all studies of political

institutions. There are two features of the executive most likely to affect the political parties: the structure of the executive electoral system and executive power.

Dependent Variable, Executive Partisanship

The *execpart* measures executive partisanship as a straightforward nominal dummy variable coded as “1” if the executive chooses to be formally identified with a particular party, and “0” if not.

Executive Electoral System

Since there are no collective executive bodies in any of the cases under consideration, there are no variations regarding district magnitude, no instances of collective versus individual structure. There is only one executive at a time. The structural characteristic of concern here is whether the executive is a president directly chosen by popular election or a prime minister elected by the legislature. The former is essentially an SMD contest whereas the latter connects the executive to the legislature which should increase the importance of party as the means of structuring the choice of executive and as the means of linking accountability of the executive to the legislature. This offers a three-way ranking of the executive electoral system’s effect on partisanship in the executive. Two of these represent the varieties of SMD system outlined above, with victory by majority vote with run-off if necessary having the least incentive for the executive to adopt a partisan identity, and victory by plurality next. The third category is election by legislature which has the greatest incentive for an executive to adopt a party identity. Thus we have the following values, rank ordered from least to greatest incentive, for the *execsys* variable:

- 1 = Maj. Runoff
- 2 = Simple Plurality
- 3 = elected by Legis.

Executive Power Variables

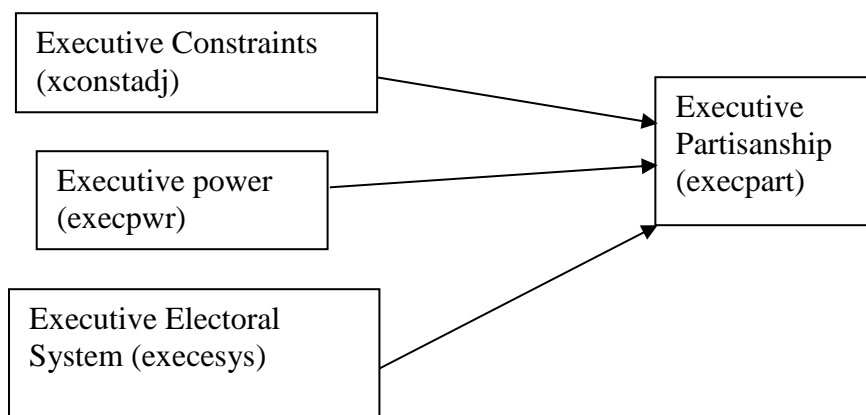
As much as anything, democratization means decentralizing state power. Yet, even in democratic government considerable state power remains concentrated in a unitary executive, and one of the major challenges of democratization is enabling the executive to function effectively without also enabling the executive to undue democratic development by reconcentrating power. Fish (2006a, 2006b) makes a strong argument that, regarding this challenge to democratization, legislative power rather than executive power is the influential factor. However, the only measure of legislative power, developed by Fish and Kroenig (2009), only exists for the year 2007. This is too recent to reflect the many constitutional changes made prior to this date in many of the countries under study, and so I decided to use a measure of constraints on executive power as a substitute.

This study includes two measures of executive power, mostly because neither is as refined a measure as I would like and this allows for doubling the test of executive power. The first variable is derived from the Polity IV database's measure of constraints on executive power *xconst*. However, I dispute the level of constraints assigned to Russia. It rates Yeltsin's power as less constrained than was Putin's when the reality is the reverse, therefore I have created an adjusted *xconst* variable *xcnstadj* in which these rating values are reversed for Russia. The *execpwr* variable comes from Timothy Frye (1997) and measures executive power by the number (out of a possible twenty-six)

constitutional provisions of power granted to each executive.² Frye accommodates the structural difference between a president's and a prime minister's independence from the legislature by multiplying the result for any executive elected by the legislature by 0.5. He also accounts for the fact that virtually all cases involve semi-presidentialism, in which there is both a president and prime minister, by ranking the power held by the office which is constitutionally charged with primary responsibility for performing executive functions. This also reflects cases where these powers are to some degree shared between a president and a prime minister, since the power of the measured office is reduced by the degree to which it is shared with the other.

The basic model for testing executive influences on partisanship is:

Figure 3. Executive Partisanship Model



Control Variables

Before proceeding to explication of the models testing partisanship as independent variables, there are control variables to be included in the above models

² Frye's study analyzes twenty-seven cases which include all postcommunist countries except for Mongolia; therefore I produced a figure for Mongolia using his methodology. Frye updated and refined his measure of executive power in an unpublished study (Frye, 1999), but it includes data for only twelve countries and so is not suitable to use here.

testing legislative and executive influences on partisanship. One of the factors often mentioned in regard to democratization, and particularly regarding familiarity with new electoral systems is learning. Both elites and electorates need to become familiar with new institutions and their incentive structures in order for generalizable patterns of behavior to emerge. The *yrtrdiff* variable measures, for each data point, the difference in years between the date of each cases' transition from communism and the time at which each particular election is held in that country. Moreover, variations in the transition experiences themselves are influential in the success of subsequent democratization (Kitschelt, et al 1999: 38-39). Kitschelt, et al provide a categorization scheme of the transition process that comprises the variable *trnstype*. The scheme reflects the relative levels of participation in the process by new as well as old elites, reflecting the idea that democratization is more likely to be successful the less the "old guard" plays a role in designing and running the new political system. These categories are: 1) transition by implosion, 2) transition by negotiation, 3) transition by preemptive reform, and 4) transition by old regime elites.

Success of Democratization—Partisanship as an Independent Variable

The second half of the theoretical model argues that the more consequential parties are as actors in the new political processes, the more likely democratization will be successful. Thus, the key is to find appropriate measures of democracy for use as dependent variables, particularly ones which go beyond the general Freedom House and Polity IV values in measuring particular aspects of democracy. While the "boom" in the study of the Third Wave of democratization, has produced more than a few such

measures, this is more complicated than one might think. Many potential candidates must be eliminated because they do not cover a sufficient time span and/or do not include enough cases to be of use here. Many of the measures which are used still do not include the early election periods and/or are calculated only biannually. The availability of appropriate measures will likely improve as time passes, but for now one must work with what one has at hand.

The Standard Measures: Freedom House and Polity IV

These measures are so commonly used that they require little introduction. Freedom House's Freedom in the World database provides measures of Political Freedom (*fhpr*) and Civil liberties (*fhcl*) with values from 1 (most free) to 7 (least free); and I have created a measure of their combined influences by adding their values together in the *fhtotal* variable with values from 2 to 14. The Polity IV database also contains two separate general measures, but they represent independent measures of Autocracy (*autoc*) and Democracy (*democ*) under the notion that they are not simply opposite ends of the same spectrum. Each has values ranging from 1 to 11, with the higher number representing more of *each*, i.e. eleven represents the highest level of autocracy and democracy respectively. In response to researchers' expressed desire for a single measure of overall democratic quality, the Polity IV database also includes the polity variable calculated by subtracting the autocracy score from the democracy score (i.e., polity = DEMOC – AUTOC) and having a possible value range of 11 to -11.

Press Freedom

This measure, also available from Freedom House, should be self-explanatory, and constitutes the typical Freedom House 1 to 7 scale from most to least free. The variable used here (*pfmadj*) has been adjusted to include values for the missing case of Mongolia, which have been taken from Mongolia's political freedom variable because these two variables are strongly correlated and for lack of another option.

IBRD Governance Matters IV Indicators

The International Bank of Reconstruction and Development (IBRD, aka World Bank) began a project for creating a database of quantitative measures for six dimensions of governance: Voice and Accountability, Political Stability, Government Effectiveness, Regulatory Quality, Rule of Law, and Corruption. The data began as biannual measures for years 1996 to 2002, after which they became annual figures. In other words, this study includes data for these six measures from 1996 to 2010 with the years 1997, 1999, and 2001 missing. For this study, these missing values have been calculated using the (single imputation) Linear Interpolation method in SPSS version 11.5. This file contains aggregate indicators of six dimensions of governance. In the primary researchers' own words, "the indicators are constructed using an unobserved components methodology described in detail in the paper. The six governance indicators are measured in units ranging from about -2.5 to 2.5, with higher values corresponding to better governance outcomes" (Kaufmann, Kraay, and Mastruzzi, 2008). These values represent point estimates so the researchers caution users that they are "subject to margins of error that are clearly indicated. Consequently, precise country rankings should not be inferred from

this data.” They are, however, what are available. Two variables have been created for each indicator, one contains data for the year in which each election is held and the other contains data lagged one year after each election so that the model can be re-tested for the longer-term influence of elections on these government dimensions using this lagged data. Table 1 lists the dimensions and associated variables.

Economic Freedom

One of the most noted features of the transition from communism is the need to transform both the political *and* economic systems; therefore it is desirable to include a measure of how successfully the economic system has opened to free market forces. The Heritage Foundation provides an indicator (*econfree*) suitable for use in this study.

Table 1 Dimensions of Governance Variables

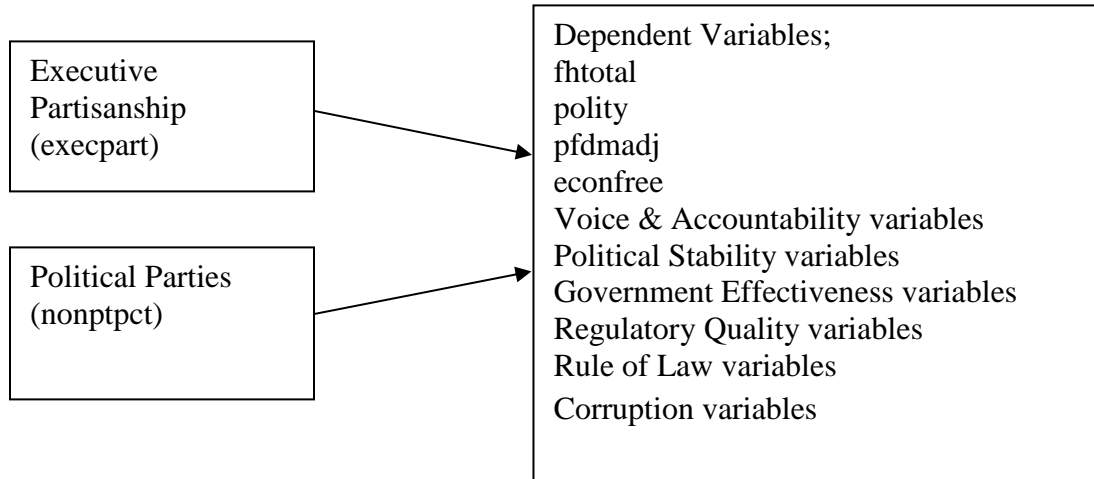
IBRD dimensions of governance indicators	Variable containing data for election year	Variable containing data lagged one year
Voice and Accountability	Vaest	VAE1
Political Stability	Polstest	PSE1
Government Effectiveness	Govefest	GEE1
Regulatory Quality	Regqlest	RQE1
Rule of Law	Rolest	ROLE1
Corruption	Correst	Corre1

The basic model for examining the effect of partisanship on democratic development is presented in Figure 4.

Control Variables

Just as previously, certain variables are needed to control for additional factors which the literature identifies as likely influences affecting the models. Also as

Figure 4. Basic Model with Partisanship as the Independent Variable



previously, the number of years since transitioning to democracy (*yrtrdiff*) and the type of transition (*trnstype*) are included to account for learning and the transition experience. Additionally, poor economic performance is usually considered to have a significant negative impact on the democratization process, therefore two indicators of economic performance are included here, both of which come from the IBRD. The first indicator is a country's per capita gross domestic product (GDP) and the second represents a country's annual percentage of GDP growth and data are available for all years. Three variables have been created for each of these two indicators (six in all) in order to test for the possibility that longer-term economic trends affect election results. One variable for each indicator (per capita GDP and GDP growth) contains values for the election year (variable names *pcgdp0* and *grwth0* respectively), one each contains values for one year prior to an election (variables *pcgdp-1* and *grwth-1*), and one each contains values for two years prior to an election (*pcgdp-2* and *grwth-2*). If a country holds an election in 2005, GDP per capita and GDP growth data would be available for 2005 (in variables *pcgdp0* and *grwth0* respectively), 2004 (in *pcgdp-1* and *grwth-1* respectively), and 2003

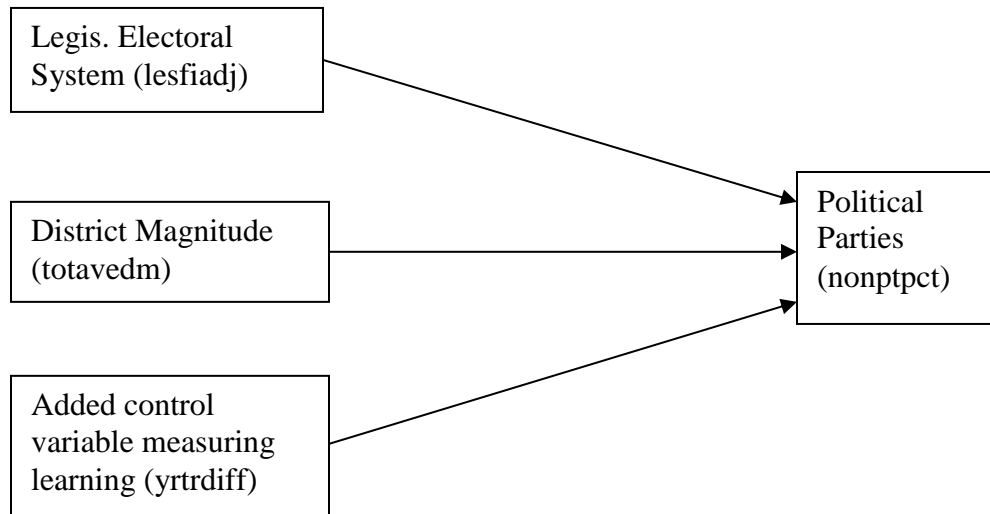
(in pcgdp-2 and grwth-2 respectively). This way, the model can be re-tested using different timeframes to determine if the effect of economic performance (if any) is immediate or long-run.

Below are the hypotheses and graphic representation for each of the three main models.

Hypothesis 1

The larger PR is as a fraction of the electoral system used, and the greater is District Magnitude, the lower will be the percentage of nonpartisans in the legislature, even when adjusting for how much learning of the new political system has occurred.

Figure 5. Model Testing Hypothesis 1



Hypothesis 2

The lower the constraints on executive power and the higher the executive power ratings, the higher the probability that the Executive will be nonpartisan, even when

adjusting for how much learning of the new political system has occurred. It is more likely that measures of executive power will become independent variables affecting democratic development directly, replacing execpart in the analysis below.

Hypothesis 3

The lower the level of nonpartisanship in the legislature and the higher the probability of a partisan executive, the greater will be the level of democracy as measured by the multiple dependent variables listed below.

Figure 6. Model testing Hypothesis 2

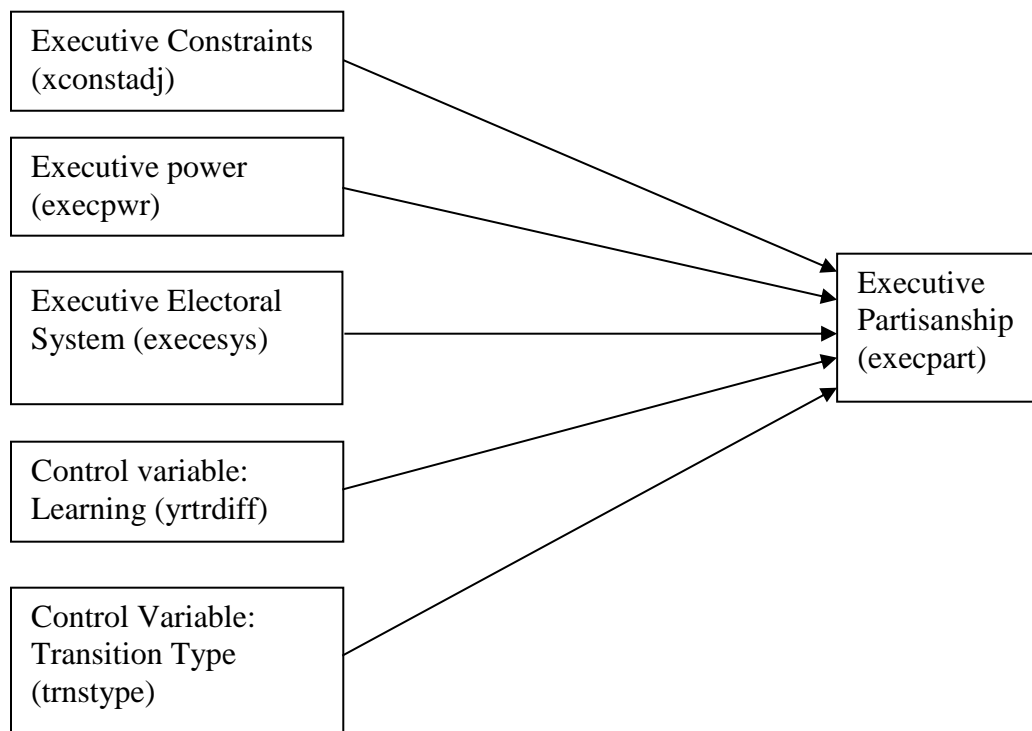
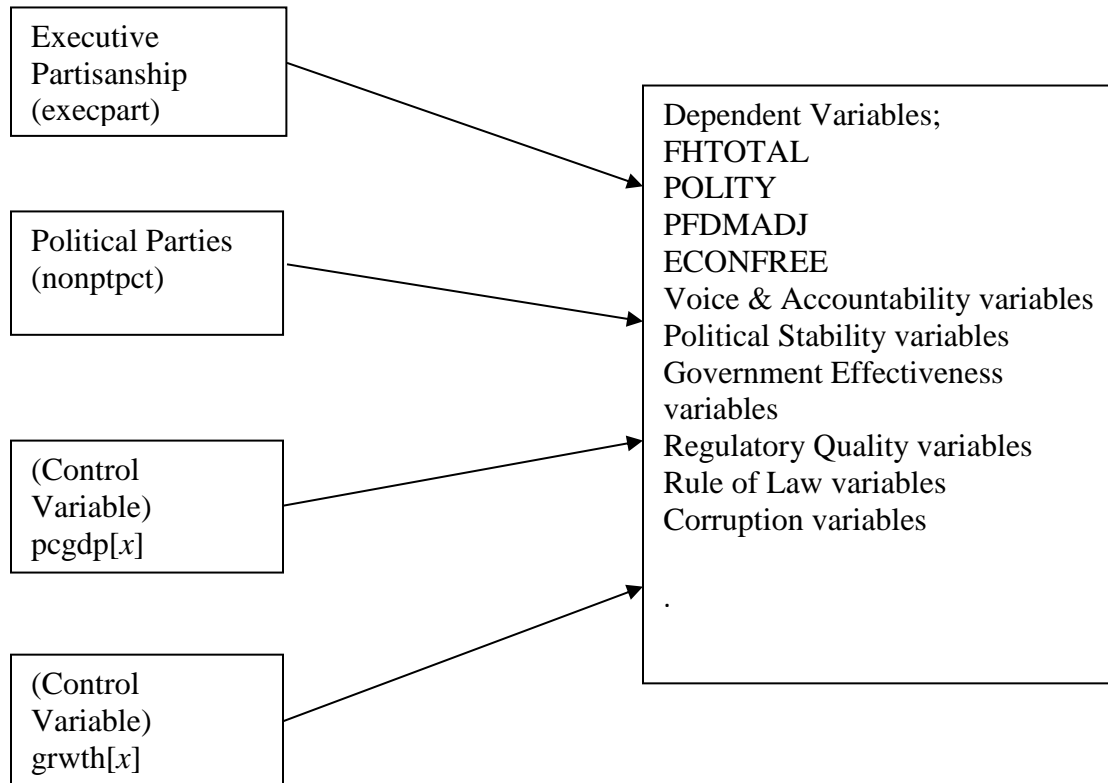


Figure 7. Model Testing Hypothesis 3



Statistical Models

To reiterate the basic theoretical argument, electoral system design influences political party development which in turn influences quality of democracy:

Electoral System → Political Parties → quality of democracy

The appropriate analytical model is path analysis which can be easily accomplished using the Amos (A Method of Moments Structure) 18.0 Structured Equation Modeling (SEM) software system. This offers several advantages. SEM does not require knowledge of specialized estimation techniques. Amos will compute path coefficients using maximum likelihood estimation which sufficiently relaxes assumptions of regression to handle the

non-normal shape of the zero censored data.³ Another key feature of Amos is that it performs SEM using likelihood-based approach to incomplete data patterns which uses all available data rather than only complete cases, therefore it is able to handle unbalanced data (McArdle and Nesselroade 2010). A Chi-square test will have to be performed on hypothesis II since this is the method Amos uses when the dependent variable contains nominal binary data. Another advantage is that the models for these analyses are recursive, which eliminates the need for simultaneous equations and their accompanying model specification complexities. This also allows separate testing of the models (Hypotheses I and II), necessary because of the nature of exocpart limits Hypothesis II to Chi-square estimation.

Qualitative Analysis

I intend to add flesh to the “bones” of quantitative framework in the previous chapter with a comparative case study analysis of electoral system design, elite behavior, party system relevance, and democratic development in the postcommunist states of the Kyrgyz Republic, Moldova, and Russia. These constitute the next three chapters respectively.

³ Chapter 32 of the Amos User’s Guide describes a procedure for analyzing censored data by treating, for example, any dependent variable having an unspecific value known to be below zero as ordered categorical data specified as <0. This only permits for Bayesian estimation. My dataset has the shape of a zero censored, because there are many cases clustered at the minimum possible value of zero, there can be no lower value for NONPTPCT. Therefore, it makes no sense to refer to categorical values, e.g. <0 and thus no reason to code any such value in my data and no reason to be restricted to Bayesian Estimation in this analysis.

Table 2. Relating Cases by Legislative Electoral System & Presidential Power.

Frye's Exec Power Ranking	PR > 50%	PR \approx SMD	PR < 50%
	Entry Format: case name, total % seats elected by PR, Freedom House ratings(Political Freedom, Civil Liberties, Overall Ranking)		
4.5 – 9.0	§Czech Rep. 100%* (1, 2, F) Estonia 100%* (1, 2, F) Latvia 100%* (1, 2, F) Moldova 100%* (3, 4, PF) Slovakia 100%* (1, 2, F) Slovenia 98%** (1, 1, F)	Hungary 54.5%*(1, 2, F)	Albania 28.5% (3, 3, PF) Macedonia 29% (3, 3, PF) Mongolia 0% (2, 2, F)
9.5 – 14	Bulgaria 100% (1, 2, F) Poland 100% (1, 2, F) Romania 94.5%** (2, 2, F)	Lithuania 49.6% (1, 2, F)	Armenia 42.7% (4, 4, PF) Azerbaijan 20% (up to 2002) (6, 5, PF) Azerbaijan 0% (since 2002) (6, 5, NF) Tajikistan 35% (6,5, NF)
14.5 – 18.5	Croatia 96%† (2, 2, F) Georgia 63% (4, 4, PF)	Russia 50% (5,5, PF) Ukraine 50% (since 1998) (4, 4, PF)	Belarus 0% (6, 6, NF) Kazakhstan 13% (6,5, NF) Kyrgyzstan 25% (6,5, NF) Turkmenistan 0% (7, 7, NF) Ukraine 0% (up to 1998) (3, 4, PF) Uzbekistan 0%‡ (7, 6, NF)

Source: Elections around the World, www.electioworld.org. Freedom House, www.freedomhouse.org., and Frye (1997).

Notes:* In these countries (including Moldova since 1998), executives are indirectly elected by their legislatures. In his data, Frye (1997 547) represents this by multiplying the presidential power indicator by 0.5.

**The small portion of these countries' legislatures elected nonproportionally contains seats designated for election by ethnic minorities.

†Legislative election is actually via multi-member seats rather than proportional representation, plus a few seats set aside for representation of ethnic minorities and Croatians living abroad.

‡67% of legislators are indirectly elected by local councils.

Several criteria were used in selecting these three cases (see Table 2). First, each case had to represent one of three general forms of electoral system design. Second, I decided to choose all three cases from among the republics of the former Soviet Union to limit to the greatest extent possible variation in influences from their communist past, pre-communist experiences with democracy, and post-transition impact of international influences on elite motivations such as the prospective benefits of joining the European Union. Third, I sought to minimize the impact of civil or localized war, which offers an opportunity for political leaders to freeze democratic reform and consolidate their grip on power. Last, I considered certain specific characteristics of the cases that would enhance their suitability as cases representative of my argument.

After applying the first three criteria, the potential choices for the majoritarian case were reduced to Belarus, Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. The Kyrgyz Republic was chosen from among these states, because it represents the greatest challenge to my theory, since it had initiated the most genuine reform effort (Luong 2002) and its first election was viewed optimistically as a real step toward consolidating democracy (Huskey 1995). Similarly, the choices for the proportional case were reduced to Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Moldova. Since all of these cases are to a degree exceptional according to my criteria (all having been part of the Soviet Union for fifty rather than seventy or more years), I chose Moldova as the least so, having been the least strident in rejecting Soviet rule during the Soviet Union's final days, the least motivated to join the new Europe, and having no past experience of democracy or indeed of being an independent state. Russia was chosen to represent a

mixed electoral system because the majoritarian and proportional tiers each elect exactly half of the legislature and function independently of each other, and because the other comparable choice Ukraine has only used a mixed system in two elections.

The qualitative analysis for this study is intended to compliment the quantitative analysis by performing two main functions. First, the relationship between the electoral system in use and the state of the party system will be examined. Second, the role of political parties as the institutional response to collective action problems and its relationship to democratization will be examined. The three case studies—Moldova, Kyrgyzstan, and Russia—which are the subjects of chapters six, seven, and eight respectively, vary by electoral system used and are expected to provide meaningful contrasts between their results.

The following are some expected findings. Democratic development should be the most advanced, or at least have experienced the least backsliding, in Moldova. Moldova should exhibit more genuine party system development with the least fragmentation and fluidity; it will experience party consolidation and will display greater consistency of the party system's composition over time. Personal political ambitions will be pursued through parties and will be tied to party objectives. Parties will structure virtually all of political space meaning that a) greater transparency enables voters to make better informed choices coordinating into meaningful election outcomes, b) the legislature will function more effectively, because resolving the cooperation and coordination problems within each party “team” simplifies the process of building

majority support for legislation, and c) the benefits of party politics will be nationalized. Moldova's political society will realize significant autonomy from elite control.

Kyrgyzstan represents the polar opposite case and democratic development there is expected to have been the least successful overall. It will have no party system as such, although there may be a huge jumble of registered parties existing in name only, but most elected officials will be independents. Personal ambitions will not be tempered by party affiliation and personalism will be more important than institutions in the political system. Parties will not structure political space and without parties to handle collective action problems more authoritarian means will be used instead. Politics will not be nationalized; instead, the country's political space will be fragmented geographically and localized elites will exert control over their regions, dominate its politics, and have considerable influence over national legislators elected from their area. The legislature will function poorly at best and will not be able to resist encroachment by the executive on its purview. Political elites will effectively control political society.

Russia is the case which has utilized both electoral methods of Moldova and Kyrgyzstan in its legislative elections and outcomes are expected also to be mixed in some fashion. Both party and noninstitutional avenues for pursuing ambition will be available. There will be some development of a nationalized party system, but also geographic fragmentation into regions without party penetration dominated by local elites. The legislature will have some partisan structure, but also a substantial number of independents. Overall, party institutions are not likely to counterbalance the influence of personalism and authoritarian responses to collective action problems; therefore the

expectation is that Russia will more likely resemble Kyrgyzstan in its lack of an autonomous political society. Before conducting these case study analyses, the quantitative analysis should be conducted, and it will be the subject of the next chapter.

The results of the studies outlined above will occupy the remainder of this dissertation. Chapter Five will describe the findings of the large-N quantitative study. Chapters Six, Seven, and Eight will discuss Moldova, Russia, and Kyrgyzstan respectively. Chapter Nine will discuss the key conclusions of the studies, significance of the findings, and recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER FIVE

CRUNCHING THE NUMBERS

The analyses will be presented in the following manner. First, will be the examination of the relationship between electoral systems and partisanship followed by examination of the relationship between partisanship and democratic development. The former relationship also entails separate analyses for legislative and executive elections and partisanship; although in the later analysis legislative and executive partisanship are considered together in their relationship to democratic development. For each of these three models, analysis will consider not only the those results relevant to hypothesis testing but also to measures of data normality and goodness of fit and additional analyses may be conducted and compared where indicated.

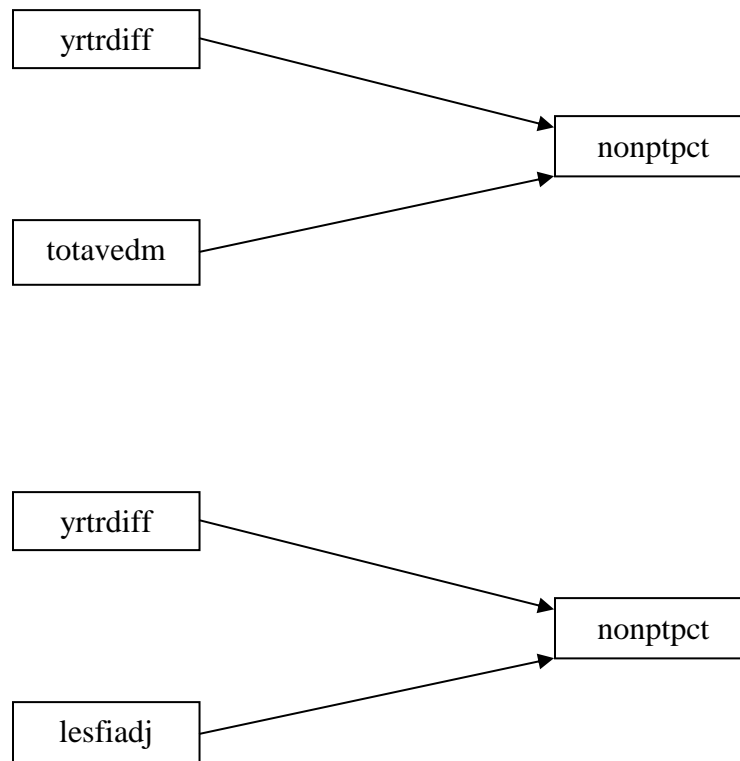
Electoral Systems and Partisanship

Legislative Elections

In this model, the main relationship of theoretical importance is that between the measure of the types of electoral systems used to elect legislatures (as measured by the variable *lesfiadj*) and the adoption of partisan identity (as measured by the variable *nonptpct*). The expectation is that the less electoral systems utilize proportional representation, the greater the likelihood that nonpartisans will hold office. It is necessary also to consider the possibility that learning, measured by the variable *yrtrdiff* as the number of years that have transpired since a country experienced transition, as well as the

electoral systems' average district magnitude (variable *totavedm*) are significant factors in fostering partisanship. The effect of district magnitude on party system formation has been firmly established (Duverger 1963 [1951] and has been linked to other political phenomena such as corruption (Kunikova and Rose-Ackerman 2002; Persson, Tabellini, and Trebbi 2003; Chang and Golden 2006). It is logical to test whether these factors also have a connection to partisanship. However, the *lesfiadj* variable for electoral method and *totavedm* for district magnitude measure related phenomena and can be expected to co-vary, therefore they must be tested separately. By using the same model twice, once with each as the independent variable alongside *yrtrdiff*, their explanatory value can be compared to each other. Below are the model path diagrams and the related hypotheses being tested.

Figure 8. Legislative Elections and Partisanship Models



Hypothesis 1

The larger PR is as fraction of the electoral system used, and the greater is District Magnitude, the lower will be the percentage of nonpartisans in the legislature, even when adjusting for how much learning of the new political system has occurred.

Hypothesis 2

Lesfiadj, an index that categorizes electoral systems according to influences expected to affect party development, is a more significant measure of those aspects of electoral system design most likely to affect partisanship and offers a better fitting model than does the calculated average district magnitude totavedm.

This model is recursive, as the one-way flow of the effects depicted in Figure 8 indicates, therefore eliminating identification problems and the need for simultaneous equation modelling. Maximum Likelihood is used to estimate the path regression weights¹, and the data includes 128 observations. The first estimation (see Table 3) pointed to the totavedm variable as having normality problems: the kurtosis value of 18.091 (far over the desirable value in the 2 to 3 range, although a value of up to 7 is workable) indicates short tails and a narrow variance and a 3.936 skew value (desirable being near zero) indicates skewed data for totavedm (see Park 2008: 7-8). The results relating to hypothesis testing and goodness of fit were also undesirable, pointing to the possibility that totavedm was detracting from the model, so estimation was redone without this variable.

¹ Regression weight is path analysis terminology for coefficient, regardless of estimation method used.

Table 3. Data Normality Before and After Removing Outliers

	Desired Skew: near zero		Desired Kurtosis: 2 to 3	
Variables	Skew Before	Skew after	Kurtosis Before	Kurtosis After
Totavedm Model				
yrtrdiff	.084	.130	-1.227	-1.183
totavedm	3.936	1.503	18.091	.814
nonptpct	2.468	2.429	5.666	5.448
Multivariate			19.215	2.901
Lesfiadj Model				
lesfiadj	-.602	-.711	-1.014	-.775
yrtrdiff	.084	.046	-1.227	-1.243
nonptpct	2.468	2.273	5.666	4.755
Multivariate			4.053	3.598

Examination of data normality² indicated that the data for both the model using lesfiadj and that using totavedm contain outliers affecting data fit. Calculating the data points' distances from the data's central tendency using the Mahalanobis distance (d^2) indicated that the totavedm variable contained three outlier observations (Russia 2007, Ukraine 2006, Ukraine 2007) and the lesfiadj variable contained six outlier observations (all three Turkmenistan observations, Belarus 1995, Belarus 2000, Kyrgyzstan 1995).

The six latter observations all include electoral systems which are uniformly either majoritarian or proportional SMD, and their being outliers is probably an indication of

² Normal distribution of data is data that are distributed along a bell curve with the mean value at the centerpoint at the top of the curve. Testing for normality involves determining how the distribution of the data being used deviates from a bell curve distribution, which can be caused by the presence of observations with outlier values. Skew measures if the data are evenly distributed around the mean; if not, the data curve is skewed to one side. Kurtosis measures how closely the data are distributed around the mean. Normal data have a bell curve with a specific height and width to the curves. Curves representing nonnormal data can be either higher and narrower than normal, or flatter and broader than normal.

how few postcommunist countries use non-mixed-member electoral systems and how fewer countries still are using a uniformly SMD method. Eliminating these observations from the dataset should not be a problem since the level of partisanship for all of them is at or near zero, which means that they all closely conform to my model's theoretical expectations so their removal will not bias the data in favor of the model. The former three observations are all outliers as the result of a dramatic increase in the value of the *totavedm* variable for these cases after Ukraine and Russia had made the same changes to their very similar electoral systems. Both countries converted from electing their 450 seat legislatures using a SMD method for half of the seats (225) and PR with one nation-wide district for the other half (225), to using PR with one nation-wide district to elect all 450 seats. Both countries' district magnitudes, therefore, jumped from 133 which was 33 percent higher than the second highest value ($D=100$ for Latvia), to a magnitude of 450 which is 4.5 times the size of the next highest value (again Latvia).

After removing these observations, data normality improved substantially for the *totavedm* model and somewhat less so for the *lesfiadj* model, as shown in Table 3. Removing these three outliers in *totavedm* accounted for reduction in over half of the skew and all of the kurtosis statistics. Removing the six *lesfiadj* outliers adjusted both statistics downward nearer to the desired values. The variable with values furthest from the desired skew and kurtosis after removing outliers in both models is *nonptpct* which is possibly due to the, large number of observations clustered at zero (i.e., countries in which no nonpartisans have been elected to the legislatures).

Having performed the quantitative analysis after removing the data outliers, the first step is to determine the goodness of fit or how well the model performs in “explaining” the data³. Choosing the proper fitness measures to report is a matter of dispute among methodologists, but using several, though not all, is recommended. (Garson 2008) The model being tested here has certain features which mathematically eliminate certain options. First, it is a simple model with a degree of freedom of only one, therefore using measures which adjust for degrees of freedom will not report statistics different from comparable unadjusted measures, since the model has only one degree of freedom (df) there are no other degrees of freedom to adjust it to, so the only comparison possible is between the model and *itself* which is meaningless. This eliminates using the chi-square statistic relative to the degrees of freedom (CMIN/DF) Second, the model’s simplicity creates mathematical complications for goodness-of-fit tests which adjust for parsimony⁴. (i.e., the number of estimated coefficients necessary to achieve a specific of fit (Schumacker and Lomax 1996: 127)). Note though that these mathematical issues are not of great theoretical concern at this juncture, because a preference for nonpartisanship serves as the baseline choice regarding whether elites choose a partisan identity so my model only needs to explain why the dependent variable varies in one direction, from nonpartisanship to partisanship, but not the reverse since nonpartisanship is considered to be preferred in the absence of other influences. Additionally, many of the factors featured in democratization studies are less influential than they used to be. As Larry Diamond

³ These indicators perform the same function for structured equation models using Maximum Likelihood analysis as does the R^2 statistic for regression analysis.

⁴ This model is quite similar to (but not the same as) the overidentified but trivial saturated model; therefore these tests will punish the model.

(2002) points out, modernity has constricted the developmental timeframe so that factors of importance to the more evolutionary processes of socioeconomic development *during* modernization have less salience now. I have chosen to use time itself as a measurement of learning without specifying what might affect this learning since my model focuses on institutions and incentive structures rather than such factors as race, ethnicity, religion, socioeconomic status or gender; and this should be sufficient representation of these factors for this preliminary analysis at least.⁵ Therefore, it makes little sense to make the model more complex just for the sake of methodology. This eliminates use of the Parsimonious Goodness of Fit Index (PGFI) the, Parsimony Normed Fit Index (PNFI), the Parsimony Comparative Fit Index (PCFI), or the information theory measures of Constant AIC (Akaike's Information criterion) and Bayes Information Criterion (BIC).

Finally, while this is a comparative analysis, it does not involve comparing two different models as such, but rather the same model tested using two different measures of electoral systems. Since "information-theoretic measures assume a research design with more than one model to be compared, not the traditional model-vs.-null hypothesis design, (PA765)," measures of fit which are meaningful only when one model fit is considered *relative* to another are not appropriate, which eliminates the root-mean-square residual (RMR) and the standardized root-mean-square residual (SRMR). Table 4 shows the fit measures which are used, including statistics for both before (in parentheses) and after adjusting for outliers.

⁵ Of course, learning may come from the electoral process, but this is less likely to continue over the long term; and, since this measure is not significant in any case, I decided that the situation can stand as it is for now without adverse impact on the model.

First, deleting outliers has improved model fit, as should be expected. This result is quite dramatic for the *totavedm* model which changed from a fairly poor to a good fit by all indicators. Results for the *lesfiadj* model, while improved, were less strong, but not rejectable since they fall on the border between acceptable fit and needing re-specification. The model chi-square results are representative. “Chi-square is a statistical test commonly used to compare observed data with data we would expect to obtain according to a specific hypothesis” (McLaughlin and Noel 1996). The chi-square statistic (as well as the Goodness-of-Fit Indices below) is calculated by comparing the sample data with data the computer reproduce using the test model’s formula which could be thought of as the “ideal” data expected from the model’s assumed results. The more similar the two are the better the model “explains” the data. The chi-square test tests for the null hypothesis that there is no similarity between the sample and reproduced data, therefore the desired result is a low and non-significant Chi-square rejecting the conclusion that the “real” data is not similar to the “ideal” data and therefore model is a good fit. The *totavedm* model clearly rejects the null, whereas *lesfiadj* falls just short of non-significance at ($p=.05$) by a difference of only .001.

Another set of measures, Goodness-of-Fit Indices include the standard Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI) and the Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI) which compensates for the mathematical effects of simple models. They perform a comparison between the variances and covariances of the sample data to those of the reproduced data, the more similar they are the better the fit. Both tests produce a measure of fitness statistic along a scale from 0 to 1 with the convention being that a value equal to or greater than .90 is

Table 4. Reported Goodness of Fit for Model of Electoral System and Partisanship

ESTIMATES	Model With Totavedm	Model With Lesfiadj
Note: Values in parentheses represent results before removing outliers.		
Model Chi-square (Probability Level's Desired value>.05)	N=125 (128) Chi-square=.657 (5.120) Degrees of freedom=1 Probability level=.418 (.024)	N=122 (128) Chi-square=3.889 (4.768) Degrees of freedom=1 Probability level=.049 (.029)
GFI (Goodness of Fit Index) AGFI (Adjusted GFI) (Range from 0=no fit, 1=perfect fit; good fit>.90)	.996 (.974) .979 (.846)	.979 (.976) .876 (.856)
Baseline Comparisons IFI (Incremental Fit Index; Delta2) TLI (Tucker-Lewis Index; Rho2) NFI (Normed Fit Index; Delta1) RFI (Relative Fit Index; Rho1) CFI (Comparative Fit Index) (good fit>.90)	1.067 (.553) 1.327 (-.710) .940 .821 .953	.954 (.948) .857 (.839) .939 .816 .952
RMSEA (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation) Good fit <.05; Adequate fit <.08	<u>LO</u> <u>90</u> <u>HI</u> <u>90</u> <u>P</u> .000 .000 .220 .486 (.180 .053 .347 .047)	<u>LO</u> <u>90</u> <u>HI</u> <u>90</u> <u>P</u> .155 .010 .329 .083 (.172 .045 .340 .056)

considered a good fit. Conventionally, it means that the test model's assumptions regarding the significant relationships between variables (improvement explains the data 90 percent better than does the null model which assumes no relationships). (Schumacker and Lomax 1996: 126). The lesfiadj model returns a GFI above the desired .90, but an AGFI below this value, but not by much at 87.6 percent improvement.

The next set of indices in Table 4 are the baseline comparison measures which compare the model being tested with a “baseline,” usually the null (or independence) model that assumes all indicator variables are uncorrelated. This measures whether the test model’s explanation of the data is significantly better than no explanation at all. Initial testing was performed by two of these measures: the Incremental Fit Index (IFI) because it is relatively independent of sample size⁶ (Schumacker and Lomax 1996: 125) and the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI, also known as the Non-Normed Fit Index, NNFI) because it is considered to be unbiased in finite samples (Schumacker and Lomax 1996: 127). However, when it became clear that fitness results for my model were “borderline,” I decided to report all baseline comparison indices (but only for the final test with outliers omitted) to see if that would give any clearer picture. Instead, they reinforce the borderline results. For example, averaging all five results, strictly for demonstration purposes, produces a result of .9036. Notice too that while there is a difference between the high value indices for the two models, the lowest index value for both, RFI, are nearly the same; thus measured by the most stringent baseline comparison fit criteria the totavedm and lesfiadj models perform equally well.

No less ambiguous are the results from the final measure, the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) which is not to be confused with the Root Mean Square Residual. Rather than comparison with a null model, RMSEA tests how far away are the data from a perfect fit. This measure is based on noncentrality; it calculates discrepancy per degree of freedom, therefore a lower value indicates the greater the

⁶ Though not completely. See Bollen, 1990.

centrality (Garson 2008). There appears to be less agreement on the conventional measure of a good fit, so I have adopted $RMSEA < .05$ as a good fit and $RMSEA < .08$ as adequate, although $RMSEA < 0.10$ has also been proposed as the cutoff for poor fitting models (Kenney, no date) Table 4 also reports the RMSEA 90 percent confidence interval and PCLOSE, which “tests the null hypothesis that RMSEA is no greater than .05” (Garson 2008). PCLOSE (labeled simply P in the table) indicates the probability that the model is a “close” fit to the data. Since it, like the chi square test, tests the null model, a PCLOSE value greater than 0.05 indicates a close fit For the lesfiadj model, the RMSEA is .155 nearly twice the minimum adequate value and the size of the confidence interval indicates that the estimate is imprecise. However, the PCLOSE value is greater than .05 indicating a significant probability that the RMSEA indicates a good fit. This goodness-of-fit measure is included here because “the RMSEA is currently the most popular measure of model fit and it [sic] now reported in virtually all papers that use CFA or SEM;” yet on the other hand, “models with small df and low N can have artificially large values of the RMSEA (Kenny 2012)” Kenny, Kaniskan, and McCoach (see Kenny 2012) have also recommended that it not be used for models with a small-N and a low degree of freedom. Here the test model’s $df=1$ and the results should be judged accordingly.

In sum, from these results it is easy to conclude that the model using the totavedm variable is a good fit to the data whereas, regarding the model using the lesfiadj variable developed for this study, it is difficult to conclude one way or another. On the one hand, rejecting the model fit would show admirable caution; while on the other hand, goodness

of fit criteria are subjective and researchers have used more generous ones in the past. Moreover, I suspect that the problem may be in the data, more specifically with the *lesfiadj*. Normality tests showed that both of these variables had a flatter curve and longer tails, especially *totavedm*, but removing three outlier observations took care of virtually all problems with data normality and fit, while removing six outliers did not produce as much improvement in *lesfiadj*. While I see no reason to believe that this variable is an invalid measure of electoral systems' institutional incentive structure regarding partisanship⁷, it is quite possible that modifying this variable's measurement criteria may improve its normality sufficiently to eliminate the doubt about goodness of fit without having to modify the model. I have decided that, on balance, it is appropriate to regard the *lesfiadj* model as having a (barely) good enough fit to continue with it.

The last consideration for this model is the relationship between the variables. The results are very encouraging, because my measure of legislative electoral systems *lesfiadj* proves to be the only significant variable to affect partisanship levels, while the district magnitude proves to be a highly insignificant factor. Table 5 reports the regression weights (ML coefficients) and significance results. Here results are different from the analysis of goodness of fit since *lesfiadj* is the only variable with a significant relationship to *nonptpct* at an impressive $p < .0001$, and it varies in the right direction. The only variable that does not have the correct sign is the measure of years of

⁷ The fact that there is significant correlation between it and *TOTAVE* is evidence supporting this.

Table 5. Regression Weights for Model of Electoral System and Partisanship

ESTIMATES	Model With totavedm			Model With lesfiadj		
Variables Dep.<-Indep.	Regression Weights			Regression Weights		
	Estimate	S.E.	P	Estimate	S.E.	P
nonptpct <- yrtrdiff	.001	.000	.087	-.001	.002	.630
nonptpct <- lesfiadj	N/A			-.086	.010	***
nonptpct <- totavedm	-.006	.004	.129	N/A		
				(***) = P < .0001)		
(Standardized Weights)=>	Estimate			Estimate		
	nonptpct	← yrtrdiff	-.151	nonptpct	← yrtrdiff	-.034
	nonptpct	← totavedm	-.134	nonptpct	← lesfiadj	-.619

postcommunist experience yrtrdiff in the totavedm model, but its coefficient is small and insignificant whereas in the other model the sign is correct but the coefficient is even smaller. Additionally, comparing the standardized coefficients shows that lesfiadj has approximately a five times stronger relationship to partisanship levels than does totavedm, plus the model using lesfiadj considerably reduces the value of yrtrdiff as an indicator, as opposed to that using totavedm. It is not too surprising that the passage of time in and of itself is not a significant factor in partisanship development, because it fails to capture *what* has been experienced during that time. If the theory that electoral system incentive structures affect the formation of parties and partisan identities, then the passage of time would be significant only by prolonging the impact of these incentives. What seems more surprising is the insignificance of district magnitude since it is known to have a significant effect on candidates' decisions to cultivate a personal or a party vote. Carey and Shugart (1995) have shown that other factors affect whether an increase in magnitude actually increases rather than decreases the value of personal reputation; and

these factors are represented in the *lesfiadj* measure. Additionally, the prevalence of mixed member electoral systems may also complicate the effect of district magnitude in ways not yet revealed.

Overall, these results offer support for hypothesis 1 and provisional support for Hypothesis 2, that *lesfiadj* is the better measure. *Totavedm* does provide a better fit to the data, but a good fit to the data is not necessarily meaningful. It has a weak and insignificant relationship to *nonptpct*, which detracts from the value of the *totavedm* model's goodness-of-fit, while *lesfiadj*'s relationship is both much stronger and highly significant, indicating that it measures important aspects of electoral incentives in terms of partisanship. This is unequivocal support for hypothesis 1, although learning (*yrtrdiff*) proved to be of no significant influence in terms of reducing the phenomenon of nonpartisanship over time.

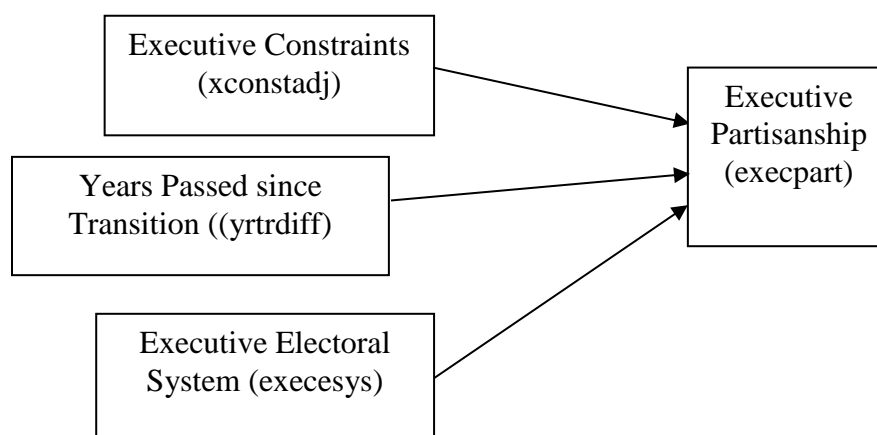
Executive Elections

The main relationship of theoretical importance here is between the design of the executive electoral system and executive partisanship. There are reasons why this aspect of my theoretical model is not expected to play as significant a role as that of the legislature. The structures of the two institutions are quite different: each observation in the database represents the outcome for a body of legislators, but only a single executive. Calculating probabilities cannot be used to determine individual outcomes. Of course, the database contains many observations of executive election results so quantitative analysis can still be performed, but with less precision since executive partisanship for each

election reflects the choice of an individual rather than that of a collective, which is why the measure for executive partisanship *execpart* is a nominal dummy variable.

Nonetheless the relationship shall be examined using the model shown in Figure 9. Besides, partisanship, two other variables may be theoretically important and are tested here. The measure of learning *yrtrdiff* is again considered as well as a measure of the constraints on the power of the executive office *xconst*.⁸

Figure 9. Executive Institution and Partisanship Model



Hypothesis 3

The lower are constraints on executive power and the higher are executive power ratings, the higher is the probability that the Executive will be nonpartisan, even when adjusting for how much learning of the new political system has occurred.

This model is also recursive, again eliminating identification problems. Maximum Likelihood is used to estimate the path regression weights⁹, and the data includes 113

⁸ Inclusion of *yrtrdiff* raises the question of why legislative and executive partisanship are not combined in the same analysis. It is because observations of legislative and executive elections differ in timeframe as well in number, making combining models problematic.

⁹ Regression weight is path analysis terminology for coefficient, regardless of estimation method used.

observations. Data normality results in Table 6 indicate no significant skew or kurtosis, and the Mahalanobis distance (d^2) from the centroid does not indicate any outliers.

Table 6. Normality Testing for Executive Partisanship Model

Variable	min	max	skew	c.r.	kurtosis	c.r.
execesys	1.000	3.000	.735	3.191	-1.436	-3.116
Ytrdiff	.000	20.000	.198	.857	-1.158	-2.512
Xconst	1.000	7.000	-.866	-3.758	-.515	-1.117
execpart	.000	1.000	-.652	-2.827	-1.576	-3.419
Multivariate					-4.313	-3.309

The goodness of fit measures reported in Table 7 are the same as in the previous analysis with the addition of the model chi-square divided by the degrees of freedom (CMIN/DF) since this model has more than one degree of freedom. The model chi-square's probability level is greater than .05 so the hypothesis that this model does not perform significantly better than the null is rejected. CMIN/DF and GFI are within the desired ranges, and AGFI is below by a mere .001. The baseline comparisons provide less positive results with only IFI and CFI indicating a good fit (neither of which passes the .95 mark) and two of the rest are quite a bit below .90, so there is no issue with borderline results here. Nor do the RMSEA results indicate an adequate fit.

Arguing the merits and demerits of these goodness of fit results, however, is moot since none of the theorized relationships are significant (Table 8). There are several reasons why accepting the null hypothesis regarding executive partisanship is not necessarily detrimental to the overall theory of partisanship and democratic development, or even unexpected. First, the theory is primarily based on legislative electoral systems promoting party development; the effect of executive elections is being considered

Table 7. Goodness of Fit for Executive Partisanship Model

Model Chi-square (Desired value $p > .05$)	N=113 Chi-square = 4.697 Degrees of freedom = 2 Probability level = .096			
CMIN/DF (chi-square/degrees of freedom) (good fit < 3)	2.349			
GFI (Goodness of Fit Index) AGFI (Adjusted GFI) (Range from 0=no fit, 1=perfect fit) (good fit > .90)	.980 .899			
Baseline Comparisons NFI (Normed Fit Index; Delta1) RFI (Relative Fit Index; Rho1) IFI (Incremental Fit Index; Delta2) TLI (Tucker-Lewis Index; Rho2) CFI (Comparative Fit Index) (good fit > .90)	.874 .621 .923 .740 .913			
RMSEA (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation) Good fit < .05; Adequate fit < .08	RMSEA	LO 90	HI 90	PCLOSE
	.110	.000	.243	.160

Table 8. Executive Partisanship Regression Weights

Regression Weights	Estimate	S.E.	P
execpart <--- xconst	.025	.026	.321
execpart <--- yrtrdiff	.002	.007	.795
execpart <--- execesys	.096	.052	.067
Standardized Weights	Estimate		
execpart <--- xconst	.102		
execpart <--- yrtrdiff	.024		
execpart <--- execesys	.187		

because it is difficult to imagine political development without the influence of this important and powerful institution of government. Second, there is the fundamental difference in structure and their incentives between presidential and parliamentary elections. Presidential elections are basically one nationwide SMD contest with the consequent lack of partisan incentives and emphasis on the candidate as an individual with an incentive to cultivate a personal vote. Elections for prime minister on the other hand are first a choice of group—party or coalition—which then selects the executive to lead its affairs, subject to its continuing approval. The incentives strongly favor partisanship. Incumbency reinforces these incentives: presidents are independent of the legislature and have much greater leeway in partisan choices. Indeed, parties may have more incentive to affiliate themselves with a president than the reverse making it easier for presidents to use party politics without becoming part of it. Prime ministers serve office from within both legislature and party and remain accountable to them. This institutional dichotomy helps explain why the *excesys* and *xconst* are correlated, and it might have produced a significant relationship between *excesys* and *execpart* if there wasn't such an imbalance in electoral systems used favoring presidential executives. Therefore, in this study the strongly partisan incentives of parliamentarianism are underemphasized and the greater freedom from partisanship incentives of presidentialism is overemphasized.

Partisanship and Democracy

It is time for the role of partisanship as intervening variable to be tested. While *nonptpet* remains a discrete measure, democratic governance has several measures;

therefore, unlike in the previous analyses, structural equation modeling (SEM) methodology will be used first to conduct factor analysis of these measures and then test for a relationship between possible latent measures of democratic governance and partisanship. The database is the same as that used in the analysis of legislative elections, with 128 observations. However, and again unlike previously, the following analyses must cope with missing values since many of democracy measures are not old enough to include values for the earliest elections. Fortunately, Amos computes maximum likelihood estimates even in the presence of missing data, without the need for listwise or pairwise deletion or data imputation, which provides an advantage over conventional estimation methods in this regard (Arbuckle 2009: 270).¹⁰

Hypothesis 4

The lower the level of nonpartisanship in the legislature and the higher the probability of a partisan executive, the greater will be the level of democracy as measured by the multiple dependent variables above.

Factor Analysis

There is still truth in Rummel's (1967: 445) observation that factor analysis can be incomprehensible to layman, social scientists, and policy-makers. Fortunately, he has also offered an excellent conceptual overview:

Factor analysis is a means by which the regularity and order in phenomena can be discerned. As phenomena co-occur in space or in time, they are patterned; as these co-occurring phenomena are independent of each other, there are a number of distinct patterns. Patterned phenomena

¹⁰ Duplicating the analyses using a dataset with missing values manually deleted also revealed no significant differences in outcomes.

are the essence of workaday concepts such as "table," "chair," and "house," and--at a less trivial level--patterns structure our scientific theories and hypotheses. We associate a pattern of attitudes, for example, with businessmen and another pattern with farmers. "Economic development" assumes a pattern of characteristics, as does the concept of "communist political system." The notion of conflict itself embodies a pattern of elements, i.e., two or more parties and a perception of mutually exclusive or contradictory values or goals. And to mention phenomena that everyone talks about, weather also has its patterns.

What factor analysis does is this: it takes thousands and potentially millions of measurements and qualitative observations and resolves them into distinct patterns of occurrence. It makes explicit and more precise the building of fact-linkages going on continuously in the human mind.

Factor analysis is a quantitative method for determining if a group of observable variables are likely to represent different facets of an unobserved or latent underlying construct or factor which may provide more understanding of the phenomena under study. For example, shouting, gesturing, and rise in blood pressure are better understood as different observable manifestations of the underlying emotional state of anger. Factor analysis can be used either to confirm the theory that certain variables do reflect the presence of an underlying factor, or to explore for possible factors underlying a group of variables. In general, this second part of my analysis intends to find what (if any) significant relationships there are between the measure of partisanship and a variety of measures of democracy and related phenomena such as economic freedom and political accountability. Factor analysis will be used to explore for factors underlying the various measures related to democracy, hoping for insights into what aspects of democracy are most affected by the development of political parties.

The Amos statistical software used for path analysis performs confirmatory but not exploratory (aka common) factor analysis (EFA), so I conducted an EFA with Stata

11.5 software using ML estimation and orthogonal rotation. Figure 10 displays the eigenvalues scree plot.

Figure 10. Scree Plot of Eigenvalues after Factor

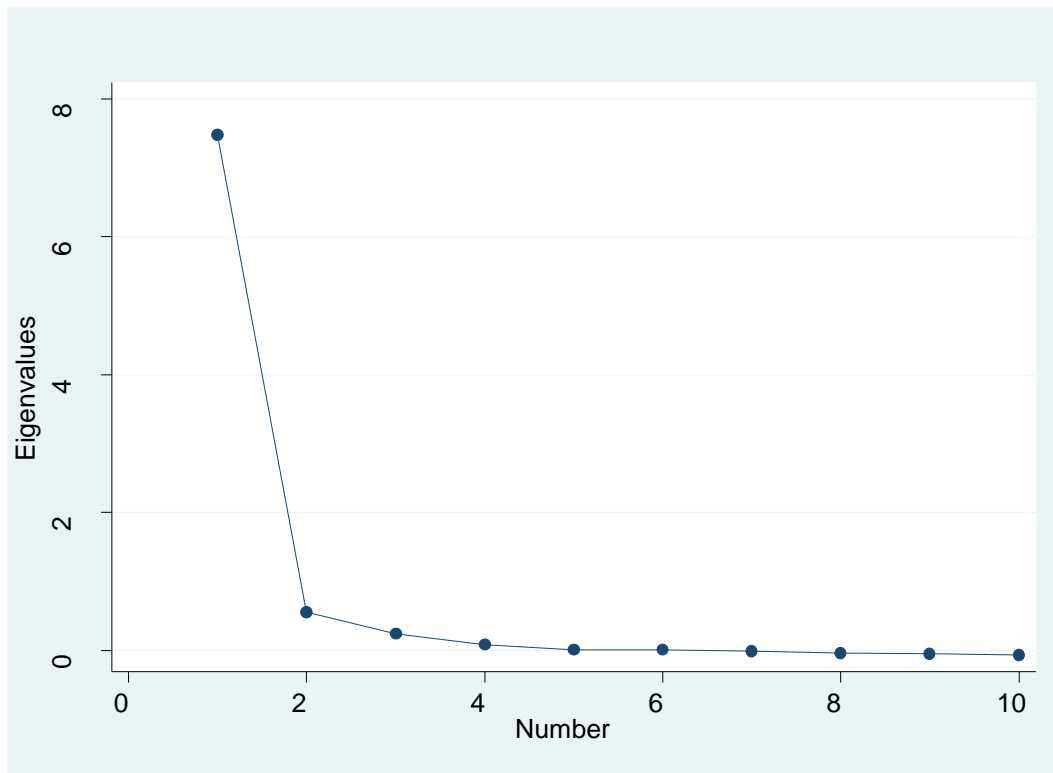


Figure Generated by Stata SE 10.0

There are two rules of thumb for interpreting scree plots in order to determine how many factors to retain and which to reject as statistical “white noise.” First is the Kaiser-Guttman rule to retain only factors with an eigenvalue >1 , and the second is to retain only those factors prior to the point where the plot levels off (Newsom 2005: 2-3). By both of these rules, Figure 10 indicates that definitely one factor should be retained, although perhaps an argument can be made for possibly retaining two factors since the second factor’s eigenvalue is approaching one, but the shape of the scree slope indicates that a second factor would contribute far less to the SEM analysis than the first.

Table 9. Factor Analysis Rotation for Five Factor

Log likelihood = -3.961979 LR test: independent vs. saturated: $\chi^2(55)=900.47$ Prob> $\chi^2=0.0000$ LR test: 5 factors vs. saturated: $\chi^2(10)=6.80$ Prob> $\chi^2=0.7446$ (tests formally not valid because a Heywood case was encountered)						
Rotated factor loadings (pattern matrix) and unique variances						
Factor	Variance	Difference	Proportion	Cumulative		
Factor1	4.45973	1.88277	0.4550	0.4550		
Factor2	2.57696	0.85090	0.2629	0.7179		
Factor3	1.72606	0.76297	0.1761	0.8940		
Factor4	0.96309	0.88674	0.0983	0.9922		
Factor5	0.07635	.	0.0078	1.0000		
Variable	Factor1	Factor2	Factor3	Factor4	Factor5	Uniqueness
pfdmadj	0.5371					0.0718
econfree	0.4624			0.4396		0.1984
fhpr	0.7485		0.3679			0.0000
fhcl	0.6565					0.0697
polity	-1.0795					0.0079
vaest					1.0249	0.0000
polstest		0.6743				0.1498
govefest		0.7622				0.5788
regquest	-0.3754			-0.5921		0.0157
rolest	-0.3567	0.5540				0.0232
correst		0.4912				0.0824

Notes *(blanks represent factor loading<0.3)

Table 9 contains the oblique rotation results for five factors. I have elected to show the results for five factors because it offers a clearer picture of how the rotation values for the variables cluster around the factors. Factor loadings of less than 0.3 indicate that the variable does not contribute to the variance of that particular factor, and have been eliminated from the table. The pattern of the values remaining shows which variables cluster together as part of the same underlying factors¹¹. Notice first that the

¹¹ Note that the relative size of the loading values is also important when a variable loads on more than one factor. For example, the variable FHPR (the Freedom House Political Rights score) loads on both Factor 1

clustering of most of the variables on two factors is clear; however, notice second that two variables, *vaest* (voice and accountability) and *regquest* (regulatory quality), both load on two of the factors that are part of the “white noise” rather than true variance and should be jettisoned from any further analysis¹². Why they should do so is not obvious, but it certainly could be the lack of appropriate measures of political phenomena associated with democratic governance. For example, *econfree* (economic freedom) loads strongly on factor 4 as well as factor 1, where it “joins” *regquest*. This suggests the possibility that factor 4 represents some type of government-economy interaction, but without additional measures consistent with the objectives of this study, this cannot be determined

The remaining variables load on the first two factors in a way that is consistent with a theoretical division between those measuring qualities of *democratic* governance and those measuring qualities of *good* governance. The variables loading on factor 1 include measures of press freedom, economic freedom, political rights, civil liberties, Polity IV rating, government accountability, and regulatory quality, those loading on factor 2 measure political stability, government effectiveness, rule of law, and corruption.¹³ Factor 2 represents aspects of governance that have been linked to democracy many times which is why they are used here, but they are theoretically

and Factor 3, but it loads much more strongly on Factor 1 and is considered to be “related to” Factor 1 and not Factor 3.

¹² When included in path analyses in addition to the factors, they proved to have no significance and so will not be mentioned further.

¹³ It could be argued that the factor loadings for regulatory quality (*regquest*) and rule of law (*rolest*) measures are inconsistent with the theoretical divide, but both variables have rather high loadings on the opposite factor as well. On the other hand, this somewhat clouds the issue of whether to retain one or two factors. As will be discussed later, the process of model respecification renders this issue moot.

distinct from measures of democratic governance specifically. These are model specification issues which can be addressed through confirmatory factor analysis (in which the latent variable's variance is constrained to 1, but all other constraints are removed) using Amos's specification search feature, which examines all possible model configurations and reports the best fits to the data. First however, the issue of whether to use the one factor or two factor model in analysis. Table 10 presents the oblique rotation results for one factor and for two factors for comparison. While neither model offers sufficiently low chi-squared values or nonsignificant probability scores indicative of a clearly good fit, the two factor model (results on the right side of Table 10) is a comparatively better fit and so the two factor model will be specified for the following analyses. I determined first that the one factor (latent variable) model did not provide a desired fit. I therefore repeated this process separately for two latent variables, labeled demgov and governance, representing factors 1 and 2 respectively (Table 10). The results for the governance factor, which is the variable in doubt, indicate that the better fit is the two factor model, but that the fit is marginal with most indicators showing an insufficient goodness of fit, yet close enough that its final status should be determined by the results and respecification of the full SEM model.

Table 10. Factor Analysis Rotation for One Factor and for Two Factors

Log likelihood	-83.35665	Log likelihood	-28.77832		
	Factor1		Factor1	Factor2	
Variance	8.30311	Variance	5.55162	3.41706	
Difference	n/a	Difference	2.13456	
Proportion	1.0000	Proportion	0.6190	0.3810	
Cumulative	1.0000	Cumulative	0.6190	1.0000	
LR test: independent vs. saturated : chi2(55) = 900.47 Prob>chi2 = 0.0000			LR test: independent vs. saturated : chi2(55) = 900.47 Prob>chi2 = 0.0000		
LR test: 1 factor vs. saturated: chi2(44) = 151.05 Prob>chi2 = 0.0000			LR test: 2 factors vs. saturated: chi2(34) = 51.45 Prob>chi2 = 0.0279		
Variable	Factor1	Uniqueness	Factor1*	Factor2*	Uniqueness
Pfdmadj	-0.9649	0.0689	-0.8207		0.0793
Econfree	-0.8540	0.2707	-0.6756	-0.5099	0.2835
Fhpr	-0.9697	0.0597	-0.8990		0.0236
Fhcl	-0.9577	0.0827	-0.8707		0.0673
Polity	0.8802	0.2252	0.9390		0.0831
Vaest	0.7099	0.4960	0.5408		0.4825
Polstest	0.8394	0.2954	0.5359	0.7294	0.1808
Govefest	0.4416	0.8049		0.6331	0.5850
Request	0.9363	0.1234	0.7369	0.5682	0.1341
Rolest	0.9470	0.1031	0.6786	0.7075	0.0391
Correst	0.9128	0.1660	0.6136	0.7419	0.0731

Note: * Factor values lower than 0.4 have been left blank.

The confirmatory factor analysis results for the latent variables governance and demgov are shown in Figures 11 and 12 as Amos-generated path diagrams with standardized results. The numbers next to the arrows are the factor loadings and those next to the indicator (i.e., observed) variables (square boxes) are the squared multiple correlation coefficients (R^2) which can be interpreted as the percentage of the indicator variables' variance "explained" by the latent variable. Figure 11 shows that there are no model specification problems regarding governance, since all four indicator variables load strongly and consistently on the governance factor which accounts for a rather uniformly high amount of their variance.

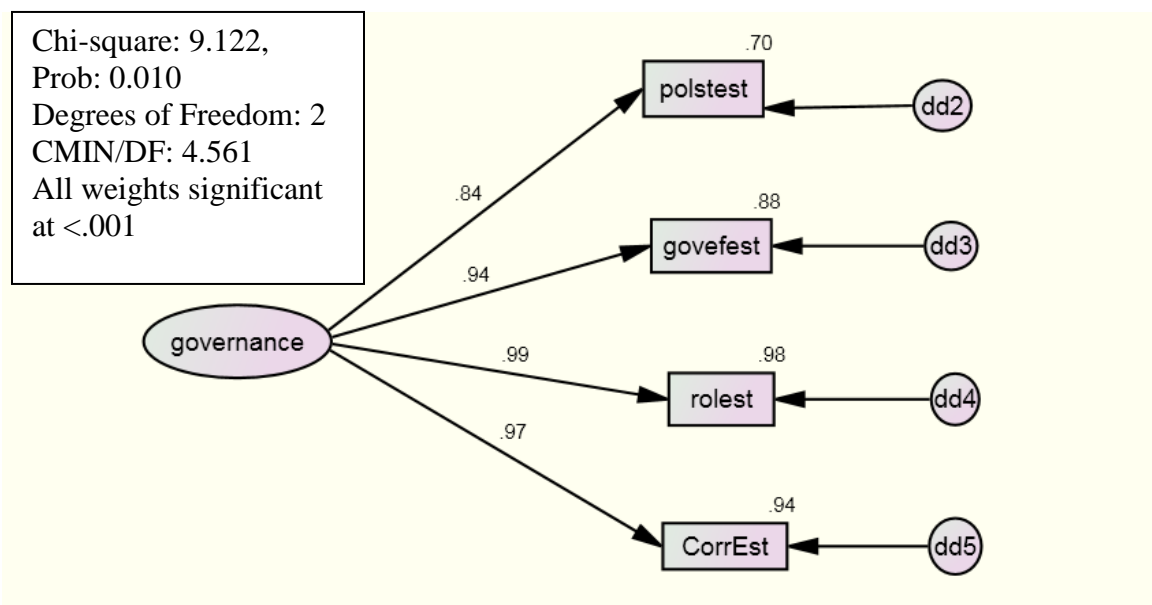
Figure 11. Governance CFA Scores With Standardized Weights And R^2 

Figure Generated by Amos 18.0

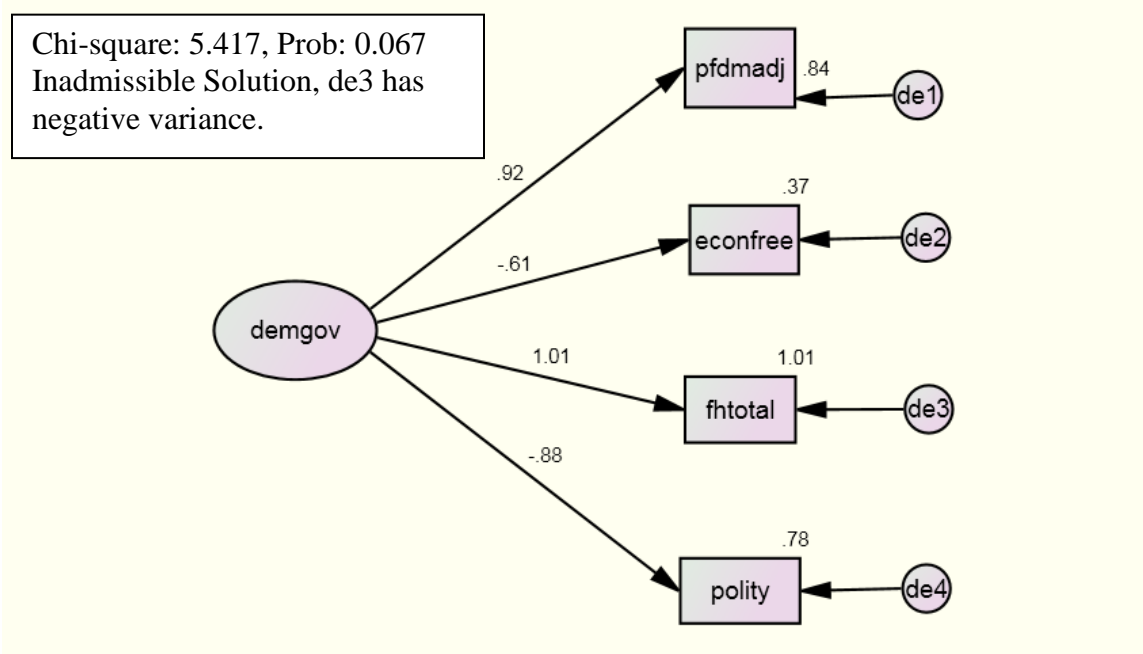
Figure 12. Demgov CFA Scores With Standard Weights and R^2 : Initial Specification

Figure Generated by Amos 18.0

The initial results for the demgov factor (Figure 12), indicated a marginally good fit, but the solution was inadmissible due to the invalid R^2 value greater than one for fhtotal producing a negative error term variance. In order to respecify the model, I elected to break down fhtotal into its two component measures fhpr (political rights) and fhcl (civil liberties) since they measure different aspects of democracy. I elected to do the same with the polity variable which combines the Polity IV measures of democracy (pivdemoc) and autocracy (pivautoc). A new specification search revealed that both fhpr and pivautoc variables do not cluster well on demgov, suggesting that eliminating them from the factor analysis should improve the fit. I believe that what this means theoretically is that the first factor represents not simply democratic government, but more specifically its liberal aspect. One way to interpret the difference between the measures of civil liberty (fhcl) and political rights (fhpr) is as that between freedom of action guaranteed by rights more generally and the rights of people to participate in the political process more specifically. This is reflected in the difference between democratic and electoral authoritarian regimes. Elections constitute genuine participation in both, but in the latter people are aware that there are real risks involved in voting against those already in power (Schedler 2002, 2006). Many of these risks are consistent with particularistic politics, where such a vote would mean loss of patronistic support and benefits, even retaliation.

However, I obtained different results from the polity IV scores. The pivdemoc component of the polity IV rating measures the democratic quality of a polity whereas its other component (pivautoc) measures a polity's autocratic component under the notion

that these are separable concepts, although it has become common practice to create an overall polity score from the democracy rating *minus* the autocracy rating. I suspected that this method might only serve to detract from the pivdemoc's validity as a measure of democracy. This turns out not to be the case since the polity variable has a higher factor loading and R^2 than pivdemoc alone, or any other combination of these two component measures considered separately. I would not go so far as to argue that this contradicts polity IV's methodology that all polities have democratic and autocratic aspects which should be scored separately, but it makes sense that democratization would produce changes in both aspects, that comparing cases of successful with failed democratic transitions would involve both aspects, and that this would be reflected in significant differences between cases in both scores. Performing CFA analyses on the respecified models after these respecification steps, eliminating fhpr but retaining polity, eliminated the error term's negative variance and improved the goodness of fit for the first factor.

Figure 13 shows the results of the demgov factor respecification. Inclusion of fhcl, by reducing the standardized factor loading to below an erroneous 1.01, fixed the admissibility problem which additionally reveals the extent to which econfree's variance is explained by the factor demgov. In the respecified model in Figure 13, the indicator variables load strongly on the demgov factor which substantially explains their variance. Econfree exhibits the lowest values, which might be expected of a measure applying predominantly to economic society, but they are still respectable.

In brief, exploratory factor analysis revealed that four of the variables used to measure the transition to democracy—press freedom, economic freedom, the Freedom

House's civil liberties score, and Polity IV's polity score— are indicative of an underlying common factor of Democratic Governance (demgov), and that the other four measures—political stability, government effectiveness, rule of law, and corruption— are indicative of an underlying common factor of Good Governance (governance). It is time now to conduct the full SEM analysis using these latent variables to determine what is their relationship to partisanship.

Figure 13. Demgov CFA Scores With Standard Weights and R^2 : Re-Specified Model

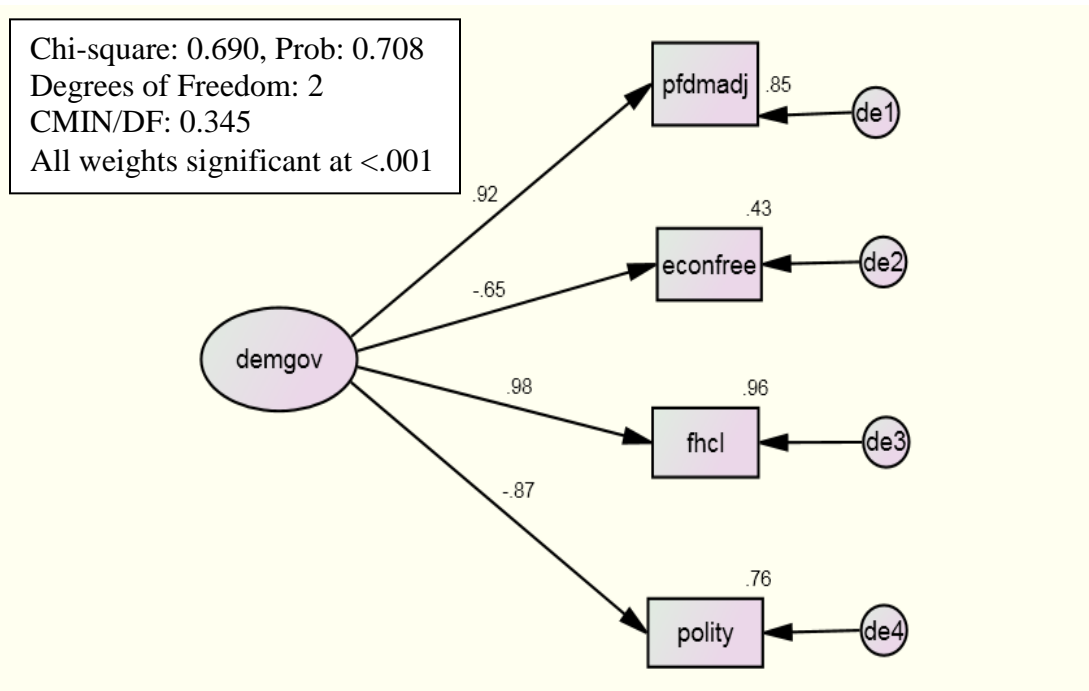


Figure Generated by Amos 18.0

Partisanship and Governance

Structural Equation Model

Figure 14 Shows the path diagram for the analytical model testing the relationship between partisanship and democracy. For the independent variables, I am using two discrete variables—nonptpct and pcgdp0—rather than using latent variables because

there is only the one measure for nonpartisanship and the other—per capita GDP (pcgdp0)—should be sufficient to control for the influence of economic performance on democratization. The latent variables demgov and governance are the “dependent” variables. Notice that in the model, nonptpct and pcgdp0 covary. This follows the assumption that economic performance and growth requires freedom for individuals to be capable of applying their ideas, creativity and hard work to entrepreneurship in pursuit of personal success; essentially the opposite of the Soviet command economic model. The to-date successful example of economic reform without political liberalization in China shows that this assumption is not a necessity in all cases; however, the Soviet approach to reform was political first, then economic, which at the time prompted a lively debate over whether the Chinese economy-first or the Soviet politics-first was the better approach to reform. Thus, covariance between these variables seems appropriate in this instance.

Unfortunately, this cannot be true for the model as a whole, for while the coefficients are strong and significant, the model’s goodness of fit is poor. The high chi-square and low probability values mean that essentially this model does not do significantly better at explaining the data than does random chance, therefore model respecification is required to determine if a modified model would perform better. The result of respecification produces a model, depicted in Figure 8, with a good fit to the data, but quite different from the original due to two major modifications. First, the latent governance variable is gone. This should not surprise anyone who does not support the notion that democratic governance is not inevitably better governance; or at least that it may take longer than twenty years for this pattern to emerge. Autocratic government

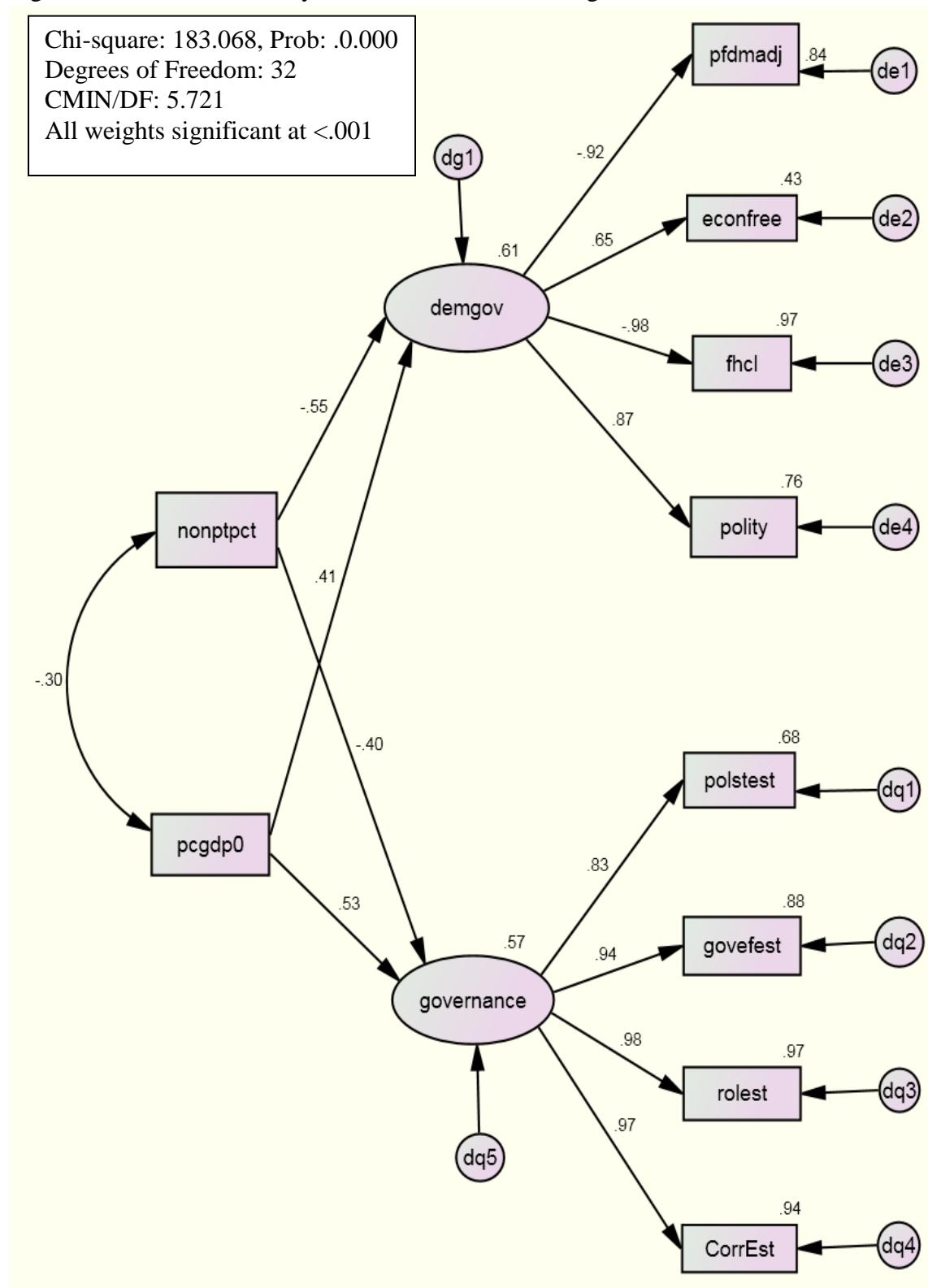
Figure 14. Initial SEM Analysis with Standardized Weights and R^2 

Figure Generated by Amos 18.0

historically has at times performed well in combating corruption, creating political stability, providing quality regulation, and even promoting the rule of law; but this depends upon the talent, character, and idiosyncrasies of individual autocrats, which history also shows is inconsistent over time. A key feature of democratic government is reliance on the constancy of impersonal institutions rather than the inconstant quality of individual rulers, but the advantages may only manifest themselves after several changes of government. In any case, a relationship between political partisanship and quality governance has at least not yet appeared.

The relationship between partisanship and the *democratic* quality of governance on the other hand is quite clear, and is the basis of the second model change, which is to use *pivdemoc* in place of *polity* as an indicator variable for *demgov*. While the factor analysis for *demgov* indicated that it accounts for more variation in the overall *polity* measure of democracy minus autocracy, it seems that this produces a poor fit of the model to the data. It appears that *nonptpct* is sensitive to inclusion of an autocracy rating as an indicator to the latent variable. It would be tidy if partisanship correlated well with both democracy and, inversely, autocracy as two ends of a spectrum; but its absence is not inconsistent to a theory in which nonpartisanship is related more to opportunism and devolution of authority to subnational elites than to nondemocratic yet effective central authority. Since the executive office is the natural source of autocratic political control, this result appears rather to be more consistent with the finding of a lack of relationship between executive partisanship and democracy.

The model in its final form is without doubt an excellent fit to the data as the goodness of fit indices in Table 11 show. Moreover, Table 12 shows that the regression weights for all variables are highly significant and all signs are going in the right direction. The standardized results in Figure 15 show that nonptpct and pcgdp0 are indeed correlated, and together account for 60% of demgov's variation, with the former (the key independent variable in this analysis) having an approximately 20% stronger relationship to demgov (1.00 - .43/-.53) than the latter. Thus, the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between variation in nonpartisanship and variation in the democratic governance factor can be rejected.

Table 11. Final SEM model Goodness of Fit

Model Chi-square (Desired value $p > .05$)	N=128 Chi-square = 7.265 Degrees of freedom = 8 Probability level = 0.508			
CMIN/DF (chi-square/degrees of freedom) (Desired value < 3)	0.908			
Baseline Comparisons NFI (Normed Fit Index) RFI (Relative Fit Index) IFI (Incremental Fit Index) TLI (Tucker-Lewis Index) CFI (Comparative Fit Index) (Range from 0=no fit, 1=perfect fit) (Desired value $> .90$)	0.984 0.958 1.002 1.004 1.000			
RMSEA (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation) Good fit $< .05$; Adequate fit $< .08$	RMSEA .000	LO 90 .000	HI 90 .098	PCLOSE .710

Table 12. Final SEM model Regression Weights

	Estimate	S.E.	Critical Ratio	P
demgov <--- pcgdp0	.001	.000	5.266	***
demgov <--- nonptpct	-13.571	2.310	-5.874	***
pfdmadj <--- demgov	-3.311	.439	-7.539	***
econfree <--- demgov	1.000			
fhcl <--- demgov	-.272	.035	-7.763	***
pivdemoc <--- demgov	.383	.066	5.838	***

***=P<.001.

What We Have Learned

This chapter has applied quantitative methodology to examine three general hypotheses—that there is a significant relationship between legislative electoral systems and the formation of political parties, that the same holds for executive electoral systems, and that legislative and executive partisanship have a significant relationship with the success of democratization in postcommunist states. The results can be characterized as a qualified yes, a definite no, and a yes.

First, the relationship of legislative electoral systems to party formation, specifically between the structural features of PR versus SMD and elite choice to be party affiliated or nonpartisan, is likely stronger than the borderline goodness of fit would indicate. I am sure that this is primarily due to the measure nonptpct developed for this study, although whether this is because of data normality issues, although its skew and kurtosis values are within acceptable limits, or measurement validity is a matter for further research. However, the overall results are consistent with the assumptions or casual observations of scholars (e.g., Birch 2000, 2005; Millard 2004) and the logic of party-based PR elections requiring party affiliation of office seekers and holders is difficult to assail, further weighing the scale in favor of accepting these results.

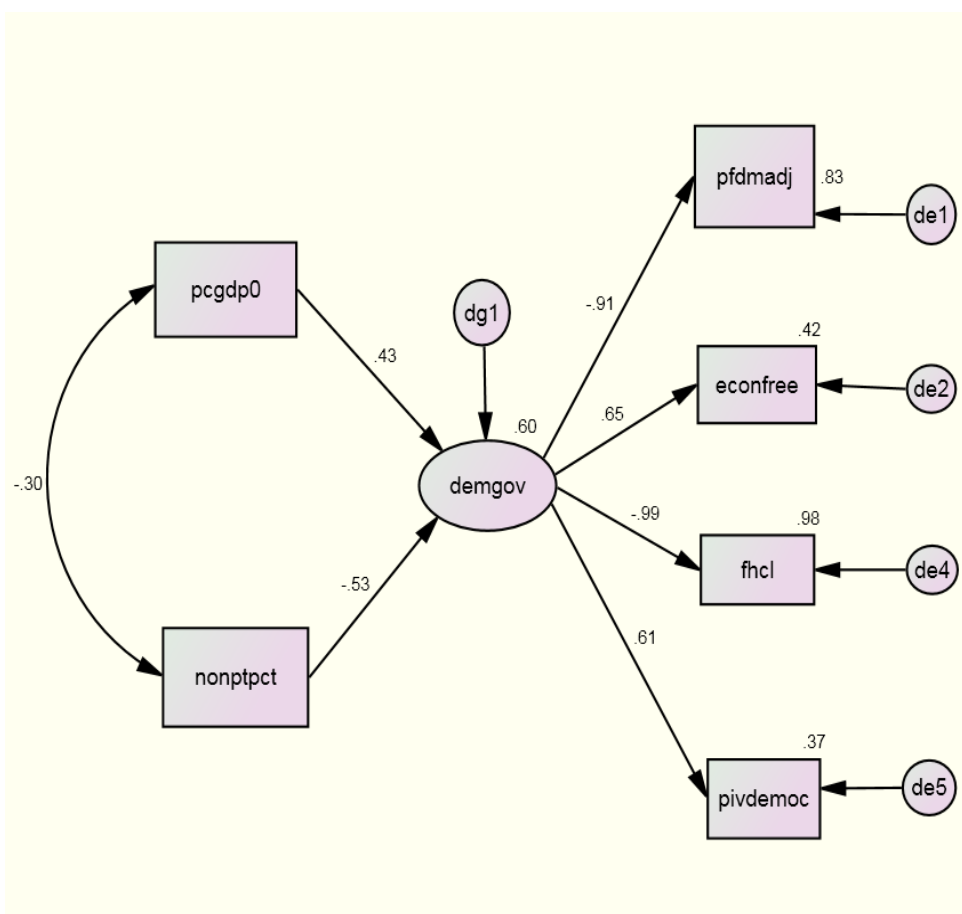
Figure 15. Final SEM Model with Standardized Weights and R^2 

Figure Generated by Amos 18.0

There is no doubt about the lack of support for the notion of a relationship between executive electoral systems to party formation, and there are a number of possible reasons why. Empirically, there is too little variation in the structure of the executive in the postcommunist cases, particularly in terms of the aspect most influential to adopting a partisan affiliation—the difference between parliamentary and presidential systems. Most of the countries have prime ministers, but few do not also have a president who performs the executive function. Only three cases (Estonia, Latvia, and Slovenia) have consistently been genuinely parliamentary, and there may simply be no structural

incentives for partisanship in presidential or semipresidential systems. There are also measurement issues to consider if this is to be confirmed. The executive partisanship and executive power variables used are “blunt instruments” offering insufficient reflection of reality and too little variability over time. A measure more representative of real not just formal power and changing circumstances could provide a better fit to the data.

Additionally, a means of measuring whether executive partisanship links the executive to the party or the party to the executive is needed. There are several cases in which ruling parties are essentially a means for autocrats to organize their supporters in order to hold on to power, but structurally such parties appear little different from “genuinely” democratic parties. Such differentiation is necessary also for future study, because where electoral competition is a sham presidents may adopt PR for *legislative* elections as more convenient for engineering majorities for the party of power at election time.¹⁴

Presidential executives are a complicating factor particularly over time for reasons already presented in the literature (e.g., Shugart and Carey 1992; Linz 1993) By concentrating power in the hands of one person as a separate and distinct branch of government, they structurally mimic autocratic government, and in democratizing countries, in the absence of institutionalization, one person may be able to make that a reality. I suspect that political parties play a role in institutionalization of legislative branches and whether they can counterbalance presidential aspirations, which is a promising avenue for further study.

¹⁴ This seems to be the reason why then president Putin eliminated the SMD portion of the Duma elections.

Finally, the last analysis provided strong evidence for a significant relationship between partisanship and democratic development—once the variables which were not direct measures of democratic governance were eliminated in the factor analysis. The model’s goodness of fit is very high and there is no more than 0.1 percent probability that the results are due to chance. The indicator variables making up the demgov factor emphasize freedoms which are consistent with my theory that partisanship helps to restrict elite’s particularistic and self-aggrandizing manipulations. Press freedom in particular is one of the first casualties when democratization reverses and moves toward electoral authoritarian regimes. Economic freedom declines when political elites practice particularism and self-enrichment. Civil liberties decline as elite control rises to prevent viable opposition from forming.

There may be some concern about vaest, the World Bank’s measure of voice and accountability, had factored with the other democracy measures, which could be due to several reasons. Being compiled only every other from 1995 until 2004, each of the early World Bank Governance indices contain as much missing as present data, which increases data error concerns. Additionally, vaest did not load on any factor with other indicator variables, but was definitely part of the “noise” or “scree,” raising the possibility that it suffers from unreliable data error. More problematic is that model respecification eliminated the fhpr variable (Freedom House’s Political Rights index), from the final specified model, but this is due to a pattern in the Freedom House data revealed when comparing scores for fhcl and fhpr as shown in Table 13. In over half (fifteen out of twenty-six) of the countries, the civil liberties rating lagged behind that for

political rights but later caught up to it; and in all but two of these cases this has coincided with generally successful democratization; whereas, if one acknowledges that Ukraine is a special case (due to the Orange Revolution) and eliminates it from this category, all six of the cases in which political rights lagged behind civil liberties at least once have failed to democratize. Overall, it appears that the fhcl civil liberties measure is more sensitive to a dynamic trend of democratization in the postcommunist states: countries serious about democratic reform tended to open up the political system first by extending political rights early, then expanding liberties, whereas unsuccessful

Table 13. Democratic Development and Freedom House Scores

	Countries where civil liberties began behind political rights but it advanced over time.	Countries where civil liberties scored ahead of political rights at least once	Countries where civil liberties and political rights scored the same
And democratization has taken hold and/or advanced over time	Albania Bulgaria Czech Republic Estonia Hungary Latvia Lithuania Macedonia Moldova Mongolia Poland Slovakia Slovenia Ukraine	Ukraine (Post 2004-2005 Orange Revolution)	Croatia Romania
And democratization declined or failed to begin	Russia	Armenia Azerbaijan Kazakhstan Kyrgyz Republic Tajikistan Uzbekistan	Belarus Georgia Turkmenistan

democratizers kept a firmer grip on the political system usually from the start, so that civil liberties, as poor as they are, may at least occasionally receive a slightly better rating. Determining whether this pattern is coincidental or meaningful, whether it applies only to postcommunist cases or democratization more generally, and whether it is enduring or merely a short-term statistical “blip” requires more time and additional research; but it does appear that partisanship is more sensitive to variation in the civil liberties than in the political rights measure.

This is compatible with my argument that nonpartisan elites are freer to manipulate the political system. It is a truism that democracy in appearance is not necessarily indicative of democracy in fact; and the postcommunist elites would know this as well as anyone since the Soviet Union and the rest of communist Europe held regular elections. This is even more apropos to contemporary electoral authoritarian states in which political participation is genuine but unlikely to take the also genuine risk of going against those in power. Hypothetically, this disparity should result in higher measures of political rights granted than in civil liberties, since the latter would be violated in order to undermine the free expression of those political rights. Comparing the Freedom House scores in the study database reveals that in no less than one-third ($43/128=.328$) of the observations political rights ranked higher¹⁵ than civil liberties, whereas only almost half that number ($22/128=.172$) ranked higher on civil liberties than political rights.

¹⁵ Since Freedom House scores inversely with the lower score indicating a higher ranking, fhcl literally scored higher than fhpr.

CHAPTER SIX

MOLDOVA

Introduction

This and the following two chapters will accomplish two things. First, they will examine the institutionalization of Moldova's party system using Mainwaring's (1999: 26-27) four dimensions of stability, party roots in society, legitimacy, and organizational autonomy; and Second, these chapters will delve into the issue of how the degree to which party system is institutionalized has affected democratization in my three case studies. In the present chapter, I intend to show that Moldova's party system is reasonably institutionalized for a postcommunist country not only still new to democracy but also to statehood. As a result, not only individuals but also political parties are important political actors in Moldova, and this has helped enable institutional structuring of political space to maintain the for determining who will (temporarily) wield government power rather than permit those in government to render these institutions impotent. Moldova's parties help to maintain the structural separateness of the political sphere from government control, or in other words, prevent the reconstruction of the authoritarian state.

In institutionalized party systems, political parties facilitate political decision-making separate from the exercise of government. Ambitious individuals may try to subvert society's influence over governmental policy and personnel by undermining the

efficacy of electoral choice, but parties exist to compete in elections and a party system survives by preserving this competitiveness. If parties as organizations are important political actors, they will strive to preserve their legitimacy and autonomy from personalist control over politics, they will forge links with society and represent societal interests, and they will engage in collective action and utilize strategies for competing in elections and governing society in the interests of their constituencies rather than for undermining the institutions of democratic politics.

Much of the evidence that parties are important actors structuring politics in ways compatible with democracy comes directly from the evidence of institutionalization, but also we need to examine how Moldova's parties are mediating between government and society that helps prevent the direct government-dominant connection with society that is key to authoritarianism. To do this I will look for signs that parties are performing their basic functions, which according to Aldrich (1995) are collective action and strategic coordination for the purpose of winning control of government in the electoral marketplace.

Of course, my claim that Moldova has the advantage of an institutionalizing party system as well as the evidence presented must be considered within the context of a country that is still experiencing many of the same problems as are my other two cases. It has suffered dramatic economic decline, corruption is rampant, and until recently the communists in power had been making headway on undermining the electoral process and reconstructing a hierarchical power structure. Party system institutionalization has to be judged in terms relative to other countries with similar experiences of political

transition, most properly other former communist countries. Nonetheless, even within this band of limited expectations, I will still be able to demonstrate sufficient variability to support my conclusions.

The remainder of this chapter proceeds in next section to give an overview of the relevant politics in Moldova, and the following sections will examine the state of Moldova's party system using Mainwaring's dimensions of institutionalization as well as parties as actors.

Moldova's Political System

Moldova's first competitive elections were held prior to the collapse of the Soviet Union in February and March 1990 for the Moldavian Supreme Soviet, in which noncommunist candidates could run as individuals in 340 SMD contests, and for the newly created office of the presidency. After independence, the Republic of Moldova held a new presidential election in which the incumbent won; but new parliamentary elections had to wait until 1994 after a new constitution had been drafted and approved. The structure of the new system fits Sugart and Carey's (1992) premier-presidential classification, because it had a parliament elected by closed list PR in one country-wide district, which formed a government by prime minister and cabinet, but there was also a non-figurehead president as chief of state who was elected in a distinctly separate contest using the two-round majoritarian method. This lasted until 2000 when parliament, essentially in a fit of pique at the president for his obstructionist behavior, passed a constitutional amendment whereby the president would henceforth be elected indirectly

by parliament in which a supermajority of three-fifths (a minimum of sixty-one out of 101) of the members was required to elect.

The elections held in 2001 therefore were for a pure parliamentary system (Shugart and Carey 1992) in which direct parliamentary elections were followed by parliamentary election of the president. The perils of this design were not immediately obvious because the Communist Party of the Republic of Moldova (CPRM) gained seventy-one seats and unilaterally elected its leader as president, and was able to maintain its hold on parliament and the presidency until 2009. In elections held in April of that year, the CPRM obtained sixty seats, one shy of the minimum needed to elect the president, and the other parties, by preventing anyone from being elected president, were able to force the dissolution of parliament and new elections to be held in July. In the meantime a student-led protest claiming the communist majority was due to fraudulent elections turned violent, ransacking government offices; but the brutal police crackdown on the protesters, which included three deaths, cost the CPRM enough popular support to lose its majority in the July elections. A coalition of the four opposition parties formed the new government, but was unable to elect a president. Parliament was dissolved and new elections were held in November 2010, but the coalition government (which survived the elections) still could not elect a president. Currently, this parliament is still seated (with an acting president), because parliament cannot be dissolved a third time for one year. A referendum to amend the constitution restoring direct popular election of the president was held in September 2010 and a majority voted in favor of it, but the turnout was too low for it to be enacted.

Party System Institutionalization

Mainwaring specifies for attributes or dimensions indicating party system institutionalization: stability, roots in society, legitimacy, and organizational autonomy. Stability means that “patterns of party competition manifest regularity. A system in which major parties regularly appear and disappear or become minor parties is not well institutionalized” (1999: 26). Strong roots in society indicate that there is a linkage between parties and citizens that structure political preferences over time, helping to provide regularity in electoral competition, otherwise citizens have trouble identifying what the major parties represent, their ideological positions are inconsistent, and linkages between organized interests (rather than voters) and parties are generally more developed. Legitimacy is accorded when political actors consider parties to be “a necessary part of democratic politics even if they are critical of specific parties and express skepticism about parties in general.” I have chosen to call the last dimension “organizational autonomy” because as Mainwaring states, “party organizations matter. Parties are not subordinated to the interests of a few ambitious leaders; they acquire an independent status and of their own.” An important sign of this is parties experiencing peaceful transfers of power (1999: 26-27).






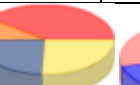

Independents in Moldovan Politics

One of the theses advanced here is that independents participating in politics are the sign of poorly structured politics, including party systems; therefore this is where the discussion will begin. There are few patterns to discern regarding the participation of independents in Moldova’s parliamentary elections. Election law makes provision for the

participation of independent candidates in these elections and several have run, although none have gain seats. Table 14 aggregates participation of parties, electoral blocs and independents and lists the winners for the past seven elections. Interestingly, the level of participation by independents fluctuates with events affecting the party system, reflecting their impact. By riding the popularity of a distinctly Moldovan identity which it championed, the Agrarian Party gained an absolute majority of fifty-six (out of 104) seats in 1994, but by 1998 the country's economic suffering led to a virtual collapse of the party as many members defected mostly to create their own parties but some also decided to try their luck on their own. Decreasing numbers of independent candidates over the next three elections, in addition to voter learning, reflects the opposition's attempts to present a more united front contending against the Communist party after it gained control of parliament in 2001. The absence of any independents in the July 2009 election reflects the opposition's most effective mobilization of unity to date in their eagerness to take control of parliament from the CPRM. Independent candidates would only take votes away from the opposition parties.

Independent candidates did not take all that much support away from parties in any case as Table 15 shows. It should be noted that the percentage of the vote received by all independents is not necessarily an insignificant fraction of the total vote, since it might have put a party finishing close to the threshold over the top, especially in 1998 when independents came close to the 6 percent threshold *parties* needed to surmount to win seats in that election. But on the other hand, the total was spread rather thin. Individual independents' shares of the vote were minimal, only two candidates out of 126 ever even

Table 14. Candidates in Moldova's Parliamentary Elections

Elect. Date	Nov. 28, 2010	July 29, 2009	April 5, 2009	March 6, 2005	Feb. 25, 2001	Mar. 22, 1998	Feb. 27, 1994
No. of parties	20	10 (-2)	15 (-3)	9	12	9	9
Elect. blocs	not allowed by law	not allowed by law	not allowed by law	2	5	6	4
Independents	20 (-1)	0	6 (-1)	12	10	67 (-7)	20
Distribution of seats	 <p>PCRM - 42 LDP - 32 PDM - 15 PL - 12</p>	 <p>PCRM - 48 LDP - 18 PL - 15 PDM - 13 AMN - 7</p>	 <p>PCRM - 60 PL - 15 LDP - 15 AMN - 11</p>	 <p>PCRM - 56 BMD - 34 PPCD - 11</p>	 <p>PCRM - 71 BeAB - 19 PPCD - 11</p>	 <p>PCRM - 40 Be-CDM - 26 Bep-MDP - 24 PFD - 11</p>	 <p>PDAM - 56 Be-PSMUE - 28 BTI - 11 Be-AFPCD - 9</p>

Source: Association for Participatory Democracy "ADEPT" <http://www.e-democracy.md/elections/parliamentary/>

Note: Abbreviated names beginning with "Be" are names of electoral blocs.

Table 15. Participation of Independents in Moldova's Parliamentary Elections

Election	No. of candidates	Ave. % vote received	Vote Range (%)	% of total vote	Winning Threshold %
1994	20	0.127	0.01 – 0.36	2.54	4
1998	60	0.093	0.0 – 1.09	5.58	4
2001	10	0.229	0.03 – 1.73	2.29	3
2005	12	0.078	0.02 – 0.12	0.94	3
2009 (Apr.)	5	0.224	0.04 – 0.57	1.12	3
2009 (July)	0	0.0	n/a	0.0	3
2010	19	0.057	0.01 – 0.48	2.54	2

SOURCE: Association for Participatory Democracy "ADEPT" <http://www.e-democracy.md/elections/parliamentary/>

received more than 1 percent and the majority received less than a tenth of one percent each. And in general, the figures present a gradual decline in independents' participation as well as votes cast for them, although the participation rise in the 2010 election, when the threshold for independent's victory was lowered to a more realistic 2 percent, shows there are still those willing to run as independents if the goal seems realistic enough.

The 2001 and 2005 presidential elections of the CPRM leader Vladimir Voronin following the change to indirect election by parliament show no surprises since this virtually ensures the president will be a party member, although it is hypothetically possible for an independent to be elected because of personal reputation or as a compromise candidate. The first two presidential elections of 1991 and 1996 where the electoral method was by popular vote in a two-round majoritarian contest, which might have shown something about partisan attachment in elections that do not necessitate it, other circumstances muddled the waters. In the 1991 election, Mircea Snegur was essentially the incumbent since in 1990 he had been a reform figure elected to the newly created office of president of the Moldovan SSR, plus he was running unopposed so even if he had had a party affiliation (he didn't) it would have gone unnoticed. However, President Snegur did join with the majority Agrarian Party after the election. The 1996 election came at the end of partisan upheaval as many of the majority party's leading figures, including both current president Snegur and the next president Petru Lucinschi, left and many new parties were formed. The confusion was such that outside observers disagreed on whether the two leading candidates Snegur and Lucinschi were even

affiliated with a party. In fact, Snegur had formed the Party of Rebirth and Reconciliation of Moldova (PRRM) in 1995 while Lucinschi ran as an independent.¹

The regional level elections on the other hand provide a clearer picture of nonpartisan politics in Moldova. Table 16 shows how independent candidates fared in the three types of regional elections: district (*raion*) councils, town & village councils, and mayors. The election method used for councils is PR (essentially the same as for parliament) while mayors are elected by a two-round majoritarian system. Independents not only run for council office at both levels, but some also win seats. This is consistent with the notion that independents holding office reflects the greater ability to personalize politics at lower levels of government, as is the fact that more independents are elected to town and village rather than to district councils. Overall, independents have yet to receive 7 percent of the district vote and 10 percent of the town vote and, although I can only make a subjective evaluation, it appears to me that the level of independents' participation in council elections could be higher. More telling though, their participation in district elections has shown a pattern of decline that suggests party identification is of increasing importance at the level (unlike towns) where candidates are less likely to be known personally by virtually all of the voters.

¹ For examples of the confusion, see OSCE/ODIHR 1996 Presidential Election Final Report, Wikipedia's website http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moldovan_presidential_election,_1996, and Mazo, 2005: 25-26. I have chosen to accept the assertion that Snegur formed the PRRM before the 1996 elections since it came from a comprehensive Moldovan source on Moldovan electoral politics, the Adept website (<http://www.opendemocracy.net/>).

Table 16. Independent Candidates in Moldova's Local Elections

	District Council Elections				Town/Village Council Elections				Mayoral Elections			
year	Number of votes		Number of seats		Number of votes		Number of seats		Number of votes*		Number of seats	
	abs	%	abs	%	abs	%	abs.	%	abs.	%	abs.	%
1995	70,065	5.97	28	2.22	76,425	6.87	300	2.83	184,290	17.18	117	14.57
1999	83,137	6.83	6	1.92	99,666	9.01	292	4.78	314,828	28.50	191	30.37
2003	67,233	5.43	23	2.04	98,932	9.38	479	4.42			157	17.48
2007	50,746	4.40	19	1.69	86,059	8.51	393	3.7			135	15.05
2011	55,882	4.05	9	0.80	95,786	8.62	336	3.16			69	7.68

SOURCE: Association for Participatory Democracy "ADEPT" www.e-democracy.md/en/elections/local/

*These figures were no longer published for the mayoral contests beginning with the 2003 elections.

The mayoral elections are likely to reflect better the relationship between independents and parties, because their election method does not discriminate in favor of parties. Overall, participation by independents is lower than it could be, and certainly lower than Russia's elections for governor (before the regional leaders were brought under the umbrella of a party of power) which is a much higher less localized level of government than that of mayor. Moreover, there is an unmistakable pattern of decline of independents, in spite of the bump up in the 1999 election, indicating that political parties are becoming more important actors in these elections and adding evidence that parties are penetrating into local politics in general.

Furthermore, local elections appear to be reflecting national trends (Kennedy 2007). This is easiest to see when comparing results for the Communist Party since it has been the most disciplined and stable party and since 2001 it has run alone not part of an electoral bloc. The results are shown in Table 17. Local election results track downward in line with the parliamentary election results as the CPRM lost ground with the electorate. This also suggests that the decline in independents represents a national trend toward greater party penetration at the local level.

Looking at the elections for mayor and council of Moldova's capitol city Chisinau is also useful, especially the mayoral race, because it uses a two round majoritarian election method, is a local election that gets national attention, is seen as a major prize, and has become a battleground between and the CPRM which desires it but so far always

Table 17 Election results for the CPRM 2001-2011

Values displayed are No. of votes % of votes No. of Seats (and %)	Parliamentary Elections	Local Elections		
		District C.	Town C.	Mayor*
Parliamentary Election of 2001	794,808 (50.07%) 71 (70.29%)			
Local Elections of 2003		595289 (48.10%) 615 (54.62%)	473411 (44.90%) 5416 (49.96%)	368 (40.98%)
Parliamentary Election of 2005	716 336 (45.98%) 56 (55.44%)			
Local Elections of 2007		394,034 (34.18%) 465 (41.44%)	331,822 (32.8%) 4,220 (39.73%)	334 (37.35%)
Parliamentary Election of 2009 (April)	760,551 (49.48%) 60 (59.40%)			
Parliamentary Election of 2009 (July)	706,732 (44.69%) 48 (47.52%)			
Parliamentary Election of 2010	677,069 (39.34%) 42 (41.58%)			
Local Elections of 2011		508,433 (36.87%) 434 (38.75%)	327,768 (29.51%) 3,440 (32.36%)	203 (22.61%)

Source: Association for Participatory Democracy "ADEPT" <http://www.e-Democracy.md/en/elections/>

Notes: *Votes count (%) data for mayoral elections not available

come in second place, and its opposition. In 2001, two out of eight mayoral candidates (25%) were independents, including the victor and incumbent mayor since 1994 Serafim Urechean. It is important to note that Urechean actually did have party ties

since he was the chair of the Independents' Alliance of the Republic of Moldova (IARM), which had been registered as a political party in 2001 and which (along with Urechian) merged into the "Moldova Noastra" Alliance (MNA) party only one month after the 2003 elections. In the 2007 elections, two out of nineteen candidates (10.5%) were independents and (one of whom withdrew), and the victor was the Liberal Party candidate Dorin Chirtoaca. In 2011, one of fifteen candidates (6.6%) was an independent with the Liberal Party's Dorin Chirtoaca again the winner. The tentative conclusion is that as the Chisinau Mayoral election has acquired greater notoriety for the reasons outlined above, it has also become more important as a contest between parties.

The outcomes of the Chisinau mayoral elections are remarkably similar to that of the two direct elections for president, the first winning candidate had party ties but officially ran as an independent while the second winner ran under a party label. The Chisinau municipal council elections for which data are available (2007 and 2011) show a trend similar to that in parliamentary elections, multiple independents have contested the elections but none have claimed a seat. In 2007, independent candidates comprised thirteen (41.9%) out of a total of thirty-one candidates² vying for fifty seats; and in 2011 they made up eighteen (52.9%) of thirty-four total candidates. Considerably more have run as independents than in the parliamentary contests which is consistent with its being a local contest, and some even fared better than a few of the parties, but still none have won a seat on the council. Considering that it should be easier for an independent to win

² Counting each party as one candidate.

at this level, it appears that the PR electoral system is actively promoting parties as actors.

Overall, participation by independents appears both limited and fairly stable. It has not gone away, but it has remained a fairly consistently small proportion of all participation. As expected, it is largest at the regional and local levels and particularly in mayoral SMDM contests which are not “biased” in favor of parties. However, in both these as well as village council races where the locality is sufficiently intimate for people to be elected based on personal reputation, the potential for independents winning elections is higher than is the reality. As a point of contrast, Russia’s gubernatorial elections prior to the rise of the party of power in Russia’s politics, which are much less local than at mayor or village levels, elected virtually no party candidates to office. Even in established democracies such as the United States, elections at these lower levels are usually personal and (often officially) nonpartisan in nature. In Moldova, in these lower level elections, approximately 95 percent on average of all office winners have been partisan. This offers evidence that support for independents is limited by a degree of legitimacy accorded to political parties generally by both officials and voters, suggesting that voters are developing at least rudimentary connections to parties and that generally parties have at least sufficient organizational strength to coordinate party activities and strategies across the national, regional, and local levels of politics.

Party Roots

Moldova’s party system shows signs of roots in society, one of Mainwaring’s (1999: 26-27) criteria for judging party system institutionalization. In Moldova (as in so

many postcommunist countries), development of party roots is difficult to assess by only examining the society's attitude toward political parties—for instance, party membership is exceedingly low at approximately 6 percent (International Republican Institute 2010)—but it is not impossible. Table 18 shows opinion polls from 2007 to 2011 regarding responses to whether respondents viewed confidence in political parties favorably or unfavorably. As expected, unfavorable responses exceed favorable but the initial two-to-one ratio dropped somewhat over time; and while the percentage of unfavorable responses remained fairly even over time, favorable responses steadily increased from one-quarter to one-third. While these are aggregate figures, they suggest that the increase in favorability came from people who earlier weren't sure about parties now seeing them favorably. The timing also coincides with the non-communist parties in parliament abandoning their co-opted status and returning to their active opposition to the PCRM, with the two highest values coming after the PCRM lost control of parliament.

Table 18. Opinion Poll Results Measuring Party Favorability

DATE	Favorable	Unfavorable	Don't Know	Place
Mar 2007	25%	55%	20%	Last
Apr 2008	25	49	25	3 rd from last
Nov 2008	31	53	16	Next to last
Sept 2010	34	45	21	Next to last
Jan-Feb 2011	34	51	15	3 rd from last

Source: International Republican Institute 2010

Another means of assessing party roots is the degree of volatility in voting patterns. I have chosen to compare party support using local election results, because more parties gain some seats than in parliamentary elections, indicating a better chance that voting is sincere rather than possibly reflecting strategic voting in light of the threshold's reductive effect, and moreover, Mainwaring recommends (1999: 29)

comparing local to national data as a means of identifying roots. Table 19 shows the percentage of seats won by eleven parties in five regional and local elections. First, there is a clear dividing line between the major (first five) and the minor parties in every election with the sole exception of the Liberal Party's (PL) poor showing in 2007. This exception is probably due to confusion, because the party had changed its name immediately after the 2005 elections from the Party of Reform to the Liberal Party, a name that had been held by another party from 2002-2003. Second, when compared to the parliamentary elections (see Table 14) the results support Kennedy's claim (2007) that local results are reflecting national trends. The patterns over time shows PCRM support rising and falling with the popularity of its government, while the democratically-oriented PDM and PL exhibited the inverse trend as voters turned to or from the communists.³ Not depicted is the Liberal Democratic Party of Moldova (PLDM) which was only formed in 2007 by prominent members of two parliamentary parties unhappy with having cooperated with the PCRM, but it too fits the trend of voters turning to the democrats after the police crackdown on protesters hurt the communists and sent support to the democratic forces. The relationship between local and national election results also shows in the trend in electoral support for the communist party. The PCRM has been the most consistent and single most important player in Moldova's elections since its ban was ended, and Table 19 shows that the local elections of 2003 and 2007 presaged the gradual decline of its success in the parliamentary elections of 2005 and 2009⁴

³ The AMN merged with the PLDM in April 2011 after having suffered from its poor showing in July 2009 and internal disputes.

⁴ The April 2009 elections did not follow this trend

Table 19. Percentage of Seats Won By Political Parties in Local Elections

Party	Race	1995	1999	2003	2007	2011
PDM	DC		20.51%	8.17	10.43%	20.27%
	TC		19.89	8.63	10.87	21.29
	Mayor		14.78	8.13	8.25	24.50
PCRM	DC	16.32	37.82	54.62	41.44	38.75
	TC	8.00	36.61	49.96	39.73	32.36
	Mayor	5.35	19.71	40.98	37.35	22.61
Ch. Dems	DC		7.69	7.28	8.73	0.45
	TC		5.59	5.26	7.66	0.71
	Mayor		3.82	2.23	6.58	0.67
PL	DC	19.97		20.16	1.96	11.61
	TC	22.02		22.16	1.53	10.93
	Mayor	10.43		21.27	1.45	10.80
AMN	DC	19.67	23.40	20.16	19.61	
	TC	21.43	23.95	22.16	19.17	
	Mayor	15.93	22.10	21.27	17.61	
SocDemP	DC	3.09	5.13	3.37	3.21	0.54
	TC	2.58	4.08	4.61	2.77	0.55
	Mayor	2.89	2.86	4.9	1.67	0.22
PLaw&Jus	DC				0.18	
	TC		0.13		1.59	0.02
	Mayor		0.16		0.33	
DPPM	DC				0.45	
	TC				0.38	0.05
	Mayor				0.11	
Equality	DC		0.32	0.27	1.25	
	TC		0.07	0.32	1.53	0.06
	Mayor		0.00	0.22	1.11	
RepPofM	DC					0.36
	TC			0.04	0.01	0.56
	Mayor					0.45
NatLibP	DC				0.45	0.09
	TC				0.72	0.36
	Mayor				0.56	0.45

Source: Association for Participatory Democracy "ADEPT" <http://www.e-Democracy.md/en/elections/>

respectively, and the local elections held in 2011 reveal how the communists have continued to lose support after the events surrounding the 2009-2010 elections.

These results do not show excessive volatility beyond what is reasonable in a new democracy. They do not reflect voters flitting from one party to the next as they become disappointed with the previous one they voted for, but are more consistent with parties having core support while experiencing normal vote shifts as noncore voters adjust their preferences in light of events, campaigns, and the like. Moreover, according to the Moldovan political analyst Igor Botan's analysis of Moldova's Institute for Public Policy surveys, the results show a correlation between people's perception of the state of things in the country, their attitudes regarding trust in political parties and their political leaders, and how they intend to vote (Botan 2010), along with how people have in fact voted.

Party as Organization

Mainwaring's last dimension of party institutionalization, I have chosen to refer to as "organizational autonomy," because as Mainwaring states, "party organizations matter. Parties are not subordinated to the interests of a few ambitious leaders; they acquire an independent status and value of their own." An important sign of this is parties experiencing peaceful transfers of power (1999: 26-27). This attribute is necessary for party system consolidation. In the beginning of democracy in postcommunist (and other) countries, there was a proliferation of political parties as aspirants to public office, both serious and otherwise, created their own. Parties cannot be important political actors when the party system is substantially fragmented, and party systems cannot consolidate when the parties' reason for existing is the self-interest of its leader. In Moldova, the best

organized and most autonomous party by far is the communist party, while the pro-democracy (center-right) forces started out divided into several parties, thus diluting their clout and generating unnecessary competition among them. Interestingly, what Moldovans have come to see the primary political division in their country as that between the communists and the opposition, and the pro-democratic (which is considered to be synonymous with opposition) forces have fostered this perception (Cash 2009: 267). Fortunately for them, their parties have shown signs of developing autonomy, and the opposition has experienced consolidation.

Political parties give evidence of their autonomy, and thus their significance as actors by surviving a leadership change and several have done so in Moldova. The Democratic Peoples' Party of Moldova (DPPM), the Moldova Noastra (Our Moldova) Alliance (AMN), the Agrarian Democratic Party of Moldova (ADPM), the Party of Socio-Economic Justice of Moldova (PSEJM), the Social-Democratic Party of Moldova (SDPM), the Environmental Party of Moldova "Green Alliance" (EPMGA), the Republican Popular Party (RPP) (originally called the Peasants' Christian Democratic Party of Moldova), The Centrist Union of Moldova (CUM), Party of Spiritual Development "Moldova Unita" (PSDMU), the National Liberal Party (NLP), and the Socio-political Movement for Nation and Country (SPMNC) all elected new leadership. Not all of these parties represent important actors, but some are, and some of the leaders involved are major players. The AMN first selected co-leaders, one of whom was Dumitru Braghis who had previously been prime minister and head of the "Braghis Alliance" electoral bloc and parliamentary faction. In 2005, mayor of the capitol city

Chisanau (and previous co-leader) Serafim Urecean assumed the leadership. In 2009 the DPM replaced its chair of eleven years Dimitru Diacov with former prime minister and current interim president Marian Lupu. Both of these parties, either alone or within a bloc, have exceeded the electoral threshold and gained seats in parliament.

There has also been at least one occasion in which parties have cooperated by withdrawing their candidates in favor of the candidates of ideologically similar parties with greater chances of winning. It occurred twice in the 2011 contest for mayor of Chisinau, which has become one of the major prizes. In 2011 it was hotly contested by the CPRM which was closer than it had ever been to winning, and this greatly worried the opposition parties. On May 6th the Liberal Democratic Party (PLDM) decided to withdraw their candidate Victor Bodiu from the electoral race and to support current mayor Dorin Chirtoaca in his re-election bid. The statement was made by the leader of the PLDM Vlad Filat in a press briefing. "It is a conscious decision based on a strategic calculation and on political responsibility. It was taken together with our candidate Victor Bodiu and the municipal team of the Liberal Democratic Party of Moldova. It is not some kind of concession. It is a sacrifice that we are obliged to make in order to normalize the situation on the political arena," said Vlad Filat (Moldova Azi, May 6, 2011). He went on to state that this was done expressly to prevent CPRM victory. In response, on June 1 Valentin Crilov of the Party of Socialists of the Republic of Moldova, *Patria-Rodina*, withdrew from the contest in favor of the CPRM's candidate Igor Dodon. While both sides hoped these withdrawals would bring them victory, in the end Chirtoaca won the election in the second round with only 50.6 percent of the vote whereas he had come in

behind Dodon in the first round 46.5 percent to 48 percent. This behavior is much more consistent with party actors judging based upon party interests rather than by an independent with narrower and more personal set of interests.

Moldova's parties also face strong electoral incentives to consolidate. The electoral system may favor parties over independents, and it does limit how many parties may compete, but the threshold does not favor a large *parliamentary* party system, having so far only allowed three to five parties or blocs to win seats at any one time. The use of electoral blocs, however, can nullify the threshold effect. Table 20 displays the number of parties and blocs that have run in parliamentary elections compared to the number taking office.⁵ It shows first that the total number of contestant organizations has remained fairly high, but second, that while electoral blocs were commonly used in the earlier elections their popularity was diminishing even before it was decided to no longer allow them. By limiting how many parties will be seated in parliament the electoral system places a limit on how many may become major parties with a role to play in governing the country.

Parties, particularly those in opposition, took greater notice of this once the communist party gained a parliamentary majority in 2001. Opposition parties of the center-right recognized that because only a few parties enter parliament, they had a strong incentive to achieve better strategic coordination through party mergers (Freedom House 2003). The diagrams in Figure 16 depict the opposition party mergers occurring

⁵ The number of parties that are registered varies but is usually much higher. For example, after the extensive party mergers that occurred in 2002, the number registered dropped from thirty-one to twenty-five (Freedom House, 2003)

Table 20. Party Participation in Parliamentary Elections

Election Year	Parties/Electoral Blocs	Winning Parties	Winning Blocs
1994	9 Parties, 4 Blocs	1	3
1998	9 Parties, 6 Blocs	2	2
2001	12 Parties, 5 Blocs	2	1
2005	9 Parties, 2 Blocs	2	1
2009 (april)*	15 Parties	4	
2009 (July)*	10 Parties, (2 withdrawals)	5	
2010*	20 Parties	4	

Source: Association for Participatory Democracy "ADEPT" <http://www.e-Democracy.md/en/elections/>

Notes: *Electoral blocs were no longer allowed.

from 2001 to 2003 which ultimately reduced ten parties down to two. Additionally, though not depicted is the decision of the Party of Civic Dignity of Moldova to join with the CPRM. This meant that many party leaders chose to relinquish their positions and their parties' identities, trading away some of the benefits for personal ambition so that the opposition's organizational strength and electoral viability could be enhanced. And there was some success. In May 2004, the Alliance "Moldova Noastra (Our Moldova)" (AMN) and the Social Liberal Party (PSL) together with the the Democratic Party created the electoral bloc "Democratic Moldova" (BMD) thereby gaining thirty-four parliamentary seats in the 2005 election. In the April and July 2009 elections, the AMN gained eleven and then seven seats respectively on its own. In 2008, there was another merger of pro-democracy forces when the PSL joined with the Democractic Party of Moldova (PDM), enabling the PDM to enter parliament for the first time in the July 2009 elections with thirteen seats, and then fifteen seats in 2010. Moreover, consolidation of opposition forces has not yet ended. In 2008, the PSL merged into the Democratic party

of Moldova PDM) and in 2011, the AMN merged with the Liberal Democratic Party of Moldova (PLDM).⁶

The communist party itself also gave the opposition incentive to consolidate. Only months prior to the 2003 local elections, several events occurred which were perceived by the opposition as attempts to use governmental powers to attack the opposition (Freedom House 2003), among which were "adoption in late 2002 of amendments to the Law on Political Parties; obstruction of the referendum on changing the electoral system initiated by the Social Democratic Alliance headed by the former Prime-Minister Dumitru Braghis; as well as obstruction by the Central Electoral Commission of the Christian-Democrats' initiative to hold a consultative referendum on joining EU and NATO" (ADEPT 2003). Thus the PCRM's heavy-handed treatment of the political opposition occasionally served as a catalyst for opposition strengthening through consolidation.

Parties in Government

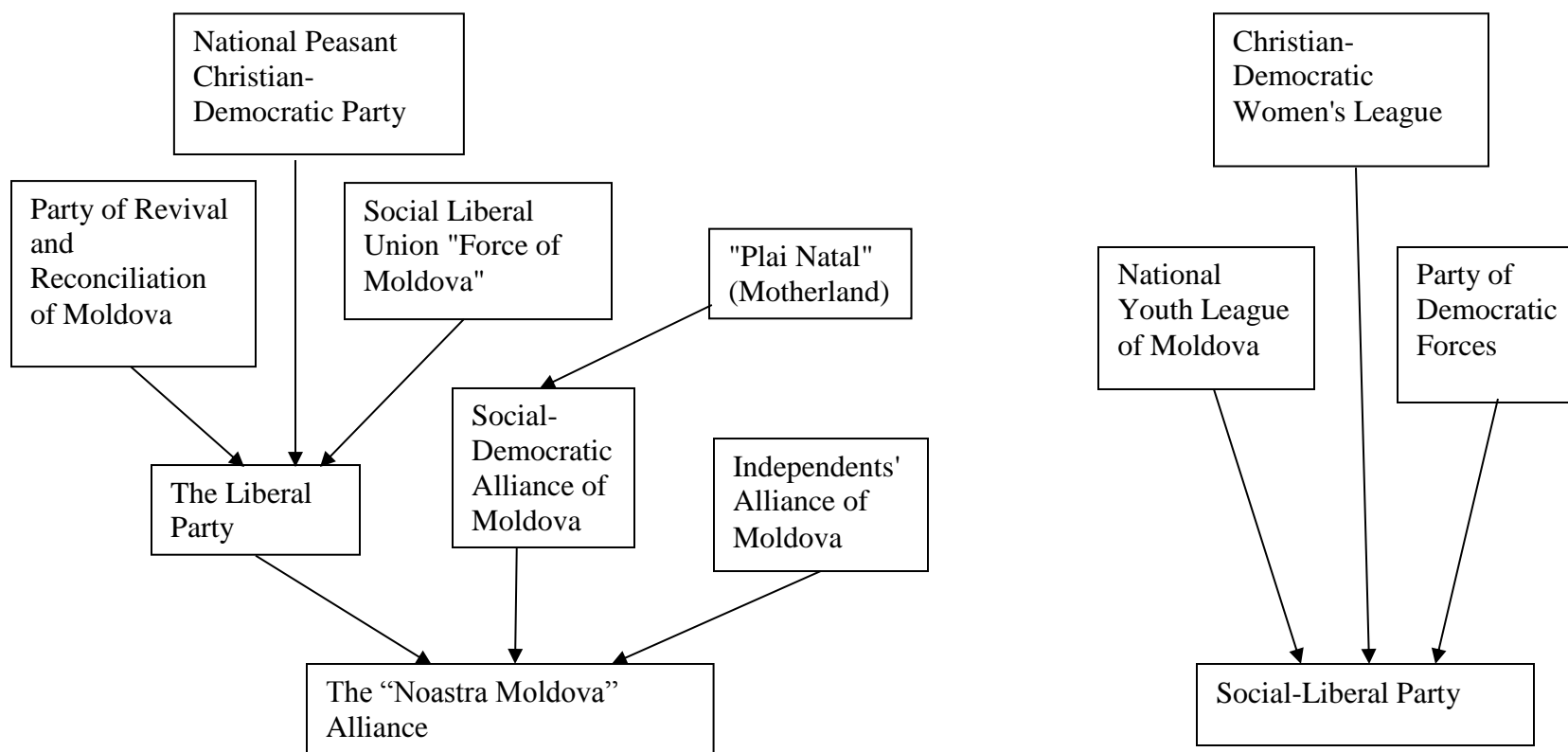
Ironically, the PCRM, in spite of itself, contributed to the importance of parties as actors, although eight years of rule by unreformed communists makes it difficult to see how this could be so. In that time, they made significant progress toward undoing democracy and restoring the Soviet-style order and they did not hide their intention to rebuild the "vertical of power" of the previous regime. The first step to recognizing the benefits of party system institutionalization is to divorce the PCRM's intent and objectives from how it behaved, and instead look at it as a political party *qua* party, as

⁶ The latter was due to so many of the AMN's deputies leaving the party's faction and joining that of the PLDM before the 2010 election that the AMN lost its ability to form its own faction, thus the merger of the electoral party organization was simply following the *de facto* merger of their parliamentary factions. While this is not in itself a sign of party system stability, it contributes to the consolidation of the democratic opposition, increasing its potential to counterbalance the communists.

one actor in the context of party politics. In this role, the communists demonstrated that parties can provide effective political leadership and, again in spite of themselves, accorded a degree of legitimacy on the party system.

The CPRM has been the most influential political actor in Moldova's politics and has itself played an important role in party system formation, but it is a tale of paradox and irony, because the communists did much to undermine competitive politics and democratic governance in general. Like in most postcommunist countries, it was originally banned, but eventually was allowed to be reconstituted, and like in many cases it became the most organized and effective of their country's parties. However, unlike the others, Moldova's Communist Party did not transform itself into a competitor in the democratic mold; rather it was reborn unreformed, having the intention to restore the "vertical of power" by the single ruling party in the Soviet mold. Its organizational capacity coupled with its growing popularity as Moldova's economy worsened, meant that the CPRM posed a serious threat to democratization and after it gained a parliamentary super majority with enough seats to elect the president on its own in 2001, it did much over the next eight years to undo democratic development in Moldova. However, because the CPRM was the most effective party in the party system but was not able to eliminate genuine electoral competition, it also contributed to the institutionalization of political parties as political actors.

Figure 16. Moldova's Party Mergers 2001-2003



Source: Association for Participatory Democracy "ADEPT" <http://www.e-democracy.md/elections/parliamentary/>

There is no denying that communist rule did cause democratic backsliding. Table 21 displays Moldova's Freedom House rankings for the twenty years since independence. The political rights values track the major changes government control. The rankings changed little from the first post-independence assessment during the fractious first parliament and most of Snegur's autocratic presidency, improved considerably under the Agrarian Party's coalition and Lucinschi's weakened presidency, deteriorated again

Table 21. Moldova's Freedom House Rankings 1991-2010

YEAR	RANKING			YEAR	RANKING		
	Political Rights	Civil Liberties	Status		Political Rights	Civil Liberties	Status
1991	5	4	PF	2001	2	4	PF
1992	5	5	PF	2002	3	4	PF
1993	5	5	PF	2003	3	4	PF
1994	4	4	PF	2004	3	4	PF
1995	4	4	PF	2005	3	4	PF
1996	3	4	PF	2006	3	4	PF
1997	3	4	PF	2007	3	4	PF
1998	2	4	PF	2008	4	4	PF
1999	2	4	PF	2009	3	4	PF
2000	2	4	PF	2010	3	3	PF

SOURCE: Freedom House. www.freedomhouse.org

under eight years of CPRM government and presidency, and then began to rebound, including an improved civil liberties ranking, in 2009 when the CPRM lost control. The 2001 parliamentary elections mark an important transition point in the quality of Moldova's democratic politics that is apparent in the changing assessments of the democratic quality of its electoral politics. These elections were also the last to be held before the communists took control. The OCSE/OHDIR election monitoring final report (2001: 1) stated that these elections "met international standards for democratic elections, *consolidating a trend already evidenced during the previous elections* [italics added]"

and noted that the inability of citizens in the breakaway Transnistria region to vote was the most significant problem of the elections. However, after monitoring the 2003 local elections held barely two years into the CPRM government, the OCSE reported that “notable shortcomings observed during the campaign, including allegations of widespread abuse of power by the authorities, were a source of concern and marked a negative development” (OCSE/ODIHR 2003: 1) among which included “heavily biased state media . . . arrests of some opposition candidates, and threats of arrest of others; [and] use of administrative resources for campaign purposes.

By the 2005 parliamentary elections, the election monitoring report noted that these elections

fell short of some [standards] that are central to a genuinely competitive election process. In particular, campaign conditions and access to the media were not satisfactorily equitable. In this regard, the elections *confirmed negative trends already noted* in the 2003 local elections. . . [including] coercion and pressure on public employees to support the incumbents’ campaign, as well as instances of misuse of administrative resources by political parties” which “amplified the advantages of incumbency and did not serve to create fully equitable campaign conditions [italics added].

OCSE’s report on the 2007 local elections stated that certain electoral administration practices

tended to benefit the ruling Party of Communists of the Republic of Moldova (PCR). A number of opposition candidates were intimidated and pressured by the authorities, as well as by some members of the governing party, leading to many withdrawals. In some instances, these withdrawals resulted in disqualification of candidate lists, as the number of remaining candidates fell below the required minimum. Several cases implicated senior public servants and some members of Parliament (OCSE/ODIHR 2007: 1).

Even before the 2009 parliamentary elections were held, Freedom House noted that “*Increased pressure on the opposition ahead of the 2009 national elections and abuse of administrative resources by the authorities prompt a worsening of Moldova’s rating for electoral process from 3.75 to 4.00 [Italics in original]*” (Freedom House 2009: 369). The subsequent two elections held in 2009 were sufficiently flawed that Freedom House again downgraded Moldova’s electoral process rating to 4.25 (Freedom House 2010: 361). The April election, in which the PCRM took sixty seats (one shy of being able to elect the president), led to protests and then student-led violence in the belief that the communists had stolen the election, which elicited a brutal response by the government. Not the violence, but parliament’s inability to elect a president led to its dissolution and new elections in July. These elections were considered somewhat more fair than April’s (OCSE/ODHIR 2009: 1) and this plus the negative reaction to police violence against the protesters is likely accountable for the PCRM’s loss of twelve seats and loss of control over government to the Alliance for European Integration (AEI), a coalition comprised of the four winning opposition parties—the LP, the LDP, the NMA, and the Democratic Party (DP). However, this coalition could not elect a president, and so parliament was dissolved again and parliamentary elections were held for a third time in 2010. The OCSE election observation preliminary report generally reported fewer problems than in the recent elections (OSCE/ODHIR 2010), and Freedom House improved their rating of the electoral process (Freedom House 2011: 375). Finally, The OCSE’s preliminary conclusions of the 2011 local elections also indicated a general decline in the negative trend of the past (OSCE/ODHIR 2011).

In spite of all of this, however, the PCRM could not get away from being a political party. A basic characteristic of many postcommunist governments is a powerful executive, and Moldova's communist president Vladimir Voronin did indeed wield considerable power; but unlike most other cases, this was less due to the powers incumbent in the executive than it was due to his party holding a majority in parliament (Roper 2008). Moldova's presidency does not hold a high degree of constitutional power, but Voronin was also supported by parliamentary power as well. Should the PCRM have lost its control of parliament, particularly if it were in favor of opposition forces, Voronin would have found his freedom of action curtailed. A somewhat analogous situation did occur after the 2005 elections deprived the PCRM of sufficient votes to choose the president on its own, although it did maintain an absolute majority. As a result, the communists had to bargain with at least one of other parties for support in order to re-elect Voronin.⁷ The PCRM succeeded only after it adopted a pro-EU policy and promised to deal with Transnistrian separatism, both of which were policy reversals; and also promised to make administrative and electoral system changes designed to improve electoral fairness and independence from ruling party influence. Because these post election reforms were at least partly implemented, and because the 2005 parliamentary elections were considered (by Freedom House at least) to be a marked improvement over the 2003 local elections (probably because the PCRM knew it was going to lose some

⁷ As it turned out, the communists were able both to win cooperation from the Christian Democratic People's Party (PPCD) and to split the opposition "Moldova Democrat" Bloc (BMD), which had come in second in the 2005 parliamentary elections with 29 per cent of votes, gaining the cooperation of the PDM and the PSL, leaving the "Moldova Noastra" Alliance (AMN) on its own as the opposition (OCSE/ODIHR, 2007: 4).

electoral support), Freedom House improved Moldova's electoral process rating from 4.00 to 3.75 (Freedom House 2006).

The communists did not make good on many of their promises to the satisfaction of their alliance partners once Voronin was re-elected, but they were able to encourage the disintegration of the co-opted former opposition parties, so that by 2006 the opposition consisted of "small groups of independent deputies and opposition factions that are more often in conflict with one another more than opposing the government" (Freedom House 2006). The 2007 local elections saw a return to higher levels of electoral abuse, and the collapse of the political consensus created in 2005 which led Voronin to threaten to "resume the most primitive political path between the two forces: Communists *versus* entire opposition" (Freedom House 2008). This is essentially what did happen in the 2009 elections, although it was not necessarily by the PCRM's choosing. The communists may have thought that the opposition had been dealt with permanently, but the opposition was able to re-form itself sufficiently to pose a challenge in the elections, and having been co-opted to their detriment once by the communists, they were not likely to repeat that mistake. Only parties can win parliamentary elections and the opposition realized it could not remain a squabbling group of independents and factions and survive. They were able to use the system to prevent the communists from keeping hold of their sixty seats by preventing the election of a president, but only because they acted as parties and not mere collections of individuals, mustering enough discipline to act as a group to do so.

Essentially, the PCRM contributed to Moldova's party system formation by participating as one competitor among several parties vying for votes in the electoral marketplace. Even as it sought to eliminate choosing government through competition of nongovernment political actors and restore direct permanent control over a hierarchical power structure, the communists could not erase what Hofstadter (1969) considered crucial to democracy, the idea of a party system. The PCRM never overcame competition and always had to abide by electoral results. The party's 2002 policy reversal favoring EU membership and its 2005 promise to carry out reforms in order to build an alliance for re-electing Voronin as president are two examples of the PCRM had to bow to political realities rather than shaping or ignoring it. Activities crossing different levels of government are also illustrative. The PCRM has never favored electoral coalitions and refused to join with like-minded left parties in an electoral bloc for contesting the 1995 local elections, but did do so in 1999 to avoid splitting the pro-left vote. Additionally, while the communists were working (and succeeding to an alarming degree) to restore centralized control over all levels of government, the PCRM also engaged in nongovernmental political activities of electioneering, particularly strategically coordinating campaign activities between national and local levels such as using Voronin's popularity with a substantial segment of the population in support of communist candidates running in the local and regional elections, as well as making campaign promises that this would improve relations between local and national governments (OCSE/ODIHR 2003, 9). The existence (and perceived bad faith) of the PCRM also contributed to improved strategic coordination on the part of its opponents,

both within and across parties that were striving to unseat the communists. Twice this enabled the opposition to create a coalition government of four parties, once which took control of government from the communists after the 1998 parliamentary election and again after the PCRM lost their parliamentary majority in the July 2009 elections, when in both cases any one of these parties could likely have gained more for itself by joining with the communists to form a government.

Overall, the parliamentary parties have managed a fair degree of party discipline when it was most in their interests to do so. Although the opposition has not consolidated into only one or two parties, on three separate occasions these parties were able to form coalition governments, depriving the PCRM of a place in government even though the communist party was by far the largest party in parliament. These coalitions were able to command only a slim majority which required a high degree of discipline to prevent the few defections necessary to lose it. These coalition governments existed from 1998 to 2001, July to November 2009, and November 2010 to March 2012. Additionally, parties have also shown the ability to act to preserve the integrity of parliament from executive power grabs. After President Lucinschi had attempted several times to increase the power of the executive, the parties were able to muster all but nine out of 101 votes to pass a constitutional amendment for parliament to elect the president. Later, after the PCRM had controlled both parliament and executive for eight years, the opposition parties all voted to approve a referendum calling for the return of direct presidential elections. Not only did the communists demonstrate their usual discipline in opposing the referendum, they revealed their roots in society by having their supporters stay home rather than voting on

the referendum, thereby denying sufficient turnout for the vote to take effect. Even the main exception to this, when three opposition parties collaborated with the PCRM government in 2005, tends to “prove the rule” since these parties suffered for their action and the opposition has assiduously avoided repeating the mistake.

However, probably the single most significant action taken by a party was when the PCRM, unable to form a government, abided by the election results and relinquished power to the opposition in July 2009. Having been deprived of their sixty seat majority gained in April by a united opposition which prevented election of a president and required holding new parliamentary elections, the communists did not take it well and have been engaging in obstructionism in return. But take it they did and step down they did, thereby reinforcing the legitimacy of electoral and party politics as the means of transferring government.⁸

Party of Power

One political party Moldova does not have is the anti-democratic pseudo-party inimical to party system institutionalization—a party of power. Meleshevich (2007: 195) defines a party of power according to four necessary characteristics: 1) it is nonideological, pragmatic, and centrist; 2) it is created by (or for) and acts on behalf of the executive; 3) it relies on state and other “administrative” resources to achieve its goals, including in elections; and 4) it bases its electoral participation on a strong personality-centric factor. In short, it is a party by, of, and for elites to reap the benefits of organization without having to the pay costs of joining a real political party, and to use

⁸ This should better be considered provisional legitimacy, because the new government will need to produce results in order to win back some of the Moldovan people’s trust.

state resources in order to avoid having to compete with other parties on a level playing field (Meleshevich 2007: 195-197).

In its origins, the Democratic Party of Moldova (DPM) showed the characteristics of a party of power. First named For a Democratic and Prosperous Moldova (FDPM), it was formed as a centrist bloc in 1997 by President Lucinshi's supporters aimed at garnering further support for the nonaffiliated president in the upcoming 1998 parliamentary elections (ADEPT n.d. Political Parties of the Republic of Moldova.). It was formed to represent the president's interests in the parliamentary elections; and indeed it was founded in reaction to former president (and Lucinschi rival) Mircea Snegur's efforts to form his own bloc to run in the 1998 elections in order to strengthen his parliamentary support and to position himself for a future comeback bid for the presidency (Quinlan 2002: 83). Thus it had the characteristics of a party of power: it was nonideological centrist, it organized support for a nonaligned executive⁹ in PR elections primarily as a vote generator in order to promote the executive's interests in the legislature with little regard for developing a support base in society or representing societal interests. Nor was Snegur's Democratic Convention bloc very different in its design and intent, except that Snegur was himself the leader of one of its major parties, the Party of Revival and Conciliation (PRC). Some of the campaign slogans made obvious the personalistic orientation of these two party blocs, such as "Vote Lucinschi's Team" and "Vote Snegur's Team" respectively (ADEPT n.d. Elections in the Republic of Moldova.).

⁹ Lucinshi was not even the leader of The FDPM bloc, nor of any of its component parties.

Parties of power that are unable to attain power by supporting the winner of the executive office usually either melt away or join the party that did. Snegur's PRC could be considered as having failed at this objective and it did join with other parties to form the Liberal Party¹⁰ in 2002 which in turn merged with five other parties to form the Moldova Noastra (Our Moldova) Alliance (MNA) in 2003. The party The Movement for a Prosperous and Democratic Moldova (MPDM), which had been the core of the FDPM bloc, might be considered a winner in these terms, even though the bloc was not the most successful in gaining seats, in as much as it supported the incumbent president who was not up for re-election at the time. It did not go the way of the PRC, but maintained its status as a separate party, although not long after the 1998 elections it changed its name to the Democratic Party of Moldova (DPM).

Neither of these parties resembled a party of power for long, however. While a party of power's *modus vivendi* is to support the government in power (Meleshevich 2007: 197), both of these parties became part of the opposition, the PRC in 1998 opposing the Lucinschi government and both it and the DPM opposing¹¹ the Communist Party of the Republic of Moldova (CPRM) after the communists gained control of both the parliament and the presidency in 2001. The PDR also showed that it was a political actor in its own right by surviving a major reorganization and change in leadership. The

¹⁰ This Liberal Party, which only existed from 2002-2003, should not be confused with the Liberal Party formed in 1993 as the successor by law of the Party of Reform (PR) and which still exists (ADEPT).

¹¹ Although after the 2005 elections, the DPM joined an alliance with the CPRM to secure the sixty-one votes needed for President Voronin's re-election, in exchange for measures to moderate the communists control over the judiciary, the media, and local government, as well as to enhance parliamentary oversight. The parties in this alliance were considered to be weak and at least partly co-opted by the communists. However, the DPM rejoined the opposition again after the 2007 local elections, but not before one prominent member Vlad Filat left to form his own party.

PRC did not keep its separate identity, but Snegur did relinquish party leadership in order to create a more unified opposition. In both instances, the parties in their new incarnations exhibited identities separate from, and outlasting their founding leaders. Joining the opposition to the CPRM meant not supporting the government in power, nor could these parties really be considered non-ideological any longer (if ever), since opposition meant taking a position *vis-à-vis* the communists.

For its part, the PCRМ behaved like a party of power while it was in power, but it never was one. As the party of unreformed communists, it was unapologetically ideological. It was not a creature of the executive, but always primarily a parliamentary party that neither held nor supported the president, until who holds that office became the choice of the majority in parliament, a constitutional change that the communists supported. The communist party leader Voronin has been popular with many voters, but not more so than has his party; and try as they might, the PCRМ was never able to get past relying on the voters' good will to stay in power using state resources.

Conclusion

Caution is, however, again urged not to conclude that the institutionalization of Moldova's political party system is complete or that political parties are able to prevent a reversal of fortune in the future. The current ruling coalition—the Alliance for European Integration composed of the Liberal Party, the Democratic Party of Moldova, and the Liberal Democratic Party of Moldova—has been experiencing internal squabbling and has yet to show that it is capable of addressing the many social and economic problems the country faces, let alone of meeting the high expectations of the voters. Nor have the

last three parliaments been able to elect a president and it is uncertain how the political system will fare if this impasse continues. And yet, at least one observer of the political events of the past two years has expressed some optimism when he concludes that “the organisation of the republican constitutional referendum, parliamentary and regional elections proved the functionality of democratic institutions even in conditions of political instability which generate anti-democratic actions, camouflaged through efforts to overcome the political crisis” (Botan 2010).

CHAPTER SEVEN

KYRGYSTAN: NO ONE'S ATTENDING THE PARTY

Elections Provoke No Parties

Nonpartisan candidates and elected officials were ubiquitous in Kyrgyzstan's parliamentary elections of 1995, 2000, and 2005. Exact estimates of how many independents and partisan participants have been difficult to derive, precisely because partisan identity seemed to have so little value that the partisan identification of the winners was not reported in the official results for SMD seats. It also appears that there were candidates who were affiliated with a party, but made no explicit mention of their partisan identity during the campaign. Reports of party-identified candidates and members of parliament during and as a result of the 1995 campaign vary. One report states that 936 candidates eventually stood for the 105 seats on offer, of whom only 161 were proposed by thirteen political parties and thirty-nine were elected (Anderson 1996: 530-31). Another report states that only fifteen party candidates won seats (The PRS Group/Political Risk Services 1998); while yet a third reports that "two -thirds of parliamentary representatives claim no party affiliation whatsoever" (The PRS Group/Political Risk Services 1999). Nor do reports differentiate between results for the elections for the Legislative Assembly (with forty-five seats) and those for the Assembly of People's Representatives (with sixty seats), even though the former was the permanent

legislature while the latter was more advisory and met only periodically.¹ Nonetheless, it is apparent that parties and partisan identity were of little value in the 1995 legislative elections.

In the 2000 elections there were, if anything, more independents. One election commentary stated that “a new phenomenon in the 2000 election was the large number of candidates who chose not to be affiliated with any party or organization” (Abazov 2003: 551). The percentage of nonpartisan candidates would have to be large indeed for it to be considered a new phenomenon, especially when coupled with the fact that in this election fifteen out of the now sixty Legislative Assembly seats were chosen by PR party-list. The 2005 election was different in that the 420 candidates who stood for the seventy-five SMD seats of the new unicameral assembly *all* ran as independents (Inter-Parliamentary Union, no date). Many parties concentrated much of their efforts on elections for offices in the capitol city of Bishkek’s metropolitan area rather than for the national legislature (Abazov 2007: 529).

Presidential elections were also held in 1995 and 2000, but interestingly only the incumbent was independent in both elections. Actually, Askar Akayev was already the incumbent when the Kyrgyz Republic declared its sovereignty in 1991, and by 1995 it was so unlikely that he would lose his office, he faced only one opponent, Absamat Masalijev of the Party of Communists of Kyrgyzstan. In 2000, the competition was stiffer, with Akayev facing five party affiliated candidates, including two political heavyweights, Omurbek Tekebayev of the Socialist Party “Fatherland,” and Almaz

¹ Only the former was included in the quantitative analysis.

Atambayev of the Social Democratic Party of Kyrgyzstan (PSDK). In both elections Akayev gained over 70 percent of the vote so he obviously did not suffer from a lack of partisanship. The presidential election in 2005 did not include Akayev, because he had been driven from office (and the country) by the uprising known as the Tulip Revolution. The man who emerged as the opposition's leader Kurmanbek Bakiyev was elected president without serious challenge at the end of the year. He competed in the election as the leader of a coalition of eight parties, The People's Movement of Kyrgystan (PMK), which had only been formed the previous September to compete in the February 2005 parliamentary elections, and resigned this position upon assuming the office of president (as required by law). Bakiyev obviously was helped considerably by being leader of an electoral alliance, although circumstances which positioned him as the opposition's leader at the right time played an important role, but once the election was over he severed all ties with the movement with no intention of resuming his involvement in the PMK once he left office.

Overall, the connection between electoral system and prevalence of independents is clear in the elections up to 2005. Political parties were basically absent from the parliament and hardly acknowledged in the elections except when a party list component was included in the elections subsequent to 1995. Boosting party system formation was the very reason it was included, revealing that at least President Akayev, who initiated the change, recognized that having a nonparty system was a problem. Moreover, after assuming office Bakiyev also "endorsed proportional representation, which, by

encouraging party formation, would reduce the dangerous emphasis on personality and loyalty to elites” (Radnitz 2006: 141).

There is also no shortage of evidence that independents elected to the *Jogorku Kenesh* were motivated by personalistic self-interests. An excellent example is the number of people believed to be seeking office because of the immunity from prosecution it granted them. After the 1995 parliamentary election, Akayev complained that all the election did was advance the cause of the old nomenklatura and the criminal elements (Anderson 1996: 331). Nor was this mere hyperbole since an estimated 30 percent of the new parliamentarians were believed to be under criminal investigation (The PRS Group/Political Risk Services 1999). More to the point, he blamed this result on the election *law* itself, clearly indicting the SMD method which doubtless led to his decision to incorporate a party-list component into the electoral system for the next election.

Many of the candidates for legislative seats have been members of the so-called “new Kyrgyz,” the new business elite that had made their fortunes from privatization (Abazov 2003: 549). This usually involved legally questionable practices, dealing with professional criminals, and exchange of favors with government officials so as a group they were interested in securing both safeguards against prosecution and political influence in the legislature (Abazov 2003: 549). Another significant source of candidates has been those who represent the interests of local administrators. Both groups largely sprang from the old nomenklatura and have their political roots in regionally based clan networks (Anderson 1996: 531). In both cases, they can rely upon their connections to

governmental power structure and their connections to traditional clan and kinship social networks to dispense patronage and command loyalties to win office; but in neither case are these legislators constrained by the incentives of party politics in the electoral marketplace to advance their self-interests indirectly *by means of* promoting the public's interests.

Luong (2002) has described how the pre-Soviet and Soviet legacies developed Central Asian societies with power structures intertwining the formal and informal institutions of administrative officialdom and clan allegiances and it need not be reprised here, except to point out that a key feature of this structure is its strongly localized and personality-based nature. This is especially true in Kyrgyzstan where the president has not dominated the regional power structures to the extent that presidents have in the other Central Asian states. Regional politics is the level at which political power is most easily wielded directly through existing authority structures in order to purchase, manipulate, coerce, or command public support without being subject to public accountability. The means of countering the problems of localism are found in the incentives of PR to emphasize ideas over individuals and to promote a nationalized political society in which parties provide for collective action and coordination of strategic behavior across various levels of government. The predominant use of SMD elections offers no such incentives and Kyrgyz politics has suffered as a result, a fact not lost on Kyrgyz politicians. One of the country's most noted figures Felix Kulov in 2003² stated that the only way of fighting the clan-based system was for political parties to run in parliamentary elections and form

² At the time, Kulov was in prison having been convicted on charges previously dropped. The charges were widely believed to have been resurrected by Alayev in order to rid himself of a powerful political rival.

a government mainly consisting of party members (BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, September 22, 2003).

The ubiquity of independents has also caused problems in the legislature as well. Unlike in the other Central Asian countries, the Kyrgyz legislature has shown a willingness to challenge the president, particularly regarding attempts to shift governmental power away from the *Jogorku Kenesh* to the presidency. Unfortunately, being composed of independents representing various localistic interests, the legislature has also been very fragmented and therefore susceptible to manipulation by the presidents to nullify challenges successfully and have their way. President Akayev actually influenced the *Jogorku Kenesh* from both outside and within. He enhanced his power by taking full advantage of the unstructured legislature, and he also formed alliances with the regional leaders, thereby securing the support of the power structure being represented within the legislature. In 1994, Akayev was able to rid himself of the quarrelsome legislature inherited from the Soviet era by using the alliances to encourage enough of its members to boycott parliamentary sessions, rendering it inquorate and powerless which compelled it to dissolve and call for elections in 1995 (Anderson 1996: 530).

The new *Jogorku Kenesh* immediately displayed the greatest weakness of collective bodies: It was so fragmented that it soon became bogged down by internal disputes rendering it incapable of enacting needed reforms. The legislature's obvious incapacity enabled Akayev to initiate and get approved a referendum in 1996 that transferred considerable power to the president (Koldys 2005: 356). In similar fashion,

Akayev was able to shift powers to the executive office through passage of other referenda, including a new constitution in 2003.

Kurmanbek Bakiyev was elected president in 1995 after the coup had brought him to prominence as Kyrgyzstan's new pro-democracy leader. Unlike Akayev, Bakiyev did not create his own party, although as president, the law forbade him to be a party member and he resigned as its leader after one day. Still, there was no doubt that it was his party. This did not mean that Bakiyev was actually seeking a different objective from president Akayev since neither was really trying to promote party system development. Rather, Bakiyev was adopting a different strategy for achieving the same goal as Akayev, executive dominance over the legislature. The strategies they adopted are in fact typical of the strategies adopted by presidents in postcommunist countries lacking electoral incentives to form party systems—either to take advantage of an incoherent legislature to consolidate power in the executive or to promote development of a party system dominated by a party of power serving the interests of the executive. While in some cases only one of the strategies was used (e.g., the former in Belarus, the latter in the other Central Asian states), other cases resembled Kyrgyzstan in that both were used, with the former being replaced by the latter. Akayev's presidency exemplifies both the opportunities and perils of a "no-party system" strategy, while Bakiyev's switch to the "party of power" strategy demonstrates how party systems can be "captured" by the executive.

Akayev maintained his independence from party politics³, capitalizing on the *Jogorku Kenesh's* lack of a functional structure to manipulate it by cutting various deals appealing to the self-interests of its members, and to perform an “end-run” around the legislature by forging direct alliances with the regional powers, the people to whom most legislators were actually accountable. This no-party system politics shares similarities with the characteristics of palace intrigue. First, they both are intensely personalistic. All deals are between individuals rather than offices, usually based upon personal promises (or threats) rather than being codified into law. The executive, the person more than the office, becomes the focal point and coordinating force for national politics. Second, both lack consistency and permanency. Executives have to form majorities anew to support every policy initiative or to fend off challenges to their authority. Alliances are based upon cutting deals and making specific promises without incentive to last after the deals and promises have been fulfilled (or proved to be worthless). Finally, the executive tends to be the only nationalizing influence on politics which otherwise is regionally or locally oriented in terms of both interests and power. But again, executive influence is based upon personal dealings which tend to support rather than undermine decentralization of power and may offer little reliability long-term. In short, they both lack the benefits of institutionalized politics.

This style of politics, while it is working, involves a basic agreement among the power elites to cooperate in maintaining their mutual hold on power while otherwise not interfering in each other's business. Akayev began his presidency by promising to

³ The Kyrgyz constitution in all of its iterations has required the president formally to sever any party ties once elected, but unlike Bakiyev, Akayev never maintained any informal party ties either.

establish democracy in Kyrgyzstan and initially his actions made this promise seem sincere; but over time, as the country's economy deteriorated and practical difficulties of democratic governance became clear, he turned more and more to bargaining and establishing alliances with regional elites. Rather than developing strategic coordination of politics through political parties, through these alliances Akayev instead tapped into the clientalist networks belonging to regional elites who themselves developed out of an alliance of Soviet-era administrators and new business leaders, and building these networks upon traditional clan affiliations (Abazov 2007: 531).

Regional Politics: The Clans Take Over

Political parties have played no more of a role at the local and regional levels than they have nationally. The electoral method also changed several times—from SMD majoritarian until 1999, a mix of single- and multi-member districts until 2007, all multi-member districts until 2010, and a mix of multi-member districts and PR for the upcoming 2012 elections—but it has not yet offered institutional incentives for party development in local elections. Little genuine attention or encouragement has been given to this situation except perhaps election manipulation favoring pro-presidential parties. This has produced decidedly negative consequences for political society's development. Political parties have not been the basis for political mobilization, collective action, or strategic coordination of political activity; instead clan and family ties determine local election results and the local power elites maintain their influence via clan networks by dispensing patronage. Parties have also no framework for the nationalization of politics. Connections among the various levels occur within the power structure of the state

through deal-making and exchanges of favors between those already in power for the purpose of staying in power.

Without parties to structure competition nationally a “re-tribalization” of politics occurred. A symbiotic alliance between local “nomenklatura” government officials and the “new Kyrgyz” wealthy business class created new political elites who, particularly after the first elections in 1995, realized that establishing networks based upon traditional clan ties was more effective for mobilizing political support than were ties to the weak parties (Abazov 2003: 548; Abazov 2007: 531). They controlled government resources as well as their personal wealth which, dispensed as patronage, cemented the arrangement. This still represented a fragmented localized structure for at least a decade, because it only produced cooperative relations and coordination of political strategies vertically in typical patron-clientalist fashion. Not until 2005 when the local/regional elites formed loose ties between themselves to cooperate in bringing down Akayev did this change temporarily. Bakiyev produced more nationalized cooperation and coordination by linking together his local/regional and national supporters via his party of power, however its purpose was not to compete in, but rather to capture political society; and it did so successfully, because the extremely weak party system provided no means to resist.

Evidence of weak parties is obvious. In 1999, parties won 527 out of 8089 seats total for party representation of 6.5 percent. In 2004, less than half of 6524 seats were won by parties, which coincides with the mix of district and PR methods used in that

election. Two pro-presidential parties won 22.07 and 20.05 percent of the seats while one other party won 3.01 percent and eleven other parties won less than 1 percent combined.

The 2004 elections may appear to have been more party oriented, but they were marred by high levels of candidate apathy and fraudulent results. Less than a month before Election Day there were only approximately half the number of candidates (just over 3800) as there were seats to be filled (BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, September 21, 2004). At election time, the average number of candidates per seat in the regions ranged from 1.4 to 1.9 which indicates that many seats were completely or nearly uncontested including in the PR contests (BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, October 11, 2004).⁴ Moreover, party participation was not uniform. Party nominees made up approximately 40 percent of candidates in urban regions while most were self-nominated in the rural areas, therefore parties were mostly absent from many of the village council contests regardless of the presence of PR. Additionally, election results show that most of the parties participating were only local presences and were inconsequential so far as party system development and nationalization of party politics is concerned. It was also no accident that the two best-performing parties were self-acknowledged pro-presidential parties of power. Overall, these results reflect the alliance between president and local power elites and the latter's ability to deliver votes favoring the former by dispensing patronage throughout their clan networks rather than genuine party participation.

⁴ A few major contests had considerably higher ratios, most notably in Bishkek where it was 6 candidates per seat, because parties were using them as "rehearsals" for the upcoming national election (BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, October 10, 2004).

This was clearly evident in the elections for the local executive positions held a year later in December 2005. Notably, these were the first time local administrative heads were being elected rather than appointed by the regions' governors not only in Kyrgyzstan but in Central Asia instituted after the Rose Revolution, but since these elections offered no institutional incentives to promote parties, they had little effect on party involvement. Out of 1863 candidates, 836 were nominated by voters assemblies, 959 were self-nominated, and only sixty-eight were nominated by parties (BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, November 19, 2005). Local/regional council elections were held again in 2008, and this time President Bakiyev removed even the appearance of party formation when he decided that *Ak Jol* would not submit candidate lists, ostensibly to avoid politicizing the elections which made it difficult to determine how well the party fared, although the US embassy estimates that it fared very well (U.S. Department of State. 2008). This may well have been his intent and, if so, it did make it difficult to determine which nominally unaffiliated candidates elected had affiliation to the president's party. Nor was this the only method used to obscure results since this was the first election in which the Kyrgyz government refused to accredit international observers and the CEC refused to publish the precinct-level results as required by law. Attempts to hide the blatant election fraud and manipulation obviously trumped institutional development.

Without parties, these elections did nothing to promote nationalization of political participation, and more significantly they did nothing to displace family and clan ties as the primary source for collective action and strategic coordination in local politics. Local

and regional politics was, if anything, more dependent on personalism, because ascriptive networks along with patronage organize politics at this level. Political elites are able to coordinate politics in their locales because of individual rather than political attributes. As a result, this situation also affects coordination between local and national levels. Local elites have been valuable to presidents because of their clan ties, and presidents have been valuable to these elites because of the resources presidents can make available; therefore cooperation between the two has been usually more beneficial than not, since they can both “deliver the goods” the other seeks. More specifically, its basis is the local elites’ ability to coordinate electoral outcomes for the president in exchange for the president’s ability to coordinate administrative favors and resources for the local elites.

The No Party System

An irony of democratization is that weak party systems in newly democratizing countries commonly feature a very large number of parties, and moreover a lack of a significant decrease in the number of parties over time is the sign of a persistently weak party system. In Kyrgyzstan the number of parties has increased over the years as shown in Table 22. The second column lists the number of parties that have registered their existence with the Justice Ministry and the third column lists the number of parties that have registered their intent to participate in a specific election with the CEC (the number in parentheses is how many parties in the end actually did participate). The difference between these two columns reflects the main reason why large numbers of parties reflect weak systems, because only the last column list how many parties are at least attempting

to be active, while the majority, to quote a Kyrgyz editor, “mostly exist on paper and that paper is in Bishkek” (quoted in McMann 2004: 219).

Table 22. Party Registration in Kyrgyzstan 1997-2010

Year	No. of Parties Registered with Justice Ministry	No. of Parties Registered with CEC*
1997	12	
1999	>20	
2000		11
2003	34	
2004	>40	
2005	42	
2006	82	
2007		22
2010	152	57

Source: BBC Monitoring Central Asia Unit; Radio Free Europe (LEXIS-NEXIS)

Notes: *CEC data represents registration for an upcoming election.

This phenomenon of taxi, jitney, or sofa parties, which earn these sobriquets due to their tiny memberships, are mostly the creation of individuals who desire to seek elected office but have no public reputation, personal resources, or access to party substitutes, as if having a political party is all it takes to make them serious contenders. It eventually becomes obvious that this is not so and the parties become the paper remnant of failed aspirations. In November 2010, the Justice Ministry initiated a process for compulsory liquidation of eighty-eight parties for failure to meet paperwork requirements for two years (BBC Monitoring Central Asia Unit, November 15, 2010). This may also explain at least in part why the number of parties kept rising over the years. With each election, as PR became a more significant proportion of the legislative election method, the appeal of forming parties has increased as well and the lessons of reality probably have yet to

outstrip hope.⁵ Moreover, parties have come and gone with each election in the best tradition of the party no-system (Sanchez 2009) which means that the number of parties having existed is larger than the largest number existing at one time.

There have been a small number of parties that have gained some notoriety for a period of time, with far fewer having done so for a long period, but they have not represented a basis for increasing party importance or party system formation. Mostly, they are charismatic parties which have been created, led, or are otherwise associated with well-known personalities. It is these people who contribute to the party's reputation and often provide finances to the party, rather than the reverse. This was the description of Kyrgyzstan's parties after the first legislative election in 1995 (Koldys 2005: 367-68).

After the 2005 Tulip Revolution and legislative elections, the new president Kurmanbek Bakiyev criticized the weak parties, stating that the only criteria people use to determine whether to join a party is "whose party it is" (BBC Monitoring Central Asia Unit, February 8, 2006). In 2010, after the 2007 legislative election which was the first to use PR to elect all members and after the 2009 ouster of Bakiyev, interim president Rosa Otunbayeva said that the Kyrgyz people tend to identify with party personalities rather than party platforms" (Radio Free Europe, August 9, 2010). In the twenty years since the Kyrgyz Republic was formed even political parties with some substance have remained vehicles for advancing the political aspirations of specific individuals much more than representing issues or promoting policies. The basic difference between these parties and

⁵ This hope has also been fed by the hope which arose after each uprising that the next elections may actually involve genuine and fair competition.

taxi parties is that the reputation and/or wealth of their founders lend some credibility to their party. In short, personal identity has been a more valuable asset than the party brand. This is not to say that the intent of their founders was to create parties resembling independent candidacy with a label, they no doubt sought for all the advantages of organization to build a body of loyal elites as well as a membership of loyal supporters, so long as the founders remain at the top. Without sufficient electoral incentives for pulling together the country's political forces into fewer and stronger national parties, Kyrgyzstan's political personalities have not had incentive to sacrifice enough of their self-interest to join with others in collective efforts for mutual interests, even though this offers greater potential to achieve success and influence as part of a larger group. For the sixteen years prior to the first all PR legislative elections this did not change. There is no doubt that Bakiyev recognizing the need for institutionalization of the party system, President Bakiyev made the following statement:

Imagine a situation in Germany with social democrats coming to power and the conservative party quietly disappearing in its wake. No, this will never happen there and it should not be happening [here]. I mean those one-day parties which are not really parties in the full sense of this word but rather a bunch of political opportunists. Our society does not need ad hoc parties like these because the time of made-to-order parties is over. I support the idea that each party should be self-defining so that it would not look around for a big daddy but be a fully-fledged political entity without fear of being chased away by those at the top (BBC Monitoring Central Asia Unit, February 8, 2006).

Party mergers have been uncommon, although electoral blocks are all too common, but they only form temporarily for each election and do not represent the basis for an institutionalized party system. Those attempts at coalition which have been attempted have fallen apart. In September 1994, the Congress of Democratic Forces sought to unify

the opposition parties before the 1995 elections, but the more moderate parties realized they would not be helped by association with the more extremist parties and the effort failed. In September 2004, Bakiyev formed a coalition of eight opposition parties called the People's Movement of Kyrgyzstan (PMK) which propelled him into the position of opposition leader and then the presidency after the 2005 Rose Revolution. After being elected president, Bakiyev disassociated himself from the PMK and it lost its importance. In March 2007 former prime minister and opposition leader Feliks Kulov founded the United Front [for a Decent Future for Kyrgyzstan] in yet another attempt to unify opposition forces, but disbanded it in September after supporting the government's new constitution, declaring that the United Front's work was done.

This is only a brief and simplistic view of the "alphabet soup" of the forming and ending over the past twenty years of numerous party electoral blocs and even larger movements that could be described as blocs of blocs, all intending to begin the consolidation of Kyrgyzstan's party system and none succeeding. This is also another reason why personalist politics has persisted. The party system has been so fluid if not downright chaotic that the leading individuals in politics are the most consistent element in the country's politics and easiest for the people to keep track of them than of parties.

Kyrgyzstan's national politics, to the extent it has any structure, has been organized around the single most visible political leader, the president. The most obvious division in Kyrgyz politics is between opposition and pro-government forces,⁶ but even this

⁶ There is also a very strong ethnic/clan division in Kyrgyzstan separating north and south; but this is a complementary influence since it means that the president's socio-ethnic affiliation becomes important in determining who are pro-government and who are the opposition

division can be weak and fluid. In a still fairly early reflection on the opposition, president Akayev stated that:

The present opposition is unable to oppose the ruling groups. In practice, it [the opposition] is part of the system of power. In any case, many members of the opposition easily find a common language with the authorities. Such close friendly relations show that opposition to the authorities is inadequate and, in some cases - why hide it? - lacks principles (quoted in BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, August 7, 1997).

Leader Felix Kulov's voluntary disbanding of the United Front, after adamantly proclaiming it as the new opposition movement, hints that ten years later the opposition may not have changed all that much. Moreover, Kulov had just left the government after having been prime minister during the first two years of Bakiyev's presidency and founded the organization as his move to return to the opposition.

Regarding the pro-government parties, for most of the past twenty years the lack of structure among these forces has been little better, although the last two years of Bakiyev's presidency represents an important exception which will be detailed later. Akayev, during his presidency, remained personally aloof from parties, but was not above using them. He accepted their support when offered, co-opted their leaders when possible, and encouraged family and allies to add their own parties to the already inchoate party system. On the other hand, he did recognize that some party system formation was desirable and it was he who added a PR component to both local and national electoral system. It is also true that Akayev backed the creation of a party of power approximately a year before constitutional term limits required that he step down as president. In September 2003, four parties merged to form the pro-president party Alga Kyrgyzstan! (Go Kyrgyzstan!) instead of just forming an electoral bloc, but it was no

secret that the party's real leader was Bermet Akayeva, the president's daughter.⁷ It is likely that Akayev's intention was to put as many supporters as possible into office in the 2004 local elections and the 2005 parliamentary elections either so that he could arrange to remain as president or at least to remain a powerful player. A PR component would therefore be an advantage for Akayev, because it would promote some party contestation and he would (and did) place the resources of the government, his connections with the regional powers, and his ability to manipulate the electoral process behind the pro-presidential parties to insure their victory.⁸ These parties did indeed do well in these elections, although independents dominated the non PR contests. In the end, this strategy failed because the blatant and excessive manipulation of the elections and fear that he may retain power led to the Tulip Revolution.

Bakiyev, however, succeeded where Akayev failed. Since he had accepted the legislature as elected in 2005 to calm concerns that he would hold another election simply to replace Akayev's people with his own, Bakiyev laid his plans for the next legislative elections which were to be held once a new constitution was created. Eventually it became obvious that he intended to create a party of power with which he could control the legislature.

After Akayev's ouster in 2005, president Bakiyev called for amending the constitution ostensibly to redefine the balance of power between the executive and legislature, but in reality to shift more power to the executive in the best tradition of

⁷ Go Kyrgyzstan! shared status with Adilet as the the main pro-government parties.

⁸ Akayev certainly expected some supporters to be elected as independents as well.

Akayev. After two new constitutions had been nullified by Kyrgyzstan's constitutional court by the end of 2006, another constitution was enacted by referendum in late 2007 which was accepted by the court and which cursorily appeared to encourage legislative capacity through party system development and more shared powers, but contained provisions which in effect nullified these reforms and promoted a return to strong presidential government (Institute for War & Peace Reporting, September 26, 2007).

On the plus side, the unicameral legislature was expanded to ninety seats all to be elected by PR and was granted the power to approve the president's nominations to several high offices, including the Central Election Committee. The president had approval power over legislative nominations for prime minister and cabinet positions. Countering this however, the president also had the power to dismiss many officials without consulting the legislature, including the prime minister, cabinet, and the Central Election Committee. The constitution also stipulated that legislators can be removed if their party loses its official recognition by the government, meaning that bothersome members can be removed if the justice ministry, whose head is subject to dismissal by the president, simply declines to reregister their party. Constitutional law professor Gulnara Iskakova summed up the opinion of many when she asked, "What's the point of having a government formed by political parties when it can be dismissed by the president" (Institute for War & Peace Reporting, September 26, 2007)?

Bakiyev Builds a Party of Power

The answer, of course, is that the president intended that his party of power would form the government. The new constitution still afforded the president means for putting the government's resources behind the pro-presidential political forces as well as using them against the opposition and for otherwise subverting the elections. The 100 percent PR elections gave the president a tremendous advantage, because now his appointees and allies at regional levels could no longer have their own independent candidate with ties only to them elected to the *Jogorku Kenesh*, now they had to support the party of power in order to support the president. He no longer had to deal with a fractious legislature, but could now use the electoral system to structure the legislature along party lines while his control of the state ensured that the party of power would dominate any new party system. Through his party of power, Bakiyev could pursue strategies for perpetuating his hold on power through coordinating the activities of the government, judiciary, state bureaucracy, and the electoral process.

While the latest constitution reforms were being debated, Bakiyev announced on September 19, 2007 his intention to create a new political party (BBC Monitoring Central Asia Unit) and on October 15 the *Ak Jol* or People's Party (PP) was officially registered. Bakiyev claimed that "Ak-Jol is not a party of the powers-that-be or bosses. It is a party of workers and men of action (Ferghana Information Agency, October 17, 2007)," but in fact *Ak Jol* typified the party of power. First, like all parties of power, *Ak Jol* is nonideological. Descriptions of the party are appropriately vague. Bakiyev described it as "a party of creation, responsibility and actions" (BBC Monitoring Central Asia Unit,

October 15, 2007). A party spokesman said that the party was created to develop Kyrgyzstan politically, economically, and socially (BBC Monitoring Central Asia Unit, October 25, 2007). Mentions of “democracy,” “progress,” and “prosperity” are *pro forma* rhetoric. Probably the clearest statement of the party’s purpose was made during Bakiyev’s September announcement of his intent to create the party when he said that the party was to carry out *his* plans for developing the country.

Second, it possesses the characteristic that executive elites create parties of power since there can be no doubt that this party was created by and for President Bakiyev. Bakiyev attended the founding congress, he was elected party leader even though the president is prohibited from being a party member while in office, and the party was officially registered “with unbelievable speed that same day” after which he stepped down as its leader (Ferghana Information Agency, October 17, 2007). The party was composed of the president’s supporters including many important government bureaucrats, which immediately placed it in control of the executive branch. Just prior to this, Bakiyev had appointed new regional administrators who proved their loyalty to him by falsifying the October 7th local election results. They were then brought together under *Ak Jol*’s umbrella and their executive powers also became a vital resource for the party. These resources were used to facilitate the approval of the new constitution by referendum on October 21st which then enabled Bakiyev to fill government posts with party members, and in the December 2007 parliamentary elections, *Ak Jol* propelled itself into the majority. By year’s end, Bakiyev put the party in control of all state structures and in so doing placed himself at the center of power. One sign that the party remained

oriented toward executive elites and considers the legislature of secondary importance is that most of the party's new MPs elected in the 2007 had little experience in political or economic issues at the national level. (Freedom House 2008).

Therefore, in short order the party came to exemplify a third and critical characteristic of a party of power: control over administrative resources for pursuing party objectives. I consider this characteristic to be critical, because this is not only the means by which presidents control the government, but also it is the means by which the powers-that-be subvert democratic accountability in order to perpetuate themselves in power. Executives can control government legitimately if they and their supporters are fairly elected to their offices, but the party of power uses the authority of the state to ensure this result, making it an institution specifically of electoral authoritarianism. The methods used are widely known: harassing and disqualifying opposition candidates, influencing voters by applying patronage and coercion, controlling or intimidating the media, and falsifying election results. These are not by any means exclusive to parties of power and even the earliest elections in Kyrgyzstan were hardly free of such practices. Moreover, once President Akayev gave up his image as a democrat and adopted a much more authoritarian approach, these practices became more extensive and more blatant. The 2000 Parliamentary elections exhibited such "flagrant official interference and vote rigging" that even the pro-government intelligentsia called it "a bad job in the best Soviet traditions" (quotes from Abazov 2003: 545). Subsequent elections before Bakiyev became president were even worse.

Akayev, however, always had to cope with a fractious and independent legislature and a more decentralized power structure. Weak though they were, the opposition had some ability to resist executive action. For instance, in an occurrence noteworthy among the former Soviet states, the *Jogorku Kenesh* denied Akayev his request to extend the president's term in office.⁹ For two years, Bakiyev also experienced resistance from the legislature elected just prior to the Rose Revolution due in no small part to his having formed a unity government with opposition leader Felix Kulov as his prime minister in order to eliminate Kulov as a challenger in the 2005 presidential election.¹⁰ By creating a ruling party of power, Bakiyev created a venue for fostering (even demanding) collective action on his behalf within the state and the means of coordinating this activity to produce more effective results advancing his strategic interests. It eliminated the necessity for the president to build *ad hoc* alliances for every major policy push or election, no more recurring rounds of negotiating with various elites separately or personally. Now once the party set its objectives, both public and secret, these elites knew what was expected of them; and the president benefited from the advantage of the party's organizational capacity to accomplish this with less personal involvement. Strategic coordination becomes easier for much these same reasons, and since a

⁹ They did, however, grant him the ability to run for a third term since he was first elected president in 1990 before the collapse of the Soviet Union.

¹⁰ This was also intended to reduce tensions due to ethnic rivalries since Bakiyev was from the south of Kyrgyzstan and Kulov was from the north.

considerable amount of party activity involves manipulation of the political system, it is likely easier to keep coordinated activities a secret.¹¹

An excellent example is how *Ak Jol* was transformed from new party to ruling party in just three months. The first steps actually occurred before the party's founding. By publically suggesting establishment of a presidential party, Bakiyev initiated a seemingly spontaneous response when a group of celebrities promptly established the Movement for Constitutional Reforms and Development three days later for the sole purpose of convening the congress, itself for the sole purpose of initiating the establishment of the new party (Ferghana Information Agency, October 17, 2007). Bakiyev, with his round of administrative reappointments also ensured that these people would immediately join the new party. This was timed to coincide with the final constitutional amendment process during which Bakiyev's supporters were able to include new PR election method which made political parties important players, as well as other electoral provisions designed to create an unlevel playing field for other parties. Party members then applied administrative resources to ensure first that the constitution was ratified and then that *Ak Jol* gained majority control in the legislature ending its obstructionism.

This transformation underscores how important institutional incentive structures are to a political system, and more specifically, how important electoral system design is to the development of party systems. Bakiyev wanted to bring an end to fractious and decentralized politics and create some order and cohesion to his support base, so he

¹¹ It is, however, an open question on just how open these secret activities are; but the details are more likely kept hidden which is a benefit.

created a political party to bring them together and coordinate their actions. In order for this to work, parties had to become the basic unit of political participation, independents had to be denied any further place in politics and he utilized the incentive structure of a PR electoral system to accomplish this. Since this would encourage the development of other parties as well, Bakiyev secured his control of state administrative resources first to neutralize opposition parties and ensure that his party of power remained the ruling party in power. Electoral system features also contributed to weakening the opposition.

Freedom House stated that “The new electoral law contains statutes that set hidden hurdles to parliamentary representation for regional parties, and local nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) called the referendum the ‘most cynical’ in Kyrgyzstan's history” (Freedom House 2008). Given the weakness of Kyrgyzstan’s party system, this meant that any party could be affected, which proved to be the case. One of the new electoral features, a requirement that parties obtain at least 0.5 percent of the vote in the countries seven regions and its two major cities in order to take seats in parliament, provides a dramatic example. In the 2007 elections the *Ata Meken* party—a party of long-standing led by Omurbek Tekebayev one of the most prominent figures in Kyrgyz politics—came in second behind *Ak Jol* with 8.7 percent of the vote, but was denied seats in parliament because it missed the 0.5 percent minimum by 0.1 percent in only one region. After a public outcry, the constitutional court ruled that the party could be seated anyway, but the CEC declined to do so. As a result of thresholds excluding this and other parties, *Ak Jol* received 48.82 percent of the vote, but over seventy of the ninety parliamentary seats and “effective one-party rule” (The *Moscow Times*, December 18, 2007).

Since Bakiyev was driven from office (and the country) the interim government has been transforming the political system to a parliamentary form of government which has changed the institutional incentive structures. The power of the presidency has been considerably reduced with the intention of making the president a symbolic chief of state, and executive powers and bureaucratic responsibilities have been transferred to the prime minister and cabinet. Another important change is in fact not a change, rather it is the opportunity for continuity. The 2010 legislative elections are the first to use essentially the same electoral method (all PR) as in the previous election, prior to this major changes to the electoral system preceded every election. If electoral consistency continues into the future, the incentives to create an institutionalized party system will be given the opportunity to have their effect. Parliamentary government with PR elections offers the best set of incentives to encourage the development of political society, but it is far too soon to know what the outcome will be. If no party-of-power comes to dominate Kyrgyz politics and the people do not become accustomed to uprisings as the means for regime change, then democratic development in Kyrgyzstan may well benefit as a result. Certainly what does transpire in Kyrgyzstan's future will offer additional insights into the effects of electoral systems and political parties on democratization.

CHAPTER EIGHT
RUSSIA'S FAILED PARTY SYSTEM
AND THE RETURN OF AUTHORITARIAN RULE

Until the elections of 2007, Russia's legislative electoral system was an even mix of two opposite types of electoral methods: one half being elected in 225 single-member district plurality contests and the other 225 by closed list proportional representation in one nationwide district. In terms of incentives to create political parties, they represent the polar extremes since the former method is the least likely to promote party politics while the latter is the most likely to do so; and the results conform to expectations. The SMDP contests promoted a no-party system of independents strongly responsive to their regional leadership while the PR contests promoted parties that mainly existed only in Moscow without roots in the society. This naturally hindered the development of political parties capable of providing cooperation and coordination within the sphere of political society and contributed to president Putin turning to the state power structures to provide these necessary functions by entrenching his party of power in the Duma and restoring the state's "vertical of power" between Moscow and the regions.

The Mixed Electoral System and Party System Malformation

It has been well documented that Russia's political party system development has been weak (White, Rose, and McAllister 1997; McFaul and Markov 1993; McAllister

and White 1995; Rose, Munro, and White 2001; White 2000; Colton and Hough 1998; Shevtsova 2003). Table 23 indicates that independent candidates have comprised a large portion of the victors in SMD contests in the first four Duma elections. While the results have fluctuated between elections, the number of independents as a percentage of all Duma seats has ranged from 15 percent to 28 percent and represents a significant portion of the legislature. At the regional level, the absence of partisanship is even more marked. Table 24 displays the nonpartisan composition of the early post-communist regional legislatures from 1995 to 1997 and shows not only that parties are nearly nonexistent but also the power of PR contests to increase party representation in the five oblasts using mixed election methods, as well as the ability of deputies to resist partisanship beyond the point that the PR method requires it. On the other hand, most of the remaining elections utilize a SMD majoritarian runoff method, therefore “the main challenge for parties is to defeat independents rather than candidates from other parties. The two round majority system, used in some areas, makes it even more difficult for parties, since the non-party majority typically steamrollers the party candidate who makes it to the second round” (Kynev 2003). In 2002, the first time in which all regional elections were held in the same year (in either March or October), party participation was even less significant in spite of efforts by national parties to establish a regional presence. More than three quarters of all winning candidates in regional legislative elections had no partisan affiliation (Freedom House 2003) and there were many who chose to hide their party affiliations, nor did any of the regional governors who were elected campaign as partisans (Kynev 2003).

Table 23. Independents Elected in Duma SMD Contests

Year	Independents elected	as % of total	No. seats gained/lost
1993	146	65%	N/A
1995	77	34%	-69
1999	114	51%	37
2003	68	30%	-46

Source: Russia Votes. http://www.russiavotes.org/duma/duma_elections_93-03.php

Table 24. Party Penetration of Regional Legislatures 1995-1997

	Percentage With All-Russian Party Affiliation	Percentage With Regional Party Affiliation	Percentage With no Party Affiliation
Average across Oblasts with mixed PR and SMD elections	30.3	15.2	49.2
Average across Oblasts with only SMD elections	10.1	4.2	85.4

Source: Stoner-Weiss 2001, p.402

Regarding the presence of parties in Russian elections, I have detailed elsewhere the high volatility of party representation in the state Duma from one election to the next between 1993 and 2003 (Riggs and Schraeder 2004; Riggs and Schraeder 2005) which Table 25 summarizes for the seats won in the PR contest. While not mathematically correct, I have chosen to represent the period when a party first acquires Duma seats (which here coincides with when a party is newly formed) as a 100 percent change and

the period when a party loses all representation (which here also coincides with a party descending into obscurity) as a -100 percent change. The majority of changes between elections from 1993 to 2003 are parties appearing (four) and disappearing (eight), three of which did both.¹ Half of the disappearing parties were hastily created to compete in the first Duma elections which were called on short-notice by Yeltsin and won PR seats only in this election, and of the remaining four parties having won PR seats in 1993, the APR is different from these only because it still exists and Yabloko lost all PR seats in 2003 never to regain any in later elections. Three other parties were created and only successful in one or the other of the subsequent elections. Only the KPRF and the LDPR have won PR seats in all of the elections, but the percentage of change between elections shows that support for even these “enduring” parties has been quite volatile. The Unity (later the United Russia) party is a special case to be discussed in depth below.

The laboratory conditions offered by Russia’s evenly divided mixed-member electoral system (Moser 1997; 2001b) reveal the power of PR to promote party development as well as the ability of SMD elections to confound the ability of parties to become important players in Russian politics. Political parties were being created “top – down” by elites in order to participate in the PR contests, but the ability of local politics to be represented at the national level without the need to establish ties to political parties as well as the lack of PR electoral methods used at the local level short-circuited incentives for party building “bottom – up”. This left Russia's nascent political party system rootless. Voters really knew little about the parties or what they were doing in the

¹ Yabloko, SRS, and APR did win four, three, and two seats respectively in 1999 SMD contests, but have won no seats since then.

Duma, therefore the only strategy they had for holding parties accountable was to "throw the bums out" which accounts for much of the high volatility of party representation from one election to the next and which made it all the harder to assign accountability to the parties. Even between elections volatility was a problem. Many parties were so weak that they did not survive to run in a second election. For example, at the time of the Duma's dissolution for the 1999 elections fully 90 deputies represented parties that did not exist when they were elected (Rose and Munro 2002:108).

As if this were not enough, there was also the disjunction between the parties in the elections and the parties in the Duma. The Duma was structured by factions which were created after the elections and which were not compelled to, and often did not, reflect electoral results so that deputies often were elected as members of one party but served in a faction of another or a faction unrelated to any of the parties (Rose and Munro 2002:106; Riggs and Schraeder 2004). McFaul has pointed out that the Duma became the one institution in which parties became central actors organizing and influencing its work (2000a), but because this was performed by the Duma factions, the centrality and influence of parties did not carry over to their electoral role.

On the other hand, this presented at least some semblance of a party system, enough so that voters could at least strategically coordinate their PR vote to signal dissatisfaction with the current regime. This did not guarantee that votes would coordinate in favor of new party preferences which might add some stability to the party system. The election of 1995 though, in which the KPRF dramatically increased its PR representation, clearly signaled to President Yeltsin that the people were not just

Table 25. PR Contest Seats Won and Percent Changes in Party Representation between Elections

Party Name	2003	1999	1995	1993	%change 99 to 03	%change 95 to 99	%change 93 to 95
KPRF	40	67	99	32	-40.30	-32.32	209.38
Unity/United Russia	120	64	n/a	n/a	87.50		
Fatherland-All Russia	n/a	37	n/a	n/a	-100	100	
Union of Right Forces	0	24	n/a	n/a	-100	100	
Yabloko	0	16	31	20	-100	-48.39	55
LDPR	36	17	50	59	111.76	-66.00	-15.25
Our Home Is Russia	n/a	0	45	n/a		-100	
Agrarian*	0	n/a	0	22			-100
Motherland	29	n/a	n/a	n/a	100		
Russia's Choice**	0	0	0	37			-100
Women of Russia	0	0	0	22			-100
PRES	0	0	0	19			-100
Democratic Party of Russia	0	0	0	14			-100
other parties	0	0	0	0		0	
independents	0	0	0	0		0	
Total	225	225	225	225			
No. of Parties Seated	4	6	4	8			

Source: Riggs and Schraeder 2004; Russia Votes. http://www.russiavotes.org/duma/duma_elections_93-03.php

dissatisfied by the performance of his administration, but were increasingly disenchanted with the transition to democracy since a vote for the KPRF represented support for less change from the past. This can also be seen in the steep decline over time in support for the Democratic parties of the right, particularly Yabloko and Russia's Choice/Union of Right Forces which lost all but a very few SMD seats in 2003 and lost even those in 2007. However, new parties popped up at every election which were able to attract significant support initially from the dissatisfied electorate, but could not hold it in the next election. The most successful of these parties were Our Home Is Russia in 1995, Unity and Fatherland-all Russia in 1999, and Motherland in 2003; but only Unity/United Russia won PR seats in more than one election and it is the only one of these parties still existing today. The only hopeful sign of stabilization in Russia's party system was the ability of the KPRF and the LDPR to win PR seats in every Duma election regardless of the volatility of the electorate's support.

The one other institution which could have had an impact on party system development is the presidency, but Yeltsin at least paid little attention to party politics and offered few incentives to encourage it. He stated publically that he would not join a political party and he made little effort to promote the reputation or electoral fortunes of the parties which identified themselves with his administration. Yeltsin was not opposed to political parties and in fact he made an abortive attempt to create a two-party system during the 1995 Duma elections, with Prime Minister Chernomyrdin's party Our Home Is Russia (OHR) supporting Yeltsin's regime and The Bloc of Ivan Rybkin representing the loyal opposition. Mostly though, Yeltsin remained aloof from party politics and failed to

offer the pro-reform parties the kind of presidential attention that might have granted them some legitimacy and durability as the pro-president parties. Instead, he allowed these parties to rise in one election only to fall in the next while the opposition KPRF and LDPR parties gained some headway in establishing their presence in electoral politics. Yeltsin's one positive influence on party development was choosing the legislative electoral method with the one-half PR contest in one nationwide district; but the idea was not his, rather it was sold to Yeltsin by one of the people he chose to design the 1993 electoral decree Viktor Sheinis. Sheinis believed that this method would marginalize minor parties and amplify representation of the major parties which would attract like-minded parties, coalescing into a stable nationalized multiparty system (White and Wyman 1997). Apparently what sold Yeltsin on the mixed-member design however, was the argument that the PR method would favor the pro-government Russia's Choice party (McFaul, nd: 4). Time has offered some validation of Sheinis' ideas, but the PR portion of the 1993 Duma election favored extreme opposition parties over Russia's Choice and Yeltsin tried to eliminate the PR contest for future elections.

The effect single-member district portion of the Duma elections has had on political party development stand in stark contrast to the PR contest. It is evident from the results of the SMD contests that they lacked incentives for party building, institutionalizing political party systems, or nationalizing electoral politics. Not only did they elect large numbers of nonpartisan legislators, they also made it possible for a scattering of seats to go to representatives of obscure and transient associations and regional parties adding to the fragmentation of Russia's political space. The advantage of

the SMD electoral methods is that legislators are more responsive to their constituents when they are the sole representatives of smaller geographically defined constituencies rather than one of a group of legislators chosen from party lists in very large electoral districts (Shugart and Wattenberg 2001c). This is what motivated other of Yeltsin's advisers to favor a majoritarian method for the Duma elections (McFaul, nd: 4). In Russia however, more often than not legislators became representatives of the powerful local elites who controlled the resources necessary to get elected and possessed considerable ability to influence the voters' choices at the polls. Overall, the politics of single-member districts can be described as localized, personalistic, particularistic. As Alexander Tsipko, formerly Mikhail Gorbachev's head ideological advisor has observed, "Russia is a large state floating in an unformed political space" (Quoted in Gessen 2012: 178).

Table 26 displays the results of the Duma's SMD contests from 1993 to 2003. There are several patterns reflecting political fragmentation and discontinuity over time. Foremost is the large number of independents elected which constituted the largest single category in the first three elections and was second only to Unity in 2003. Additionally, the total number of parties gaining seats, when compared to the same category for PR elections (see Table 25), reveals that between two and one half and six times as many parties gain seats in the Duma due to the SMD contests as they did due to the PR contests. Taken together, this means that more parties are sharing far fewer seats than in the PR contest. This runs counter to Duverger's Law, but Duverger (1963) and others (Caramani 2004) note that the law applies at the district level and will only be reflected in national election results when the party system is nationalized, thus this is a sure sign that

Russia's Duma election SMD contests are local in nature. Note also the "other parties" category. This includes parties which have never won seats in the PR contest, have won very few seats in one election only (with one exception), and then have disappeared again. Table 27 tallies parties by the number of seats each won in an election, e.g. ten parties gained one seat each in 1995, and shows clearly that most parties won only one seat—in total there are twice as many one-seat parties than in the other categories combined. That the category itself had not disappeared shows that there were after four elections still small groups and minor players attempting to emerge onto the national political scene.

Even among those parties considered to be major players, most of them did not endure over time. Three of them—Russia's Choice, Our Home Is Russia, and Fatherland-All Russia—were failed attempts at creating parties of power and were a spent force after one election. Three parties – the Women of Russia, PRES, and the Democratic Party of Russia –could not maintain their popularity after the very first election, And Motherland and the People's Party were newly created for and only won seats in the 2003 elections. The two parties of the democratic right, the Union of Right forces and Yabloko, and the procommunist Agrarian Party declined in popularity more gradually, but were on their last legs by 2003. The few seats taken by them in the last two SMD contests represented their last gasps since the electoral method was changed to all PR for the 2007 elections. Although they still exist today they have taken no seats since then.

Table 26. SMD Contest Seats Won and Percent Changes in Party Representation between Elections

Party Name	2003	1999	1995	1993	change 99 to 03	change 95 to 99	change 93 to 95
KPRF	12	46	58	16	-073.9	-20.7	262.5
Unity/United Russia	102	9	n/a	n/a	1033.3		
Fatherland-All Russia	n/a	31	n/a	n/a	-100	100	
Union of Right Forces	3	5	n/a	n/a	-40.0		
Yabloko	4	4	14	3	0.0	-71.4	366.7
LDPR	0	0	1	5	0.0	-100.0	-80.0
Our Home Is Russia	n/a	7	10	n/a	-100	-30.0	
Agrarian*	2	n/a	20	12	-90.0†		66.7
Motherland	8	n/a	n/a	n/a	100		
People's Party	17	n/a	n/a		100		
Russia's Choice**			9	30			-70.0
Women of Russia			3	2			50.0
PRES			1	1		-100	0.0
Democratic Party of Russia				1		-100	100
other parties***	6(4)	9(7)	32 (15)	8(4)			

Table 26. continued

Party Name	2003	1999	1995	1993	change 99 to 03	change 95 to 99	change 93 to 95
independents	68	114	77	146			
Against All	3	0	0	0			
Total Seats	222	225	225	224‡			
No. of Parties Seated	14	16	23	16			

Source: Russia Votes. http://www.russiavotes.org/duma/duma_elections_93-03.php

Notes: *Joined with the KPRF for the 1999 election.

**Merged with other parties to form the Union of Right Forces in 1999.

***Number in parentheses is the number of the parties that share the seats in this category.

†Number represents % change from 1995 to 2003, skipping over the 1999 election.

‡One seat in Chechnya left vacant due to political situation.

Table 27. Breakdown of “Other Parties” Category

Count of Parties per Seats Won	1993	1995	1999	2003	All Years
One Seat Each	2	10	5	3	20
Two Seats Each	1	1	2		4
Three Seats Each		2		1	3
Four Seats Each	1				1
Five Seats Each		1			1
Nine Seats Each		1			1

Source: Russia Votes. http://www.russiavotes.org/duma/duma_elections_93-03.php

Only three parties have shown the ability to endure over multiple elections. The KPRF and the LDPR have shown more consistent patterns of support over time, but for

very different reasons. The Communist Party of the Russian Federation in the beginning was the closest thing to a genuine political party Russia had at the time, because it had inherited the resources, organizational network, and some of the support for the old Communist Party of the Soviet Union. The KPRF was able to compete at the local levels and was able to show more consistent success in both PR and SMD contests. On the other hand, the LDPR was the epitome of a national party that only existed in Moscow and had few resources or connections outside of the capitol city; therefore it won virtually all of its seats in the PR contests. The Unity–Later United Russia–party is the very successful party of power created for the sole purpose of supporting Putin's presidency. Since Putin was very popular the party gained considerable support among the electorate in a very short period of time which explains Unity's successful first showing in 1999 PR contest. The tremendous jump in the number of SMD seats it won in 2003 however, does not reflect so much the growing abilities of the Unity party as a political actor as it does the growing ability of Vladimir Putin to manufacture electoral results. By 2003 Russia's transition away from democracy was well underway, but it is important to turn first to the parlous condition of Russia's political party system prior to this, for here is to be found some of the reasons why Putin was able to undo the democratic reforms of the first decade.

The Yeltsin Era

During the Yeltsin years, Russia's political parties and party system remained very weak, but their development was not a complete failure thanks in part to Yeltsin himself. It was important to Russia's transition that Yeltsin was dedicated to “de-

monopolizing” the state and creating institutions for a market economy and a democratic political and social order (Colton 2008: 234). It was also important that, while Yeltsin did exhibit authoritarian tendencies and disregard for some democratic principles, he had his limits. Presidential advisor, scholar, and Duma member Viktor Sheinis has declared that: “Curbs on political pluralism and straightforward suppression of opposition, unless it itself had moved to violent action, were in a forbidden zone for him” (quoted in Colton 2008: 234). The opportunities for party system development lost because of Yeltsin's disregard for party politics were balanced by his lack of active interference in party system development, although in the end it was insufficient for the party system to survive a different president with fewer qualms about curbing political pluralism. In this next section I will discuss three developments regarding political parties as actors during the Yeltsin years and their consequences: the ability of voters to hold political parties accountable, the ability of parties to provide some coordination and cooperation so that the Legislature was not just an impotent rubberstamp, and the continued inability of parties to provide for nationalization of politics not based on personalism or outside of the state.

Russia's inchoate political party system did display a glimmer of stabilization within it. Three parties—LDPR, KPRF, and Yabloko—have participated in every election from 1993 to 2011. While somewhat misleading, these parties could be said to very loosely represent the nationalist far right, the Communist far left, and the Democratic center right positions in a nascent ideological spectrum. Other pro-democratic forces have also persisted although undergoing some consolidation over time:

Democratic Russia (which was formed before the collapse of the Soviet Union), Russia's Choice, and other smaller liberal groups joined together to form the SRS in 1999, and the SRS in turn joined with the Democratic Party of Russia and Civilian Power to form the party Right Cause in 2009 which participated in the 2011 Duma elections. It is possible that over time the proportional representation elections would have encouraged some semblance of a party system stabilization, but there are at least two reasons why that was not to be. First, in the 1993 and 1995 Duma elections only the far left and right appeared to be coalescing around the KPRF and the LDPR respectively, the democratic forces on the other hand were highly fragmented. This prevented coordinated voting for the pro-democratic center while enhancing the ability of anti-Democratic voters to coordinate their votes in favor of the left or the right, the high number of wasted votes cast for Democratic parties made it virtually impossible to reward them at the voting booth whereas it was much easier to coordinate votes to punish democratic forces. Even with the creation of the SRS in 1999, the pro-democracy vote was still split between it and Yabloko, and by that time the people were quite disillusioned with democratization and they were much more inclined to punish than reward the pro-democratic center right.

Second, another complicating factor was the propensity for parties of power seeking to capture the center position to be created for each election only to disappear again, thus further fragmenting the center of the spectrum. This includes Russia's Choice in 1993, Our Home Is Russia in 1995, and both Fatherland-all Russia and Unity in 1999. On the positive side, Yeltsin did not attempt to use a party of power to dominate Russian politics; but on the negative side, he never made it clear to his supporters which party to

vote for in order to best support his presidency. Moreover, lack of continuity made it just that much harder for voters to coordinate their votes for holding political forces accountable over time and it denied the forces of the political center the ability to learn the public's desires from how they voted over time. For these reasons, limited party system development favored the anti-democratic forces of the left and the right over the center and left a large number of disenchanting voters susceptible to populist appeals for stability and an end to transition and the lure of a strong personality.²

Further party system development occurred within the Duma as the means of structuring legislative activity. The factions formed in the Duma did not simply mirror electoral party results, but they did provide the means for coordinating the voting of like-minded legislators and for building cooperative alliances among groups to promote policy objectives. The faction system reduced the fragmentation caused by a large number of independents by offering them the ability to join factions. According to White, Rose, and McAllister (1997: 184), out of the 141 independents elected in 1993, eighty-three of them joined factions, more than half of whom joined the New Regional Policy faction created by independents. Factions facilitated greater coordination and cooperation in the Duma as a whole; thus the Duma was more effective an institution than might have otherwise been the case considering the substantial powers granted the president by Yeltsin's 1993 constitution. The legislators were able to prevent Yeltsin from eliminating the Duma election's PR portion once he perceived that it did not work in his favor,

² The KPRF and the LDPR were not in a position to take advantage of the situation, because the electorate had already shifted votes to these parties in past elections only to shift away again after realizing that doing so had not changed anything.

because it did serve their interests. This was especially true for those members elected by party list, and particularly true of party leaders since, as head of a winning slate of candidates, they were virtually handed leadership roles. Moreover, party members' interests were served regardless of which party they belonged to, leading to successful coordination (and undoubtedly some cooperation as well) of the pro-party votes, including those who were not elected by party list but were party members, thus their votes were coordinated in favor of keeping the PR method not because it was in their self-interest but because it was in their parties' interests.

Overall, the Duma was capable of coordinating votes and building temporary coalitions in order to perform its legislative function and to cooperate with the president when desired in order to get important legislation passed. The first Duma alone, between 1993 and 1995, adopted more than 400 laws, many of which were designed to consolidate the post-communist states system and establish new bodies of legal codes (White 2000: 66). More significantly, it had some ability to countermand the president. On two well-known occasions, the Duma was able to register its dissatisfaction with Yeltsin's performance. First was when it twice rejected Yeltsin's nomination for prime minister (Chernomyrdin both times). Since a third rejection would dissolve the legislature and call for new elections, and since Yeltsin was so unpopular that it was likely that a new election would only benefit his opposition, the Duma forced Yeltsin to choose a nominee more to their liking. On the second occasion the Duma made a direct challenge to Yeltsin's presidency by instituting impeachment proceedings, although they failed to convict him. Both of these actions were very bold moves requiring strategic coordination

and cooperation to build a solid majority capable of taking drastic action that, particularly in the first instance involved risk to the legislators themselves.

This party system development and its benefits must not be overstated, however. There were still several independents unaffiliated with any faction and regardless, they all represented more localized interests the type and importance of which can vary significantly from member to member. Yeltsin and Putin in his first term often had to deal with at least some independent members individually when building legislative majorities to pass important legislation. There was also a measure of fluidity in the membership of all of the factions, party factions included, as some legislators moved from one to another or new factions were created. It took just over a year for a group of independents to break away from the New Regional Policy and form the new faction, Russia, in 1995, and the “stability” faction was formed to represent the prime minister and the government in the legislature which took several prominent politicians away from the Russia’s Choice, the Democratic Party, and PRES (White, Rose, and McAllister 1997: 184-85), further dividing the pro-reform center. This meant that there were always more factions than the number of parties elected. Moreover, unity within factions and the coalitions between factions were both unreliable. The situation was similar after the 1995 Duma elections, when it was divided into four party factions, three deputy factions, and twenty-five independents (White 2000: 66). Interestingly, most deputies elected as independents joined one or the other of the factions whereas most of the independents had been elected on a party ticket (White 2000: 62), which underscores the confusing disparity between party system in the elections and that in the Duma. Nor did the

situation change appreciably after the 1999 Duma elections. What political structure that did exist in the Duma was more fragmented than the parties that were elected and less accountable to the electorate at election time. For the president, working with the Duma could be difficult and laborious; and for the deputies, their greatest ability to resist the president often came through inaction.

One benefit of political party development that was definitely underdeveloped in Russia was the nationalization of the political party system and of political society in general. The PR portion of the state Duma electoral method created one nationwide constituency, but this did not influence extending parties into the regions since regional legislative elections were overwhelmingly SMD so there was no impetus for any party development at the regional level, and hence nothing at the regional level for the national parties to build upon. There were several important consequences resulting from this situation. First, the regional legislatures were even less capable of providing some balance to executive power than was the Duma at the national level. Without a party system to provide functionality to these collective bodies, more power naturally flows to the executives and the greater the possibility that they will assume an authoritarian style of governing. Second, without a nationalized party system to provide coordination and cooperation between political elites at different levels, the greater is the possibility that the executives will rely upon their personal networks and resources to do so. To varying degrees this was true of both Yeltsin and the regional governors. Third, without a nationalized party system, there is no mechanism for interregional political coordination. As Richard Sakwa points out, political interaction existed mainly as vertical connections

between the president and the regional governors which allowed Yeltsin to follow the principle of divide and rule when dealing with them, offering incentives to some regions while withholding it from others (Sakwa, 2003:129). Fourth, regarding the district level elections to the state Duma, in this environment the opportunity costs of running as a party candidate would exceed the benefits of doing so. Henry Hale (2006) has shown how local interests can act as party substitutes. Local political and economic elites already controlling the necessary resources, both formal and informal, provide them to candidates who, as deputies, represent their interests at the national level, short-circuiting accountability to the electorate.

By the end of the first decade, Russia's party system showed some degree of development, but the parties had little capacity for political coordination and cooperation or for serving as institutions of political society separate from government. The fractious and fluid party system as well as the separation between parties and elections and parties in the legislature meant that was difficult for voters to know how to assess who was responsible for government performance, how to cast their votes in order to hold incumbents accountable, and who to cast their votes for as suitable replacements for incumbents doing a poor job. Factions enabled the Duma deputies to coordinate and build alliances, so that the Duma was able to function as a legislature and had some capacity for acting independently from the president; but it usually took considerable effort to do so since faction loyalty could not be relied upon, coalitions were ad hoc, and deputies had ample opportunity to serve their individual self-interests rather than the broader interests of society. Political interaction between the federal and regional levels was based not

upon institutional connections provided by political parties, but upon personal connections and exchange of resources controlled by government officials or wealthy individuals. However, since Yeltsin did respect the principles of political pluralism and opposition, the true weakness of Russia's party system and the perils it posed to democratization was not fully evident while he was president. This would become obvious after Putin became president.

The phenomenally rapid rise of Putin from obscurity to immense popularity was itself a consequence of the weak party system. The people had a clear idea of what they did not want: Yeltsin was identified with the country's economic hardship, social decay, pervasive corruption, and rampant criminality; he was seen as old, ailing, infirm, and a weak leader; and he was disliked for having the oligarchs, the few people who had become fabulously wealthy, as his cronies. The people wanted Yeltsin gone, an end to transitions, and a return to some degree of normalcy, although not a return to the Soviet system. But, they were without a party system to provide them with a clear alternative for the future they desired. The parties participating in the elections were either known quantities, voting for which had not made a difference in the past, or were completely new and unknown. There was even less incentive for institutionalizing parties since a new president was (supposedly) to be chosen this election cycle, therefore the parties were more than ever election vehicles for individual elites rather than programmatic. Most of the new parties of any consequence were parties of power devoid of ideology, including Fatherland, All Russia, and Unity (as well as a second run for Our Home Is Russia), and therefore did not support public interests or indeed any goal except

supporting their leaders' election and future administration. However, most of these individuals were also known to the people and associated in some way with Yeltsin, including Luzhkov, Primakov, and Chernomyrdin. What the people wanted was something, and somebody, new.

Russia Under Putin

Since Putin became Russia's leader³ many changes have been made to address party system weakness, and superficially they appear to be positive efforts for developing democracy. He required all political parties to re-register in 2001 under new membership requirements to weed out the smaller parties. Putin eliminated the Duma's SMD electoral contests starting with the 2007 election so that the Duma is now elected by 100 percent PR in one nationwide district, and he increased the threshold from 5 percent to 7 percent. Additionally, he instituted the use of PR election for one half of each regional assembly having more than thirty deputies. There can be no doubt that these changes have had their effect as shown in Table 28 which displays the results of the 2007 and 2011 Duma elections. Party representation dropped to the same four parties in both elections whereas, in contrast, in 2003 there were fourteen parties and sixty-eight independents elected, as well as three seats where the vote "Against All" won the largest plurality. The electoral system change has obviously eliminated independents, decreased party fragmentation considerably, and reduced party volatility across elections, although two elections do not make a trend.

³ This includes the four years of Medvedev's presidency during which Putin was prime minister. They were typically referred to as the "ruling tandem," but Putin never relinquished significant power to Medvedev. See Gessen, 2012.

Table 28. Duma Election Results for 2007 and 2011 Using 100% PR

Party Name	2007		2011	
	vote %	seats	vote %	seats
Unity/United Russia	64.30	315	49.32	238
KPRF	11.57	57	19.19	92
LDPR	8.14	40	11.67	56
Just (or Fair) Russia	7.74	38	13.24	64
Agrarian	2.30			
Yabloko	1.59		3.43	
Union of Right Forces	0.96			
Democratic Party of Russia	0.13			
Civic Force	1.05			
Party of Social Justice	0.22			
Patriots of Russia	0.89		0.97	
Right Cause			0.60	
Total	98.89	450	98.42	450
No. of Parties Seated		4		4

Source: Summary table of election results CEC of Russia. 2007

http://www.vybory.izbirkom.ru/region/region/izbirkom?action=show&root=1&tvld=100100021960186&vrn=100100021960181®ion=0&global=1&sub_region=0&prver=0&pronetvld=null&vibid=100100021960186&type=242 (Accessed May-8-2012).

Summary table of election results CEC of Russia 2011

http://www.vybory.izbirkom.ru/region/region/izbirkom?action=show&root=1&tvld=100100028713304&vrn=100100028713299®ion=0&global=1&sub_region=0&prver=0&pronetvld=null&vibid=100100028713304&type=233 (Accessed May-8-2012).

In this case, however, appearance has been very deceiving. Putin has not been supporting party system development *per se*, but rather he has been promoting the dominance of his party of power Unity/United Russia in Russia's politics. The high rate of independents' electoral participation shows that the Russian Federation was not born complete with a structured elite class; and Meleshevich (2007: 198) points out that the development of parties of power occurred for some of the same reasons that Aldrich (1995: 24) posits for why parties developed in the United States, nonaffiliated elite

recognition that the powers, resources, and institutional forms of the organized group would increase their prospects of winning desired outcomes. United Russia provides an excellent example of how a party of power, particularly once it is *in* power, represents an advanced form of personalism. It represents an organization that is dedicated to perpetuating the rule of one person (or possibly a small group of people) where leadership is ostensibly subject to periodic choice by the people via elections. Its role is less to win elections than it is to control them and less to formulate policy than it is to rubber stamp which policies the leader chooses.

The weakness of parties over personalities is well demonstrated in the elections of 1999-2000. The single most important factor in the outcome of both the Duma and presidential elections was Vladimir Putin's soaring popularity. When Yeltsin chose the then unknown Vladimir Putin as prime minister and the Kremlin's choice for successor, he chose better than he knew. Yeltsin's age and ill health harkened back to the period of the Soviet "gerontocracy" when society stagnated and the people feared that its problems would never be addressed by a succession of ailing aged leaders. The major difference was that Russia had undergone years of social, political, and economic upheaval and hardship rather than stagnation and Russians were looking for stability rather than more reforms. Putin on the other hand was young and fit at age forty-seven and he quickly established a reputation for toughness in restoring order by taking a hard line favoring reinvading Chechnya after the 1999 terrorist bombings of Moscow apartment buildings and Chechen invasion of Dagestan. Arguably Putin's most important feature was that he was a blank slate upon which the Russians could project their hopes and desires

(Shevstova 2005: 70; Gessen 2012; Hale 2004: 179). He became prime minister and announced he was a candidate for president in August 1999 and his popularity was 31 percent, by January 2000 his popularity had risen to 84 percent. Such was the power of Putin's personal appeal that he had a tremendous influence on the outcome of the December 1999 legislative elections even though he was not on any ballot; and moreover, the newly created Unity party which rose from obscurity to win 73 Duma seats (second only to the KPRF) in just three months did so solely because Putin announced that he would vote for the party and it in turn identified itself with Putin which was as close as the party got to offering a policy position.

This outcome is all the more significant given that Unity was intended to be little more than a political decoy to absorb some of Fatherland-All Russia's support base and thereby weaken the chances of its candidate winning the presidency. As such it wasn't even created with the legislative elections in mind nor was it intended to last beyond the current elections. Unity was less a party than it was a presidential election tactic until it was able to tap into Putin's *personal* popularity and gain unexpected success. And as it turned out, Unity wasn't very important to the presidential election since Putin won the election in the first round with 53 percent of the votes and he was not a member of Unity or of any party. He received endorsement not only from Unity, but also from the SPS party, thus he was the candidate of two parties while being a member of neither (or of any) party. Putin's election was also thereby able to perpetuate the role of the presidency as "above politics" begun by Yeltsin while parties have a subservient position, because he

was not beholden to Unity while the party was beholden to him not just for its momentary success but for its continued existence.

It is important to understand that a major reason why Putin was willing to encourage party system development is that he has had no intention of encouraging development of political society. In the 1999-2000 elections, he was Unity/United Russia's support base rather than the reverse. Putin himself was elected without a support base of his own. If he had sought to build his support base around the party that would have been a move toward accepting that support comes ultimately from the electorate choosing in a competitive electoral marketplace. Instead, Putin built his support base within the government bureaucracy by restoring Russia's security state (Soldatov and Borogan 2010). Specifically he drew upon his connections with the former KGB and the power ministries to build a cadre of loyal people throughout business and government and charged the KGB's successor the FSB with protecting the stability of Putin's regime and the country (Soldatov and Borogan 2010: 4). Without the need to make parties important actors in politics, Putin was able to pursue the easiest and most effective course for solidifying his personal rule.

The weak institutionalization of Russia's party system has played an important role in achieving this objective and United Russia has had a part to play in coordinating the subversion of electoral processes. After the election Unity served as one means by which the losers could demonstrate their new-found cooperation with the victor. There were a number of regional executives who had backed OVR in the Duma elections and who therefore needed to win Putin's forgiveness. The simplest way was to join the Unity

bandwagon, and the majority did so (Sakwa 2003:140). The leaders of the OVR also understood the political reality after the Duma elections and chose to back Putin for president in 2000 instead of fielding its own candidate, and in April 2001 it joined with Unity to form the party United Russia. This merger did not change the nature of the party; it remained Putin's party of power. The party has also served to coordinate efforts to get out the vote, mostly by means of coercion (Shevtsova 2003). Similarly to how political party labels serve as a shorthand communication of the party's larger ideological framework, everyone is given a simple message: a vote for United Russia is a vote for Putin and the existing power structure, which simplifies choosing at the voting booth. Moreover, it coordinates compliance since lower-level officials know that getting out a strong vote for United Russia, by whatever means, displays loyalty to the regime; and the electorate knows that whoever represents the party has access to state resources and can exact retribution on those who fail to vote as they were told.⁴ The party has also participated in efforts to gain votes by "hoodwinking" the public. In the first all-PR Duma election in 2007, United Russia filled the top of its party candidates list with regional governors in order to enhance the name recognition factor. After the elections, the governors "decided" to resign their Duma seats in favor of their executive offices and the seats went to the lesser luminaries further down on the list.

Beyond United Russia's contribution, Putin's administration has been able to tilt the election in the party's favor by manipulating the party system as a whole. Just as

⁴ There are methods for determining how at least some people have voted. It has been common for hospital patients, soldiers, and some factory workers to be handed absentee ballots and told to vote for United Russia and then have their ballots collected again. Public voting by a show of hands is a still practiced tradition in parts of Russia.

Unity was created to take votes away from OVR, the Kremlin has been instrumental in creating political parties for each election intended to attract electoral support away from other parties. For the 2003-2004 elections (the last to include SMD elections), the Motherland (Rodina) Party was created as a pro-Kremlin center-left party to offer more electoral choice to voters on the left or, in other words, to peel away the KPRF's moderate supporters (Shevtsova 2003: 287-88). It appears to have been successful too, having won 37 seats (29 in the PR contest) in the Duma while the KPRF's representation dropped by over one half (by two-thirds in the PR contest). For the 2007-2008 elections, the A Just Russia (SR) party was created through a merger of the Motherland, Russian party of Life, and the Russian Pensioners parties (later joined by six other small parties) to perform the same function.

This is one example of the strategies employed on behalf of what has become known as Managed Democracy—the administrative management of party and electoral politics (Sakwa 2011). Moreover, managed democracy had an architect—the president's previous Deputy Chief of Staff Vladislav Surkov. Surkov himself has variously been referred to as the “grey cardinal” (Ellen Barry, *New York Times*, December 27, 2011), the “dark prince” (Sakwa 2011), “Rasputin” (Pomerantsev 2011: 3), “puppet master” (*Guardian*, U.S. ed. 2011), and “mastermind” (*Moscow Times* 2012), all of which convey the extent to which the Kremlin manipulates parties and elections in order to minimize meaningful political pluralism in participation and competition.

The purpose of electoral reform was to capture the Duma and once the electoral system had been changed to all PR with a 7 percent threshold, this was accomplished.

The 2007 election eliminated independents and all but the largest parties and, supported with the power and resources of the state, United Russia was handed a super majority big enough not just to control the agenda, but to amend the constitution unilaterally. From this point on the Duma has actually resembled a responsible party system since United Russia is in control of the legislative agenda has maintained strong voting discipline and United Russia has served essentially the same purpose as any party, it has increased the efficiency and effectiveness of the legislature by coordinating legislative activities. Except the party does not formulate the agenda nor does the public have any input, rather the party enacts what policies the Kremlin dictates.

Putin did not start out having the “controlling interest” in the Duma and initially he had to rely upon the party system’s weakness to take the upper hand. Without parties that define and delineate the genuine structure of political contestation operating publically in political society, Russian politics, nurtured by Putin, assumed the basic structure of regime versus opposition. Political parties did not disappear (although some became irrelevant), but they aligned themselves accordingly. The LDPR outwardly continued to behave as an opposition with Zhirinovsky railing against the Kremlin’s actions, but inwardly it formed a sort of symbiotic relationship with United Russia. It essentially stopped being a political party and turned to lobbying for the private interests of their business contributors in the Kremlin and the ministries, and it always voted with the Kremlin in the end (Politkovskaya 2007: 8). On the other hand, the KPRF has remained, in fact has become, the opposition. At the beginning, Putin, pursuing a policy of cajoling all parties, shared the Duma’s most important posts with the Communist

Party, but then drove them out of these positions in 2002 (Shevtsova 2003: 230). United Russia's hold on the Duma was consolidated and the Communists, with power diminished, have been relegated to the position of minority opposition since then. The Kremlin-initiated center-left parties on the other hand would be sure not to interfere with the Kremlin's plans. The pro-reform right parties Yabloko and SRS (the latter in spite of having endorsed Putin for president in 2000) were made irrelevant by diminishing popularity and lack of ties to Putin's government.

The final element was the substantial number of independent deputies and they were a major factor in Putin's decision to eliminate the SMD contests in order to promote party composition of the Duma. Putin had had sufficient dealings with the Duma both as prime minister and president to appreciate the amount of effort required to negotiate with independent and minor party deputies in order to get legislation passed, and he favored the change to PR elections fairly early. Even though the independents usually supported Putin, coordinating their support was laborious and difficult, and a task performed well by a political party as pointed out by Aldrich (1995). In the 2003 election United Russia came within four seats of a majority (which included a higher proportion of SMD seats than previously at the expense of the independents) thereby gaining effective control, but Putin still felt strongly that the Duma would be much more efficient and easier to control so long as United Russia would no longer be facing genuine competition, and it is not coincidental that he waited until then before actually making the electoral changes.

Russia's Regions: Democracy Avoided

Yeltsin had had little choice but to allow the dramatic decentralization of power in Russia after the collapse of the Soviet Union. He actually had to negotiate separate treaties with each region delineating its relationship between it and the federal government as if they were sovereign states. The regions focused inward on their affairs, solidifying an elite power structure and advancing local interests, while placing federal interests a distant second and giving virtually no regard to relations with other regions. Their main concern with federal-level politics was regarding what benefits and resources could be had. The high incidence of independents elected in local districts reflects this political parochialism. Since there was perceived to be little reason for the regions to advance coordination or collective action among them, what need was there for political parties? The most that had been attempted was for some independents to form Duma factions for representing their regions' interests.

Much more is known about regional level politics in the Russian Federation than in most of the other post-communist countries. Political development in Russia's eighty-nine regions⁵ has been the subject of several cross-regional comparative analyses which have covered much of the ground work and which provide valuable observations regarding electoral systems and political party development at the regional level. (This includes Gel'man, Ryzhnikov, and Brie (2004), Golosov (1999; 2003a; 2003b; 2004), Konitzer (2005), Moraski (2006) Stoner-Weiss (2001), and Treisman (2001). While

⁵ As Golosov (2004: 14) points out, Russia has a complex taxonomy of types of regional entities, including republic, autonomous republic, territory, autonomous province, province autonomous districts, and federal cities. The word "region" is used here for the sake of simplicity.

virtually all of these authors point out that political development in Russia's regions is hardly uniform, none of them disagree that overall, democratic development in the regions and that of national political parties in particular, has been weak. Moreover, they all offer insight as to why lack of party system nationalization adversely impacts the development of democracy in the country as a whole.

First, as at the national level, in the regional legislative elections "favourable electoral rules exert significant weight upon party development by stimulating both party nomination and the overall level of electoral competitiveness" (Golosov 1999: 1360). Unfortunately, most regions have not used favorable rules. In the first (1993 to 1995) cycle of regional elections, fifty-one regions (57.30%) used SMD Plurality, Six (6.74%) used MMD plurality, ten regions (11.24 %) used plurality rules in a combination of both SMD and MMD contests, seven (7.87%) used SMD majority, the remaining fifteen (16.85%) used some formulation of multiple rules which in some cases included some partly PR contests, and no region used all PR (Golosov 1999: 1349). Table 29 shows that party nominees actually compete and win seats in a majority of regional legislative contests, but the proportion of party affiliated deputies in the average legislature is only 1/8, just over 1/5, and 1/6 for the three cycles respectively (Table 30). The effect of electoral system method on the number of party nominees being elected is shown in Table 31. The percentage of party-affiliated deputies in the few cases which include some use of PR is approximately three times the percentage of party-affiliated deputies elected only by SMD. While the data for this table only encompass half of the second electoral cycle, this is when a large majority of the elections occurred and this cycle had the

Table 29. Number of Parties on Ballot and Number of Parties Winning Duma Seats

	1995	1999	2003	2007	2012
no. on ballot	n/a	26	20	11	7
no. winning seats	23	16	12	4	4

SOURCES: CEC of Russia http://gd2003.cikrf.ru/gd2003/normat_acts (Accessed May-8-2012). http://www.vybory.izbirkom.ru/region/region/izbirkom?action=show&root=1&tvd=100100021960186&vrn=100100021960181®ion=0&global=1&sub_region=0&prver=0&pronetvd=null&vibid=100100021960181&type=236 (Accessed May-8-2012). <http://www.vybory.izbirkom.ru/region/izbirkom> (Accessed May-8-2012). Wikipedia. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elections_in_Russia (Accessed May-8-2012).

Table 30. Political Parties in Regional Legislative Elections 1993-2003

	1 st Electoral Cycle 1993-1995*	2 nd Electoral Cycle 1995-1999	3 rd Electoral Cycle 1999-2003
Percentage of elections contested by party-nominated candidates	65.9	88.6	85.9
Percentage of elections in which party nominees won seats	57.6	78.4	67.1
Average percentage share of seats won by party nominees	12.5	21.8	14.3

Source: Golosov 2004: 73

Notes: *The electoral cycle year begins in August and ends in July.

highest party representation of the three, so the data cannot be dismissed as unrepresentative. Moraski (2006) argues that from the beginning most of Russia's regional elites were holdovers from the Soviet era and that, in the absence of other influences, they chose to establish SMD elections in the regions, because it allowed them

to build a support base from already existing patronage networks rather than invest in the higher opportunity costs and greater uncertainty of party building.

Table 31. Electoral Systems and Party Penetration of Regional Legislatures 1995-97

	Percentage of deputies with National Party Affiliation	Percentage of deputies with Regional Party Affiliation	Percentage of deputies with No Party Affiliation
Average across the five regions with mixed PR/SMD systems	30.3	15.2	49.2
Average across the 67 regions with only SMD systems	10.1	4.2	85.4

Source: Stoner-Weiss 2001: 402

The data also reveal that while the reach of the national parties into the regions is limited, the regional parties themselves are much weaker at the regional level, having fared only half as well as the national parties regardless of electoral method, indicating how few are the incentives for party politics in the regions. If parties had any utility in the typical regional election, executives at least might be more likely to rely upon local parties of power to win and hold onto executive office; but this did not happen, nor did they suffer for it. Table 32 shows the poor, and declining performance of party-affiliated candidates in the regional executive elections. By the third cycle, party activity and electoral success dropped dramatically so that 93.1 percent of those winning office were independents. Golosov (2004: 143-46) demonstrates that for incumbents and challengers alike, resources from institutional affiliation (e.g., holding a city, regional, or national Duma office and business leaders) rather than party affiliations were much more important for winning executive elections. A key element of these affiliations is the

control over dispensing public goods, i.e. patronage. Research has shown that the situation is essentially the same for most of the regional legislative elections (Slider 1996; Hughes 1997; Golosov 2002).

Table 32. Political Parties in Regional Executive Elections 1995-2003

	2 nd Electoral Cycle	3 rd Electoral Cycle
Percentage of elections contested by party-nominated candidates	54.5	36.8
Percentage of elections in which party nominees won offices	14.8	6.9

SOURCE: Golosov 2004: 71

The greater presence of national parties overstates their importance in regional politics as well. The KPRF has been the best organized at the grassroots level and its label offered value to candidates in some areas, but more often the KPRF entered into informal alliances with the local nonpartisan elites and supported their independent candidates. In the third electoral cycle, where Unity/United Russia was involved in local politics it was often co-opted by regional business elites who would fill the party branch with members loyal to them not in order to challenge officials by running candidates, but in order to improve their bargaining position with the regional administration. In many other regions, local executives could afford simply to ignore Unity regardless of its standing as party of power at the national level (Golosov 2004: 110-12). Regional administration and legislatures have created consultative bodies attached to them which enable party leaders to be involved in public affairs, but also for the purpose of transforming their allegiances from federal to regional leadership (Badovskii and Shutov

1997: 5). These examples illustrate that there was a disconnect between national parties and their regional organizations, where they existed, and that these regional entities often behaved inconsistently from the interests of the parties as a whole, but not inconsistently from the reality and interests of the regional powers to whom parties often must play a subordinate role if they are to play any role at all.

Parties have proven useful in those regions where a balance of power has meant that intra-elite conflict has to be resolved through elections (Goloslov 2004: 134-38; Gel'man, Ryzhenkov, and Brie 2004: 131-58); but such cases are the exception. In most cases, the regional political structure has been described as a “clan” or clan-like clientalist network, powered by elite control over important public resources, social services, or access to employment (Badovskii and Shutov 1997: 3; Hughes 1997: 1021; Golosov 2002; 2004: 150; Moraski 2006).⁶ Such informal institutions predominate over the formal institutions of parties and elections, and render the latter subservient to the elites' needs. Badovskii and Shutov (1997: 1) point out that there is a “clear line between ruling elite (with access to regional resources of power) and the strictly political elite” because the *nomenklatura* principle still governs elite formation in Russia. Party recruitment and electoral competition offer no means of political advancement, because these are not the true means to political power. Rather, it is based upon entry into administrative-corporate structures and advancing through the ranks according to personal connections and the personal preferences of particular individuals in the hierarchy who make decisions about

⁶ Hughes (1997: 1026) also states that this may represent the interlocking of networks “which straddle politics, business, and organized crime,” but that such networks cannot be rigorously investigated. There is nonetheless reason to believe it is true. See for example, Handelman (1995), Politkovskaya (2007), Soldatov and Borogan (2010), and Gessen (2012).

the political futures of those receiving their patronage. Regional politics is a “pyramid of power,” a rigid hierarchy with local elites serving as an echelon supporting the regional administrators and, most commonly, eventually the regional governors at the top (Badovskii and Shutov 1997: 1-2).

It is clear that prior to Putin, political parties played an insignificant role in coordinating either electoral contests or governance. Political society did not exist in most regions, because most political activity was dependent upon access to the recourses of the state. Voters voted for candidates who either were, or were backed by those with their hands on the levers of state power who could directly impact the quality of their daily lives. Politics in the regions was coordinated by power. In the majority of regions, the power hierarchy made clear everybody’s relationship to everyone else. This does not mean that political competition did not occur, but that it occurred within the power structure rather than in the voting booth. Most serious challengers already had some position within the hierarchy and had institutional backing and access to administrative recourses, such as when a legislator backed by the regional assembly makes a bid for an executive office (Golosoov 2003b).

This situation, not surprisingly, did not bode well for party nationalization in Russia in at least three ways. First, there was little political interaction between regions (Sakwa 2003:129) since the vertical structure of the regions offered no means or incentive to coordinate politics between regions. This presented little reason for regional elites to consider broader policy issues affecting the regions ahead of their own self-interest. Second, politics between the regions and the federal government was most often

based upon personalistic relations and particularistic exchanges of resources and favors. Absent party ties, there were no formal institutional connections between Yeltsin and the regional elites since the regions had gained such a degree of autonomy that Yeltsin had to establish their relationship by signing treaties with the governors. Yeltsin still had influence over the regions primarily through dispensing or withholding presidential patronage (Treisman 2001), i.e. through an informal clientalist-style institution. Also, he used it for personal political advantage, since he dispensed more presidential resources to those regions where support for his presidency was weaker (Treisman 2001). Third, this is consistent with Hale's (2006) argument that party substitutes (e.g., financial-industrial groups, political machines, and wealthy individuals) have supplanted political parties in Russia, because these substitutes have been better able to fulfill the roles of parties. The need to resolve collective action and social choice problems as well as acquire resources is much more easily met by the already established informal institutions in the regions based on power and patronage. Party substitutes also have greater capabilities: they can not only get people to vote, but to compel them to vote a certain way; the regions' pyramidal structure reduces the inefficiencies of decision-making by restricting it to a few "bosses"; and the best resources, those of the state, are already under their control. For the ruling elite building parties would mean accepting the greater competitiveness and uncertainty of outcome characteristic of political society, in other words giving up much of the advantage they already enjoyed without party politics. Political parties in the regions are created primarily by political outsiders, those "strictly political elites" who aspire to enter the ruling elite but do not have access to means other than winning an

election. Their chances are not good, but investing in parties has been just about the only opportunity available to them.

By the end of Yeltsin's presidency, Russia had an underdeveloped party system and political system dominated by personalism and particularistic practices. What party system existed was due to the use of PR election method at the federal level, but only included half of the Duma seats; the other half of its seats as well as nearly all regional assembly elections used some form of single member district method and independents predominated. Because of this, the party system had no roots in the society and lacked the ability to coordinate politics nationally. Regional foci of power were able to take control in the regions and to take the place of political parties. Absent political society, elites used power and leverage, personal relationships, clientalism, and patronage to minimize competition and uncertainty in electoral politics and governance. Putin's re-nationalization efforts were intended to reconnect regional politics to the federal level without changing its basic nature. Moreover, the new connection between them was of the same nature; today, most regional elites are loyal not to the office of the president, but to Putin himself. Electoral system changes at the regional level were intended to nationalize party of power politics only, to extend the organizational support for personal rule.

Putin believed that the decentralization of power was a major source of disorder in Russia, and from the first he had wanted to re-nationalize Russia's politics. He did not look to parties to perform the task, because he was not interested in nationalizing opposition forces in competitive politics. Rather, he sought to restore the hierarchical

pyramidal structure of political power reminiscent of the Soviet Union; what he and others call the ‘vertical of power’ extending from the president on down. The extent of party involvement was restricted to the party of power. In the 2003 election, United Russia coordinated regional elites’ cooperation with the Kremlin by backing the party’s candidates in the SMD contests rather than independents; and the party took an unprecedented 102 SMD seats while the number of independents dropped by 40 percent (see Table 27). Additionally, the most recent round of local/regional elections included half of the seats elected by PR in most of the regional assemblies which was most likely intended to promote local development of United Russia. As a practical matter, the party took most of the PR seats.

This last example is less significant than it appears, because promoting party local development came only after Putin had substantially restored executive power over the regions, just as it waited at the national level until Putin solidified his base in the government bureaucracy. It does take advantage of the nationalizing effect of PR elections via parties, and of parties’ role in coordinating political activity among different levels and spheres of the nation’s politics. Moreover, the outcome has been beneficial, not in terms of developing political society, but rather more as a convenience for coordinating cooperation with the Kremlin’s machinations and manipulation of politics nationally. Putin found though that extending his control over lower levels of government was far more difficult and took longer than doing so at the federal level since the governors sought to keep their autonomy over regional affairs, and some of them had strong power bases of their own. Ultimately, Putin was able to gain the upper hand only

by making the governors directly accountable to the president which means to Putin himself. In 2004, he eliminated the institution of elections in choosing governors and reinstated their appointment by the president. By accomplishing this, Putin substantially restored the power vertical in Russia, further choking off political competition even as he worked to establish the appearance of a political society.

Conclusion and a Glimpse at the Future

Russia is a case of democracy lost for a number of reasons, among which was the lack of incentives for developing political society in which political parties structure the patterns of political competition and cooperation in the electoral marketplace which society at large chooses who will control government power, all of which is substantially independent of government control. For the first ten years, the party system was uninstitutionalized, representation was fragmented by several parties of little account and by many who were from no party at all, as well as the “temporariness” of parties disappearing between elections. For the electorate, this floating party system meant that they had great difficulty hitting their target when determining who to support, and adding in the unstable faction system made it more difficult to figure out or who to hold accountable. Some structure developed because one half of the Duma was elected via PR and it did appear to offer the Duma some ability to function, but it could only attenuate the structurelessness of the SMD elections which ultimately proved to be the dominant influence. Moreover, the parties that did exist had no roots in society since the predominance of SMD elections at the regional and local levels offered no incentives for parties to exist at those levels. The general lack of local parties indicated that elites were

able to dominate politics at these levels. A local party system developed only in the few regions where there were opposing groups within the elite neither of which could dominate, therefore they organized and battled for control through elections.

One final note regarding Russia's politics: Vladimir Putin has accomplished much toward returning authoritarian control to the top of government (i.e., to himself) by restructuring the political system, but it is a mistake to conclude that this control is absolute or that democratic institutions no longer matter. Legitimacy by election in particular is still important even if the results are engineered. This explains why Putin never amended the constitution to remove the two consecutive terms limit for serving as president as was widely anticipated, this preserved the appearance of democracy by his not taking such an obviously authoritarian step. Instead, because the power belonged to Putin personally rather than to the office of the president, he could simply swap offices with Prime Minister Medvedev and still wield power. Here too there were limits. Putin's power was derived from the power of the bureaucrats who supported him, especially those who controlled the police, security services, and the military, but in return he had to tolerate the considerable corruption that was their means of extracting payment for their support. Putin's power came at the expense of the government's effectiveness (Shevtsova 2003).

These limitations were revealed by the 2011-2012 elections. Russia's society has been changing with the rise of a post-Soviet generation and a new middle class, and toleration of a corrupt and ineffective government has been wearing thin. In 2011 the Russian blogger Alexei Navalny referred to United Russia as the "party of crooks and

thieves” (*Economist*, March 3, 2012: 34). The moniker has stuck and Navalny instantly gained celebrity, becoming the leading voice for Russia’s discontented. The proof is in the Duma election results in which United Russia, in spite of all the machinations in its favor, barely hung on to the majority by keeping 238 seats with 49.32 percent of the vote. The party lost seventy-seven seats which were picked up by all three of the other parties: KPRF picked up thirty-five additional seats, A Just Russia picked up 26, and the LDPR picked up sixteen. Even two minor parties participating—Yabloko and Right Cause—received a slight upswing in vote share, although they did not take any seats. Putin himself retook the presidency (with a recently extended six-year term) in the 2012 election with 63.6 percent of the vote, reflecting in part his ability to retain a level of popularity for having restored stability in Russia.

Putin has been able to keep himself separate from United Russia and to deflect public discontent onto the party, and the enduring weakness of the party system will allow him to jettison the party, although starting over will not simply be a matter of creating a new organization disguising the same old actors. Local elections held in the spring 2012 resulted in a string of opposition victories over Kremlin-backed candidates regardless of their administrative resource advantages, showing that the old strategy for neutralizing the opposition is no longer working. The Kremlin strategists’ are planning a new approach that will continue to exploit the weak party system, but now it will do so by sowing confusion with a new strategy of ‘managed chaos’ which involves a combination of subterfuge, co-optation, and exploiting wedge issues. Instead of using party label to highlight who is the Kremlin-backed candidate, the kremlin plans to

promote party proliferation and will then back several candidates per contest, some of them stealthily. Wedge issues will be used to divide opposition support and when opponents win the Kremlin will try to co-opt them. The first step has already been taken: the legal the minimum membership requirement in order for a party to register has been dropped from 50,000 to 500 (Whitmore 2012). In short, it is a divide-and-conquer strategy that calls for the party system to return to the fragmented state existing before, denying the electorate the ability to coordinate their votes effectively and short-circuiting accountability.

The difficulty is that elections are beginning to lose their legitimacy. The Russian people are hardly unaware of the manipulation affecting the elections, but for many honest elections had been less important than the stability Putin had restored to society and the order he had restored to the political system, while many more had become resigned to the situation. However, the 2011-2012 elections have revealed that the people are becoming fed up with Putin's corrupt and ineffective government and electoral fraud has greatly increased disquiet over the status quo. Following Navalny's advice, many people cast their votes for any party other than the "party of crooks and thieves" and when the "official" the Duma election results were released demonstrations were held not in defense of the parties they voted for, but in defense of the votes themselves. When the Kremlin ignored calls for fair elections, the demonstrators' slogan became "Russia without Putin" (*Economist*, March 3, 2012: 33-34). Ironically the United Russia label now offers voters an advantage to the dissatisfied in the electorate, because it at least identifies who to vote against in order to express their dissatisfaction, but no opposition

party has emerged that can coordinate the votes in its favor. The main problems affecting political participation have not changed though. Russia's political space is ill-defined and its political society is insufficiently independent of government influence, its party system has been either floating around rootless seeking for the best short-term political advantage or captive to those wielding government power. Party organization to date has not provided the means to overcoming the problems of coordination and collective action in order to establish an effective opposition capable of breaking through the barriers placed in its way. This is the reason why the Kremlin's new strategy promotes confusion and obfuscation and the inchoate state of the party system offers them a chance to be successful.

On the other hand, Russia is beginning to show the signs which have developed in other postcommunist states when elections do not offer the people a genuine avenue for political participation and they are tired of being ignored—they are resorting to alternate means of being heard. The results of the 2011-2012 elections precipitated protest demonstrations which have been larger, more frequent, and more sustained than usual and, more importantly, they are calling for regime change. Protesters are making it clear that they are following the tradition of colored revolutions and that they seek for one in Russia, even adopting white as their color and flying white banners as the symbol of their movement.

CHAPTER NINE

CONCLUSION

Elections Make Parties

There is adequate evidence to establish the basic connection between electoral method and political party formation that PR elections promote it while SMD does not. In the case studies, Moldova has had PR elections and partisan-structured politics from the beginning while Kyrgyzstan started with no PR and no party system development and Russia began with 50 percent PR and some degree of partisan structure of its politics. More importantly, both Kyrgyzstan and Russia eventually transitioned to all PR elections specifically to overcome the difficulties resulting from inadequate party development. There is also a significant quantitative correlation between the basic type of electoral method (SMD versus PR) and nonpartisanship in legislatures, but the analysis becomes more problematic when a more sophisticated measure of electoral method is used. The full measure used in my analysis factors in the differential influences of plurality versus majoritarian SMD methods and open- versus closed-list PR, as well as adjusting for differing combinations and the extent to which they are used in mixed method systems. The results support a tentative conclusion that the relationship between this measure and the percentage of legislative nonpartisanship is significant, but only after removing six outlying cases from the analysis, and because the measure includes so many factors it has proved to be not possible in the present study to determine which one, or ones, are

producing the outlying condition. Parsing the measure into separate variables reduces the number of cases applicable to each circumstance, in some instances to the point where the number of variables exceeds the number of cases. Also, electoral method designs are not static and in more than one country they have become more complex and harder to classify. Expanding the data pool over time and across countries should no doubt resolve at least some of these issues.

The one other definitive conclusion that can be made from the quantitative analysis of electoral methods is that district magnitude has no significant relationship to party development. This is a finding of some importance to the discipline considering that district magnitude has long been considered to be one of the primary factors affecting party systems and is a ubiquitous variable in studies of electoral systems and party systems. Moreover, district magnitude has been connected to party system fragmentation and thereby, whether explicitly or implicitly, connected to the fate of democratization since PR with its higher district magnitude has been considered to promote greater party system fragmentation which promotes weak government which in turn threatens the success of democratic governance. Thus, in terms of practical uses of electoral system design, those elements of the electoral method promoting party formation may initially take precedence over district magnitude's effect on party system fragmentation since party formation comes prior to party system development and nonpartisanship represents the ultimate fragmentation.¹

¹ The Czech Republic followed this very reasoning when it was decided to begin electing their legislature using PR then after several elections changing the method to SMD which they have recently done. Their objective was to develop parties as important actors first, then use a district magnitude of one to restrict the

The case studies also offer evidence that PR elections promote party system nationalization whereas SMD allows district factors greater sway resulting in political space that is disconnected regionally and between the regions and the national level. Combine this with lack of a partisanship influence and elections dominated by SMD result in legislatures comprised of nonpartisan members who are more responsive to district leaders and interests, and to district leaders' interests, than to the broader interests of the society. This was exactly the condition of Kyrgyzstan's first Jogorku Kenesh which was elected by SMD elections only. Moldova represents the opposite case in which elections at all levels of government have always utilized PR and the party system that has developed fully structures the country's political space. In Russia, the Duma's hybrid electoral created a bifurcated political space divided between the party system promoted by the PR elections which was rootless existing only at the federal level, and the general lack of partisanship permitted by the SMD portion of the Duma elections and the virtually all SMD regional elections. Disconnection across regions and between levels mostly characterized Russia's political space until the Kremlin restored the power vertical; after that, subsequent changes making Duma elections all PR and increasing the presence of PR in regional elections are of less significance, because the Kremlin controls Russia's political space. Similarly, later electoral method changes in Kyrgyzstan adding a PR component did not appreciably change the structure of its political space.

size of the party system following the standard that if $D=1$ the number of effective parties in the party system equals two.

Democratization Needs Parties

Although it was the phenomenon of nonpartisanship that sparked my initial interest in this study, one of my conclusions must be that it is not the presence of independents, but rather the absence of party that impacts democratization. Political parties structure political space so that recentralization of power is difficult to achieve and competition difficult to eliminate; politics by competing teams means that competition promotes collective action within parties and reduces the efficacy of politics by personalistic and particularistic practices; and party labels clarify voters' choices and coordinate the individual choices into results that communicate their interests, expectations, and assessment of performance, all necessary for accountability. Without political parties all bets are off. Unstructured political space is an invitation for elites to restructure it to their advantage, to win the competition over power and minimize challenges to that power from democratic institutions, particularly elections and legislatures. This threatens the independence of political society, and without party system structure and parties as actors the ability to resist is compromised. Nonpartisan elected officials at the national level are likely to indicate another structural feature of political space, that power is concentrated in the hands of subnational elites, either instead of or alongside the national leadership. At this level, it is easier for elites to dominate politics and take control of the electoral process, and act as a 'party substitute' for these elected officials who are then beholden to them.

This clarifies how the institutional structure of electoral methods is related to successful democratization through party formation. The SMD method divides a country

geographically into a host of localized winner-take-all contests which emphasize candidates over ideology and personality over policy. Because SMD emphasizes the individual over collaborative action and parochial over coordinated national politics, collective action and social choice problems are of much less concern, considerably reducing incentives for party formation. Additionally, powerful people in new democracies tend to want to overcome these problems by centralizing decision-making in one or a few hands which creates a disincentive for party formation. In contrast, the PR method often creates one nationwide district, or at the least far fewer and larger districts, in which elections are positive-sum contests between teams which emphasize ideology and policy over personal reputation. Emphasis on group collaboration and national coordination of group activities gives rise to collective action and social choice problems and therefor a strong incentive to create, contest elections, and participate in government through parties.

From society's perspective, the key role of parties is to make politics more visible and comprehensible. A political society in which the political space is structured clarifies the landscape; the party system provides a "map" to how the political forces are arrayed, from which the electorate can determine their different ideological and policy orientations, relative strength, who is in power and who is not, and who are allies and who are competitors. Party decision-making may occur behind closed doors in smoke-filled rooms, but government decision-making cannot be (or at least not easily), because responsibility, praise, and blame can be readily assigned by team. Without parties, this information is not only difficult to come by and requiring great effort, it can be hidden

from the public so that government action itself now can occur in the smoke-filled rooms without accountability. Eventually, political society loses its independence and the political system becomes captured by power players, elections become manipulated and unfair, and the people lose their voice as political participation loses meaning.

Compare how regime change occurred in these three case studies. Neither Kyrgyzstan nor Russia has had a turnover of regime through regular democratic procedures. So far, Kyrgyzstan's previous two presidential regimes had been voted into office, but were ended by coups after which the government was essentially started over from scratch. The current design includes a weak mostly symbolic presidency, a stronger prime minister, and PR legislative elections in the hope that this will produce a more functional and stable democratic system. Russia's regime changes have involved Yeltsin was elected president prior to the collapse of the Soviet Union and ended this term violently after which he wrote a new constitution. Putin first gained the presidency without being elected when Yeltsin resigned the office in his favor only months before the end of his second term, so Putin ran for office as the incumbent. By the time he reached his limit of two consecutive terms, Putin was so personally powerful that he simply used the election to swap offices with Prime Minister Medvedev. They swapped back in the most recent election, but public dissatisfaction with manufactured elections is reaching new levels as a result. In Moldova all regime changes have been accomplished democratically. While the legislature did change the presidential election method in order to prevent Lucinshi from winning re-election, in the end this helped both to reduce tensions between these institutions and to strengthen the party system. Popular unrest

resulting in the police killing four protesters did occur after the April 2009 elections in reaction to the communists winning another majority, but the official response to the incident was to hold new elections in July in which the electorate expressed its ire at the government's heavy-handedness and took away their majority. The communist government tried using force to respond to conflict and discovered that it did not have enough control over the political system to ignore pressure from the people and their competing parties. Moldova's current party system has been so stable that it produced twenty months of legislative gridlock over the issue of electing a new president, but democratic procedures were never abandoned.

Legislatures Need Parties

This also shows that political parties do make a difference in executive-legislative relations, just not as a means of linking the two. Rather, legislatures are more effective and better able to counterbalance executive action when parties are present to overcome collective action and social choice problems; whereas legislatures without parties are so ineffective and weak that executives not only hold the advantage, but may even lead executives to take charge in order to get something accomplished. After all, one of the advantages a unitary executive holds over a collective body is the 'energy in the executive' (*The Federalist Papers*, Federalist #70 19) to make and implement decisions quickly and easily, because social choice and collective action problems are not an issue. This encourages executives to increase their power in order to avoid the cumbersome and messy process (with less certain outcomes) of having to work through a collective body in order to accomplish their objectives.

This was certainly the case in Kyrgyzstan especially in the beginning. In Kyrgyzstan, the legislature showed virtually no party structure and was highly ineffective. Nonpartisan legislators elected from local districts had no links to each other or incentives to work together, and since its members were focused upon their own individual agendas. The country's first president soon found that he could not mobilize support for his policy agenda, not because of strong opposition but because the legislature was so dysfunctional. After realizing this, he sought to work around the Jogorku Kenesh. Russia's legislature was not as unstructured, but Yeltsin and Putin both found that mobilizing support for legislation was a laborious process of negotiating with its many independent deputies and it was a process that had to be repeated with each initiative. Largely due to this experience, presidents in both countries later sought to promote party structure in their legislatures, but the desired outcome was to have parties of power dominate them.

Moldova's political system did not suffer this problem. Party lines clearly delineated the array of political forces, their ideological positions, and how they were aligned to other political forces in government. Party coalitions may change, but the partisan identities of parliamentary deputies have been much more stable. Remember though that from 1991 to 2000 Moldova had a semi-presidential system with a separately and popularly elected president similar to Russia and Kyrgyzstan, and during this time all three countries did share experiences of tension between president and legislature considered to be a serious weakness of presidential government (Linz 1996a; Shugart and Carey 1992). The critical difference from the other cases is that Moldova's parliament

could withstand presidential power plays and eventually come out ahead. In the second half of the 1990s, conflict between the ruling government coalition and President Lucinshi created political gridlock until the coalition convinced the communists to join with them in amending the constitution to have the president indirectly elected by a minimum three-fifths majority (sixty-one out of 101) of the deputies. In a bit of irony, the unreformed communist party won a majority in parliament large enough to elect party leader Voronin president and control the government without needing a coalition, and enabled him to run the government unimpeded for the next decade. Voronin certainly tried to gain permanent control for the party by infiltrating the bureaucracy, judiciary, electoral commission, and the press with party loyalists, but his power came not from these sources but rather from the party's majority in the legislature; and in the end, when enough people tired of the communist government they were able to relieve the party of its majority and Voronin of his presidency.

Democracy Needs Nationalization of Party Politics

The issue of party system nationalization does not directly relate to party formation *per se*, it is an additional effect of PR elections that accompanies the party formation effect; nonetheless it has been included in this study, because there are reasons to believe that democratization benefits when parties also form into a national party system. Especially in new democracies, local politics is more susceptible to capture by powerful interests and historically this has been true even where parties have been important actors. Party machine politics in the cities (and even in some states) of the U.S. reveal that parties themselves can serve as the mechanism for boss rule. The proposition

is that national parties are too big and too visible to become captured in this way and that by guarding their independence they protect the independence of political society.

The three case studies do offer evidence supporting this proposition, although it is not easy to parse out the effect of nationalization from that of party formation since PR elections foster both together while SMD elections foster neither. Nonetheless the studies reveal patterns in the relationship between regional and national governments: where there is party system nationalization, to some degree this relationship is acted out within political society based upon party allegiances, but where there is no party system nationalization the relationship is characterized by personalism and the direct use of power. In Kyrgyzstan and for many years in Russia their party systems were weak and made no contribution to nationalizing their political space or to preventing the capture of political society. In most cases regional elites became bosses in their respective regions, especially in Kyrgyzstan where new class of regional elites developed and gained substantial power by controlling the well-established clientalist networks that had their origins in traditional social relations. This new elite eliminated independent political society in their regions and they determined how their people voted for in both local assemblies and the national legislature. Presidents could work around the Jogorku Kenesh by dealing directly with these regional bosses who were able to topple presidents by turning their people against them, which was instrumental to the coup of 2005 that toppled President Akayev (Radnitz 2006).

Russia's regional political leaders gained a great deal of independence and power as power devolved from Moscow with the collapse of the Soviet Union, and they held on

to it at least through Putin's first term. Local parties and party systems were virtually nonexistent and local elites readily took control of democratic institutions. Tellingly, it was only in a few regions where power was balanced between two or more elite groups that party politics developed as the elites had to turn to elections to resolve the question of who was in charge. Often Yeltsin would "buy" cooperation from the regions by doling out (or withholding) federal government largesse and political favors which in itself is not indicative of capture, but in these cases these were personal deals promising support between Yeltsin and governors as individuals. Putin used his control of the legislature to pass a constitutional amendment replacing direct election of regional governors with their appointment by the president.

In contrast regional-center relations in Moldova have tended to be more formal and institutional. Nationalized parties mean that cooperation between different levels of government is based on partisan connections and the lines of conflict between parties extend between different levels, both of which reinforce the nature of politics as competition between teams within the arena of independent political society.

Parties of Power Are Anti-Democratic

Ironically, there is one type of political party, the party of power, which is indicative of a weak party system and which poses a threat to democratization. The purpose of a party of power is not simply to organize supporters of those in power, but to do so in order to coordinate activities intended to manipulate the elections so that those in power will stay in power. A party of power is best understood in the context of electoral authoritarian regimes since it acts to remove the people's power of choice and perpetuate

the rule of the existing power structure. The United Russia party performed this function well. In addition to promoting the collective action of “getting out the vote” among its genuine supporters in the electorate, the party also organized and mobilized Putin’s supporters among the political and bureaucratic elite, and coordinated their vote stealing, ballot stuffing, and voter coercion on behalf of Putin and his allied candidates. Once United Russia gained control of the Duma, it supported Putin’s agenda without complaint. In Salwa’s words (2003: 125), “United Russia acted as the simulacrum of a competitive political organization occupying the space where political parties should belong.”

The case of United Russia shows how a weak party system is at the least very important to the rise of a party of power. Russia’s political parties had weak connections to the electorate which created the possibility of wide vote swings (with increasing economic hardship made them a reality), and party labels had less value to the voters than personal reputation. When Putin appeared to be the leader the people were seeking, his fast-rising popularity lifted up from obscurity a new and little-known party because it had had the good fortune to be created to back his candidacy for president. Unity’s merger with the Fatherland-All Russia party represented recognition by political elites that they had little expectation of attracting voters back; therefore the smart thing to do was to go where the voters were. As Putin leveraged his popularity and used his connections with ex-members of the KGB (known as *Siloviki*, or Strong Men) to increase his power and control of the government, allying with him became more promising and less dangerous than remaining in competition. Eventually, Putin became the center of Russia’s political

space as the politically powerful congregated around him, consigning the remainder of the competition to the periphery. In short, authoritarian centralization of power had returned to Russia.

Parties of power may be a useful tool in this process, but they are very unlikely to be its catalyst. In inchoate party systems party labels have insufficient attraction to serve as the gravitational force for bringing power elites together, the party needs the reputation of a person or group who offer the promise of attaining the power to reward their allies and punish their enemies. In the 2005 Kyrgyz elections, President Bakiyev attempted to accomplish Putin's feat by creating his own party of power to take control of the legislature. In this last he did succeed, but he could not focus sufficient power on himself, because he did not have great personal popularity and the regional elites were too strong. Without having authoritarian power behind them, parties of power are just additional competitors in the electoral marketplace.

While a structured party system may not be necessary to prevent an authoritarian return, it may be sufficient to do so. In Moldova, the PR legislative elections meant that from the beginning political space was divided among several parties and parties occupied all of it. Other things being equal, greater not less party system division is the typical effect of PR elections. Moreover, parties not individuals are the competitors in the elections which emphasize their importance as teams and increase the value of being team members. Individual political leaders are not unimportant and they do lend their reputations to their parties, but they must engage in politics as part of a cooperative endeavor. Also, as Katz (1980) established PR systems emphasize ideology over

personality so party labels become identified with particular sets of ideas and policies that establish each party's competitive position differentiating it from the rest. As a result, Moldova's party system underwent more institutionalization than those in Kyrgyzstan and Russia as like-minded parties merged into fewer, better defined, and more permanent entities. Even after the unreconstructed communist party had controlled the government for almost a decade having been elected by large majorities, the communists could not attain authoritarian control, because the teams were too well-established and the battle line had been drawn. Political elites did not abandon their parties to join with the communists who could not eliminate electoral competition, and in the end the electorate took away their majority. Party system stability has reached the point where after the 2009 Elections, it took 20 months and the defection of two communist party members before the legislature could put together the sixty-one vote majority needed to elect a president.

Implications and Further Research

The objective of my study is to add to the body of knowledge regarding the nonpartisanship phenomenon. Brancati (2008) has analyzed the relationship between nonpartisanship and election methods, but I have done so to study this relationship as a factor in democratization. For this purpose have I developed an index measuring the effects of relevant features of electoral systems on whether political elites choose to participate in party politics or to remain nonpartisan. This entails rank ordering categories of election methods from least to most likely to promote partisan affiliation which in the case of mixed electoral systems is adjusted according to what portion of seats are elected

by each method then recombined into a single value for each observation. This allows sophisticated quantitative analyses to be used to answer this question and it allows for nonpartisanship to be treated as an independent variable in democratization studies.

My study is the first to look for a linkage between electoral system and democratic success, with party system development (measured by the proportion of nonpartisans elected to office), as the significant intervening variable. In pursuing this objective, it is the first to perform a large-N analysis of the effects of electoral systems on the incidence of nonpartisans elected to legislatures using the postcommunist countries as cases in order to focus the study on states which have undergone political transition and have attempted to move toward democracy. It is also the first to perform a large-N analysis of the relationship between party system development, using nonpartisans as a percentage of all legislators for the measure, and successful democratization.

Starting from Aldrich's (1995) argument that parties originated as the institutional means of overcoming collective action problems of cooperation and coordination, but treating parties as an independent variable, I have emphasized the collective nature of parties and made the argument that party-centered politics offers incentives for political elites to "buy into" the democratic process.

This research holds several implications for future democracies. First, it offers additional evidence why democracy needs political parties. Democratic governance involves decentralizing power and dispersing it among a number of institutions and government bodies, and democracy also requires that the choice of who runs the government be determined by the people in competitive contests conducted in an arena

existing outside of government. Making and carrying out decisions in this type of political system involves a good deal of collective activities and coordination of efforts, and must continuously cope with collective action and social choice problems. Political parties provide the means for doing so among both the electorate and the contestants in the electoral contests, and they do so among the officials representing the people's interests in government. In the absence of parties, collective action and social choice problems make it much harder for democratic institutions to resist encroachment by powerful elites who capture them render them ineffective. Elections are manipulated, competition is undermined, legislatures become rubber stamps, and power becomes reconcentrated. Research on the political changes in Africa and the Middle East is beginning to examine some of the same issues covered in this study and the topic of party formation and its consequences in these regions, as well as making comparisons between them and the postcommunist states needs to be encouraged.

Second, democratization in the postcommunist countries has revealed that party formation should not be taken for granted. We need to heed Hale's admonition (2006) that considering the question of *how* parties develop is not enough; we also must consider *whether* they do so. Concluding that the PR electoral method does promote parties whereas the SMD method does not is of more than academic interest. Electoral system design has gained considerable importance in new democracies as a tool for affecting the course of democratic development, and future designers should consider whether party formation will be a problem and if so they need to factor this into their designs. Additional research on possible effects of other structural features, and interaction of

features of electoral systems is needed to clarify what options are and are not available to designers.

Third, there is evidence that it is more conducive for successful democratization if parties and party systems are nationalized. Democratic institutions can be undermined and replaced with bossism even more readily at the regional level without some nationalizing influence on a country's politics other than a centralized hierarchical power structure. Nationalized parties mean nationwide competition and nationwide coordination of party interests and collective action by party leaders, which limits the opportunities for regional capture of politics without national politics also being captured. Electoral system designers need to be aware that electoral methods play a role here as well: PR promotes party system nationalization whereas SMD fragments and parochializes politics. Nationalization of party systems was not the main subject of this study and the findings are intended to suggest that additional research on this topic, particularly in the quantitative modeling of the postcommunist cases, would be a fruitful endeavor.

Finally, these case studies suggest that there is importance associated with the sequence of events and the impact of elections, parties, and democracy. Several patterns are suggested as relevant. It appears to be important that the PR method be used from the very first election. Later adoption of PR seems to be common as occurred in both Kyrgyzstan and Russia, but this does not always reflect a desire to promote democratic development. This does seem to be the case in Kyrgyzstan (although it is too early to judge), but in Russia change to all-PR was intended to make it easier for the Kremlin to manipulate elections in favor of the ruling party of power which has given Putin greater

authoritarian control over the political system. In both of these countries, however, initially including SMD elections appeared to encourage development of electoral authoritarian political systems. This points to another relevant pattern: in these two countries there was a growing sense among the people that elections did not matter, that they had no real choice in who ruled and no voice in government. This does not mean that there have been no expressions of dissatisfaction with government in Moldova, there have been plenty of demonstrations there. The youth in particular demonstrated their frustration at continued communist rule and it was the government's violent reaction to one such demonstration held just after the 2009 elections that led to the communists losing power. The critical difference is that public dissatisfaction in Moldova has been handled by the institutions and has not seriously challenged the legitimacy of its political system, while in Russia large demonstrations held after the 2011-2012 elections have been calling for a color revolution and vowing not to cease until it occurs, and Kyrgyzstan's government has been twice successfully overthrown by coups. Ultimately the purpose of political parties is to provide the cooperation and coordination necessary for each to represent its constituents effectively, and when this does not happen people will eventually resort to more direct measures in order to be heard.

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