Development of Parties and Party Systems in Central Europe 1989-2007

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Transitions, political parties and stages of post-communism

The collapse of communism led to a numer of different research agendas in postcommunist studies. Most postcommunist states have been in transition to democracy, and the question of which states will become democratic or not and what stands in the way of democratic consolidation ranks among the most interesting in postcommunist studies (Kubicek, 2000). The agenda transitology has been a popular approach to study the changes that have taken place in the CEECs (Central East European Countries) after the year 1989. As rightly argued by *David Lane* (Lane, 2005) systemic breakdown followed by system transfer became the most usual explanation of the process of transition from communism in Eastern Europe. Thus the collapse of state socialism led to a proliferation of studies analyzing aspects of democratisation. Central to many studies is an assumption that postcommunism and changes in the CEECs are but a variation on a larger theme, that is, the recent "third wave" of democratization from authoritarian to democratic rule (Valerie Bunce, in Brown (2001):468).

A helpful distinction is made between "transitology" that focuses on political institutions versus the more complex and long-term "consolidology" that goes beyond institutions and agency and includes e.g. the political culture, the civil society, the economic arena and rule of law. Some speak about majoritarian, others of a consensual type democracy (Michal Kubat, in Dancak and Hlousek, 2006:39, 41). "Transition" deals with the interval between the the old and the new regime, where the rules of the game are not yet established and the political actors are still fighting about their interests and the rules and procedures of the new system.[1]

Often transition-studies are accused of "third wave" over-optimism, teleology, neglect of the crucial structural historic and cultural barriers and the stateness problems, overestimation of the significance of election, voluntarism, downplay of the impact of institutional legacies, a too privileged position of political parties and elites (Guliyev, 2005, Kubicek, 2000). As we shall see in the section dealing with consolidation of democracy, several ex-communist countries have not moved closer towards democracy, rather some kind of hybrid "grey zone" authoritarian or semi-democratic regimes.

After transition, in the consolidation stage, new rules and procedures are established and internalized. Democracy becomes the "only game in town". As consolidation proceeds, terms like "transitology and the "post-communism" lose their original meaning. In other words, the transitological paradigm now belongs to the past. Therefore, the classical concepts of democracy and non-democracy from mainstream Western political science can be used (Holzer, in Dancak and Hlousek, 2006).

In the first years after 1989, the formation of political parties was analyzed mainly structurally with the emphasis on historical factors, in particular the impact of the (late) post-totalitarian regimes. It was broadly accepted, that the way of leaving state socialism was closely connected with the type pre-1989 regime. The differences in regime trajectory, and particularly the emergence of democratic regimes in some of the former Soviet republics but not in others, have been a matter of much scholarly concern (Gill, 2007). The "mature" and "soft" state socialist regimes in Poland and Hungary were characterized by the pacted transition (Poland) or by a evolutionary "simple change" of system (Hungary) initiated by reform-minded communists. Unlike in Hungary and Czechoslovakia, the "hard" and "frozen" post-

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[1] Jan Holzer in Dancak and Hlousek, 2006:31.

totalitarian systems of Czechoslovakia and DDR were vulnerabel to *implosion* i.e. a radical fast "break-down of existing institutions, the ruling communist parties included. In contrast, in Romania and Bulgaria the breakthrough was due to a coup d'État' inside the communist parties.

The changes taking in the second half of the 1980s confirmed that "revolutions" do not necessarily take place at the time when the non-democratic systems are most repressive, but rather when the old systems try to *reform themselves* but are unable to *reproduce themselves* (Baylis and Smith, 1999:91-92, 132). The result was a "hollowing out" followed by decay, crisis and system demise and collapse.

Regime types under (late) real socialism:

Poland: national-accommodative (Kitschelt etc., 1999), mature posttotalitarian (Linz and Stepan, 1996)

Czechoslovakia and DDR: bureaucratic-authoritarian (Kitschelt etc., 1999), frozen posttotalitarian (Linz and Stepan, 1996)

Hungary: national-accommodative (Kitschelt etc., 1999), mature posttotalitarian (Linz and Stepan, 1996)

Bulgaria and Romania: patrimonial (Kitschelt etc., 1999), sultanistic (Linz and Stepan, 1996)

The break-through in 1989:

Democratisation by pacts (Karl, 1990)

Simpel change (about Hungary)

Imposition (about former GDR)

Transplacement and replacement (Huntington, 1991)
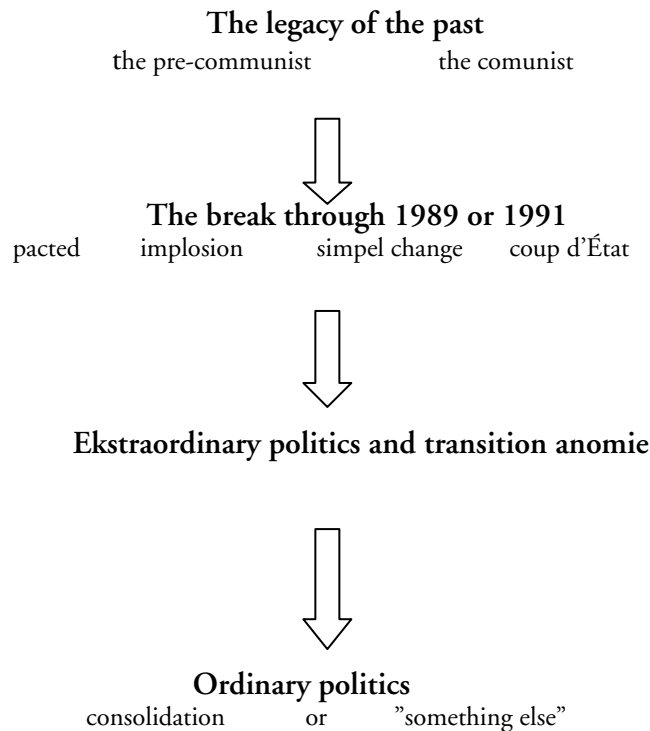
Refolution (Ash, 1990)

Restoration or rebirth (Soltan, in Antohi and Tismaneanu, 1990)

Implosion or system collapse (Highey, in Aurel and Barany, 1999)

"Post-communism" constituted a specific regime type starting from the break-down of state socialism ending at the post-transformative phase. Post-communism are divided into three or four stages, each

signifying a move from extraordinary to ordinary politics under complex double or triple transformations. In the first stage, characterized by extraordinary politics and transition anomie, the new "rules of the game" were not yet established and most people behaved according to short-term survival strategies. The old system was paralyzed, the new system did not yet work. At that time, the social base of most parties was extremely heterogeneous. Neither were new party systems established; thus, to some extent we were dealing with "party non-systems". Moving from to "ordinary" politics the party systems became more stable and predictable. Now we were dealing with "new regimes", more consolidated, but not necessarily democratic entities (Korosteleva, 2004).

Figure: 1 Stages of transition:

The legacy of the past

the pre-communist   the comunist

⇩

The break through 1989 or 1991

pacted   implosion   simpel change   coup d'État

⇩

Ekstraordinary politics and transition anomie

⇩

Ordinary politics

consolidation   or   "something else"

Transformation classifications, characteristics and dynamics

1985-1989: The late stage of real socialism

"extrication"

"anti-politics"

"blackmailing"

polarisation according to "we" versus "them"

the official system versus the antisystem

autonomisation and strengthening of civil societies/antisystem

spontaneous privatisations

active adaption ("the Gorbatjov-factor")

self-limitation

1989: The break through

the officiel system becomes weaker than the antisystem

implosion

reinvention of politics

"rebirth"

total articulation

pacted transitions (e.g. Poland)

"party-coup d'État" (Bulgaria and Romania)

"refolution"

partial revolutions

evolution

simpel change (Hungary)

1989-1990: Transition anomie/ekstraordinary politics/ "unsettled times":

new anticommunist party movements, historical parties and post-communist parties

fragmentation, fission and fusion of parties

emergence of "party non systems"

democatic/government overload and functional overload

output-articulation

"over-parliamentarization"

"overparticitation"

institutionalisation under systemic vacuum

political crafting

emergence of retrospective utopias

depolitisation and demobilisation

governance without alternatives ("path-dependency")

the aim of "speeding up" of transformation ("przyspieszenie")

symbolic politics versus programme politics

de-communisation ("lustrace")

elite-circulation and/or elite-reproduction

political crafting and entrepreneurship

inclusionary civic nationalism versus exclusionary ethnic nationalism

shadow institutionalisation

marketisation and privatisation

short term strategies of survival

political learning

1991- : Ordinary politics, moving towards:

a. "petrification"

formalistic façade democracy

defective or deficient democracy

majority rule, maybe "tyrannic"

"cartelisation" of the political scene

clientelism and clientura's

delegative democracy

democracy by design

freezing of cleavages

polarised pluralism

shadow institutionalisation

adversary politics

democracy by design

delegative democracy

democracy by default

postcommunist cartel parties

authoritarian democracy

non-party pluralism

pluralist stagnation

neither plan nor market, e.g. "crony capitalism" as in Jeltsin's Russia

or

b. consolidation

embedded advanced democracy

liberal democracy

the "two turn over test" passed

democracy as "the only game in town"

fair and free elections

pro-democratic civil society

fair play between government and opposition

erosion of political authoritarian charisma

rule of law

functional checks and balances

depersonalisation, rutinisation and erosion of charisma

consensualism and consocietalism

de-ideologisation and pragmatisation

freezing and de-freezing of cleavages

functional institutionalisation

functional market economy

Evidence from the beginning of the 1990s showed, that many citizens wanted to live in a market-democratic society. However, at the same they time they rejected steps, means and methods required to create such a society. Normally the difuse support of democracy was higher than the specific. *Grzegorz Ekiert* (Ekiert, 1996) rightly points out that the legacies of 40 years under communist rule shaped a powerful way and produced many features unique to the East Central European democratization. After all, the rejection of the old system turned out to be neither total or unconditional. Transitions in Central East Europe were in some way or another signified by the impact of structural factors like as the common imperial and communist past, the vast geographical distances and not least the extent, the depth and the speed of the changes of society (the "triple transitions").

The stage of extraordinary politics and after

The first stage of post-communism was marked by "extraordinary politics" (Balcerowicz, 1994), "perplexity" (Wnuk-Lipinski, 2003), also called "unsettled times (Innes, 2001) and "transition anomie" (Kabele, 1999). The ways and means of "farewell" to the old system were different in each country, pacted transitions in Poland, gradualism, evolution and "simpel change" in Hungary, implosions in GDR and Czechoslovakia and coup d'état's in Bulgaria and Romania. Input articulation was almost unlimited, rarely coordinated and sometimes even "total". The state socialism developed differently in Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary. Notions such as "mature post-totalitarian" and "national accommodative" ahave been used when describing the state socialist systems in Poland and Hungary,and "centralist-bureaucratic" and "frozen post-totalitarian" about the regime types in Czechoslovakia and the DDR (Kitschelt et al., 1999, Linz and Stepan, 1996).

The transitions from state socialism in Hungary and Poland in 1989 shared many common features: both occured following yars of tentative liberalization; both were pacted and both to a significant degree initiated by regime reformers (Renwick, 2006:36). The new rules of the game were not established and accepted. People had no other option than to "muddle through" adhering to short-term strategies of survival. In order to survive the modern part of the nomenklatura tried to convert political power into economic power.

As formulated by Kabele:

"This provisional situation was characterized by a rich dynamic of social problems, together with an unbalanced and changing distribution of gains and losses. The resulting conflicts become- in successful cases - part of the universe myth. In this universe of myth, these conflicts are seen as a series of crises/tests, which push the society indirectly from the old order to the new. This originally open transition comes to a close when the participants cease to see the current events as provisional" (Kabele, 1999).

As put by *George Schöpflin* (Schöpflin, 1993), the first stage was signified by weak institutionalisation, lack of confidence among people, atomisation of civil society, a desire for ideologisation of almost all in society and a widespread resistance against politics in general ("antipolitics"). The CEECs lacked the historical experiences with political parties such as was the case in West-Europe, thereby precluding long-term ties and links to social groups. Nevertheless, the new politicians were forced to take far-reaching decisions under high insecurity and time pressure. In unsettled times the social preferences and the visions of the new society were imprecise and vague. Under those circumstances the characteristics of identity politics and moral politics became striking.

The tabula rasa account that accentuates the uniqueness and fluidity and chaotic environment of the first stage of post-communism, seems to me to be most appropriate to use when studying the first

"extraordinary" stage of post-communism. The parties and party-systems were marked by qualitatively specific "extraordinary" characteristics distinguishing them from the West-European counterparts. The situation was both unique and "extraordinary". As can be seen new concepts, reflecting the unique and complex historical situation had to be used. Some authors analyze transitions and democratisation through parsimonious rational-choice models, others argue that such models cannot capture the complexity and contingency of democratisation (Renwick, 2006:37).

When moving to "ordinary" interest based politics, the political and economic life became more interest based and also more predictable. Under "normal politics" democracy has been labelled "input democracy" characterised by retrospective elections, neo-corporatism and more interest based politics. However, ordinary politics did not necessarily mean consolidated, advanced or embedded democracy. Ordinary politics became closely conncted with membership of the EU. By the CEECs, membership of the EU was not only considered as public goods but as public necessities as well, a "valens issue" meaning that all the relevant and responsible parties, post-communist parties included, agreed and declared the same objectives, therefore mainly disputing each other's competence in achieving the desired policy" (e.g. EU-membership) (Innes, 2002:90).

Political parties

As put by *Peter* Mair, citing *Rudolf Wildenmann* (in Mair (ed), 1990:3), even a short list of the functions of political parties is long, as

"parties structure the popular vote, integrate and mobilize the mass of the citizenry; aggregate diverse interests; recruite leaders for public office; and formulate public policy. Most important of all, within the liberal democracies it is primarily parties, which organize modern government in such a way that, as Wildenmann notes, party government is the crucial agency of institutional legitimation."

Political parties can be defined in minimalistic ways, in which case they are to be considered as "any political group that presents at elections and is capable of placing through elections candidates for public office" (Sartori, 1976:64), in contrast to the more maximalistic and demanding formulations, used by *Jan-Erik* Lane and *Svante Ersson* (Lane and Ersson, 1999:132), who say that

"political parties are organized collectivities orientated towards the pursuit of some combination of the goal of electoral success and in the end of political effectiveness, i.e. the capacity of parties to have an impact upon government policy-making. Differences in strategy and tactics between parties may help explain the variation in the capacity of parties to cope with a changing if not turbulent environment".

The more maximalist definitions include the demands for a more robust party organisation. Functionally the parties must be able to recruit people to fill important posts in society, control and coordinate and secure sufficient quality and stability in public administration. Moreover, parties are considered as associations, which by competing with other parties take part in election campaigns with the aim of getting access to governmental power and taking responsibility for the state.[2] Parties can be regarded as functional agencies and serve specific purposes. They are channels for "expressions", fulfil specific roles and thereby solve specific tasks in relation to the political system.

The actor-structure debates have also been crucial in case of East Central Europe. *Aleks Szczerbiak* and *Seán Hanley,* (Szczerbiak and Hanley, 2004) explore the formation of political parties by including a number of non-structural "transitional" and "political" factors, arguing:

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[2] Inka Slodkowska,"Partie i ugrupowania polityczne polskiej transformacji", in: Jacek Wasilewski (ed), 1997.

- that choices made by political actors during the *critical junctures* and formative moments matter, i.e. decisions taken in the first years (1989-91) may determine the development of parties

- that *institutional,* macrostructural as well as microstructural factors matter, e.g. that the proportial electoral system may produce more cohesive parties, and a parliamentary regime tends to produce more successful parties and stable party systems than (semi)presidential systems

- that *elite-cohesion and ideological construction* matter, e.g. the existence of charismatic leadership and cohesive generationally defined elites may generate more stable parties and party systems

According to Szczerbiak and Hanley, broad structural historical legacies do not prove helpful in explaining the fate of the centre-right or the left in terms of the political dynamics of the post-1989 period. In other words, agency is placed over structure, choice over legacy, and action over institutions (Lewis, 2004). In short, many different notions and definitions of political parties and party systems were introduced. Basically, in their operating style, most parties in the CEECs shared the competitive logic of western catch-all parties, but lacked their ideological and organisation al anchors.

In transition studies parties and party systems belong to the "political arena", but closely linked to the other arenas, in particular the economic arena, the civil society and rule of law (Linz and Stepan, 1996). Normally political parties are considered as a necessary but not as a sufficient precondition for successful transition and consolidation of liberal democracy in the Western understanding of the term.

When studying the development of political parties and party systems in the CEECs a broad definition must be used. In several cases we have been dealing with catch-all single-issue movement parties without positive political programmes and under highly fragmented multiparty systems. Furthermore, the establishment of political parties and party systems are closely connected to different stages of post-communism and mutually interdependent arenas of democracy. Each stage of post-communism deliniates new conditions for what can be accomplished in the subsequent stages.

From the outset political parties served more as a means of communicating within the elite and mobilising ideological and political resources in intra-elite struggles than as a way of representing social interests. Gradually politics became more rule and interest based and for that reason also more stable and predictable. In other words, the "homo economicus" squeezed out the "homo sovieticus".

In those later stages of postcommunism, parties and party systems can more easily be studied using the concepts and the cognitive instruments used in studies of the morel institutionalised parties and party systems in the West, e.g. the distinctions between different *types* of political parties and party systems as put forward by Duverger, Sartori, Kirchheimer, Mair, etc., e.g. mass mobilisation parties, catch-all parties and cartel parties, the different types and forms of polarisation and the party system format (Fiala etc, 2003:191).

Country wide democratic polities are not sustained without the organizing and mediating role of political parties. One function of parties is to reinforce identification with the democratic process by taking account of and aggregating different interests in society, thereby counteracting an excessive particularism (Brown, ed., 2001:211, 213). *Actor type* explanations emphasize the significance of strategic choices and leadership processes ("political crafting" and "political entrepreneurship"). *Structural factors* have a subjective side in case economic growth and social mobility decline. When the

economic growth and social mobility decline, group consciousness increase and undermine the political system.

Studies of political parties alternately clude independent variables such as size, ideological characteristics, social links, membership, organisation and leadership, i.e. problems related to party institutionalisation. As far as party systems are concerned, emphasis is mostly laid on the *number* of parties, i.e. the party system format, voter volatility, structure of the ideological spectrum, types of polarisation , linkage to cleavages and characteristics of voter support.[3]

Richard Gunther and Larry Diamond classify 15 "species" of parties on the basis of three criteria: (1) the nature of the party's organisation (thick/thin, elite-based or mass-based, etc.); (2) the programmatic orientation of the party (ideological, particularistic-clientele-oriented, etc.); and (3) tolerant and pluralistic (or democratic) versus proto-hegemonic (or anti-system) (Gunther and Diamond, 2003).

The parties in the CEECs moved towards the catch-all electoral-professional party models, hierarchially and centralitically governed with tenuous links to the social groups in society. Furthermore, they concentrated on "a wider clientele of voters ... rather than opt[ing] for the well-defined segments of society."[4] Agrarian parties like the PSL in Poland and the Independent Smallholders Party (FKGP) in Hungary were most equivalent to class parties. The liberal pro-market parties suffered at many elections due to the absence of a strong and prosperous middle class ("the missing middle"). Thus, some observers consider the emergence of strong right-traditionalist political parties as the result of civilisational "backwardness" and unfinished and distorted modernisation.

Party systems

Party systems constitute one of the political system's most important subsystems by emphazising the *interaction* between parties. As Sartori put it, a "party system is precisely the system of interactions resulting from interparty competition"; therefore party systems consist of "patterned interactions of its component parts. Interactions provide the boundaries, or at least the boundedness of the system" (Sartori, 1976:43-44). In addition, functional party systems are at the same time characterized by competition and willingness to enter political compromises. Looking at the way in which parties connect society and government, three functions are relevant. Basically party systems *aggregate* social cleavages, *translate* social cleavages into political cleavages, or *block* the politicisation of social cleavages. As noted by *Matthis Bogaards* the one-party state tend to maximize the blocking of cleavages; the two-party systems seem to be the best in achieving aggregation; the multiparty system is most suited to "translation" (in Mungiu-Pippidi, Krastev, 2004:250).

In addition, Sartori distinguishes between first two-party systems as in Britain and the US; second, moderate plural systems with limited fragmentation and moderate centrepetal competition; third, party systems characterized by polarized pluralism; fourth, highly fragmentated and ideologically polarised party systems, and finally what he calls "predominant" party systems, in which one party has a majority in parliament over a long time. Decisive is *the way* parties interact – whether as "working multi-party systems", "non-working multiparty systems" or "immobilist" multiparty systems.

Thus, the system concept is meaningless unless the system includes characteristics that go beyond the component parts, i.e. beyond a separate consideration of its component elements. In other words, the

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[3] See e.g. Jean Blondel, "Types of Party System", in Mair, 1990:302.
[4] Peter Kopecky, "Developing Party Organisations in East-Central Europe: What Type of Party is likely to emerge?", *Party Politics*, 4, 1995:515-534.

parties are functions of interaction with other parties, to a great extent they react and act in a competitive interplay with other parties. In case the interaction does not take place, we are dealing with party non systems or weak party systems (Almond and Powell, 1996:237). In such cases conflicts (and interaction) *inside* the parties become stronger than *between* the parties. In addition, party systems may be high or low polarised, depending on *intensity* of polarisation, and they may be fragmented or segmented as in the case of multipartyism and long ideological distance between the parties.

Strong polarisation generate adversary politics, in which case the relations between the bigger parties are characterized by confrontation. In that case political life is marked by a permanent election campaign. From the outset new great utopias were rejected, even the Prague Spring in Czechoslovakia as the new elites preferred the already tested like the market economies and liberal democracies known in the West. The political debates became highly polemic and personal, but antisystem parties in general did not do well at elections. Parties which aimed at destroying the new postcommunist system did not necessarily win any great electoral support. Adversary politics took place also between parties that were ideologically and programmatically close to each other.

The formation of political parties in the CEECs

Most new political parties were established top-down, more supplied from above than demanded from below and established almost over night as "sofa-parties and mostly by intellectuals. Contrary to South European countries like Greece, Spain and Portugal, before 1989 the parties in the CEECs had not been in a position to establish institutionalised structures internally or externally, i.e. in exile. Throughout the region the parties were marked by the communist past, especially the late stage of real socialism, and by the speed, the ways and means of leaving the old state socialist system.

Parties were established under rapid, deep and not yet finished economic and social transformations and under unexpected deep economic recession. Several new parties had their background in dissident circles under the old system. Therefore many new leaders had been forced to live in a "ghetto" without much contact to the "real life". Aversion against parties ("antipolitics") and nostalgia for some type of non-party rule coexisted with aproval of their role in democracy (Raciborski, 2007:28). Due to low institutionalisation, many new parties strived to hide themselves behind apolitical charismatic personalities. Before the formation of parties, discussions about the best strategies for the transformation were rare, as only few were able to foresee the speed and the depth in the social economic circumstances and changes, caused by the rapid break-down of the old system.

In the beginning the market for political parties was almost completely open and the establishment of parties a "simple notification". The supply of parties was easy, but the voters' demand was difficult, if not impossible, to predict. The parliamentary origins of many parties and the top-down mode of party formation were striking. The formation of parties itself was not due to certain cleavages in society, rather were were dealing with "transitory" and preliminary formations or proto-parties. Due to the great weight on abstract symbolic policy, the catch-all profile, the aim to represent the "whole people", was widespread.

As already described, most parties seemed to lack sufficiently strong organizational structure. For the most part, new parties were professional, personalised and closely linked to the state, i.e. postcommunist cartel parties (Spirova, 2005). Some parties – in particular the historic parties – were "re-invented" or "reborn", some were labelled post-communist "sucessor parties", aiming to find a new post-communist identity, others were authentic historical, e.g. social democratic and agrarian parties.

Finally some new political parties were anticommunist catch-all movement-parties, i.e. negative political alliances appealing to all anti-communist minded sections of society.

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Types of political parties after the fall of communism

New movement parties: established spontaneously at the time of crisis and demise of the old systems. Quickly after the formation, internal divisions took place due to a lack of coherence on leadership level and policy disagreements. Thus, these parties can be seen as "transitory". Examples: Civic Forum (OF) in the Czech Republic, Solidarity in Poland, the popular fronts in the Baltic countries.

Historical parties: reestablished, "reborn" parties, i.e. parties which in most cases had existed in the mid-war years, but became banned under communism. Examples: after WW II the Czech Social Democratic Party (CSSD) merged by use of force with the then ruling communist party (KSM).

Postcommunist parties: had existed under communism as formally independent parties cooperating with the communists inside the national fronts and in parliaments. After 1989 they strived to transform themselves and find a new party identity freed from the "legacy" inherited from the past. Examples: The Republic of Poland's Social Democratic Party (SdRP), the Peasants' Party (PSL) in Poland, the Hungarian Socialist Party (MSZP)

Non reformed (or only partly reformed) Communist parties ("hard-line"): communist parties keeping the old party name and maintaining the old marxist-leninist ideology and centralist party organization. Examples: the comunist parties in the Czech Republic (KSCM) and Slovakia (KSS).

Parties of power or "floating parties", e.g. United Russia, closely linked to Putin.

Protest parties: established either exogenously or endogenously, rejecting the existing parties, and mode of governance, often appealing to nonpolitics by conducting a "clean hands" policy and maybe also rejecting the new democratic order. Sometimes they gained a considerable blackmail potential, sometimes becoming "responsible" and relevant parties by gaining government positions. Examples: MIEP in Hungary, Res Publica in Estonia, Selfdefence (Samoobrona) in Poland.

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Parties and politicians, pretending to be "above politics", were successful at the first elections but mostly due to the then widespread resistance to party politics as such. In the first phase the prevailing political culture was not favourable for formation of functional and standard type political parties and party federations and the emergence of professional and responsive politicians. Thus, characteristics from the former system, e.g. extrication, total articulation, output-articulation, anti-politics, overparliamentarisation and adversary politics turned out impossible to eliminate over night.

Several country-specific characteristics were striking. Some were mostly due to *structural* factors, e.g. the different legacies of the past, some to the *country specific* circumstances at the time of the demise of the old systems and, finally, others due to the *chosen strategies* for transformation, i.e. the subjective factors on the policy level. As in most Western countries, studies of *internal* party dynamics and local politics have been rather limited, at the same time also difficult to carry through.[5]

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[5] For more on this subject, see Szczerbiak, 2001:94.

At the beginning the political parties tended to have weak organizations with only modest presence outside the big towns and tenuous ties to the civil societies. They were broadly defined and included well organized mass parties as well as weak proto-parties, loose political associations and clubs, political factions and movements. Furthermore, in several cases parties became cadre configurations, not mass organizations such as in the West. As mentioned above, most parties were established spontaneously in the wake of the demise and collapse of the old systems. Only in Janos Kádár's Hungary did the foundation of political parties take place over one to two years, which is reason why we did not find the broadly based anti-communist movement parties like in the Czech Republic (The Civic Forum), Slovakia (Public Against Violence), Poland (Solidarity) or Bulgaria (SDS).

From the outset the political capital, i.e. the spontaneous support from society, was high, but more short-term than expected. As noted by *Abby Innes* (Innes, 2002), the Eastern European parties had to satisfy two constituencies, the one internal, i.e. the domestic scene, the other external, i.e. IMF and the EU, sometimes with the very existence of the latter inhibiting the development of the former.

Most political parties in the East were established as distinct postcommunist "mass parties" and after that they had to "look after their voters". However, patronage and a clientelistic style of politics were too widespread. The weak links to the voters implied that the parties tended to miscalculate voter preferences. At the first free elections the post-communist successor partiets overestimated their electoral support, but at the Polish 1993 election the "post-communist" parties did surprisingly well. Weak linkages to the social groups and low party institutionalisation made the parties dependent on the media, bringing the freedom of the press under more political pressure.

In addition, the boundaries between parties and interest groups were porous. In general, the legacy of the communist past seemed to have an "anti-political" bearing on the nascent party systems and parties. The label "political parties" we have to use in the minimalist way, in which case parties are considered as political units that put forward candidates on common lists at elections – and not much more.

The political parties are only able to decide the political agenda if a majority of the electorate feel themselves better represented through political parties than interest groups, like the trade unions, the church, the military or, in the worst case, mafia-type economic organizations or other kinds of illegal networks.[6] Shadow institutionalisation took place not only in the countries on Balkans and in the CIS. In Poland the strong position of the church and the trade unions (Solidarnosc and OPZZ) made a difference. In the CEECs, new parties never became mass parties in the traditional way, rather weakly institutionalized post-communist catch-all parties, later transformed into electoral professional and centralized cartel parties.

The party fragmentarisation remained high, but especially in the first phase. Also party fission and party fusions were frequent. "Reinvention of politics" took place in a political and ideological vacuum without close links to the most important social groups. The collapse of the old systems gave space for almost unlimited clashes between proto-democratic actors ("total articulation"), between spokesmen for the old system and the opposition ("we versus them") and, not to forget, between different groups *inside* the two opposite camps ("wars in the top" and conflicts "between us"). Former dissidents found "enemies" also inside their own camp.

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[6] In the minimal sense political parties can be defined as "any group that presents at elections and is capable of placing through elections candidates for public office" (Sartori, 1976:64).

Both the old communist parties and the new movement parties laid claim to "represent the people" in catch-all ways. Conservative-traditionalistic, e.g. Solidarity in Poland, and neoliberal parties, e.g. ODS in the Czech Republic, behaved like premature catch-all parties appealing to voters from all social strata. By contrast, medium-sized parties tended to act like interest based and class orientated parties, to a large extent relying on "automatic" votes of their direct constituencies (Ágh, 1998:115).

Some argue that the new anti-communist movement parties resembled old communist parties as regards political discourses, institutions and policy style. For many not only reform communists, but also former dissidents became the "other"- i.e. bound up in communist party type intrigues, thus not representing the normal electorate, but instead becoming inappriopriate representatives of the people (Innes, 2001:87). *Paul G. Lewis* argues that the new anti-communist parties were disposed to:

"mirror the inclusive, monolithic communist organization; their antagonism to state authority; their inclination to strive in political action for broad symbolic expression rather than group representation all seemed in some ways to point as much back to the practices and structures of the traditional Soviet style communism as forward to the practices and structures of the traditional Soviet-style communism as forward to the processes of modern democracy and structures of Western pluralism" (Lewis, 1994:264).

The political parties were established either *exogenously*, i.e. under the influence of voters' preferences and other ways of influence from outside, or *endogeneously*, i.e. according the dynamics inside the existing parties or between the parties at the national level. Inside the parties the clientelistic characteristics have been striking with close links between the political and economic sector.

On the one hand party identities were created by the interplay between the past and the present, on the other hand between the national and the international level or between the national and regional level. The weight laid on the past, the present and the future has been different. The formation of political parties was marked by the circumstances leading to the demise of the old systems and the characteristics of the new political elites. The movement parties were in possession of either a predominantly *historically* derived identity due to strong "foundation myths", or a predominantly *presently* derived identity related to the day-to-day politics. After a short time, the movement parties as the popular fronts, Solidarity and Civic Forum became divided and subsequently split up into new independent political fractions and parties. In the case of a recently derived identity, the parties' identities were shaped primarily according to what Sartori described as contemporary political appeals.

The *sequencing* of elections was important. In Yugoslavia and Russia, elections at the republican level took place before the elections at the national level. The parties here were chiefly regionally based thereby undermining the legitimacy of the central authorities and parties that reached the whole country.

Strong presidentialism gave rise to "floating parties" and "parties of power" established shortly before elections closely linked to the oligarchy ("clientura"), the president and with easy access to the media. The parties were created top-down, only rarely from voters' preferences, as these were at best vague. Furthermore, parties were mostly established spontaneously without much knowledge about the exact demand for parties. Programmes as well as policy statements were mostly too vague and abstract.

Despite weak linkages to civil societies the parties soon captured a crucial position. As mentioned before, most political parties remained badly institutionalized, but for that reason they were by no means insignificant. Gradually a professionalisation and cartellisation of the political scene took place.

Due to party-ist properties parties felt tempted to misuse new-won power. In "extraordinary crisis situations", e.g. Hungary in 1995 and the Czech Republic after the 1996 election, de-democratisation, party-ism, reinforcement of antidemocratic discourses and anti-politics were observed. In general, the parties were established by institutionalisation from above and mobilisation from below, but the freedom of manoeuvre in the economic and social policy remained low. At the same time, the new parties strived to satisfry their own electorates and western governments and institutions, in particular the EU. Before long a political demoblisation set in and most citizens concentrated on short-term strategies of survival and activities in the new private sector.

At the beginning the job as a politician was often considered as a "call" or even a "mission". The new broad catch-all movement-parties such as Solidarity in Poland and Civic Forum (OF) in the Czech Republic legitimized themselves by references to the fight against the old system thereby appearing to the electorate as broad catch-all parties. A major problem was that the day-to-day needs of the people were downgraded. The absence of close links to social interests in society was considered as a virtue, as parties should place themselves above group interests. In the new post-communist discourse the label "party" was negatively loaded as "parties" for many citizins were connected with the former one-party state. Therefore many new "parties" called themselves "movements", "centre", "forum", "alliance", "agreement" or "union". Thus, the slogan of Civic Forum (OF) in the Czech Republic was simpel: "Parties are for the party-people, Civic Forum is for all".

Due to the low priority given to "day-to-day problems", movement parties suffered election defeats in the beginning of the 1990s, thus paving the way for political "comebacks" for "postcommunists". Postcommunist parties achieved electoral success much due to relatively high party institutionalisation and programme-crystallisation. As one of the few liberals, Václav Klaus took account of the fact that most voters preferred political parties with a high institutionalisation and political programmes appealing to broad sections of the people. For that reason, Klaus decided to use the label "Civic Democratic *Party*" (ODS). The position of Václav Klaus was one of several proofs of the significance of political crafting and "political entrepreneurship in the first stage of post-communism.

In established consensual democracies, voters' behaviour to a great extent reflects the most important social interests in society. If political parties were divided differently from the societies they represent, almost inevitably political crises develop, unless the parties were able to attract voters by using non-class symbolic political appeals. In the first years most new anti-communist movement parties underestimated the significance of the retrospective utopia, i.e. the "soviet man".

After the short time of extraordinary politics, most voters seemed to prefer parties with concrete forward-looking programmes, a strong organisation and a clear profile. Voters seemed to behave more rationally and strategically, voter volatility remained high and the political scene became more cartellised (Dawisha and Deets, 2006). Programmatic work became more important as identity and moral politics receded. Also a routinisation and erosion of charismatic politics took place. Parties with low institutionalisation adhering to symbolic and identity politics were not able to meet challenges most significantly when moving towards "ordinary politics" and "settled times". People did not show any great interest in becoming party members, also among the parties themselves interest in getting new members was limited due to fear of internal divisions in case of influx of new people.

The experience from the first twelve years of post-communism evidenced that "institutionalisation matters". Parties well organized and with sufficient financial resources may suffer election defeats, but nevertheless obtain political come-back at later elections. In contrast, badly institutionalised "forum

parties" might win the first elections, but, on the other hand, they possessed a weak "immune defence" in the case of internal crisis, increased party competition and loss of parliamentarian representation.

In most cases party-coalitions, e.g. AWS in Poland and SDK in Slovakia constituted fragile constructions, as they were neither sufficiently institutionalised nor held up by a common identity and party-culture as each party within the alliance cared about its own identity. Thus we are mostly dealing with *negative* election alliances kept together by the common enemy (i.e."post-communists"). The fall in political participation was due to weak linkages to the civil society. Because of low institutionalisation, the political parties' contacts to the electorate and party members were modest, mostly mediated through the media. The number of party members remained low, however, in a few cases increasing. The Czech Civic Democratic Party (ODS) had 16.000 members in the late 1990s, 7,000 more in 2004. In contrast the Christian Democrats (KDU-CSL) had 45,000 members in 2004, 16,000 less than six years ago. Party press and journals for party members were badly needed. In general, party life was downgraded in the minds of the political elites. The party candidates and even the leaders themselves had not sufficiently been subject to political training and learning.[7]

Most party alliances on the Right tended to be tactical aiming at minimizing the waste of votes at elections. The aim was to establish a new common right-wing government and maybe transform election alliances to standard parties or functional party-federations. In contrast to the Polish Right, after 10 years the left-wing party alliance SLD in Poland succeeded in transforming itself into a disciplined standard party until then having been an alliance consisting of 20-30 different groups on the Left.

In conclusion, we can say that party and party system development can partly be explained by *structural* factors such as the legacy of the past, partly by *dynamics of the transitions*, e.g. the political style and the policy of political leaders, the different ways of governance, the political crafting, the institutional set-up and the changes at the policy and programme level. The significance of each independent variable has changed over time. Political crafting and entrepreneurship made a strong impact, due to the power vacuum, the high political capital, and the move towards "post-modern policy". Unfortunately, misuse of the new-won political power was widespread due to party-ist characteristics, inexperienced leaders and weak civil societies. Sometimes non-political actors became functional equivalents to parties ("shadow institutionalisation"). In specific situations, like in Hungary in 1995 and 2006 and in the Czech Republic in 1996-1997 and 2006, de-democratisation, party-ism, antipolitics, reinforcement of antidemocratic discourses and a political stalemate took place, detrimental for further consolidation of the new-won democracy.

Stages of party and party system development

That leads us to a mapping out of the different stages of party development. As noted above, the parties were established in socialist systems in crisis and decay. The first stage of post-communism was marked by extraordinary politics, extrication, political crafting, transition anomie and functional as well as government overload. Parliaments almost became "law making machines".

Most new political parties were embryonic "sofa-parties" and proto-parties marked by internal splits and veto-group factions. The problem was to find new constituencies and political issues on which to compete. Political strategists did not know what the electorate would tolerate be way of hardship (Innes, 2002:88). Therefore, the exact demand for political parties was difficult to dertermine. As noted by *Edmund Mokrzycki*, the new political leaders tended to base their calculations on simplified holistic

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[7] See e.g. Martin Potucek, "Ze Sredni Europy na Balkán?", *Ekonom*, 1997, Praha:84.

and radical constructions and neoliberal utopia believing in a harmonic and natural order after in four decades being harassed by marxist-leninist propaganda.[8] As noted above, they simply underestimated the strength of the retrospective utopia, the "soviet man" and the impact of the "first wave of social frustrations".
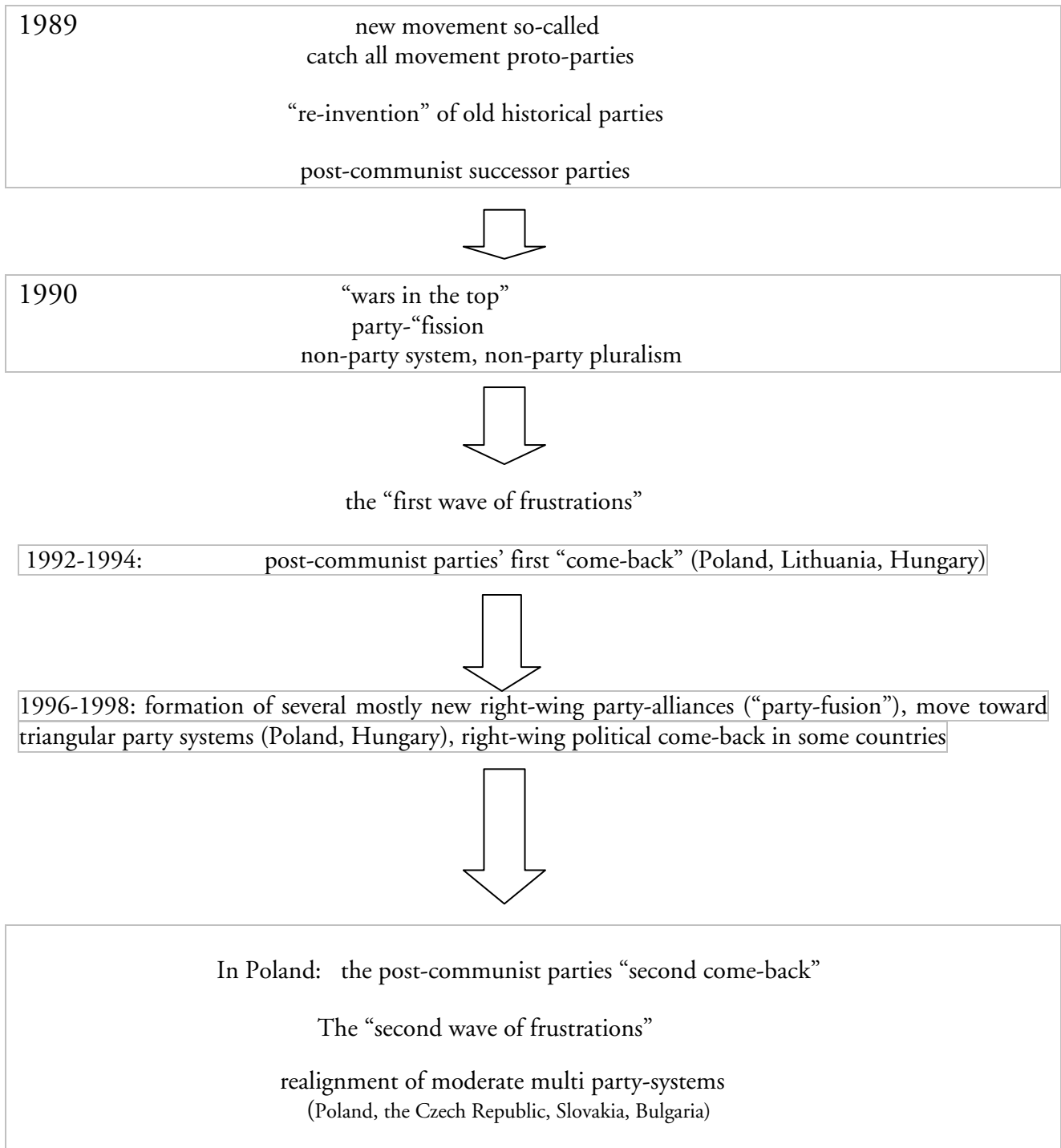
Under the prevailing extraordinary politics and transition anomie the party systems, that means interaction *between* parties, were not sufficiently developed as interaction mostly took place *inside* the party movements. Due to low party institutionalisation political entrepreneurship and political crafting came to play a prominent role. Most parties were forced to "look inwards", secure higher institutionalization, formulate consistent programmes and promote elite-cohesion. Only few striking differences between the party programmes could be observed. The historical parties were forced to organize themselves almost from scratch, while the postcommunist parties forced to find a new, maybe a "new-old" identity and reach a "compromise" between the past and the present, certainly no easy task.

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[8] Edmund Mokrzycki, "Kapitalizm Oswojony", *Gazeta Wyborcza* 11-12 August, 2001:10.

Figure 2: Stages of party development

Year

1989	new movement so-called catch all movement proto-parties "re-invention" of old historical parties post-communist successor parties

⬇

1990	"wars in the top" party-"fission non-party system, non-party pluralism

⬇

the "first wave of frustrations"

1992-1994:	post-communist parties' first "come-back" (Poland, Lithuania, Hungary)

⬇

1996-1998: formation of several mostly new right-wing party-alliances ("party-fusion"), move toward triangular party systems (Poland, Hungary), right-wing political come-back in some countries

⬇

In Poland: the post-communist parties "second come-back"

The "second wave of frustrations"

realignment of moderate multi party-systems
(Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Bulgaria)

At that time some even spoke about "early freezing" or a partial consolidation of the party systems (Ágh, 1998:103). A de-freezing of at least some of the old cleavages could be observed. In particular the systemic "we"-"them" distinction lost some of its former meaning. Furthermore, the cohesion inside the heterogeneous opposition circles was undermined shortly after the fight against the old state socialist system had been won. Instead "wars in the top" of the parties erupted. The new distinction ("we against us") to some extent replaced the old distinction "we versus them" from late 1980s.

In the *second* stage, moving to more "ordinary" and more "mature" politics, the political parties acquired more power without necessarily becoming more legitimate. The activities of many citizens moved from the political to the economic sphere. Elections in the late 1990s evidenced that institutional design, campaign strategies, organisational resources and the mood of the electorate matter. Party membership was relatively unimportant as party *leaders* played the most crucial role. Thus, new parties were more likely to resemble Kirchheimer's catch-all, Panebianco's electoral-professional and Katz and Mair's cartel party than Duverger's mass party model (Szczerbiak, 2001:101).

In the *third and fourth* stage, the political parties paid more attention to the external frames focusing more on long-term policies and strategies. A polical learning took place as more attention had to be paid to strategies and programmatic work. The freedom of manoeuvre in the economic and social policy remained low, but the politicians learned how better to compete over operating styles, tactically modulated principles, postmodern issues better than over programmatic substance (Innes, 2002:88). The true constraints, under which the parties had to operate became more apparent. Elections became retrospective to a large extent signified by politically motivated *policy* blame. The separation of parties from civil societies seemed less striking, sometimes even consolidation of the party systems took place. However, not all political parties and party systems passed the stage of high consolidation.

Symbolic communist-anticommunist cleavages inherited from the past were defreezed, at least for a while. The freedom of manoeuvre in the economic policy remained narrow due to harsh external conditionalities and lack of economic ressources. In the third and fourth stage, political parties became more highly institutionalised, mostly centralised, professional, electoral cartel parties or fragile election alliances were forced upon the parties due to higher election thresholds. The changes of party systems were non-linear. Unification of forces, fragmentarization, in some cases formation of a new common identity took plac. In too manyl cases we had to do with destructive "wars in the top".

In the more "mature" stage also social links *between the state and the parties* should be reinforced. After some years most parties and party federations strived to become post-communist catch all and cartel parties, primarily focusing on state power aiming to appeal to so broad sections of society as possible. At the same time bad governance, widespread misuse of power, clientelism, political capitalism and corruption tended to weaken the position of political parties in general, especially those in government position. Bad governance and social frustrations gave rise to a new "second wave of social frustrations", that benefitted, not postcommunist parties, rather hard or soft populist.

The Central European party systems moved closer to classical European party system models consisting of a centre-left versus centre-right bipolar system, in some cases a tripolar multi-party systems emerged based on socio-economic cleavages (Ágh, 1998:111). The neoliberal discourse lost some of its original appeal. Elections became more retrospective and only few governments passed the test. The embryonic characteristics became less striking, but the intake of party members remained low.

From the mid 1990s, the election campaigns tended to be conducted in more professional ways, in spite of the fact that the links between political parties and civil societies remained weak. Nevertheless, the

parties became somewhat more "outward-looking". Interest groups gained more influence, thus sometimes delaying political and economic reforms, e.g. privatisation and restructuring of public finances. Some political groups adhered to the old movement line. The majority of the electorate seemed to prefer parties characterized by strong leadership, high professionalism, clear, long-term and consistent political programmes and good leadership performance in the mass media. Thus, to some extent party institutionalisation seemed to matter - also in the case of the CEEC's.

Neither macroeconomic progress was any guarantee of success. Thus, socialist-led governments in Poland and Hungary lost elections in spite of rather good macroeconomic performance. Establishment of election alliances was most enticing to "outsider parties" without prospects for parliamentary representation by "going alone". In the later stages, the access to the political scene became more difficult, as the costs of entrance increased due to financial constraints and modest access to the media. Also a defreezing of the old "we-them" cleavage took place, but to a different extent og with a different speed. From the outset the political culture looked most consensual in the case of Hungary. Short term factors, not great visions and utopia's determine the outcome of elections.

As we have seen the party landscape was marked by "fissions" and "fusions", however, voter preferences remained fairly stable. The quality of governance became more decisive at elections. However, the voter judgments of parties in government remained merciless, also after moving away from "the valleys of tear". Thus, after some time the national elections were determined primarily by "politically motivated policy blame", not, like at the first elections, by "politically motivated system blame".

Left-right divide and post-communist cleavages

The left-right divide, known from already established political party systems, cannot be used unconditionally. From the outset, the communist successor parties constituted a rather easily identifiable bloc, but defining who is centre-right from amid an array of nationalist, conservative, Christian, liberal and populist groupings has been rather difficult (Szczerbiak and Hanley, 2004:1). The left and right divide existed in people's minds, but differently in each East Central European country. The different patterns of ideological structuring we must see in the light of the relative importance of the main cleavages in society and each country's concrete experiences of leaving socialism.[9]

The party systems emerging in the Czech Republic after 1989, came rather close to the left-right division, according to which attitudes to state regulation and the welfare state tend to be the most decisive ones. In for example Hungarian political parlance "Left" and "Right" do not have much to do with economics (Kenez, 2005). The Socialists are more likely than FIDESZ to support privatization. The Right employs populist rhetoric more than the Left. Fierce passions are flamed by issues, e.g. on the Hungarian diaspora, that have only scant effect on everyday life of the citizens. The interpretation of history may become the most contentious subject, in particular among the political elites; a person's view of the past may sometimes determine his current politics, or, perhaps, vice versa.

In the case of Poland, the left-right axis has been closely related to the *socio-cultural* dimension, in particular questions about the role of the church in society and attitudes to the communist past. Parties with strong anti-communist and market and eurosceptical characteristics are sometimes described as right-*traditionalistic*. On social issues and questions about state regulation, right-wing parties tended to behave more "social democratic" than most post-communist parties, including the democratic left

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[9] Attila Ágh, "Party Formation Process and the 1998 Elections in Hungary", *East European Politics and Societies*, Vol. 14, No. 2, Spring 2000:292, and Radoslaw Markowski, "Political Parties and Ideological Spaces in East Central Europe", *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 30:3 (1997):122.

alliance SLD and the Peasants Party (PSL) in Poland. Symbolic politics and low programme crystalisation have been striking compared with most conservative-*liberal* parties and most parties on the political Left.

On the other end of the scale we find conservative-*liberal* parties, which are strong supporters of free market economy. Furthermore they behave pro-European and argue against restitution to the church and church interference in politics, e.g. on questions about religious instruction in schools and abortion. The Freedom Union (UW) in Poland, the ODS and ODA in the Czech Republic and the Alliance of Free Democrats (SZDSZ) in Hungary belong to parties of the conservative-liberal type.

The *political left* we can divide in "hard" orthodox communist parties ("hard-line"), left social democratic trade unionist post-communist parties with roots in reform minded sections of the old communist parties and, finally, "soft" authentic, historical social democratic parties with roots going back before the communist take-over and forced unifications of the social democratic and communist parties.

The parties in the CECC's have been divided according to partly overlapping criteria. Thus, *neoliberal* pro-market and pro-western parties are contrasted to neo-*traditionalistic* particularistic as well as *social democratic* types of political parties. Thus the parties on the right are alternately regarded as progressive, traditionalist, liberal and authoritarian. On the basis of that we can distinguish between modern/rational versus neotraditional/nationalist parties. Furthermore, pro-market and pro-western parties are contrasted to market sceptical, religious, agrarian or populist socialist parties (Thomas, 1999:8).

Before 1989 "postcommunist" parties cooperated closely with the communist parties inside the national fronts, many "historic" parties had been outlawed under the communist rule and "reborn" after the fall of communism. We also find parties established almost spontaneously and therefore hardly placeable on a right-left scale.[10] In some cases, the memories about the uprisings against the communist regimes and the circumstances and the ways of demise of the old regime created specific "foundation myths", leading to "early freezing" of old socio-cultural systemic cleavages.

From the outset the deep underlying systemic cleavages were difficult to reconcile within a framework of compromise, give-and-take and acceptance of diversity. The political actors were disposed to view the "other" as constituting a threat to the moral order of which they tended to see themselves as the sole representatives. From this perspective, political parties were not inclined to trust their opponents with power, treat their time in office as the legitimate exercise of near-monopoly power, and regard the loss of office as cataclysmic (Schöpflin, in Lord (ed), 2000:63). Thus, the post-communist parties' come-back in the beginning of the 1990s were hard to accept for neo-traditionalists. Under those circumstances democracy did not become rutinized and "the only game in town".

The agrarian parties can not easily be placed on a right-left axis. In Poland the peasants' party PSL has constituted a centre-left party because of the historic background in the communist period and the cooperation with the left alliance SLD after 1990. In the 1990s the Christian-Democratic KDU-CSL took part in the ODS-led governments in the Czech Republic, after the 2002 election in social democratic led governments. In Hungary, the Smallholders Party (FKGP) has appeared as a class party only entering coalitions with the centre-right Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF) and FIDESZ.

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[10] Michal Klima, "Consolidation and Stablisation of the Party System in the Czech Republic", *Political Studies* (1998):496.

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Post-communist conflicts and cleavages

- (post)communism versus anticommunism (all countries)

- state versus church (e.g. Poland)

- liberalism versus cosmopolitism (e.g. Hungary)

- National ethnic conflicts (e.g. in Slovakia)

- Free market versus regulated market (the Czech Republic)

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The right-left dimension deviated from those known from established party systems in the West. In their lengthy essay, Lipset and Rokkan (1967) identified four social cleavages – centre-periphery, state-church, land-industry and owner-worker. Political parties must organise support and competition around cleavage. Once this demand has been met, a "freezing" of party systems may take place (McAllister and White, 2007:198). The collapse of state socialism led to several examinations of how cleavages become politicized in the newly emerging democracies. Normally parties played an instrumental central role by identifying, politicising and representing mainly social divisions.

Cleavages in the post-communist CEECs tended to be multidimensional and, as agued by *Miklos Haraszti*, to a great extent *cultural* and *political* (communist versus anticommunist).[11] Therefore some observers rightly spoke about specific "cleavages and conflict lines of transformation" (Hlousek etc., 2004:48). Kitschelt and his collaborators identified four divides around which post-communist elite politics might be organized: a *regime-divide* comprising attitudes to the system as a whole, an *economic-distributive* divide, comprising different attitudes to free market versus state intervention; a *national-cosmopolitan divide*, comprising attitudes to national particularism and internationalisation, and fourth a *socio-cultural* divide, comprising attitudes towards traditional social institutions versus individualism and libertarianism (Fowler, 2004, Kitschelt et al., 2001). The socio-economic divide is most pronounced in the Czech Republic, the regime divide most striking in Poland, while the national-cosmopolitan and socio-economic divide rather strong in Hungary.

 Ian McAllister and *Stephen White* (McAllister and White, 2007) conclude that most CEECs have avoided the territorial conflicts based on urban-rural and centre-periphery divisions which were common in established democracies in the early part of the twentieth century. In general, they say, social cleavages are similar to those of established democracies, with religion and class dominating.

In the first stage, the parties and individual participants to a large extent became representatives of the (post) communism-anticommunism conflict. Later, socio-economic cleavages, e.g. the conflict free market versus regulated market and the social and economic policy conflict became noticeable and that

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[11] Miklos Haraszti, "Young Bloods, Hungary's election results promise a new taste of political salami", *Transitions*, July 1998:48-52.

not only in the Czech Republic. Socio-cultural cleavages connected to ethnic conflicts and nation building we find in Slovakia due to a late and complex nation building, inevitably bringing to political parties rather unstable, "immature", "non standard" characteristics. Socio-economic cleavages have been rather weak in the case of Slovakia in particular in the first years after independence.

Anti-communism and the Right

Anti-communism has been defined differently by respectively nationalists, Christian-Democrats, liberals and populists. Right-liberal parties paid most attention to economic questions, in particular the shock therapy type transition from plan to market, and did not bring questions about "lustrace" ("purification") high on the political agenda. According to people like Tadeusz Mazowiecki in Poland and Jiri Dienstbier in the Czech Republic, the reckoning with the past should be structural, not a question about political revenge. In contrast, the conservative-traditionalists talked about "speeding up" purification of the system.

In other words, the different opinions about the past soon became questions about the future, including disagreements about the role of the Church. In addition, the conservative-liberals and the conservative-traditionalists were deeply divided as regards questions about state regulation and free market economy. Neoliberalism was a political reaction against the one party rule and the old plan system, transmitted to the CEEC's from the West, only to a minor extent rooted in society and not capable to overcome the first wave of social frustration.

The traditionalists we can place on the political right because of nationalist and patriotic slogans and semi-authoritharian and anti-modernistic attitudes, sometimes a protest against the ongoing pragmatisation and de-ideologisation of the political life. The political line was characterized by "pragmatisation without de-idelogization". The conservative-traditionalists spoke in favour of more state intervention, pro-family policy, social justice and to a considerable extent also expressed euroscepticism. The enemy was not only the "post-communists", but also neoliberal "traitors" inside their own political camp, mainly neoliberals and EU-federalists. The "wars in the top" inside the right-wing political camp inevitably enhanced radicalisation and polarisation at the symbolic and personal levels.

Among the national-*populists* anti-elite, anti-urban and anti-cosmopolitic attitudes were noticeable. The notion "the people" had a social meaning, leading back to the archaic agrarian society's old loyalty to the conservative ruling class. Many on the populist right considered politics as a "dirty business". Support to democracy they regarded as conditional because subjects about moral and etics, e.g. abortion, were regarded as being "above politics". Under communism they fought for political freedom, but after the victory over communism they did not necessarily love the new won freedom. Many politicians from that camp behaved like political "amateurs. However, a consolidated political arena could not be stabilised by identity-based politics. The fate of the government parties was primarily determined by good or bad governance and elections became more retrospective. Elections were no longer, as in the beginning, mainly referenda for or against the old system.

Finally, many right-traditionalist parties became divided in *moderate* Christian conservatives versus uncompromising *fundamentalists*. The split inside the Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF), between Jozsef Antall and the radical Istvan Csurka, Sajudis in Lithuania and the Union of Democratic Forces (UDF) in Bulgaria evidenced that "enemies" also existed inside ones own camp.

The dilemmas of the Left

In the year 1989 the socialist ideology was in a deep discredit. The demise of communism had discredited socialism in all its variants, be that as a discourse, as an utopia, as a revolution or as an inspiration for personal emancipation (Schöpflin, 2000:66). The prevailing neoliberal discourse was not seriously challenged. As rightly argued in a round table discussion in the Polish daily newspaper "Gazeta Wyborcza", the Left simply lacked a new "grand vision" for the future post-communist system.[12] It was primarily the failures on the political Right, and some nostalgia for the past, that gave the "successor parties" the election victories and political come-back's in the beginning of the 1990's.

From the outset, the polical scene was left over to former politically inexperienced dissidents, right-wing intellectuals, parts of the former nomenklatura and an empoverished middle class. Passing the "tears of valleys", a "retrospective utopia" and a "transformation fatigue" emerged, by many citizens the economic transformation was more felt as a "shock" than a "therapy". "Democracy"was identified with unstability and social unjustice. The new order did not, as originally expected, signify law and order, economic development and "catching up", better governance, more honesty in politics and – not to forget – social justice. Some explanations of the rise in support from the left were socio-economic, others primarily structuralist sociological. Examining the pattern of electoral support for successor parties in Hungary, Poland, East Germany and Russia *Jacek Lubecki* concludes that strictly economic explanations have taken a secondary importance (Lubecki, 2004). On the individual level, lack of religiosity and middle age (35-55 years of age) seemed to be the best predictors.

In Russia, with its low religiosity, the sucessor parties' supporters tended to be rural and older than fifty-five. He contends that regions, characterized by a predominance of large, landed estates and rural poverty in the pre-communist era, where masses of poor peasants and agricultural proletarians had experienced the communist period as a time of unprecedented socioeconomic advancement, have been the areas where successor parties have enjoyed the highest and most consistent electoral support. Agricultural proletarians and poor peasants, whether continuing to work on state and collective farms, migrating to the communist-built urban centres, making careers as party apparatchiks, or working on private plots of land owing to communist land reforms, became the backbones of the old communist order and core-voters of the post-communist successor parties (Lubecki, 2004:13, 43).

Ishiyama and Bozóki (Ishiyama and Bozóki, 2001) identify four different ways of postcommunist adaption: the national/populist, the orthodox communist, the modernization/reformist and the national communist way, in political practice meaning:

- The *Leftist-retreat* way where the successor party embraces its Marxist traditions (rejects the free market), repudiates western influence, and adopts the status of an anti-system opposition party. This pattern was exemplified by PDS in Germany and KSCM in the Czech Republic.

- The strategy of *pragmatic reform* that attempts to distance itself from "dogmatic Marxism" and redefines the party as a "European" social democratic party consisting of "experts", "technocrats" and "pragmatists".

- Or the *national-patriotic* strategy, which does not involve an attempt to redefine the party as a "European" modern social democratic party. Rather this strategy seeks to associate the party

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[12] 29 to 30 November, 1997.

with nationalism, a "modern" ideological alternative to communism, often "red and brown" coalitions or "nationalist-patriotic" and "fatherland" fronts like in Russia and Romania.

We should not forget that parties with roots in the old system despite the flight of many party members were in a position to maintain several old-new networks, retain more party members than the new movement parties, gain a higher institutionalisation, and in possession of greater financial means. At the same time, the postcommunist successor parties had to fight energetically to be recognized at home as well as abroad, e.g. in the social democratic Socialist International (SI).

After 1989 the communist successor parties as well as the historical social democratic parties were forced carefully to think out the new post-communist situation and define a new, different and more feasible "common sense socialism". In fact, they did succeed earlier and faster than at first expected. The main task was to free themselves from "hard-core" communists and appear to the electorate like authentic, pragmatic, professional and reform-minded standard political parties, arguing in favour of a more just and regulated market economy. The former communist parties, the reform-minded part of the nomenklatura, tended to walk along expressively technocratic and centristic pathways. From a conservative-traditionalistic point of view, the turn to the left signified a step back to old-new political economy, corruption, nomenklatura type capitalism and whitewashing of black money.

The Left became divided into two different groups, on the one hand *traditionalist* post-communist parties stubbornly adhering to the marxist-leninist and trade unionist princples, and on the other hand *"modern"* social democratic parties leaning towards West-European social-liberal values. Following the same line, *Krzystyna Skarzynska* calls attention to the *economically* orientated versus the modern *identity* orientated Left[13]. The first was the trade unionist group which adheres to classical welfare state policies, demand social justice, economic regulation and slower privatisation .
The "modern", technocratic, social-liberal and international left groups appealed mostly to the young and well educated living in the big towns. In other words, the motivation for voting left was primarily *social* and cultural. Both "modernisers" and "traditionalists" rejected demands of tough lustrace and decommunization. Basically, the "modern" left aimed to finish the project for modernisation that had been introduced in the late 1980s. As we shall see in the following, the two different lines could be found also *inside* the parties themselves. In general unreformed communist parties failed, if we do not take into account the stable performance of the Czech communists (KSCM) and the Slovak communists, who became represented in parlament at the 2002 election.

To a large extent, political strategies were determined by aims of *recognition* and *survival*. As noted by *John Ishiyama* and *András Bozóki* (Ishiyama and Bozóki, 2001), several communist successor parties succeeded to pas their own internal transformations. The post-communist parties' strategies of adaption to the new post-communist environment were changing considerably over time. Seen in that perspective, party change may constitute rational and purposeful moves responding to internal or external stimuli. Furthermore, major changes have been precipitated by poor electoral performance.

The take-over of governmental responsibilities by the Left came earlier than first expected. The participation in government had a strong deideologising and pragmatising impact. The limited freedom of manoeuvre in the economic and social policy turned the political Left closer to the political middle, however, at the same time moving away from the voters and the civil societies. Thus, at the elections in 1996 and 1997 in Bulgaria, Romania, Lithuania and Poland many transformation losers felt deceived

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[13] Used by Krzstof Pankowski, in "Od lewicowosci zawstydzonej do prawicowosci zagrozonej- zmiany w deklaracjach politycznych polakow i ciagu ostatnich pieciu lat", *Politicus*, no. 1-2(7), Warszawa:Biuletin Instytutu Studiów Politycznych PAN, 1995:55.

by "postcommunists". Therefore many dissatisfied voters decided to become "non-voters" or alternately to vote for right-traditionalist market sceptical parties. The electoral support for neoliberals remained rather low due to the "missing middle", i.e. the few "transition-winners".

Being in government, the policy of the Left was determined by the low freedom of manoeuvre in the economic and social policy marked by a specific post-communist path dependency. In contrast to socialist parties in Spain and Portugal the left in the CEECs had to change societies from plan to market under difficult conditions and without the social dimension promised in election campaigns. Thus, also the left governments were forced to pass the "valley of tears" before – slowly – moving to economic growth.

Coalition building and party alliances

Several *election party alliances* came forward, often with the aim to pass the threshold requirements,and rarely due to an approximation on the elite level or the policy and programme level. Inside the Solidarity in Poland and the Quadre Coalition (4K), the obstacles for establishing functional party federations turned out to be insurmountable. The main problem was to create sufficient loyalty and cohesion on actor level and on the policy and programme level. A common "federal" identity was impossible to establish. On the macro level, changes of party identities are explained as much by factors *internal* to the parties in the federation as by external factors.[14]

In several cases we are dealing with only loosely institutionalised *party-alliances* and *umbrella-parties* and negative party alliances focusing on *a common enemy* such as was the case in SDK in Slovakia (Meciar), AWS in Poland ("post-communists") and the Four Coalition (4K) in the Czech Republic (Klaus and Zeman). In those cases, systemic post-communist cleavages made the emergence of some coalitions impossible, even when, as in the case of SLD and Freedom Union (UW) in Poland, party programmes were quite similar (Raciborski, 2007:24). Party alliances were not able to obtain sufficiently stable and definitive party memberships, rather we are dealing with "participants in their actions" (Ágh, 1998:103). Often movement parties underlined the "original" and "ideal" unity between society and party, but in most cases they were organisationally fragile, transitory political phenomena, rarely functional political entities. The cult of spontaneity and the movement line may overcome division between everyday life and politics in the *broad, abstract* meaning, but mostly in the first stage of anomie, extraordinary politics and systemic "We-Them" cleavages.

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[14] John Ishiyama and András Bozóki, "Adaption and Change: Characterizing the Survival Strategies of the Communist Successor Parties, *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, Vol.17, No.3, September 2001:32-51.

Figure: types of cooperation and alliances among parties in the CEES

Types of cooperation/alliances	Characteristics	Examples
Transitory governments	Normally formed just after the demise of the old system and until the first free election, often set up according to a compromise between representatives from the old and new system, i.e. the opposition	The first non-communist government in Poland, the government in Czechoslovakia after the velvet revolution until the first free election May-June 1990
Negative party alliances	Cooperation between parties primarily based on a common enemy, i.e. the (post)communists and in spite of disagreements on both policy and actor level	Election Alliance AWS and the AWS-UW government in Poland, the SDK-led government in Slovakia after the 1998 election, Democratic Convention in Bulgaria, and (partly) the 4K in the Czech Republic
Tactical alliances	Party cooperation, with the primary aim to secure the parties, involved a better representation in parliament by minimising the waste of votes at elections	The first stage of the four party cooperation (4K) in the Czech Republic, "Przymierze Polski" in Poland at the municipal and regional elections in 1998.
Cartel agreements	Power sharing agreements, in which case the policy-content is neglected, the aim is to keep other parties out, the majority principle, "the winners take it all"	The agreements between ODS and CSSD in the Czech Republic after the 1998 election, especially the first "opposition agreement" just after the 1998 election
Imposed agreements	Cooperation between parties established after heavy pressure from the international society, i.e. the West, e.g. the EU	Difficult to find in the "pure" form, however the government established after the 1998 and the 2002 election in Slovakia can be taken as examples.
Free "self chosen" alliances	Several coalition alternatives exist, only few historical structural obstacles and no pressure from the international society. Agreement on policy level is of greatest importance, the closeness of political programmes and ideologies is rather high. In some cases old cleavages, which may be barriers for coalition building, are de-freezed or non-existing	The governmental coalition established after the 1998 in Hungary between FIDESZ and agrarian party FKGP. FIDESZ could have established a broad coalition with e.g. the Socialist Party (MSZP). After the 2002 Czech election the CSSD could have continued cooperation with ODS, but chose the Coalition (K) as partner in government
Historical compromises	Cooperation that overcomes deep-rooted historical, i.e. structural cleavages. Reflect de-freezing of old e.g. "We versus Them" cleavages	The governmental coalition between the Socialist Party (MSZP) and the liberal Alliance (SZDSZ) after the 1994 election in Hungary

The fragmentation and party splits after the first free elections gave rise to formation of *umbrella-* type political parties. Umbrella parties have an hegemonic core that dominates smaller parties. Small parties with prospects of losing parliamentary representation, may survive if they enter coalitions with stronger ("hegemonic") parties thereby passing thresholds requirements and obtaining seats in parliament. So the most important task is to minimize waste of votes caused by high election threshold requirements. We find umbrella-type inter-party cooperation on both the political right and left side of the political spectrum. The cooperation between MDF and FIDESZ in Hungary and between the Labour Union (UP) and SLD in Polan can be considered as "hegemonic" party-alliances. Before the 2002 election in Slovakia, new election alliances emerged. Some were transformed into "parties" because of changes in election rules, decided by the Meciar government.

After some time, the umbrella parties and party alliances may change into functional party federations with a strong decision centre and even become unified "parties". The question, however, is to what extent the parties involved are willing to give up their own identity. Unification and standardisation are difficult in particular for parties with a long historic tradition and and established party culture.

A third model was the establishment of *pure tactical alliances*. In this case the parties involved are capable of cooperating and putting forward common lists at the elections, but limiting themselves to coordination on the policy-level. They do not transform themselves into party *federations* that includes "shadow cabinets" and common political programmes such as was the case of AWS in Poland and SDK in Slovakia. The Smer-SD cooperation with HZDS and SNS after the 2006 election was to some extent imposed due to lack of alternatives, to some extent closeness on policy level. In other words, in purely tactical alliances, the parties involved maintain their own party identities and their own party institutions. For that reason, the day to day policy problems are often discussed "relaxed" and "practical". From the outset, the Four-Coalition (4K) in the Czech Republic and "Przymierze Polski" in Poland constituted "pure" tactical party-formations as they were neither distinct negative alliances or party federations such as in the case of AWS and SDK. Before the 2002 election, the 4K tried to transform itself into a functional party alliance with a common election program and also a "shadow cabinet", however, soon after the victory at elections several "wars in the top" erupted.

Dysfunctional party negative alliances are not kept together primarily by references to the common "enemy", e.g. "post-communists" (e.g. SLD in Poland) or "nationalists" (e.g. Meciar in Slovakia). The lack of loyalty and cohesion on actor level has been widespread. On the Polish Right several times policians changed party affiliation. In the case of SLD in Poland, the aim was the transformation to a party-alliance and later into a unified "standard party". In other cases no final decision was taken, e.g. as regards the "Quad Coalition" (4K) and "Przymierze Polski". To sum up, the ultimate aim of functional party alliances tended to be to establish functional party federations and in the longer term to be transformed into unified "standard" parties. However, most political groups tended to regard party alliances as tactical and *temporary* and for that reason many of them failed

Presidentialism

Parties and party systems performed differently in presidential and parliamentary systems. According to *Robert Elgie* (Elgie, 2005) the debate about the relative merits of presidentialism and parliamentarisme has a strong history. The debate was revived in 1990 with Juan Linz' articles about the supposed perils of presidentialism and the virtues of parliamentarism. Linz' conclusions, however, were criticised from many quarters. Party non-systems and weak party systems tended to create presidential or semi-presidential systems.

Presidential systems may seem to be rigid, as it is almost impossible to change the president in mid-term without bringing down the regime itself (Sakwa, 2002:104). Often the presidential veto and the reference of laws to the constitutional courts delay the political decision processes. The problem has been the greatest in case elected governments are denied financial laws and tax laws already adopted by a majority in parliament. The disagreements among parties, and the too many "wars in the top" within the parties before presidential elections suggest that direct election of presidents may reinforce party fragmentation and further stabilisation and crystallisation of the party systems.

Presidents strived to act "above politics" and "compensate" for the absence of strong parties, at the same time hampering consolidation of democracy. In order to strengthen their position, some presidents set up barriers for development of "anti-presidential" parties such as was the case e.g. in Russia, Ukraine

and Poland. Also *Steven Fish* (Fish, 2006) contends that parliaments and political parties do better under parlamentarian systems according to the slogan saying "Stronger legislatures, stronger democracies". Stronger legislatives and stronger parties, he argues, serve as a weighty check on presidents and are a more reliable guarantor of horizontal accountability than the too weak legislatures.

In Slovakia the rivalisation and disagreements between President Michal Kovac and Prime Minister Vladimir Meciar undermined the democratic process and gave rise to a heavily polarized political system. His successor Rudolf Schuster strived to become a mediator between the "Meciar" and the "anti-Meciar" block, but ended up as as destabilizer, in several cases speaking against government policies. The successor as president (Gasparovic) became a more careful "hands on" type of president less interfering in politics than his predecessor. Commenting on the political development in Slovakia, he admitted that the liberal reforms introduced by the Dzurina-government had generated more foreign investments and economic growth and secured Slovakia's membership of the EU. The main problem was high social inequality in society.[15] After the 2006, with the establishment of the Smer-SD led government cooperation between president and prime minister became smoother. President Václav Havel in the Czech Republic and president Lech Walesa in Poland criticized the behaviour of political parties in general questioning the role of political parties for the further consolidation of the new won democracy ("antipolitics"). The election of Lech Kaczynski as president of Poland at the 2005 election signified a change towards more pronounced presidential "activism" in domestic policy. As Law and Justice Party (PiS) also won the election to parliament and subsequently was able to form a new minority government no major "cohabitation" problems arised.

The Slovenian president Janez Drnovsek's activism in domestic politics and humanitarian efforts abroad made him no friends among the political elites at home, his aim for example to set up a civil society group in Slovenia and promote humanitarian and political peace initiatives for Kosovo and the Darfur province in Sudan. In the case of Kosovo, he put forward his own peace proposal before the UN sponsored negotiations about Kosovo had finished. In the case of Darfur he delivered a personal message to the Sudanese president without first asking Prime Minister Janez Jansa.[16] In Romania the parliament voted to suspend President Traian Basescu over allegations that he abused his position. I several months Romanian politics came to a stand-still because of the mutual dislike and distrust between the Prime Minister Calin Popescu Tariceanu of the National Liberal Party and the president, Traian Basescu, formerly of the Democratic Party. The 19 May a referendum was held on whether to impeach the president. Basescu won the referendum, but the voter turn out was low, only 42 pct. Most of those who went to the ballot box wanted a change and blamed in particular the socialists for Romania's corruption, and they saw in the plain-spoken Basescu a rare honest man[17].

A similar destructive power struggle almost paralyzed politics in Ukraine in spring-summer 2007. Both sides of the ongoing dispute demonstrated disregard for the rule of law. Thus Yushenko re-wrote the the constitution by claiming powers of dissolving the parliament on nebulous charges of "usurped power", apointing and firing judges single-handedly, replacing the general prosecutor, ignoring court decisions, and directly commanding Interior Ministry troops. For his part Yanukovych ignored valid presidential decrees and was accused of suborning a judge of the Constitutional Court, paying protesters to gather in Kyiv, and acting to circumvent constitutional limitations on the parliamentary majority formed by the Party of Regions, which Yanukovych heads[18].

[15] *Pravda,* 2.11.2005, "Gasparovic:Vláda dovládne".
[16] Ales Gaube, "Omnipresent President", www.tol.cz 20 February 2006.
[17] "Black Sea Captain", *Economist,* 29.1.2005.
[18] Ivan Lozowy, "Let the Games Begin", www.tol.cz 6 June 2007.

The election of Václav Klaus as president of the Czech Republic signified a move away from the "anti-politics" civic-based, Atlantic and clear pro-EU line of President Václav Havel. Thus, Klaus refused to give up his extraordinary tie to ODS, and did not hide his support to the parties in opposition to the social democrats. He repeatedly warned against restrictions on human freedom of state power and bureacracy and made clear that he saw such negative trends not only in the Czech Republic but also in Europe. He criticised some NGOs, who he said aimed to interfere in people's lives, in contrast to political parties without gaining any political mandate through elections, leading the country away from liberal democracy towards illiberal *post-democracy*. "Our country must be a free space for the consistent application of the civic principle in which democracy does not degenerate into becoming a post-democracy in which the republic of free citizens does not disintegrate under the pressure of various expedient groupings striving for political power – under the veil of noble statements and without any political mandate" – Klaus argued in his October 28 adreess 2005.[19] He also vetoed the government proposal about registered partnerships for sexual minorities.

Basically, the absence of constitutional rules and the difficult cohabitation between presidents and governments were greatly due to a weak democratic culture and party system polarisation . Several times the president and the Prime Minister belonged to different political parties. Thus, cohabitation "in the French way" took place in Poland under the post-communist government (Walesa versus the SLD-PSL government), the AWS-UW government (Kwasniewski versus the AWS-UW government), in Romania (Basescu versus the government and the prime minister) and Ukraine (Yuschenko versus the prime minister).

In some cases, intervention by presidents solved governmental crises and "deadlocked" political situations. This took place in 1993 when president Lech Walesa dissolved the parliament after a vote of non-confidence against Hanna Suchocka's government, and when Walesa intervened against Jan Olszewski's government. President Václav Havel's intervention in late 1996 that removed Václav Klaus as Prime Minister, was controversial from a constitutional point of view, but the outcome, the establishment of a caretaker government and snap elections, looked like the best solution.

Sometimes the formation of new parties took place after successful presidential campaigns. The rise of the Movement for the Construction of Poland (ROP) was initiated by Jan Olszewski, one of the candidates at the 1995 presidential election. Before the 1995 election Lech Walesa established the presidential party (BBWR), and after the 2000 presidential election the presidential candidate, Andrzej Olechowski together with some defectors from the Freedom Union (UW) and AWS established the liberal Civic Platform (PO). Normally "spontaneously" created party formations are badly institutionalised and vulnerable to internal splits. Actor rivalisation ("wars in the top") and political crafting were strong due to weak party institutionalization. In the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary with parliamentary systems until now no distinct presidential parties have entered parliament.

The new political elites

The establishment of political parties was closely connected to the emergence of new *political elites.* At the time of the demise of the old systems individual politicians were in the position to leave their mark on the political agenda (by "political crafting" and "political entrepreneurship"). *James Tool (Toole, 2003)* and *Jon Elster, Calus Offe and Ulrich K.* Preuss (Elster etc., 1998) argue that the development of political parties in new democracies was pushed forward by new political elites, emphasizing the significance of political elites and institutional agency for further consolidation af democracy.The first

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[19] www.ctk.cz 31.10.2005.

generation of political elites was created in the transition stage, the second strived to find a more long-term consensus concerning strategies for consolidation.

Political elites can briefly be defined as individuals and groups who, by occupying strategic positions in society, are able regularly and substantially to make an effect on the political decisions. By "substantial" I mean that without the impact of elites the political outcomes would have been considerably different. However some questions arise: *Who* in society occupy the most powerful posts and who in society are among those in society most capable of influencing and controlling those in power?

Prime Ministers, presidents and some ministers, especially the ministers of finance, obtained an important position in governments much due to the then chaotic extraordinary politics and the weak party institutionalisation. As we have seen, the parties were mostly established top-down and therefore they also became elite-driven. Quickly after the demise of the old systems new and different elite structures emerged. Special interest was attached to the new non-communist elites and the fate of the old communist nomenklatura. Many seeked an answer to the the crucial question of who would become the "winners" and who the "losers" in the new post-communist environment.

Research of political elites often benefits from theories about elite-*reproduction*, in which case systemic changes do not lead to renewal on the personal level, or elite-*circulation*, in which case the main focus is laid upon the instalment of *new* elites. In case changes at the elite level are modest or cosmetic we have to do with "within-private" regimes (Braun and Barany, 1999:8). Russia under Jeltsin is one of several examples of within-private regimes, as the new post-communist elites to a great extent came from the old nomenklatura. However, we also find within-regimes in the CEEC's.

As noted by *Jacek Raciborski,* the mechanisms of elite reproduction vary: from the hereditary principle, to the practice of cooptation, the most capable individuals into the elite, to various types of electoral mechanisms for converting financial, social and cultural capital into political capital. The elitist paradigm assigns political elites the main role not only in "settled times" and "ordinary politics", but also in situations of drastic social change and transformation of old statist authoritarian regimes into democratic systems with market economies. As democracy and market economy become established, the relative strength of the *government elite* increases, while the relative strength of the parliamentary elites, party elites, and other parts of the political elite declines. At the same time power will become more dispersed and diffuse (Raciborski, 2007:18-19).

Many, including *A. Lijphart* (Lijphart, 1977) underline the importance of elites for stabilisation and development of pluralistic societies, not least in cases where ethnic and social divisions are deep and tend to enhance polarisation and political conflicts.[20] In this respect Yugoslavia is an important case. High elite fragmentation deepens polarisation and enhances party competition. Crucial was to defreeze political polarisation and try to install a consociational type of democracy. In short, a high degree of elite *consensus* is important for political stability and further consolidation of democracy.

John Highley distinguishes between consensually united and ideocratically united elites.[21] Basically consensually united elites share the same views on the development of society, which means that the different networks and elite groups co-exist quite harmoniously. In contrast, ideocratically united elites share common attitudes and belief systems. The conservative-traditionalist elites typically were ideocratically united as long as the common enemy, the (post)communists, was alive. However, often

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[20] A. Lijphart (1977), *Democracy in Plural Societies: A comparative Exploration",* Berkely, California: University of California Press.
[21] John Highley, in Braun and Barany, 1999:52-53.

the ideocratically united behave intolerantly in order to secure for them selves the sufficient support, if necessary by non-democratic means, sometimes by use of force.[22] Not all elites favoured the establishment of democratic regimes. Some chose the non-democratic path because civil society or external forces did not exercise any effective influence. If elites are accountable to civil society it is likely that the elites will press for some form of democratic system (Gill, 2007:615).

From the mid 1980s, with the changes taking place in the Soviet Union, the old elites concentrated on strategies of survival. Since 1989, the old nomenklatura has on the one hand been accused of usurping political power. On the other hand we also find those who have been warning against "demonising" the role of the nomenklatura, according to the argumentation that a considerable part of the old nomenklatura contributed to the smooth transition from plan to market and the consolidation of democracy.

Before 1989, the old elites were forced to act under constantly growing insecurity. After the demise of the one-party systems, a part of the modern part of the old nomenklatura strived to exchange political power with economic power. At the same time the cohesion within the nomenklatura declined incessantly. In the 1980s in Hungary a great part of the nomenklatura undermined the old system as many from the old elite listened more to the advice from the IMF and the World Bank than to the ruling communist parties. Others adopted a mixed "new-old" attitude. The attitude to the introduction of democracy and market economy was positive, but most people did not reject all in the old system.

After 1989 different type political leaders emerged. Thus, *Attila Ágh* differentiate between four groups (Àgh, 1998):

- *"Politicians of morals"*, who played a significant role in the first stage. Mostly they appealed to patriotic and national values with references to their own "heroic past". As politicians they acted reserved, improvised, morally, non-professionally, almost aristocratically, often captured by a specific "liberation myth". Poland's Jan Olszewski and the Czech Republic's Václav Benda belonged to this first group.

- *"Politicians of historical vision"*. Often politicians from that group left the political scene after the demise of the old system. Before 1989 they had not been active as dissidents. As politicians they often based their arguments on idelogies and discourses dating back to pre-communist times. Before 1989, they had entered into compromises with the power holders. The political style was arrogant, non-compromise seeking and to some extent unprofessional. Former prime minister in Hungary Józef Antall and the Christian Democrat Jan Carnogursky in Slovakia belong to that group. Also many politicians in the Baltic countries shared the feeling of fulfilling a historical mission by reestablishing independence after 50 years under communist rule. Nonetheless, many from that group had been politicians under the old system, sometimes expelled from communist parties due to lack of party discipline.

- *"Politicians by chance"*, i.e. persons who were "carried" into politics. Several times people from that group became an embarassment for the further consolidation of democracy due to their aggressive self-promoting style onesidedly aiming at a political career. Several from that group became involved in political scandals, and many were using absurd, often populist and xenofobic polical slogans. Stanislaw Tyminski, Lech Walesa's rival candidate at the 1990 presidential election, Miroslav Sladek, the leader of the right-wing populistic republican party in

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[22] John Highley, in Braun and Barany, 1999:52-53.

the Czech Republic, Istvan Czurka, a right-wing nationalist in Hungary, and Vladimir Zjirinovski, leader of the populist Liberal Democratic Party in Russia, belonged to that group.

- *The old nomenklatura* has done well. Especially the modern part of the nomenklatura made a good showing. The conservative "hard-liners" had either resigned from politics or turned into nationalists. Poland's president and former leader of the left- wing SLD, Aleksander Kwasniewski, and Hungary's former foreign minister, prime Minister Guyla Horn, belonged to the "modern" technocratic accommodating part of the nomenklatura.

- Finally, Attila Ágh mentions the *new professionals*, a mixture of old and new, mostly consisting of experts and professionals from the old regime or youngsters without any links back in time. Among the first generation of professionals and people from the "second tier" of the old system, we find Václav Klaus, leader of the liberal party ODS, and the later president of the Czech Republic, and Leszek Balcerowicz, former Minister of Finance, leader of the liberal Freedom Union (UW) and the later governor of the Polish National Bank.

In agreement with Atilla Ágh, *András Bozóki* (Bozóki, 1994) from the Central European University in Budapest, breaks down the new elite in this way:

- The first group consisted of *professionals*, "born" into politics, who recognises their new role in society, were able to adapt themselves to new situations and find their bearings in a new and much more unpredictable situation. Many reform-minded communists belonged to this group.

- The next group was *those doing "missionary work"*, i.e. persons, who felt they performed a historical mission, often writers and cultural personalities, who were "carried" into politics. For this group politics was not a goal in itself, the goals were rather metapolitical.

- To the third group belonged *the "divided"*, i.e. people who were not power oriented and had an unclear vision about their own roles in politics and the political future. Many from this group resigned from politics along with the professionalisation or bureaucratisation of politics.

- Finally, there were those who after the breakthrough in 1989 resigned from politics. Some returned to their former work, others moved to the new private sector or became political advisors.

Furthermore, it is important, how many *resources* and how great a "capital" that belongs to the the different elite groups (Szelelyi et al., 1995). As regards "capital", we can differentiate between four different types:

- *Economic capital*, i.e. the possession of property and access to financing, state subsidies, etc.

- *Cultural capital*, e.g. education.

- *Societal capital*, e.g. close networking horisontally and vertically.

- The ability to *convert capital* by using the already established networks to exchange political with economic capital.

Furthermore, we can make a distinction between "laissez faire", "transactional" and "transformational" political leadership (Heywood, 1998:334). In the case of laissez-faire leadership we have to do with delegation of political power to lower levels of decision making; in the case of transactional leadership we are dealing with a "hands-on" leadership that emphasize pragmatic goals, party unity and party cohesion. In the case of transformative leadership, the main emphasis has been laid on visions, inspiration and charismatic leadership, the closest as possible contact between elites and voters by use of political mobilisation aiming to carry through the necessary reforms of society.

The parties were established top-down and for that reason became to a great extent elite governed. In most cases the new elites were in short of institutional capacity to translate visions and strategies into action. In the first stage, the leadership was mostly "hands on" as the new elites had to formulate a new and complex project for transition under high insecurity. Gradually political leadership became more transactional, but still political decisions were taken without any close contact to voters and party members. As far as the CEEC's are concerned "agency of leadership" and "political crafting" still played an important role. However, institutional structures became more important when moving from extraordinary politics to more "settled times" and "ordinary politics" (Innes, 2001:112).

It is difficult to say, which of the above-mentioned elite groups became winners or losers in the new post-communist system. So what we can say is that the old, but at the same time modern part of the nomenklatura altogether did rather well. The former communists belong to the fourth group in Ágh's classification and the first group in Bozóki's. Before 1989 many former communists had gained considerable political experience, but after 1989 they were pushed into the defensive. The "moral politicians" lost influence after the come-back of the post-communists, but some came back to power after the political pendulum had moved back to the right. Nevertheless, moral politicians and nationalistic minded intellectuals had to give way to pragmatists. The new pragmatists and post-communist technocrats were mostly recruited from the second rank, i.e. outside the old nomenklatura, but also outside the dissident circles. Only rarely did the former dissidents belong to the transition winners.

Some regretted, others accepted the moral politicians' loss of influence in politics. In all the CEECs intellectuals had played an important and even "mythical" role, as regards the Czech Republic people like Palacký, Jungmann, Masaryk and Havel. At the conference held in Budapest in 1996 on "Intellectuals between morals and politics", the mayor of Budapest, the liberal *Gabór Demszky*, said that in Hungary several former dissidents and nationalistic minded intellectuals had left politics, for the new Hungary was no longer in need of "educators" and "parents". *Adam Michnik* shared that view and criticised former dissidents for not being able to adapt themselves to the new times, "Our heroes fought for freedom, but they did not learn to love it".[23]

The peaceful "revolutions" in 1989 were governed by small counter elites of mainly intellectuals. Like Balcerowicz in Poland and Klaus in the Czech Republic some were economists and technocrats. In Slovakia under Meciar and Bulgaria clientelistic structures came to play a significant role, binding together the economic and political sphere. Two things the new non-communist leaders had in common were possession of political power and a lack of political experience and professionalism. In the words of *Edmund Wnuk-Lipinski*, the new leaders were on the alert for "elite conspiracy" that threaten their new-won political power, whether that be from representatives of the old system or

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[23] Demszky and Michnik's views are mentioned in Tismaneanu in Antohi and Tismaneanu, 1999:153-154.

people inside their own political camp.[24] The first generation non-communist leaders were mostly ideocratically united, but also personal networks were important. Individual persons like Václav Klaus and Leszek Balcerowicz left their stamps on the political agenda, acting as "political entrepreneurs".

Before 1989 many new leaders had been dissidents living too long away from "real life". They had not been elected democratically, rather they were "appointed" due to the extraordinary situation and with a considerable political support from the West. The room for manoeuvre was great due to political capital. However, the common enemy and the personal networks came to play a greater role than ideologies and programmes. The disagreeements and "wars in the top" gave rise to legitimacy problems. Evidence showed that in the new post-communist system a dissident background did not in itself constitute a great political resource. Nevertheless, dissidents like Havel, Göncz and (in the first stage) Walesa became popular also as presidents. In several countries, the presidents gained a greater popular support than Prime Ministers and "party people". In particular in the case of Hungary and the Czech Republic, the presidents aimed to act catch-all, to be "above politics".

As the transformations moved to the stage of more ordinary politics, the political elites had to be more inclusive, and the negative sum games had to be replaced by a positive sum game. To move in that direction, also a neutral and well-educated bureaucracy was needed. The power vacuum just after 1989 gave bureaucrats, economists and financial experts a considerable influence. The most crucial was to enhance the social and political dialogue and weaken the position of the new-old clientura by installing more younger, neutral and well educated people in the most important jobs in society.

The reform-minded parts of the nomenklatura were able to "twist themselves" in the new chaotic system. Some joined political parties, even right-wing parties, others converted old political power to economic power. Those strategies of survival were in particular important in case of privatisations.

The polical learning process became more painful than extpected. Some problems had to do with the difficulties of moving from working "underground" to working "above the surface", i.e. legally. With political freedom new coalitions and networks emerged linking the political parties and the new cultural and economic elites together. A great part of the efforts was aimed at promoting a sufficiently high loyalty and cohesion and demobilising the civil society and making it responsible and accountable.

At the first elections the political leaders were not elected democratically. They were "appointed", i.e. accepted by most people because of the underground work and the support from the West. Some became charismatic leaders, e.g. Lech Walesa and Václav Havel. After some time a depersonalisation (Havel) or erosion of charisma (Walesa, Meciar) set in. The first stage with high freedom of manoeuvre was much due to the political capital despite several constitutional and institutional limitations. However, the political capital was more short-term than first expected.

For many citizens the new political leaders reminded them about the former communist, at least as far as political style and communication was concerned. The new power structures were signified by personal contacts and elite networks. In general, the lack of political experience among the new leaders was problematic as the majority of the electorate preferred disciplined and professional politicians, if necessary people with a background in the reform-minded faction of the old nomenklatura.

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[24] Gerd Meyer (Tübingen), "Towards a Political Sociology of Postcommunism: The Political Cultures of East Central Europe on the Way to Democracy", in: Andrzej W. Jablonski, Gerd Meyer (eds), 19996:22-25. The subject is also mentioned by Edmund Wnuk-Lipinski in an interwiew in the weekly *Wprost*, 7 February 1999 ("Dolina Lez"):19-20.

The cohesion among former dissidents did not last long. "Wars in the top" emerged endangering further democratisation. The split and fragmentation took place at an unfortunate point in time, for under the prevailing transition anomie and economic recession, political truce and concensus were needed.

Many new parties were led by a narrow circle of intolerant elites. Thus, the originally consensually united elites became dysunified. Over-ideologisation and political infighting aimed at accumulation of political power prevailed. Differences of opinion and political debates were not considered as political resource, rather as an attack on the nation, the unity of the party and the party leader. Communication failed not only inside parties and among political elites, but also between the political elites and most citizens.[25] Lack of contacts and responsiveness to the civil societies turned out to be an obstacles for further consolidation of democracy by increasing social og political frustrations.

From the outset radicalisation and extrication worked as an admission card to the new post-communist elite (Marshalek (ed.), 1992:78), but from the mid 1990's the first revolutionary elite generation gave space for the *second generation* of liberal minded reformers. In other words, the second generation post-transitional "elite of consolidation" replaced the first generation of "elite breakthrough" (Frentzel-Zagórgska, in Wasilewski (ed.), 2001:11). Thus, a more professional political class emerged. Many from the second generation elite were well educated having been "lower noble class" of late communism. As noted by *Ákos Róna-Tas* probaly the same people had made a political career also in case the old state socialist systems had not collapsed.[26] They were typically ambitious, flexible and able to adapt them selves to the new fast changing post-communist system, in many cases able to turn political into economic capital and pragmatism into political cynics.

From *1993-1994* new opportunities emerged for the "modern", pragmatic and accommodating part of the old nomenklatura. Many were technocrats who wanted to finish the modernisation project started but not finished in the 1980s. Some had been young without close links to the top echelons of the state socialist systems. The political socialisation they had obtained in socialist systems in decay, working in the "second echelon" until the opportunities for a political career arose. Often the relations within this group were based on elite settlements going back to the procedures and discoursive practices in the years leading to the breakthrough in 1988-89. The main problem for the the new "post-communist" leaders was the low freedom of manoeuvre in the economic and social policy.

In order to improve the quality of governance, neutral and uncorrupt civil servants were needed. Crucial was to develop viable alternative government coalitions in order to enhance effective democratic governance. If this did not happen, protracted crises and stalemate post-electoral situations evolve (Strmiska, 2001:29-30). Problems of governance increased due to low wages in the public sector and constant delays of regional and local reforms. The high elite-circulation enhanced politisation with close links between the civil servants, the new (semi)private sector and the new political elites. In Hungary there was even talk about "italianisation" of the transformation due to widespread corruption, black economy, clientelism and mafia-like clienturas, i.e. "political machines" reminding of the oligarchic system in Russia and other CIS countries. Slovakia, under the rule of Vladimir Meciar is an illustrative case of clientura based political economic systems.

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[25] See e.g. Jiri Pehe, "Ceske demokraticky system postrada nekretere dimenze", *Hospodarske Noviny* 20 January, 1998:6.
[26] Ákos Róna-Tas, "Path Dependence and Capital Theory: Sociology of the Post-Communist Transition", *East European Politics and Societies*, Vol. 12, No. 1, Winter 1998:113.

Party institutionalisation

Maurice Duverger (Duverger, 1954) belongs to those emphasizing the significance of party institutionalisation and party organisation. Changes in the relative strength of the parties are minor when political parties are in possession of a relatively strong organisation and close bonds between party and voters. By contrast, in the case of weak institutionalisation, parties may be dominated "from outside" by relatively small elite groups. In the case of high institutionalisation, parties are better able to mobilise core voters.

Close links between parties and voters enhance party loyalty and make better election results certain. In some cases, the voters even identify the parties with party institutions. In case the institutions are strong, voters are in possession of structures, to which they are able to make references and orient themselves (Mair (ed), 1990-72). Furthermore, well-organized parties are associated with less factionalism and splintering, can prevent succeful entries into the system of new parties and be associated with lower levels of party system fragmentation (Spirova, 2005:615).

From the outset, historical parties with roots in the old state socialist system had a relatively strong organisation and closer bonds to the voters due to inherited pervasive structures of their predecessors. However, new non-communist parties achieved higher party institutionalisation and political training because of state support and support from foundations and parties in West-Europe and the US.

The subject of institutionalisation is included in several analyses of political parties. The Polish *Ewa Nalawejko* (Nawalejko, 1997) belonges to those who underline processes that make an impact on party institutionalisation. Special emphasis she lays on the internal dynamics. Institutionalisation, she argues, involves those processes reflected in well-known practised and recognisable patterns of behavior. Institutionalisation controls behavioural patterns thanks to formal and unformal rules and norms. After some time the patterns of behaviour become more internalised due to bureaucratisation and routinisation of behaviour. Institutionalisation not only reflectsl but also "produces" and reinforces cleavages,. *Aleks Szczerbiak* (Szczerbiak, 2001) belongs to the few who carried out some studies of party institutionalization. As he points out, until today rather little attention has been paid to the internal party dynamics, as this subject has been relatively difficult to analyse due to the low access to data.

Party institutionalisation is closely connected with mechanisms of political power between each section of the party, e.g. the parliamentary group and the party apparatus. Institutionalisation takes place *internally* by introducing regular decision procedures, or *externally* by linkages to society. In other words, institutionalisation can take place also without closer links to social interests. Institutional structures normally play a strong role when moving to interest-based "ordinary politics". Shall party institutionalisation become successful, more internalised rules must come forward as regards distribution of power. At the same time, routinisation and legalisation of political enterprise can be observed. Thus, institutionalisation tends to create detailed and internalised rules and norms for cooperation, conflict resolution and control. Political demobilisation and lower political participation are mostly the results of, not the reasons for higher institutionalisation.

Legitimation is important, as legitimacy provides institutions with more freedom of action. Institutionalisation was most difficult in the first stage of postcommunism with high voter volatility, functional and government overload, antipolitical attitudes and overparliamentarisation. Given the weakness of trust in institutions inherited from the past, the existing democatic order became largely accepted at the symbolic level, but less so in concrete terms (Schöpflin, in Lord (ed), 2000:63). The first

stage of institutionalisation took place under high insecurity and transition anomie. An institutional vacuum prevailed, and the political parties were strong enough to fill out the vacuum.

Linkages to social cleavages are not in themselves sufficient to promote a consolidation of democracy. Parties also must be sufficiently strong organisation ally in order to bring the political messages to the electorate. Unfortunately insufficient organisational capacity and poor party finances gave rise to internal splits and weak policy formulation. Formally institutions were in place, but the *attitudes* that strengthen institutions and make them functional did not exist. Under those circumstances the political agenda could easily be decided by other institutions like the presidency, foreign institutions, donors, criminal structures and other institutions outside democratic control ("shadow institutionalisation"). The worst case scenario is a long-term weakening and marginalisation of the political parties. Low party institutionalisation unfortunately reinforce party control over the mass media, in particular from the side of the political parties in power.

In Poland institutions such as the church and some trade unions were able to penetrate the political process and some parties due to strong organisation and close personal links. In Hungary independent institutions like the national bank, the constitutional court and the ombudsman institution imposed several restrictions on the law making process, fostering a "fragmented democracy" and many horizontal checks and balances. In fact, we were dealing with a too early and too sofistcated institutionalisation. In Russia and Ukraine financial oligarchs, networking, clientura's and other structures beyond democratic control arrogated to themselves a menacingly strong position thereby weakening the political parties' the freedom of action and also the parties' links to civil society. To some extent, non democratic structures originated in the old state socialist system.

In order to get *meaning* for the population, institutions must be strong enough to internalise the norms necessary for cohesion and futher consolidation.[27] For this to happen the institutions have to be capable to adapt themselves to the political environment, shape the optimal cognitive frames of references and make complex realities more simple for the citizens. Only in this way sufficient loyalty and legitimacy is obtained, for a new-won democray can only be consolidated, if the democratically elected institutions are sufficiently strong to fulfil their responsibilities and ensure rule of law and good governance. In other words, party organisation constitutes an important intervening variable. Even political ideologies can be rooted sufficiently in society without high institutionalization.[28]

The question has been raised as to what extent high institutionalisation constitutes a necessary condition for democratic consolidation in young democracies, which are subject to fast changes and in which case the most important is flexibility.[29] In the longer term, however, higher institutionalization becomes a necessity.

Thus the question has been raised, whether in the early stage political institutions constituted an independent variable decisive for the formation and the development of political parties, or whether institutions better can be regarded as an mechanic reflection of the division of power between the parties and the most important cleavages in the societies concerned (Ware, 1996:197). High institutionalisation may, however, be the result of, not a precondition for democracy. Within the parties, top-down constructions and centralisation of power around a small group could be observed.

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[27] See Claus Offe, "designing Institutions for East European Transition", in Jerzy Hausner, Bob Jessop and Klaus Nielsen (eds), 1995.

[28] Underlined e.g. by Giovanni Sartori, e.g. in the article "The Sociology of parties: A critical Review", in Mair (ed.), 1990:169.

[29] This question has been raised e.g. by Radoslaw Markowski in "Party System Institutionalisation and Democratic Consolidation: On Idiosyncracies in the Polish Case", in Frenzel-Zagórska and Wasilewski, 2000:65-89.

To a large extent they were financed by the state, the catch-all slogans have been powerful and suited to East European tradition. More than members, the parties needed voters, who they can obtain better by using modern means of communication than by a cohesive party structure (Spirova, 2005:602). Somtimes the party structures become "stratarchial", in which case elements in the party organisation became autonomous aiming at the highest possible freedom of action. This development has mostly taken place inside party federations such as AWS in Poland and SDK in Slovakia, both characterized by dysfunctional decision-making structures and internal divisions.

As agued by *Paul G. Lewis* and *Radzislawa Gortat* also West-European parties have moved away from maximation of the number of party members and high institutionalisation towards focusing on election success, i.e. maximation of votes.[30] Therefore political parties in the East remind us of Kirchheimer's "catch-all, Panebianco's "electoral- professional" and Katz and Mair's "cartel parties" than of Duverger's mass parties (Szczerbiak, 2001:101). *David M. Olson* (Olson, 1997) contends that evidence from the first 10 years of transition shows that party organisations are developed by small groups of activists with broadly formulated and vague political messages and slogans. Thus, institutionally several parties remind us of the US type catch-all elite or cadre parties.

The heavy law making burden changed parties into specific post-communist cartel parties. Due to higher institutionalisation more power was left over to the party apparatus and small professional elite groups. Political strategies and policy-making took place strikingly top-down. Unlike in the first stage, the parliamentary groups were no longer the most crucial decision- making and agenda-setting institutions. Under changing elite-voter linkages institutionalisation tends to be weak. Most non-communist parties aimed to appear to the public as broad catch-all parties. The opposite was the case for the post-communists. After the departure of the "hard-line" communists, the SLD in Poland gained a more functional party organisation and a broader voter profile.

As in western countries, most parties preferred to appeal directly to the voters via the electronic media bypassing party structures and party members.[31] The party congresses concentrate their efforts on elections and personal matters, and local party organisations mostly became passive tools for top-down decisions. However, local party organisations tended to gain some autonomy in in local affairs, especially after the introduction of administrative and regional reforms. Thus, in most countries "local barons" and local "party kings" emerged. Local elections may have a spillover on national elections in particular provided these local and national elections are not held at the same time (Spirova, 2005:614). However, the central party apparatus were in possition of some means of intervention in local politics, e.g. at the appointment of candidates and the "screening" of party members. The organisational structure consisted of three or four levels (municpial, district, regional, and national).

Low party institutionalisation was to some extent overcome by more polical learning. Furthermore, most parties established commitees or party annexes dealing with subjects such as youth questions, women and environment. After the election defeats, the parties on the Polish, Slovakian and Hungarian political Right draw the conclusion that elections can not be won by use of symbolic politics. At the 1997 and 1998 elections, electoral alliances and umbrella party constructions (AWS, SDK and FIDESZ-MDF) were set up in order to unite the right wing parties and minimise the waste of votes. However, anticommunist alliances like AWS and SDK constituted negative alliances without a sufficient unity on policy and programme level and the necessary cohesion and loyalty on elite level.

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[30] Paul G. Lewis and Radzislawa Gortat, "Models of Party Development and Questions of State Dependence in Poland", *Party Politics*, Vol. 4, 1995:599-608.
[31] Miroslawa Grabowska, "Political Parties: Social Representative or Agent of Change", *Polish Sociological Review* 4 (116), 1996:307-322.

The low number of party members was not only caused by a lack of incentives to become a party member, the political parties also showed a low interest in gaining new members. More important than "solid membership" was to build around the party a "periphery" of supporters and sympathizers. In addition, the parties secured favourable financial resources thanks to subsidies from the state, to some extent making fees from party members insignificant. In addition, many members may mean more conflicts and divisions in particular in parties, which were not kept alive by a common party history and common ideologies and programmes. Expanding membership was considered as an oldfashioned phenomenon belonging to a different era and maybe even associated with the old communist parties. In other words, parties tended to strive for voters rather than members, just like more attention was paid to media presence and electoral campaigns (Spirova, 2005:610). In the new TV and IT age, party members do not necessarily play the role as the most important means of communication with the voters (Wightman, in White, Batt and Lewis (eds), 1998:163).

The assumption that better party organisation leads to better election outcomes is not confirmed. Thus, at the 1994 election in Hungary, the post-communist Socialist Party (MSZP) gained more than half seats in parliament in spite a fall in number of party members. At the 1993 election in Poland, the SLD did well in spite of the fact that the number of members of the peasant party PSL, the junior party in government, was three times higher. Nevertheless, in the long term parties with a small membership base more easily face insurmountable difficulties in particular in times of crisis and decay.

Several parties aimed to compensate for low institutionalisation by a high level af activities on the macroeconomic level, in particular in parliament. High activity in parliament, however, led to more disagreements on leadership level, reinforced "elitisation " and enhanced low party discipline. In the end, lack of discipline and too many "wars in the top" drained political political parties of energy.

High institutionalisation inevitably enhances *input-articulation*, which means that the political demands are put forward in the decision-making stage. In the first stage, the input-side was grossly downgraded, thus enhancing total articulation, outputarticulation and democratic overload (Heywood, 1998:80). Contributing to this development were the hermetically closed decision- making procedures.[32] The centralisation of decision-making was due to the problems connected with absorption of demands from outside, the aggregation of demands and convertion of demands to political decisions. Low institutionalisation was not only a party phenomenon, but signified also interest organisations, including trade unions. In general, the parties were not in a position to "sell themselves" to the electorate due to bad party press, bad profiles in media, too few party members and low administrative capacity. Under those circumstances the political debates become zero sum games and the political life permanent election campaigns. Between parties, as well as within parties, the aims to provide more consultative forms of political articulation did not succeed.

Party culture and party life

The party culture is closely connected with collective memories, in the case of the CEECs political battles before and under communist rule. Collective memories constitute a specific "pantheon" and "demonology", sometimes even a "foundation myth" going back to the formation of the party, the role of previous leaders and their contribution to the development of parties. Sometimes party culture is connected with former enemies of the party and "cowards", who had betrayed the party and evaded crisis situations. Such memories might concern the persecutions under the communist rule or the communist parties' persecutions back in the 1930s and under nazi rule. Also memories about "traitors"

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[32] Bohdan Szklarski (1997): *Semi-Public Democracy, articulation of interests and system transformation,* Warszawa: Institute of Political Studies, Polish Academy of Sciences, PAN ISP:65-66.

and enemies of the party who at some time in history had left the party and scoffed at the party, may foster solidarity and cohesion with a distinct "we versus them"-based foundation.[33]

To party culture in the broad meaning belong songs, flags, logos and narratives about the past, i.e. the *party tradition*. Party institutionalisation provides the party with symbols, party press and norms and rules for decision-making and behaviour in the broad sense, being the cement that keeps the party together. A strong party culture may reinforce cohesiveness and foster a lively and democratic party debate.

The party culture we shall see as a part of the culture in society in general. In the case of the Czech Republic, some observers call attention to the general lack of ability to organise, the low solidarity in society and the widespread opportunist behavior. Furthermore, low political participation and the tradition of antipolitics had an outmost negative impact on party membership and internal party life.

The experiences from the dissident period, i.e. the working "underground", fostered a certain style of political action. Some parties, e.g. Solidarity, was in possession of a unique *liberation myth*. By contrast, the liberation myth was less striking in the Czech Republic, where the breakthrough in 1989 was very short. Before 1989, the opposition had been badly organized. Anti-political attitudes were strongly rooted.in particular among intellectuals fostering elite parties with weak linkages to civil societies. Like in civil societies the internal party life was not assigned an important role by most party leaderships.

In the case of Hungary the party culture was to a minor extent linked to the fight against the old regime, that had been liberal and nationally accommodative and with the market economy already partly tested before 1989. From the outset the Czech people's perception of democracy and democratic values was rather individualistic.[34] Moreover, programmatic and institutional shortcomings made politics almost "issueless" (Thomas, 1999:9). In Poland the political culture has been more religious and collectivist than in the Czech Republic, inspired by tenets of the Catholic church. The historic memories became a significant resource, especially in the case of Solidarity in Poland.

Thus feelings of solidarity from the time of fighting against the old regime was strong, in Poland going back to the uprising in 1956 and Solidarity in 1980-1981. As a member of Solidarity you became so to say a part of a bigger community ("Us" contrasting "Them"). The many different party rituals reflected the deeply rooted party culture, e.g. in the case of group participation in church services and carrying party emblems. After the state of emergency in December 1981, many carried the "pornik", the opposition badge. On the 3rd of May, the anniversary of the 1791 constitution and the anniversaries of the Polish uprisings in 1830, 1863 and 1944 (the Warsaw uprising) and the murder of the priest Popiluski were also marked. The colours of the Polish flag were also the colours of the Solidarity banner. Thus, patriotic and religious rituals linked to the memories of the fight against communist suppression were re-activized in election campaigns.[35] Solidarity in Poland was strong on the *symbolic* level, but unfortunately too weak and divided both organisationally and institutionally.

For the *(ex)communist* parties, the years working underground before and during the Second World War had a special meaning, also the first years after World War II. During the Stalin years, most political activities were concentrated on the fight against "counterrevolutionaries" inside as well as outside communist parties. The friendship with the Soviet Union, the showdown between communist

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[33] Michal Waller, "Party inheritance and party identities", in Pridham and Lewis (eds) (1996:25.
[34] See e.g. interview with Jiri Musil in *Gazeta Srodkowoeuropejska*, in *Gazeta Wyborcza* 19 February, 1995:13.
[35] Wlodzimierz Modzelewski (1989), "Symbolika "Solidarnosci"", in "Studia nad ruchami spolecznymi tom. II", Uniwersistet Warszawski, Institut Socjologii, Warszawa.

leaders and "class enemies" enhanced internal cohesion, but at the same time fear and insecurity as today's friends may become tomorrow's enemies. Also festive days and revolutionary songs became an integral part of the party culture. After 1989, the *fight for recognition* and the pressure from non-communist groupings and parties fostered cohesion and party institutionalisation.

The new *non-communist parties* had to establish a party culture almost from scratch. In contrast to the (post)communists they could do so with "clean hands" without "dead bodies in the cargo". The roots of new, broad, anti-communist civic movements went back to the fight against the old system. Unlike the *historic* non-communist parties, the new movement parties could not survive only by references to history. The party history and the resistance against the state socialist system occupied an important place, but did note ensure the necessary internal cohesion and consensus on the elite level.

The reborn *social democratic parties* did their best to link themselves to party traditions back to the time before the forced unification with the communist parties after WW II, however in most cases without any great success. The historic social democratic parties suffered because they had not played a leading role in opposition the communists. Therefore also a common pantheon and collective memories were less developed. Due to internal fragmentation, generation gaps and disagreements about the policy line, at the first free elections the historical social democratic parties were often surpassed by reformed communist parties, which were able to carry through internal transformations.

For historic reasons, conspiration theories and internal "wars" were widespread, hampering development of an active, democratic internal party life. The new parties faced political battles on two fronts, against enemies in their own camps ("the wars in the top") and against external enemies ("insider-outsider differentials"). The political language became aggressive not only directed against the representatives of the old regimes, but also against people sharing divergent opinions on policies concerning the present. Likewise, party leaders labelled opponents inside and outside the party as "agents", "traitors", "thieves of public properties" and "foreigners"; anti-semitic statements were not absent either. In short, political debates and the political language between and inside parties were signified by a "language of aggression" and a "language of attacks", i.e. by polarized pluralism.[36] In Poland "purifications" of "postcommunists" and "agents" re-captured the political agenda. After the 2005 election, a conflict erupted over the issue of whether Poland's National Remembrance Institute, which has the custody of secret files from the communist era and opened the files for the public arguing that national security and moral obligations were at stake.

Consolidation of democracy

Dealing with post-communism great attention is payed to questions about stabilisation and *consolidation* of democracy, i.e. the way authoritarian regimes give way to democratic regimes. Much litterature has been devoted to regime change in Latin America and Southern Europe and discussions about to what extent conclusions concerning the CEECs with advantage can be accommodated within the earlier paradigms or crucial aspects of those paradigms must be changed when dealing med former communist countries (Gill, 2007). Attention has been paid to "technical" as well as normative aspects. Consolidation has a "normative core" in the shape of a belief in a change toward advanced democracy. The short-term goal was to enhance political stability and minimize the risk of a set-back or a return to the old political order. In other words, democracy and market economony must be "the only game in town". As already argued by *O'Donnell and Schmitter* (O'Donnell & Schmitter, 1986:3)*,* transition

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[36] Janina Fras, "Political discourse in post-Communist Poland", in Andrzej W. Jablonski, Gerd Meyer (1996):155-159.

away from authoritarian systems might well be a transition to "something else", i.e. maybe pseudo-democracy, semi-democracy, hybridisation and petrification.

However, as mentioned in the first section too little research has been undertaken on the emergence and persistence of nondemocratic authoritarian regimes ("authoritarian status quo") due to third way euphoria, overestimation of the role of elections, teleological tenets, underestimation of cultural factors and informal structures and exclusive focus on transitions in Latin America, Southern Europe and Eastern Europe (Guliev, 2005). At the outset, a third wave euphoria was striking. However, there is no guarantee that transitions mean a move from authoritarianism towards consolidated democracy. As underlined by *Farid Guliev* (Guliev, 2005)*, several countries are signified by being neither fully democratic nor clear-cut authoritarian, some semi-authoritarian, others patrimonial or sultanistic with no prospects of change often unstable and semi-anarchic like Georgia and Ukraine. Some cases involve *competitive authoritarianism* that presumes a certain settlement of democratic institutions, but legally and "morally" provides grounds for the rise of other authoritarian leaders (Korosteleva, 2004:125). In other words, ordinary politics does not necessarily lead to liberal or advanced democracy.

This confronts us with the question of why communist autocracy was not replaced by genuine democracy and even has a prevalent tendency to become more undemocratic, leading to pseudo-democracy, a permanent grey zone type of regime or outright dictatorship. In the group of semi-authoritarian we find Egypt, Venezuela, Senegal, Croatia and sultanistic semi-authoritarian regimes e.g. Azerbaijan.

The notions "transition", "transformation" and "consolidation" are defined differently. Transition can be seen as more "simple" than consolidation or transformation meaning that the stage of "transition" concerns primarily the first stage after the "breakthrough, which was" signified by extraordinary politics and transition anomie and lasted until the first free and fair elections, the so-called "founding elections". As noted by *Petr Kopecky and Cas Mudde* explanations clustered about three sets of variables:[37]

- *Structural*, e.g. level of socio-economic development, patterns of modernisation and industrialization, and prevailing cultural patterns, all of which can be linked to the modernisation paradigm

- *Institutional*, such as designs of executive-legislative relations and electoral systems and the shape of parties and party systems

- And *actor-behavioural*, such as the power constellation of elites or even very particular and contingent policy decisions. In other words, in this case emphasis is laid on the policy-content.

- Finally the *policy and programme* level has to be included, by that we mean the ability of parties to solve the "day to day" problems and formulate long-term consistent political programmes.

Juan J. Linz and *Alfred Stepan* (Linz, Stepan, 1996:7) rightly argue that democratic consolidation requires much more than just elections and markets. Consolidated democracies require a state, i.e. that the stateness problems are solved. Five interacting arenas must function in order for consolidation to exist, *first* a free and lively civil society, *second* a relatively autonomous and valued political society, *third*

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[37] See Petr Kopecký and Cas Mudde, "Explaining Different Paths of Democratization: The Czech and Slovak Republics", *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, Vol. 16, No. 3, September 2000:69-70.

a rule of law, *fourth* a state bureaucracy that is usable and *fifth*, an institutionalized economic society. Thus, reform of public administration is crucial when building a democratic state. Problems connected to weak administrative structures are compounded by absence of a functional civil service and professional central and local administrators (Sakwa, 2002:123).

Linz and Stepan argue (Linz, Stepan, 1996:3) that transition to democracy has gone toward completion

"when sufficient agreement has been reached about political procedures to produce an elected government, when a government comes to power that is the direct result of a free and popular vote, when this government de facto has the authority to generate new politics, and when the executive, legislative and judicial power generated by the new democracy does not have to share power with other bodies de jute"

Jon Elster, Claus Offe and Ulrich K. Preuss (Elster etc., 1994:4) underline the significance of "institutional agency" and "transformative agency". The structural factors play a role, they argue, but *actors*, able to establish new and robust institutions, are neccessary for the deepening of a new- won democracy, providing firm linkages between rules and procedures for decision making. Seen in that perspective, they regard consolidation of democracy (Elster etc., 1998:247,305) as "a condition in which conflict is limited and contained within a framework of enforced and recognized rules". Consolidation is endangered, if categorical conflicts linked to identity and ethnicity take the upper hand. In short, their approach is institutional with the main emphasis laid on the interplay between "legacies", i.e. the legacy of the past, institutional engineering and decisions, i.e. the policy aspect.

Terry D. Clark (Clark, 2002:65) contends that Linz' and Stepan's model suffers because of theoretical incoherence or outright lack of explanations supported by theories. The five arenas are as interdependent, but the absence of theoretical linkage leaves L&S open to the charge that they have defined a model for a static ideal end-state (a consolidated democracy) and not much more. The way out of the morass is to build a theory that permits scholars to meaningsfully consider an end to the process without sacrificing consideration of stagnation or reversals. The task is to reach conclusions under which circumstances the transition tends to stagnate or reverse ("set back") and *why*.

As put by *Andreas Schedler*, consolidation has been an exceedingly ambiguous concept and a "moving target" due to the fact that in principle consolidation "never ends". The concept does not have a core meaning, as it has been treated as a catch-all concept and for that reason used in different meanings. Furthermore, dealing with the different types of (semi)democracy, Andreas Schedler distinguishes between authoritarian, electoral, liberal and advanced democracies. He also argues in favour of a "peaceful coexistence" between the different interpretations and meanings of the concept.

Moreover, Schedler argues that institutional insecurity and blurred temporary boundaries of democratic transition are a defining feature of democratization, thus recognizing the structural fuzziness of transition and consolidation. If uncertainty is taken seriously, regime transition and consolidation can not be regarded as discrete stages with neat starting points and endpoints. Rather they are to be conceived as vague periods of institutional fluidity whose outer boundaries are indeterminate.[38]

Among the non-consolidated democracies we find *Lucan A. Ways' pluralism by default*. Here we are dealing with political competition specific to weak states, e.g. Moldova and to a large extent Ukraine. Pluralism by default describes countries in which institutionalized political competition survives not

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[38] Andreas Schedler, "What is Democratic Consolidation?", *Journal of Democracy*, volume 9, No. 2, April 1998:91-107, and "Taking Uncertainty Seriously: The Blurred Boundaries of Democratic Transition and Consolidation", *Democratization*, Vol. 8, No. 4, Winter 2001:17-19 and 1-22.

because leaders are especially democratic or because societal actors particularly strong, but because the government is too fragmented and the state too weak to impose authoritarian rule.[39] *Frane Adam* and *Matej Makarovic* call some democracies "deficient".[40] The institutional structures, the cultural patterns and the prevailing attitudes in the public sphere and among the political elites are basically democratic. However, deficiencies like instrumental understanding of democracy, lack of efficiency in performance of democratic institutions and lack of trust, limited elite circulation and media pluralism, etc., are still present on all the democratic arenasand subsystems mentioned above.

In the case of *democracy by design*, known from presidential rule and delegative democracy, those in control of the state machinery succeed in shaping the institutions and procedures of a competitive election in ways that ensure an outcome favorable to the designers themselves.[41] Analyzing "competetive authoritarianism" and "delegative democracy" *Paul D'Anieri* introduce the term "machine politics", in which case the dominant party organisation strives to maintain control for long periodes using patronage, favouritism and intimidation to skew elections decisively in its favour (D'Anieri, 2005: 232, 243), a regime type termed electoral clientelism and authoritarianism (Kuzio, 2005). Consolidation demands much "self-limitation" on behalf of both parties in government and parties in opposition, which we do not find in case of machine democracies. Controlling the media, exorting financial support from business people, using the government payroll to gain votes and controlling the counting of votes, "machine politicians" foster non-democratic regimes.

In the case of Russia, the term "phoney democracy" was used, later, under Vladimir Putin, democracy became more "controlled" signified by "democracy by design", which *Richard Sakwa* defines as

"those in control of the state machinery attempt to shape the institutions and procedures of a competitive election in ways that ensure an outcome favorable to the designers themselves" (Sakwa, 2002:145)[42]

"*Authoritarian situations*" are well known, e.g. in Hungary under Viktor Orban, in which cases the dominant political agents exclude other agents from the political process thereby securing direct or indirect control over the political life including the mass media.[43] In those cases the democratic institutions are in place, but the democratic rules are "hollowed out" due to the winners' focus on keeping political power according to the majoritarian principle about the winner who "takes it all".

Wolfgang Merkel (Merkel, 2004) argues that over half of all new electoral democracies represent specific variants of diminished syb-types of democracy called *defective democracies*, which he divides in four diminished subtypes, exclusive democracy, illiberal democracy, delegative democracy and finally tutelary democracy. Consolidation comes close to his term *embedded democracy*, according to Wolfgang Merkel consisting of five closely interdependent partial regimes, electoral regime, political rights, civil rights, horizontal accountability and effective power to govern.[44]

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[39] Lucan A. Way, "Pluralism by Default in Moldova", *Journal of Democracy*, Volume 13, Number 4, October 2002:127-141.

[40] Frane Adam and Matej Makarovic, "Postcommunist Transition and Social Science:The Case of Slovenia", *East European Quarterly*, XXXVI, No. 3, September 2002.

[41] Michael Urban, "December 1993 as a Replication of Late-Soviet Electoral Practices", *Post-Soviet Affaires*, Vol. 10, No. 2 (April-June 1994):128.

[42] Sakwa refers to Michael Urban, "December 1993 as a Replication of Late-Soviet Electoral Practices", *Post-Soviet Affaires*, Vol. 10, No.2 (April-June 1994):128.

[43] A term used e.g. by Juan Linz, "The Future of the Authoritarian Situation or Institutionalisation of an Authoritarian Regime: The Case of Brazil", in Alfred Stepan (ed.) (1973), *Authoritarian Brazil. Origins, Policies and Future*, New Haven, CT, and London, Yale University Press:233-254.

[44] Wolfgang Merkel, "Embedded and Defective Democracies", *Democratization*, Vol. 11, No. 5, December 2004:33.

In the first stage of post-communism the institutional set-up vital for a consolidated democracy was in place, e.g. political parties, elected parliaments and independent courts. In the context of consolidation of democracy they do not function in optimal ways. As regards consolidation of democracy, all the Central European countries passed the "two-turn over test" meaning that the political power was handed over to the opposition peacefully in the case of election defeat for ruling parties, but democracy in the CEECs can hardly be seen as consolidated in an "advanced" sense. Democratic consolidation requires self-limitation among the power holders as well as by the opposition. Political fundamentalism, political capitalism, identity politics and antipolitics, all signifying the late stage of real socialism and the first stage of post-communist, have to be overcome as quickly as possible. A de-freezing of old cleavages, e.g. the old "we versus them" distinction, must occur to some extent, but it will probably take place unevenly from country to country.[45]

A negative type of consolidation was achieved shortly after the collapse of the Soviet Union in late 1991, where a return to the old system was considered to be impossible. Thus, consolidation was closely connected to *regime survival*, i.e. prevention of break down or regression to the old state socialist system.

From advanced democracy to "something else"- regime types

Advanced, consolidated, embedded democracy

Liberal democracy, e.g. the polyarchic (Dahl) or elite type (Schumpeter)

Electoral democracy, with a one-sided focus on elections, maybe a move toward electoral autocracy

Majoritarian democracy of the consensual (Britain) or tyrannic (Slovakia under Meciar) type

Cartel democracy, cooperation between political elites in homogeneous societies (Jan Kysela, in Dancak and Hlousek, 2006:73)

Illiberal democracy with absence e.g. of fair and free competition and lack of rule of law

Authoritarian democracy, maybe as façade type democracy, by some used in the case of Hungary under Orban

Competitive authoritarianism, which may resemble Aristotle's demagogical democracy, presumes a certain establishment of democratic institutions, but at the same time provides the grounds for the succession or the rise of yet another authoritarian leader (Korostelova, 2004:125)

Delegative democracy, e.g. in (super)presidential systems, in the case of Ukraine under Kutja named "machine politics", signified by patronage, favoritism, intimidation, patron-client politics (D'Anieri, 2005)

Controlled democracy, i.e. all main arenas somehow "controlled" by the ruling elite

Phoney democracy, e.g. used about Russia under Boris Jeltsin (Sakwa, 2004)

Domain democracy with great power to certain non-democratic elected institutions, e.g. the military

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[45] As mentioned by Gábor Toka, there can be talk about cleavages in a party context "if an enduring organizational form is given to a politically mobilized opposition between such members of relatively closed groups who have distinct values, beliefs and identity", see Gábor Tóka, "Party Appeals and Voter Loyalty in New Democracies", *Political Studies* (1998), XLVI: 596, Tóka refers to Bartolini and Mair, *Identity, Competition, and Electoral Availability*, O. Knutsen and E. Scarbrough, "Cleavage Politics", in J. van Deth and E. Scarbrough (eds.) (1995), *The Impact of Values*, Oxford:Oxford University Press: 492-523.

Fake, manipulative, pseudo democracy by default (Alexey Pushkov about Russia under Jeltsin) (Aydin, 2005)

Democracy by default, weak state, weak government, weak opposition, e.g. Moldova

Democracy by design or managed democracy, "shaped" top-down, e.g. by super-presidentialism

Deficient, defect non-consolidated democracy (Merkel, 2004)

Bureaucratic authoritarianism, sometimes used about "Putin II"

Electoral authoritarianism (Kuzio, 2005)

Sultanistic semi-authoritarianism like in Azerbaijan (Guliev, 2005)

Authoritarianism in the "classical" way, e.g. post-totalitarian systems, e.g the CEECs after Stalinism

Outright totalitarianism like the Soviet Union under Stalin and Nazism

The transformations in the CEEC's were anti-communist, but as agued above not necessarily democratic (Przeworski, 1991). Evidence shows that democracy may avoid erosion or break-down in case party systems are not fully developed, and democracy may erode and break down even in case parties and party systems are well institutionalised. Basically, transition to the new system encouraged two types of conflicts, one between those resisting the old system and those defending it, and another between "proto-democratic actors", mainly former dissidents aiming to secure for themselves the best possible positions in the new-won post-communist system (Przeworski, 1991). Many options were open, also non-democratic regimes, that be autocratic, electoral, majoritarian or procedural.

From the experience of the first post-1989 years, *Attila Ágh* concludes that most new democracies became semi-democracies or even pseudodemocracies. Later he became more optimistic (Ágh, 1998:17), describing democratic *transition* as "the mixture of two systems in a creative chaos, with a complicated and painful process of democratic institutionalisation and socio-economic transformation" and democratic *consolidation* as "the coherent emergence of the new system in all social sub-systems, with the establishment of a democratic political culture – the invention of democratic traditions". Transition and consolidation constitute complex sociational processes encompassing institutionalisation, social integration, participation and formation of a new political culture after 40 years with Stalinism, neostalinism and different forms of post-totalitarian real socialism. Furthermore, Ágh distinguishes between *external* and *internal* consolidation, where external consolidation constitutes the social links to civil societies and the establishment of new lines of communication in society. The internal dimension deals primarily with institutionalisation *inside* the parties, including lines of communication between the different centres of decision making, e.g. the party leadership, the parliamentary group and the party member local organisation s (Ágh, 1998:110).

Democracy may be enhanced in case a democratic regional hegemon, e.g. the EU, by using meaningful incentives and disincentives promotes and implants democracy. The EU factor played an important role in the case of Spain's and Portugal's transitions to democracy, and these experiences played a role also when crafting democracy in the CEEC's. However, the differences between the South European and the East European countries are striking. The market economies in Spain and Portugal were more advanced at the time of the democratic breakthrough and consolidation. Therefore the way down in the "valley of tears" was shorter and less painful than in the CEEC's.

Nevertheless, in the end democracy became "the only game in town". The CEECs passed the "two-turn over test" as presidential power as well as governmental power have been peacefully tranferred to opposition in case of election defeat for parties in power. However, without further modernisation and more equal social rights, greater civic participation, policial tolerance and further institutionalisation the transition to more advanced democracy will not take place and "democratic government" will not constitute a "democratic regime."[46] In most countries, "velvet indifference" and de-mobilisation came forward soon after the first time of mobilization, for example finding expression in lower electoral participation. In some cases, e.g. in Slovakia, democratisation is "blocked", "illiberal" signified by "regression" ("konsolidacni regres", Kopecek (ed), 2003:22). Taken realistically the consolidation in the CEECs are at least to some extent "advanced", but not yet finished and in some cases even with set-back from liberal to electoral, illiberal, majoritarian democracy.

Thus, in Poland after the 2006 election we may speak about erosion back to illiberal democracy. The way to consolidation has not been a linear one. In 2007 Romanian politics became almost paralyzed due to bad governance, widespread corruption and destructive political divisions between president, prime minister and parliament. After the 2006 election the political scene in Hungary became heavy polarized. The political parties have been exposed to two parallel challenges, europeanisation and globalization. Most relevant has been that political "players" seem to adapt to competitive multiparty elections and accept the most basic civic and political rights, but support for democracy turned out to be more diffuse than specific. The support for the *basic* rules of democracy is high despite antipolitical feelings, new "frustration waves", negative attitudes to democratic elected institutions and the parties in power. However, the most negative scenarios like "ungovernability" and "weimarization" have been avoided. So, as regards consolidation of democracy in the CEEC's we can still, 18 years after the break-trough in 1989, in broad outline use *Zoltan Barany's* formulation from 1999:

> "What we currently have in Eastern Europe are imperfect, and in some places (e.g. Albania, Romania, Slovakia) fragile but, most importantly, *functioning, working, democratic polities*" (Braun and Barany, 1999:107).

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[46] Wlodzimierz Weselowski distinguishes, referring to O´Donnald (1994), between "democratic government" and "democratic regime" in "Political Actors and Democracy: Poland 1990-1997", *Polish Sociological Review*, 3 (119), Warsaw, 1997:227.

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