INTENDED AND UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES OF ELECTIONS IN RUSSIA AND POSTCOMMUNIST STATES

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Unlike much of the writing on postcommunist elections, this article argues that across the region significant political learning has taken place and actually has occurred relatively quickly. This learning can be seen most clearly in the efforts by elites to alter the rules in their favor. Importantly, increased strategic behavior by voters and party leaders is also apparent in the decline in disproportionality, wasted votes, and number of parties. In addition, across a number of indicators, the widely held view that there is a growing gap between the post-Soviet cases and the East European cases is not supported by the evidence.[1]

FOUNDING ELECTIONS

The choice of electoral systems was generally a function of the perception that elites had of the distribution of power between the communists and their opponents at the time that the electoral rules were being written. As the communists virtually always supported SMDs (single member districts) and the opposition supported PR (proportional representation), initial elections in postcommunist states were typically held under plurality when the communists wrote the electoral rules and PR when the non-communists did, with mixed systems appearing when they both did. Even in the former Soviet Union, in every state in which the communists won the 1990 election, the first election after the collapse was held under majoritarian rules, while every state in which the popular fronts won the 1990 elections adopted either proportional representation or a mixed system (*Elections in the Baltic States and Soviet Republics*. 1990).

The strategy of the Hungarian Socialist Workers Party (HSWP) was a case in point. In 1989 secret HSWP polls revealed that people would rather vote for parties they had never heard of, and that did not even exist, than for the HSWP. With SMDs the HSWP hoped that voters would select candidates based on loyalty to local (HSWP) bosses and not on national party platforms. In addition, it believed that no other party could field candidates in every district nationwide. The following report by the Party Secretary in charge of internal security, György Fejti, given at a closed session of the Hungarian Politburo provides a fascinating insight into the calculations made by Party officials, and the high level of knowledge some of them already possessed about electoral systems:

> "[A]n exclusively electoral list system is not at all favorable for the [HSWP].... Constituencies, undoubtedly, bring about a competition of individuals, personalities. And a competition of local programs. So, the focus of the debate is not really the general program of the party, but events on the local level. This is why I believe that this is the advantageous method for the [HSWP].... [T]he

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[1] Unless otherwise noted, the states included in this study are those 17 countries that have held at least three rounds of elections. Those states are: Albania, Bosnia and Hercegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Georgia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Moldova, Poland, Romania, Russia, Slovakia, and Slovenia.

> historical parties who had run in the elections in 1945 and 1947, and are remembered from then, will be in favor of lists, the exclusively [nationwide] electoral lists. ...I firmly propose to use the German model where half the seats are decided on by constituencies and the other half through county lists." (HSWP Minutes 1989)

The HSWP correctly foresaw the ability of a mixed system, particularly one which linked the two halves, to produce manufactured majorities and consolidate party systems, but they wildly overestimated their popularity in 1990. Few of their candidates even made it to the second round in district voting, and in the end the renamed Hungarian Socialist Party won a single seat in the single-member districts, reminiscent of the single seat won by the Polish United Workers Party in the 1989 Senate election.

Russia adopted a mixed-member majoritarian system only in 1993, under conditions of actual warfare between reformers around Yeltsin and their communist/nationalist opponents in the parliament, which was at that time known as the Congress of People's Deputies (CPD). In the previous Soviet-era parliamentary elections in 1990, there was no organized alternative to the Communist Party since non-communists were only allowed to run as individuals. As a result the communists established an overwhelming majority in the parliament and were reluctant to give it up. At the same time, Yeltsin was openly antagonistic toward the communists in the CPD. Poisonous debates on a new electoral system took place throughout 1992-3, with two expert committees formed to draft the new electoral law failing to come to agreement: one, headed by Viktor Sheinis, proposed a 450-seat legislature with half the seats filled by SMD and half by party list, and another committee headed by Viktor Balala, a centrist deputy whose party Smena grew increasingly critical of Yeltsin during 1993, suggesting a pure SMD system (McFaul 2001).

Ultimately, the violent events of October 1993 resulted in Yeltsin disbanding the CPD and replacing it with the current Duma. The subsequent electoral rules, which initially were established by presidential decree, using the Sheinis proposal, created a mixed system in which 225 deputies were elected by PR and 225 by SMD. Yeltsin evidently supported the mixed system believing that it would spread the risk to the reformers in light of competing advice and lack of certainty about the impact of PR versus single-member districts in conditions in which there were no long-established liberal and pro-reform parties (Moser 2001; Remington and Smith 1996). Yet this system that was hoped to cement the emergence of pro-Yeltsin and pro-reform parties instead produced a legislature after the 1993 elections that was dominated by Yeltsin opponents from both the communist and the hard-nationalist sides. The Russian case provides an excellent example of the difficulties of operating under conditions of extreme divisiveness and uncertainty (White, Rose and McAllister 1997).

SECOND-STAGE ELECTORAL REFORMS

Under the cumulative impact of multiple social and economic crises throughout the region in the first years following the collapse of communism, demands for stronger government grew. Public opinion in most states revealed increasing dissatisfaction with parliaments' inability to solve critical issues, and in the first years after the transition, public support for suspending parliament appeared in many countries, particularly in those countries ruled by unstable parliamentary coalitions (the percent rose from 32 to 43 in Poland, 21 to 28 in Bulgaria, and 10 to 19 in Romania [Rose and Haerpfer 1992, 1993]). In polls conducted in Russia and 8 other new democracies, in five of them (Russia, Bulgaria, Slovenia, Belarus and Ukraine), over 50% of the respondents agreed that it would be better to dispense with parliament altogether and be ruled by someone with a ‘strong hand’ (New Democracies Barometers: http://www.cspp.strath.ac.uk).

At the same time, new leaders began to think of political reforms that would extend and deepen their own grip on power. This applies equally to those non-communist and communist parties that had managed to to win a substantial share of the seats in existing parliaments. In general, the convergence of interests between populations and ruling elites set the backdrop for the next phase in which a number of reforms were introduced, including higher thresholds and less proportional electoral formulae, that were designed to maintain existing elites in power and stabilize the party system, although parties supporting the reforms did not always benefit as they expected.

Thresholds. Looking first at thresholds, in seven of the eleven postcommunist countries that had low or no thresholds (0-4%) in the first round of elections, thresholds were increased with an eye to reducing the number of parties actually represented in parliament. Overall in the 14 postcommunist countries that utilized thresholds between the first and second parliamentary elections, the average threshold increased from 3.07% to 4.21%, as six countries raised the threshold. Subsequently this trend stabilized as only Croatia and Slovenia have raised thresholds in subsequent elections and Albania actually lowered its threshold after the fraudulent 1996 elections. The specific justification for raising the threshold differed from country to country, but perhaps the most blunt defense of the practice was delivered by the Russian Constitutional Court when it declared, in a ruling in November 1998 upholding the 5% threshold, that “equality of citizens does not mean equality of election results” (“Constitution Watch: Russia” 1999, p. 33).

In many postcommunist countries, an increase in the percentage of votes required for a party to have any representation in parliament (a threshold) was favored as a way to eliminate these small parties and move toward a more stable competition amongst a smaller number of larger parties, any of which might over time form a government and all of which would have an imbedded interest in playing by the rules. This was clearly the rationale for changing the electoral laws in Poland and Georgia before the 1993 and 1995 elections respectively. Because it is usually the case that the fringes of political life are more populated by small parties than the center, thresholds are also designed to decrease the impact of parties that represent these fringe interests and magnify the influence of centrist groups. For example, in Hungary the threshold was increased in 1994 specifically to knock out parties on the left and the right: the threshold was raised from 4 to 5% before the 1994 election in a successful bid to keep out the Hungarian Workers Party, the orthodox communist offshoot of the HSWP, and the newly-forming extreme right-wing Hungarian Justice and Life Party led by Istvan Csurka (Tamas and Haraszti 1999; Rady 2000).

In Russia, despite the role of liberal and centrist deputies in writing the electoral laws, the 5% threshold disproportionately hurt these parties largely because they had failed to unite and and as a result saw themselves fall below the minimum required for representation in parliament. Whereas only two liberal or centrist parties had fallen below the 5% threshold in 1993, eight failed to gain more than the needed 5% in 1995, including former acting prime minister Yegor

Gaidar's Democratic Choice of Russia (McFaul 2001, 286). This performance was in contrast to the success of the two main opposition parties, the communists and Zhirinovsky's Liberal Democrats, who between them garnered over a third of the votes in both the 1993 and 1995 elections. However, seven nationalist parties also fell below the threshold in 1995, representing a lost 19% of the vote, thus denying to the opposition an even bigger victory had they been able to unite.

Electoral formulae. A second aspect of the reform process was the introduction of electoral formulae that rewarded winning parties by giving them a higher proportion of seats in parliament than the proportion of the vote they received. For example, pure proportionality would require that a party winning 25% of the vote receive 25% of the seats. But formulae exist and are widely used in established democratic systems that favor winning parties by giving them a higher proportion of the seats than they 'deserve.'[2] This is done both to reduce the number of parties and because it is surmised that in two-party or moderately pluralistic party systems with only three to five major parties, parties will seek the advantage of getting extra seats if they win the most votes and thus will move their message to where the votes mainly reside — theoretically in the center. Therefore, it is believed that these formulae will create stronger governments in the short-run and make them more centrist in the long-term.

While it is clear from the literature that electoral formula and district size have significant impacts on the distribution of seats in PR systems, it is difficult to know before votes are actually counted how a given party would have fared under different rules. It is therefore unsurprising that only a handful of states have changed either district size or electoral formula. Where they have been changed, movement has generally been away from high proportionality. Thus, among the 17 states utilizing proportional representation to elect some or all of the representatives to parliament in the first postcommunist elections, ten used formulae that were more proportional.[3] In subsequent rounds, the parliaments of two of the countries that previously had the most proportional systems, the Czech Republic and Poland, altered the rules to make them less proportional. Poland did so first by changing from St. Lague to d'Hondt. In both Poland and the Czech Republic, district-size has become a battleground for parties and party-blocs seeking advantage in upcoming elections. Poland increased the number of electoral districts before the 1993 election, and the Czech Parliament sought to do this for the 2002 elections.[4] Slovenia similarly created a less proportional system in the wake of government scandals and complaints about the accountability of parliament. In 2000 it eliminated national compensation seats and moved to a d'Hondt formula as it changed to a unique electoral system which functions somewhat like PR with unranked lists.

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[2] The differential impact of these formulae on election outcome is demonstrated in Appendix A in Lijphart 1994.

[3] Hare is the most proportional of the PR formulae (used in Bosnia and Lithuania), followed by modified Sainte Laguë, Droop and Hagenbach-Bischoff (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Czech Republic, Georgia, Latvia, Poland, Russia, and Slovakia), while eight from the beginning put in place a system that was less proportional, notably Imperiali and d'Hondt (Bulgaria, Estonia, Hungary, Moldova, Romania, Slovenia, and Yugoslavia). Some states used one formula to allocate seats at the local level and another for the national level: categorization is made using national level formulae. The specific impact of each of these electoral systems on proportionality is demonstrated in Lijphart (1994) Appendix 1.

[4] The Czech Parliament passed a bill to increase the number of electoral districts from 8 to 35. However, since the Czech Constitution states that Parliament will be elected by PR, in January 2001 the Czech Constitutional Court struck down this considerable increase in electoral districts, reasoning that it went to far in introducing majoritarian elements into the electoral system.

Movement toward greater proportionality generally has not occurred through such subtle methods as larger districts and more proportional formula, but by increasing the percentage of seats elected by PR. This has generally occurred in those countries that had a popular democratic opposition, but one that was not popular enough to win the first elections (Albania, Macedonia, Ukraine, and Bulgaria). In each of these cases, the government encountered a crisis of legitimacy, causing it to move away from single-member districts to mixed systems for the subsequent election in Albania, Macedonia, and Ukraine, and from a mixed system to PR in Bulgaria. While Albania and Bulgaria changed systems before their second elections, Ukraine and Macedonia moved from single-member districts to mixed systems only in 1998 as a result of too many years of weakly consolidated parties, significant segments of the population shut out of parliament, and a feeling that new electoral systems would reenergize the moribund transition. In a similar effort to increase the legitimacy of the parliament, President Nazerbayev of Kazakstan announced in 1999 that ten deputies would be elected by PR to join the 67 already elected to the Majlis by SMD. In Russia, two years of efforts by Yeltsin and the reformers between 1993 and 1995 to engineer a reformist majority ultimately failed when the communist dominated Duma succeeded in passing their version of the Election Law in 1995, thus maintaining the status quo. Subsequent discussions about further amendments have likewise produced little change (Moser and Thames 2000).

CONSEQUENCES: INTENDED AND OTHERWISE

As electoral theory assumes that voters and candidates behave rationally, over time voters should stop voting for parties with little chance of winning. In a first-past-the-post two-party system, any voter knows that a third party is an irrational vote, even though it may be undertaken for perfectly good reasons (protest, etc.). But in a 34-party or 43-party system, particularly in a mixed system where part of the seats are elected by PR and part by first-past-the-post plurality elections, what is an irrational vote? How can voters know in advance how to structure their preferences? If they cannot know, given the number of votes that will be wasted, at what point does it become truly irrational even to vote at all? In Russia, will liberal voters ultimately give up voting at all or change their allegiance if liberal elites are unsuccessful in unifying? These kinds of questions have lead to considerable consternation in the literature about whether postcommunist states provide a challenge to electoral theories about whether voters and politicians respond rationally to electoral rules (Elster, Offe, and Preuse 1998; Moser 1999).

Continued high numbers of registered parties. If fewer parties and a more stable party system were the intended results of electoral reform, what actually happened? Contrary to predictions, in some of the postcommunist states the number of registered parties actually increased, at least in the short-term. For example, in the Czech Republic the number of parties increased from 17 in the first elections to 21 in the second, in Georgia from 47 to 54, and in Lithuania from 17 to 24; in Hungary the number of registered political parties remained very high at 19. There was no clear trend in the number of registered parties between rounds two and three, with the numbers increasing in 8 countries (Albania, Bosnia, Bulgaria, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, and Poland) and declining in 9 others (Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Georgia, Macedonia, Russia, Slovakia, and Slovenia). It should also be noted, as it has been elsewhere (Olson 1998, p. 449) that the variability in the way in which parties are registered makes meaningful cross-national and cross-temporal reporting of these trends very difficult. Additionally, even where the numbers may have gone down, this does not necessarily mean that the names of parties have remained stable, or that electoral coalitions have not changed from round to round. Finally, it must be acknowledged that even in the West many parties exist for reasons other than winning seats.

Declining number of effective parties and rates of disproportionality. With the perceived low barriers for entering the electoral game in light of the relatively proportional first round elections, it is not surprising that so many new parties formed and were able to attract votes in the second round. Consequently, few of these parties were able to get enough votes to pass the threshold in elections. As shown in Figure 1, in those countries that had held at least three rounds of elections by mid-2001, the average number of **effective electoral parties**[5] increased from approximately 6.2 to 7.1 between rounds one and two. However, given the fact that so many failed to win a significant share of seats, or any at all, voters abandoned smaller parties in the third round, and the effective number then declined to 5.2. In Russia, the number of effective electoral parties was above the norm in each round, and increased from 8.43 to 11.39 between rounds one and two before declining significantly to 6.88 in round three.

These voter shifts, combined with the use of thresholds, also decreased the number of parties in parliaments, which was the real goal of many of these electoral reforms. The total number of **effective parliamentary parties** declined from a high of 5.6 parties in the first round to around 4.1 in the second and third rounds. The introduction of electoral formulae to strengthen winning parties in parliament awarded them additional seats, which also contributed to the decline in the number of effective parliamentary parties. The trend in Russia, however, is contrary to the norm where the number of effective parliamentary parties did decrease from 9.55 to 6.26 between rounds one and two, but then went back up to 8.48 in round 3, more than twice the average.

While it initially appeared that the trend toward low **proportionality** might be increasing, this trend did not hold up in third round elections. The data supports the argument forwarded by Taagepera and Shugart (1989) that voters and elites will adapt to the incentives of the system and switch their allegiance to parties in advance of voting. Clearly this has worked best in systems where party fragmentation is less and rational calculations can be made more clearly. As can be seen in figure 1, looking at the states that have held at least three rounds of parliamentary elections, disproportionality (using Least Squares[6]) rose dramatically from an average of almost 7 in round one to over 10 in round two and then declined again to just over 7 in round three. Russia has followed the trends, with disproportionality decreasing from average levels in rounds one and two (8.47 to 10.77) to a rather remarkable below average level of 5.77 in round three.

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[5] The effective number of electoral parties is based on parties' vote shares and is calculated by Laakso and Taagepera (1979) as $N_v = 1/\Sigma v_i^2$. The effective number of parliamentary parties is calculated $N_s = 1/\Sigma s_i^2$.

[6] As developed by Matthew Gallagher (1991) and used by Lijphart (1994), the Least Squares index calculates disproportionality by weighting the deviations by their own values, so that larger deviations take up a greater share of the index that smaller ones. The formula is: $Lsq = \sqrt{½ \sum (v_i - s_i)^2}$

Finally, the argument often made that there is a distinction between Central Europe and the former Soviet Union is not firmly supported by data from third and fourth round elections. Thus of the third and fourth round elections (figures provided in Appendix 1) held by 2001, in 18 disproportionality declined and in 17 the number of effective electoral parties declined. Those third and fourth round elections where disproportionality increased were Albania (96), the Czech Republic (98), Moldova (01), Romania (00), and Slovakia (00). Those elections where the number of effective electoral parties increased were Albania (96), Albania (97), Bosnia (98 and 00), Croatia (00), Estonia (99) and Slovakia (94).

Russia is often viewed as the example of the country where the laws of strategic behavior are unlikely to work (Moser 1999). Yet third round electoral results showed a very sharp decline in disproportionality, putting it below the average, and an equal drop in the number of effective parties. While the number of effective parliamentary parties is still comparatively high, reflecting the extreme fragmentation and high number of independents from the SMD half of the election, Russia's electoral system, whatever its other faults, has clearly begun to conform to the rules of strategic behavior.

Declining level of wasted votes. In states in which at least a portion of the legislative seats is chosen by proportional representation and a threshold is employed, a certain percentage of voters will vote for parties that do not receive a single seat in the legislature because they fail to cross the threshold. In Western Europe, the mean of wasted votes for all proportional representation elections in the post-War era is 6%, i.e., slightly more than one vote in 20 will be cast for a party that does not gain any representation in parliament. In postcommunist elections the average wasted vote in the first three rounds has been almost 16%. In other words, when citizens cast ballots in elections using proportional representation, there is an almost one in six chance that they will be voting for a party that does not gain a single seat in parliament.

One of the best cases of the impact of raising thresholds on outcomes was provided by Poland. In 1991 elections were held using no thresholds, so only the votes of the smallest of the 69 registered parties were wasted. By 1993, however, the electoral laws had been changed, and a 5% threshold had been put into place (8% for coalitions). Voters learned from the 1991 elections that they could vote for almost any party and see their preference in Parliament, but this behavior in 1993 led to fully 35% of the votes cast being wasted. Elections in other states were even more marked in this regard, however. The 1995 Russian election 'bested' Poland's results, with a staggering 49% of the vote being wasted. While these elections captured the most attention, in fact it was the Georgian elections the same year that resulted in the highest percentage of wasted votes: 54 parties vied for votes in an election with a newly-introduced 5% threshold, which resulted in 61% of the votes being wasted (as compared to only 14% wasted in the previous election), with the winning party, the Union of Georgian Citizens, garnering only 24% of the votes but 48% of the seats.

The high levels of wasted votes are alarming because voters, instead of changing their preferences by voting for parties that have a better chance of winning may lose faith in the power of the process altogether. While some states with dramatic increases in wasted votes have seen declines in turnout in subsequent elections, turnout has been declining across the region, making any correlation difficult to determine. Still, public opinion polls in countries with high percentages of wasted votes do suggest increased voter disillusion with their ability to affect outcomes. The 16% of wasted votes, moreover, applies only to PR elections or that portion of the legislature chosen by PR in mixed systems. In postcommunist states where large numbers of parties also contend for seats in SMD elections, and in which many of these seats (sometimes up to 50%) are won by individuals running as independents, many parties end up without a single seat in these elections as well. Consequently, the total percentage of votes wasted is far in excess of 16 percent.

On the other hand, the trend is going in the right direction. While the percentage of votes wasted in first and (especially) second round elections average out at 17.8%, the percentage wasted in third and fourth round elections has declined to 13.6%; this is still more than double the European average, but the numbers are nevertheless declining. The decrease in the number of wasted votes indicates an improvement in the stability of the party system and an increase in strategic voting by the population; and importantly, again, the exceptions to the rule are not primarily from the former Soviet Union. Rather those elections where the percentage of votes wasted has actually increased (either between the second and third, or third and fourth rounds) are Bosnia (98), Croatia (95), Czech Republic (98), Moldova (01), and Romania (00).

In Russia, the percentage of wasted votes decreased significantly between the 1995 and 1999 Duma elections, with 81% of the votes for the party list section of the election being cast for the six parties that made it past the 5% threshold. This meant that whereas 49% of the vote was wasted in 1995, only 19% of the party list vote was wasted in 1999. This improvement had been achieved largely as a result of the emergence of two large electoral coalitions (the Union of Right Forces and the Fatherland-All Russia bloc) that brought together groups of candidates determined to beat the 5% threshold. As compared with the unwieldy 43 parties that had appeared on the 1995 ballot, only 26 (still a large number) parties fulfilled the more stringent registration requirements in 1999.

Learning in conditions of high volatility. Even where subsequent rounds of elections produce a decline in the number of effective electoral and parliamentary parties, as shown in Figure 1, party volatility (defined by Roberts and Wibbels [1999, 576] as "the change in vote shares obtained by individual parties in a given political system across consecutive elections") remains very high, even compared to new democracies in other regions (Olsen 1998, 460). Furthermore, these parties' identities and names often change between rounds, making it difficult for voters to know who to punish for previous failings or who to vote for in order not to waste votes.[7] However, the high volatility masks the growing stability of those parties that remain in the electoral game.

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[7] For example, see the charts in Pettai and Kreuzer (1999) on party changes in Estonia and Latvia, two states regarded as relatively successful transitions.

As Table 1 illustrates, in the last elections before the end of 2000, **in every country except Russia** the majority of votes and seats went to parties that had first entered parliament before 1993. This low level in Russia reflects the pattern of creating successive “parties of power” beginning with Our Home is Russia under Yeltsin and up to Edinstvo (Unity) under Yeltsin and Putin. This failure of the Russian center to produce a stable and real parliamentary party in particular has hurt the ability of the center and liberal sides of the political spectrum to challenge the communists in the single-member districts. Whereas the CPRF was able to field candidates in almost 70% of the districts, four of the other main Duma parties were able to field candidates in less than half of the districts, underlining the continued weakness of the Russian party system in the regions (Remington 2002, 181).

If the goal of party leaders has been to use electoral rules and other laws dealing with party registration and financing to keep new players out, by and large they have been successful. The notable exception has been in the states of the former Soviet Union, where barriers to new parties remain low, and in Bosnia and Hercegovina, where the international community has played an important role in encouraging new parties as a way of breaking the power of the three major ethnic parties. This combination of high volatility and high barriers to new parties means that voters who still maintain little party loyalty, are punishing ruling parties by shifting en masse to other parliamentary parties. This is clearest in Hungary, where voters swung towards the Hungarian Democratic Forum in 1990, abandoned the party in 1994, and then rallied around FIDESZ in 1998. The tendency in much of Central Europe has been a see-saw between the two major blocs (the former communists and their opponents), although the recent breakthrough of King Simeon in Bulgaria's 2001 election indicates that voters eventually will lose patience if the existing party system fails to meet expectations (Ganev 2001).

A final consideration is that as voters search for winning parties, formal theory (Mueller 1989, 201) has shown that in a two-party system political parties will adopt positions close to that of the median voter in order to maximize their chances of being elected, and competing parties over time end up vying for votes at the center. But if the median voter is an orthodox communist voter, or a Serbian or Croatian nationalist voter, is a rational candidate well-advised to move toward that median in order to capture votes? Is it not possible that postcommunist politics in some countries may proceed not toward the center but away from the center? In particular, in russia, as the country prepares for Duma elections in 2003, Edinstvo may reflect liberal or centrist views in economic matters, but conservative or even authoritarian attitudes on the social and political axis.

In these countries, candidates and voters are not arrayed on a uni-dimensional axis but around rather stable, yet multiple, groupings involving admixtures of ideology and regional, ethnic and religious affiliations — affiliations that are deeply rooted in the animosities and illiberal oppressions of the communist and precommunist eras. These group identities are less negotiable than the socioeconomic, status and associational identities more common in Western democracies, which emerged very slowly and with greater difficulty than is usually accepted. While the stabilization of these identities may promote party system consolidation, an examination of postcommunist parties and radical nationalist parties provide only scant evidence for the most pessimistic fears.

Continued consolidation of communist and postcommunist parties. While early forecasts opined that communists' strength was actuarially limited and would 'naturally' decline as young noncommunist voters increased and voted for centrist and liberal parties, these conclusions had to be reevaluated after the revamped communist party, the Democratic Labor Alliance, won the 1993 Polish elections. There are several pieces to explaining what happened. In the cases in which the postcommunist (or in Russia, the communist) parties won the second elections after having lost the first (Hungary, Poland, Russia, and Lithuania, if one counts as 'postcommunist' the 1990 election that swept Sajudis to power), the party did receive far more votes in the second election than in the first. For example, in Hungary three times more people voted for the Socialist Party in 1994 than voted for it in 1990. In Poland while the Democratic Labor Alliance would not have been dominant in the Sejm without the electoral rule changes, it did win twice as many votes in 1993 as in 1991.

The ability of postcommunist parties to continue to attract voters, however, reflects the considerable advantages they had over their rivals. While name recognition of individual candidates and large coffers helped, their biggest asset was organization and party discipline. Along with this came a social network, or at least nostalgia for functioning networks, that survived the transition. These factors help explain why so many private businessmen, whose interests would seem to lie with the pro-market liberal parties, have openly supported the postcommunists, which is often where their personal connections remain. Even where their party platforms have changed dramatically, particularly in Hungary and Poland, the former communist parties have been able to put forth an image of relative bureaucratic competence and pull together a collection of reassuringly familiar faces. This feat would have been impossible for any of the new parties, filled as they often were with new faces and inexperienced leaders. Finally, unlike other parties, many of the former communist parties held together, even after their electoral defeats. This semblance of party unity reinforced images of party effectiveness (Curry 1996).

The anticommunist opposition, on the other hand, splintered, and it did so frequently. To some extent the large blocs were filled with unnatural allies and destined to break apart. But the extreme proportionality of the first elections also generated a degree of hubris in the minds of many politicians who believed that they could lead their own party into the next parliament instead of being second fiddle in a larger party, as happened for example with the liberal and centrist parties in the 1995 Russian elections.

This was despite the fact that the thresholds had been raised in some countries. For example, the creation of a threshold in Poland did not result in any party consolidation before the 1993 election. The loose array of Catholic, conservative, and liberal parties that had been governing Poland actually garnered more votes than the DLA in 1993, even with the DLA's sharp rise in its support, but most of these parties fell below the new threshold (Kaminski, Lissowski, and Swistak 1998). In the 1991 Bulgarian election voters had to choose between three parties named Union of Democratic Forces, denying the largest of them an absolute majority of seats and forcing them into an unstable coalition with the Movement for Rights and Freedoms. An equally dizzying array of parties emerged out of the Civic Forum in the Czech Republic, Public Against Violence in Slovakia, the National Salvation Front in Romania, and the popular fronts in Estonia and Latvia. These parties simply did not have the legacy of institutionalization that prevented most communist parties from disappearing.

The advantages of the communist party, especially in the early 1990s, can be seen by comparing shares of votes and seats. While the mean percentage of the vote received by postcommunist parties in the PR portion of elections actually declined from approximately 28% in the first round to just over 19% in the second, their share of seats in parliaments fell only slightly as a result of being amongst the parties that could survive thresholds, garner significant shares of votes under the party list and single-district rules that combine to make up mixed systems, and then receive a disproportional share of the seats as a result of being amongst the winning parties. The wide gap in round two particularly reflects their considerable overrepresentation in Poland, Hungary, Georgia and Russia. In these cases, the postcommunists won over 1.5% of the parliamentary seats for every 1% of the PR section of the popular vote they received. In addition to the case of Poland discussed above, in Hungary the Socialist Party received about 35% of the vote in the 1994 election and won 56% of the seats. Under a more proportional system, a coalition with the Alliance of Free Democrats would have been an absolute requirement.

Finally, in the 1995 Russian election, the Communist Party of the Russian Federation received only 22% of the total vote, but 35% of the seats distributed through proportional representation. The wide disparity in round 2, however, greatly narrowed in round three, illustrating the increase in strategic behavior by both politicians and voters opposed to these parties. Still, if Lipset and Rokkan (1967) are correct about freezing party systems, those postcommunist parties that have successfully survived three rounds of elections should be expected to remain on the scene for quite some time

Volatility of Extreme Nationalist Parties. While postcommunist parties have become ensconced in the electoral systems, the extreme nationalist parties largely have been marginalized. The lack of organizational coherence and resources from which many new parties suffer are particularly characteristic of extreme right parties. Whereas the postcommunist parties tend to be overrepresented in parliament based on their share of the popular vote, the extreme right parties tend to be slightly underrepresented. One reason for this is that it is very difficult for extreme right parties to win single member district seats. For example, in the 1993 Russian election, Vladimir Zhirinovsky's Liberal Democratic Party received the most votes in the PR half of the balloting (23%), but the party received only 14% of the parliamentary seats since it performed so poorly in the single-member districts. Similarly, in the 1998 Hungarian election, the Hungarian Justice and Life Party just crawled over the threshold with 5.5% of the vote, but it did not win any single-member districts, leaving it with 3.6% of the seats in parliament.

Secondly, because these parties have such a narrow platform and largely serve as protest parties, their voter base fluctuates significantly from election to election. So even in PR systems with thresholds, these parties have trouble consolidating as few consistently cross the thresholds. This can be seen with the electoral collapse of the Republican Party in the Czech Republic in

1998 when it fell below the threshold, the 75% decline in votes for the Slovenian National Party in 1996 compared to 1992, and the continuing disarray among Romania's and Poland's extreme right parties. The exception to this trend can be seen in that group of countries that face state building alongside the transition from communism. The Croatian Party of Rights and the Slovak National Party, for example, have found a stable core of voters. In addition, Vadim Tudor reinvented the Greater Romania Party as an anti-corruption party for the 2000 Romanian elections and may yet create a firm political base.

Finally, some of the extreme nationalist vote has been captured by larger parties, either through mergers of parties or by large parties tailoring their message to lure these voters, which does indicate a degree of rational action by politicians. For example, before Poland's 1997 election, a number of parties on the right fringes joined with center right parties and the remains of Solidarity to form Solidarity Electoral Alliance. In Bulgaria the Socialist Party has been particularly adept at attracting anti-Turk voters since the first postcommunist election in 1990. One can see a similar process with the Communist Party of the Russian Federation. However, at least in the case of Bulgaria and Poland, one can argue that the anti-liberal rhetoric has been softened by the nationalists being subsumed into a broader party.

As seen in Graph 3, as a result of these trends, the number of people voting for clear extreme right parties has decreased overall. In the first round of elections an average of 5% of voters cast their ballots for these parties. While they received almost 8% of the vote in the second round, by the third round their vote was down to 4%. Similarly, the share of parliamentary seats held by radical nationalists was well under 4% by the third round. Therefore, while changes to create moderately disproportional electoral systems helped to consolidate such larger parties as the postcommunists, they also helped to reduce the force of radical nationalist parties in electoral politics.

CONCLUSIONS

Trends over the elections thus far point to several conclusions. The first is that on the whole states have adopted a variety of systems and not changed them significantly over time, indicating that the electoral systems rather quickly became constraining institutions. Only six of the 27 electoral systems have been subjected to any major change of electoral formula since their inception. Where they have been changed, movement has generally been away from the extremes of either high disproportionality or high proportionality. Moreover, the results show that there has been significant learning, both between the first and second rounds and between the second and third. In both the second and third rounds, party elites and voters behaved in ways that were rational considering the outcome of the previous election. In particular, results from subsequent rounds appear to show declining party system fragmentation, declining disproportionality, declining volatility, and declining wasted votes, indicating a growth in strategic voting. While initial fourth round elections indicate the possibility of a slight reversal in this trend, these factors are fluctuating in an increasingly narrow band. Finally, except in the case of party volatility, the widespread view that there is a growing gap between the post-Soviet cases and the East European cases is not supported by the evidence presented here.

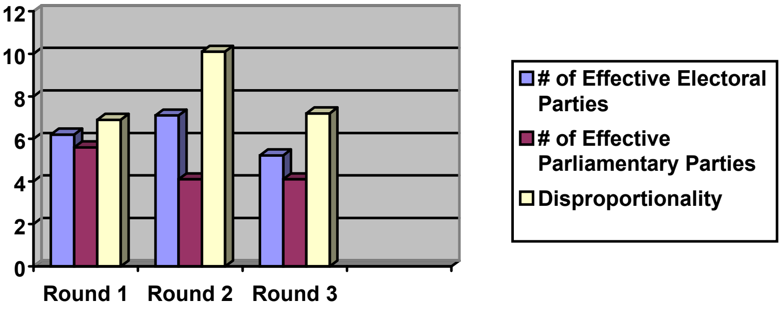
Table 1: Party volatility

	Vote	Seats
Albania	86.1	91.0
Bosnia	66.0	66.7
Bulgaria	89.6	89.2
Croatia	86.5	92.7
Czech	84.0	90.5
Estonia	62.3	69.3
Georgia	53.6	55.4
Hungary	87.9	96.1
Latvia	58.8	54.0
Lithuania	48.5	46.8
Macedonia	84.3	80.8
Moldova	63.1	81.2
Poland	88.4	98.3
Romania	85.0	94.8
Russia	46.8	40.2
Slovakia	86.2	80.7
Slovenia	85.2	84.4

Vote: Percentage of votes won in last elections before December 2001 by parties that had won seats in parliament by December 31, 1992 (again, except Latvia, where the 1993 elections are used).

Seats: Percentage of seats won in last elections before December 2001 by parties that had won seats in parliament by December 31, 1992 (again, except Latvia, where the 1993 elections are used).

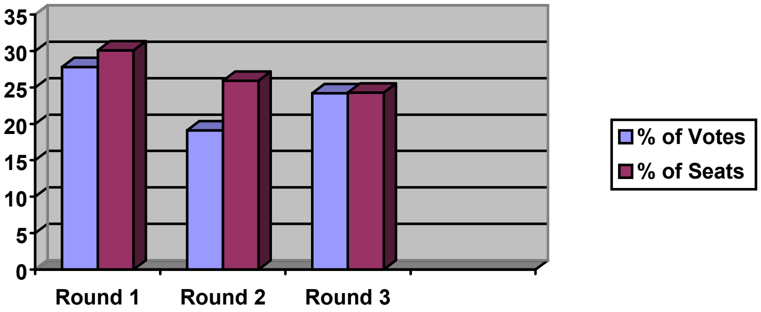
Figure 1: Electoral Trends



N=16. Only those countries with three rounds of free and fair elections are included: Albania (1991, 1992, 1997), Bosnia, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Georgia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Poland, Romania, Russia, Slovakia, Slovenia. For mixed systems, only those votes cast in the PR portion of the election are included in the calculations for effective electoral parties and disproportionality.

Note: Macedonia is excluded because of difficulties in generating meaningful data for 1990 elections (a high number of candidates ran under more than one party label) and for the 1994 elections (due to the boycott of IMRO in the runoff).

Figure 2: Trends for Post-Communist Parties

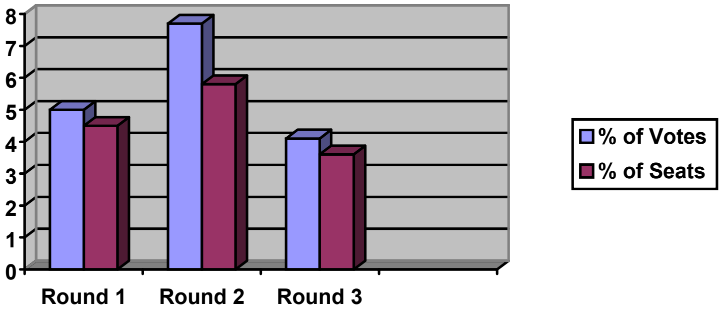


N=16. Only those countries with three rounds of elections and at least part of all three rounds were conducted by PR are included: Albania, Bosnia, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Georgia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Poland, Romania, Russia, Slovakia, Slovenia

Parties coded as Communist Successor

Albania	Party of Labor
Bosnia and Hercegovina	Social Democratic Party, Alliance of Reformed Forces of Yugoslavia
Bulgaria	Bulgarian Socialist Party
Croatia	Social Democratic Party
Czech Republic	Communist Party
Estonia	Justice
Georgia	Peace Bloc, Union of Georgian Citizens
Hungary	Hungarian Socialist Party
Latvia	Work and Justice, Latvian Unity, Russian Citizen
Lithuania	Lithuanian Democratic Labor
Moldova	Socialist Party/Edinstvo (94 only), Democratic Agrarian Party, Communist Party
Poland	Alliance of the Democratic Left
Romania	National Salvation Front
Russia	Communist Party of the Russian Federation
Slovakia	Communist Party of Slovakia, Party of the Democratic Left
Slovenia	Party of Democratic Renewal, United List

Figure 3: Trends for Radical Nationalist Parties



N=15. Only those countries with three rounds of elections and at least part of all three rounds were conducted by PR are included: Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Georgia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Poland, Romania, Russia, Slovakia, Slovenia; with the exception of Bosnia due the problems of coding radical nationalist parties.

Parties Coded as Radical Nationalist

Albania	Bali Kombetar
Bulgaria	Fatherland Party of Labor, Bulgarian National Radical Party
Croatia	Croatian Party of Rights
Czech Republic	Republican Party
Estonia	Estonian Citizen
Georgia	Merab Kostava Society, National Independence Party, St. Ilia the Righteous, Bloc 21st Century/Konstantin Gamsakhurdia/United Georgia
Hungary	Patriotic Electoral Coalition, Truth and Justice Party
Latvia	Anti-Communist Union/Our Land, National Movement for Latvia, Popular Movement for Latvia
Lithuania	Lithuanian Nationalist Union, Lithuanian Union of Political Prisoners and Deportees
Moldova	Christian Democrat-Popular Front, National Christian Party
Poland	Confederation for Independent Poland, Nationalist Party, Party X
Romania	Greater Romania Party, Party of Romanian National Unity, Socialist Labor Party
Russia	Congress of Russian Communities, Derzhava, Liberal Democratic Party of Russia, Republican Party
Slovakia	Slovak National Party
Slovenia	Slovenian National Party

APPENDIX I
Parliamentary Elections in Post-Communist States

State	Date	# of Parties	Threshold[1]	Method	Winner % Vote[2]	Winner % Seats[3]	Eff. # of Parl. Parties	Eff. # of Electoral Parties	Disprop.	"Wasted" Vote[4]
Albania	3/91	8	50	Majoritarian	56	68	1.83	2.15	10.16	--
Albania	3/92	11	4/50	Mixed	62	66 (5/90)	1.97	2.20	3.26	5
Albania	5/96		4 (4 for each coalit. party) /50	Mixed	56	87	1.31	2.80	24.52	9
Albania	6/97	23	2/50	Mixed	53	65 (55/69)	2.26	2.90	9.26	9
Bosnia	11/90	13	0	PR	30	33	4.43	4.89	3.64	6
Bosnia	9/96	29	0	PR	38	45	3.41	4.35	6.63	9
Bosnia	9/98	83	0	PR	33	40	4.86	6.47	6.32	13
Bosnia	11/00	51	0	PR	19	19	7.77	7.57	4.36	7
Bulgaria	6/90	45	4/50	Mixed	47	53 (49/57)	2.42	2.75	4.88	3
Bulgaria	10/91	40	4	PR	34	46	2.41	4.21	12.18	26
Bulgaria	12/94	48	4	PR	43	52	2.73	3.87	7.48	16
Bulgaria	4/97	31	4	PR	56	57	2.52	3.00	3.73	8
Croatia	4/90	<30	50	Majoritarian	42	68	1.92	3.16	20.63	--
Croatia	8/92	17	3/0	Mixed	43	59 (48/78)	2.45	4.09	14.78	4
Croatia	10/95	14	5/0	Mixed	45	59 (52/75/100)[5]	2.60	3.79	10.89	11
Croatia	1/00	<12	5	PR	39	47	2.94	4.03	6.33	15
Czech	6/90	17	5	PR	53	68	2.22	3.58	10.14	19
Czech	6/92	21	5	PR	34	48	4.80	7.63	6.69	19
Czech	5/96	20	5 (up to 11 for coalits.)	PR	30	34	4.15	5.09	3.59	9
Czech	6/98	13	5 (up to 11 for coalits)	PR	32	37	3.71	4.74	5.66	11
Estonia	9/92	16	5	PR	22	29	5.91	9.06	6.41	20
Estonia	3/95	16	5	PR	32	41	4.15	5.98	6.81	13
Estonia	3/99	12	5	PR	24	28	5.50	6.93	3.69	8
Georgia	10/92	47	0/50	Mixed	20	16 (19/7)	21.16	13.30	4.27	14
Georgia	11/95	54	5/0	Mixed	24	48 (60/25)	3.71	13.74	19.04	61
Georgia	10/99	33	5/33	Mixed	42	51 (57/42)	2.60	3.99	11.43	19
Hungary	3/90	19	4	Mixed	25	42 (25/63)	3.80	6.73	13.69	16
Hungary	5/94	19	5 (up to 15 for coalits.)	Mixed	33	54 (28/85)	2.90	5.55	15.45	13
Hungary	5/98	26	5 (up to 15% for coalits.)	Mixed	32	35	3.45	4.47	7.28	11
Latvia	6/93	23	4	PR	32	36	5.05	6.29	3.32	11
Latvia	9/95	19	5	PR	15	18	7.61	9.83	4.81	13
Latvia	10/98	21	5	PR	21	24	5.49	7.11	3.78	12
Lithuania	10/92	17	4	Mixed	43	48	3.75	4.13	6.45	17
Lithuania	10/96	24	5 (7 for coalits.)	Mixed	29	51(46/56)	3.54	8.10	14.63	36
Lithuania	10/00	25	5 (7 for coalits.)	Mixed	31	36 (40/32)	4.23	5.66	6.9	23

State	Date	# of Parties	Threshold[1]	Method	Winner %Vote[2]	Winner % Seats[3]	Eff. # of Parl. Parties	Eff. # of Electoral Parties	Disprop.	"Wasted" Vote[4]
Macedonia	11/90	<20	50	Majoritarian	--	32	4.44	--	--	--
Macedonia	10/94	37	50	Majoritarian	--	48	3.28	--	--	--
Macedonia	10/98	28	5/50	Mixed	28	41	3.70	5.08	9.97	10
Moldova	2/94	26	4	PR	43	54	2.62	3.99	8.77	18
Moldova	3/98	15	4	PR	30	38	3.64	5.85	8.73	24
Moldova	2/01	17	4	PR	50	70	1.85	3.78	15.98	37
Poland	10/91	69	0	PR	12	13	10.94	14.52	3.08	7
Poland	9/93	35	5 (8 for coalits.)	PR	20	37	3.88	10.18	17.26	35
Poland	9/97	<40	5 (8 for coalits.)	PR	34	44	2.95	4.62	10.24	12
Romania	5/90	<35	0	PR	66	68	2.21	2.23	.65	5
Romania	9/92	79	3	PR	28	34	4.78	7.08	5.81	20
Romania	11/96	65	3 (up to 8 for coalits.)	PR	30	36	4.26	6.16	5.81	20
Romania	11/00	69	3 (up to 8 for coalits.)	PR	37	45	3.50	5.25	8.46	23
Russia	12/93	13	5/0	Mixed	23	14 (26/2)	9.55	8.43	8.47	13
Russia	12/95	43	5/0	Mixed	22	35 (44/26)	6.25	11.39	10.77	49
Russia	12/99	26	5/0	Mixed	23	25 (30/20)	8.48	6.88	5.77	19
Slovakia	6/90	17	3	PR	33	39	5.32	6.24	2.40	8
Slovakia	6/92	22	5	PR	33	47	3.19	5.45	10.39	24
Slovakia	9/94	17	5 (up to 10 for coalits.)	PR	35	41	4.41	5.86	5.18	13
Slovakia	9/98	<15	5 (up to 10 for coalits.)	PR	27	29	4.75	5.36	5.66	6
Slovenia	4/90	17	3	PR	17	18	8.21	9.16	2.39	9
Slovenia	12/92	25	3	PR	23	25	6.61	8.63	4.27	18
Slovenia	11/96	<15	3	PR	27	28	5.53	6.38	2.53	11
Slovenia	10 /00	10	4	PR	36	42	4.86	5.15	1.27	4

Sources: Dawisha and Parrott. 1997; IFES Elections Today 3:2-6:4 (Fall 1992 - Winter 1997); IFES electionguide.org (http://www.ifes.org/eguide/elecguide.htm); Foreign Broadcast Information Service-Eastern Europe (FBIS-EEU) various. Political Transformation and the Electoral Process in Post-Communist Europe (http://www2.essex.ac.uk/elect/er_index.htm)

[1] For PR systems, the threshold is the minimum percent of votes required to obtain any seats in parliament. In majoritarian systems, it is used here to indicate the percent of votes required in the first round to avoid a second round. In mixed systems, the first number refers to the PR system and the second to the majoritarian.

[2] For Presidential elections in which no candidate received over 50% of the vote in the first round, the first number is the winning candidate's percent of the vote in the first round and the number in parentheses is the vote in the second round.

[3] For mixed systems, the first number in the parentheses is the percentage of seats won available through PR and the second number is the percent of single-member district seats won.

[4] Here "wasted" votes are the total votes in proportional representation systems for parties which received no seats.

[5] 12 seats are reserved for the Croatian diaspora, and there are separate lists to fill these seats. The HDZ was the only party to pass the 5% threshold in the election for these seats, and it therefore received all 12.

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