Formation of Party Cleavages in Post-Communist Democracies: Theoretical Propositions
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FORMATION OF PARTY CLEAVAGES IN POST-COMMUNIST DEMOCRACIES

Theoretical Propositions

Herbert Kitschelt

ABSTRACT

Research on post-communist party systems must deal with (1) the extent to which party systems crystallize around programmatic cleavages or are based on clientelistic or charismatic parties and (2) if programmatic competition is high, the content of the major divisions that are represented by the parties. The extent to which programmatic structuring takes place in post-communism depends on countries’ democratic experience and the nature of their democratic institutions fostering more personalized or more depersonalized power relations. These institutions, in turn, are influenced by the pathways of transition from communism to democracy, the type of communist rule and earlier traditions of democratization and industrialization in the inter-war era. With regard to the content of cleavage divisions, the paper identifies several configurations of party systems. Determinants are derived from voters’ economic interests, the varying salience of socio-cultural conflicts in post-communist countries and the relations among ethnic groups.

KEY WORDS • democratization • parties • party systems • programmatic competition

The focal point for studying patterns of party competition in any region of the world is still Lipset and Rokkan’s (1967) seminal article on the emergence of west European party system cleavages in the 19th century and first half of the 20th century. According to this study, the national and industrial revolutions created four cleavages – centre/periphery, religious/secular, urban/rural, and capital/labour – which have crystallized in European party systems to a varying extent, contingent upon the pathways of modern state and economic
development and the political opportunities to mobilize electoral constituencies around unique party appeals. Moreover, Lipset and Rokkan suggest that once societal divisions have been converted into party cleavages they stay ‘frozen’ over extended periods of time, even though the underlying societal conflicts may subside.

Later work on western Europe has essentially amended and tested these arguments, particularly the contention that European party systems have been stable and ‘frozen’ since the inter-war period. Moreover, research has identified societal and political configurations that account for the rise of new cleavages not anticipated by Lipset and Rokkan. This literature has convincingly demonstrated that not just societal developments, but the deliberate choices of politicians, embedded into systems of institutional rules and strategic configurations, make a difference in the dynamic of party systems and the evolution of cleavages. Lipset and Rokkan, as well as later students of west European party systems, however, have assumed that parties are typically organized around societal cleavages and articulate different political programmes in the process of electoral competition. Even if such cleavages subside and party systems show sign of dealignment, a modicum of programmatic or issue-specific differences in the parties’ electoral appeal is still taken to be the baseline of political competition. But why should party systems be organized around political cleavages and related programmatic divisions that motivate citizens to vote rather than around other incentives that bind people to a party, such as clientelistic favours or the attraction to a charismatic personality?

Because cleavage-based parties with programmatic appeals are not dominant in Latin American or Asian, let alone African, politics, the presumption that political conflict between parties is based on rival programmatic appeals has always been more problematic for students of non-west-European politics. In a similar vein, it is plausible to question whether post-communist party systems organize around lasting lines of conflict that are based on rival political programmes and value commitments. The first section of this article explores theoretical arguments to determine the extent to which party systems are likely to revolve around programmatic or other principles of crystallization. The second section then turns to hypotheses about the substance of the programmatic divisions that are likely to structure those post-communist democracies in which issue- and ideology-based politics does emerge. In each case, I begin with simple, naive and hence empirically unsatisfactory models and then make them more complex to approximate empirical reality. The simple models help us to clarify analytical questions we should ask in the study of party competition. The less parsimonious (and therefore less elegant) arguments have more empirical content.
The Structuring of Post-communist Party Systems

When voters choose new parties, one of three considerations is key: sympathy with the personality of a party’s candidates, expected personal and selective tangible and intangible advantages derived from the victory of a party, or the production of indirect advantages in the form of collective goods if the party of choice wins the election. These considerations give rise to three pure types of parties — charismatic, clientelistic and programmatic parties — although in real life different considerations may be intertwined and create mixed arrangements. For example, European Christian or socialist mass parties used to attract voters just as much by providing direct emotional and material bonds to the party as by the promised collective benefits that the realization of their programmes held in store for the electorate. Over time and across party families, however, the mix of incentives that constitute voter–party linkages through charismatic, clientelistic and programmatic mechanisms varies significantly. Incentive systems, of course, are not all that maintains a voter–party linkage. Once a party has established a linkage to voter groups, continued support also rests on the habituation (and eventually the socialization) of voters within a pattern of political interest articulation. Socialization can explain the persistence of party–voter linkages, but not the emergence of new parties or the affiliation of newly enfranchised voters.

Programme-based parties incur the highest coordination costs among party supporters and leaders and require the greatest amount of information and cognitive skills among voters to arrive at an intelligent choice between competing alternatives. Charismatic parties avoid high costs of organization and political consensus-building because they involve not much more than an unstructured mass of people rallying around a leader. Charismatic authority is unstable not only because it stands and falls with a unique personality, but also because leaders sooner or later have to provide non-trivial benefits to their constituencies. At that point, they are compelled to embark on the trajectory of organization-building and begin to produce selective incentives or collective goods that tend to result in clientelistic or programmatic parties. Clientelistic parties, particularly patronage organizations, make high investments in organizational structure and have to provide a constant flow of resources (‘club goods’) to their following. They avoid, however, the high coordination costs of political consensus-building among their activists and followers, since affiliation and continuing loyalty are based on selective material and solidarity incentives. Programme-based parties face a much more complicated task. They attempt to build an organizational structure to advertise their ideas about a desirable society as the collective good they promise to produce and to attract activists and leaders ready to propagate and to implement these ideas, if the party captures government offices. Moreover, in the process of articulating collective goals, the programmatic party incurs high coordination costs because it must be able to find programmes that motivate the activists and the party’s external following.
alike to contribute to the party's continuing electoral viability. On top of these requirements, programmatic parties also are very demanding on voters' cognitive skills, as they ask voters to calculate the distance or proximity between the party's advertised programme and political strategy, on the one hand, and the voters' individual payoffs from the 'collective goods' promised by the party (economic growth, inflation, unemployment, income equality, social security, environmental protection and so on), on the other.

Although programmatic parties are harder to build than charismatic or clientelistic parties, they are more likely to reinforce the consolidation and stability of democratic regimes than the two alternative modes of party-voter linkage. Programmatic party competition provides a rational motivation for citizens' participation in elections and thus a rational justification of the democratic rules of the game. Charismatic and clientelistic parties have a tendency to make democratic competition look irrelevant or irrational from the perspective of deliberating voters. Hence, they generate cynicism among voters, particularly the well educated within the electorate. If party competition is based on the charisma of individual politicians, voters give a 'blank cheque' to leaders, who may do whatever pleases them after being elected. Voters cannot rationally calculate the policy consequences of their choices and might find their interests undermined by the very candidate whom they elect to political office. The lack of a rational, deliberative base of the voter–leader linkage is the major weakness of charismatic political competition and yields what O'Donnell (1993) has recently termed 'delegative democracies'.

Also, clientelistic parties undermine faith in democratic competition because of a built-in schizophrenia they are likely to foster among sophisticated voters. To play by the electoral rules, they advertise the provision of collective goods in their official programmes, but voters know that all the parties will deliver are personal services and benefits to their loyal following. Moreover, in countries where clientelistic parties cooperate in dividing up state revenue and jobs as the booty disbursed to their followers, voting appears as a superfluous exercise. Whereas voting and party competition invoke the centrality of the electoral process of interest aggregation for the distribution of group and societal benefits, clientelistic parties tend to void that process by allocating scarce goods in ‘smoke-filled rooms’ and secret negotiations with their rivals. Clientelistic parties work around rather than through the stated rules of democratic competition.

Clientelistic and charisma-based party systems have a chance to survive as long as (1) they deal with unsophisticated, uneducated voters for whom the discrepancy between democratic rules and party performance is not noticeable or problematic and (2) they do not operate in an environment of economic growth and sectoral change that upsets the balance of political coalitions crafted by such party systems. Not by accident, 'progressive' movements against clientelistic parties attract sophisticated middle-class voters with exceptional cognitive capacities and with interests that are at
odds with the existing clientelistic incentives systems, no matter whether we think of the United States after the turn of the 20th century or contemporary Italy or Japan.

Because programmatic party competition is costly and difficult to achieve, yet beneficial to the consolidation of democracy, a number of authors have claimed that (1) post-communist democracy is not going to be based on programmatic party competition in the near future, but on highly volatile charismatic and clientelistic parties, and that therefore (2) post-communist democracies will remain unconsolidated for a considerable period of time. Parties are said to lack the societal and political anchors that would permit programmatic structuring. I will call these arguments the ‘tabula rasa’ hypothesis. It is based on four interconnected propositions. First, the communist experience of overt compliance with authority and covert pursuit of anomic self-interest has brought about a ‘civilizational incompetence’ to develop an active civic orientation and to participate in the political debates and the governance of a competitive democracy (Sztompka, 1992, 1993). Second, the fluidity of property rights undercuts the formation of economic and social cleavage divisions, because citizens are unable to recognize the interests that may serve as the basis of political mobilization around programmatic parties. Third, the new democracies have created a cacophony of political entrepreneurs and parties without track record or appreciable reputation that make it impossible for voters to choose among programmatic alternatives in an intelligent fashion. And fourth, the international economic constraints imposed on the liberalization of former communist economies leave little to choose for citizens and parties. Whatever programmatic differences are voiced by political parties, they are nothing but window-dressing, concealing the fact that all parties have to follow identical policies.

The tabula rasa hypothesis, however, may be much too conservative and pessimistic. It under-estimates the capacity of human beings to learn and process information quickly. It may be true that post-communist parties will not produce divisions of interest and programmatic party competition in the same vein as established capitalist democracies, but rational voters and party leaders may still be able to bring about a certain depth of programmatic structuring. Moreover, the tabula rasa thesis leaves little room for variations within or across post-communist polities or, for that matter, with post-authoritarian democracies in Latin America and South-east Asia. It may be easier for some post-communist countries to develop programmatically structured party competition than for others. A number of conditions influences the extent to which the programmatic structuring of new party systems may vary across time and space, yielding a model that can be applied to the cohort of post-communist countries. I work backwards from the most proximate causes of differential programmatic party structuration, which are often under the purview of today’s actors, to the historical antecedents that are beyond the control of contemporary actors. The most recent influence is the time period during which democratic systems have operated and the
constitutional arrangements that govern them. As we go back in time, the nature of the pre-democratic communist regime and the mode of transition to democracy affect the choice of democratic rules and modes of party competition. Further in the past, previous democratic experiences and the nature of industrialization leave their mark on the conditions that shape contemporary democracies.

System Time. Party competition is an iterative ‘signalling game’ in which voters and parties learn about each other’s ‘type’ through signals (public speeches, parliamentary debates and voting on bills, opinion polls) and develop reputations on which they act. The longer the game is played, the greater is the chance that parties will acquire a programmatic profile. Simultaneously, voters have the opportunity to revise misconceptions they hold about parties. Programmatic structuring of parties and electorates in the 1990s may also build on episodes of democracy before communist rule that are remembered by older voters and recollections of which are handed down to their offspring. Altogether, programmatic structuring of democratic party competition in post-communist countries in the mid-1990s is more powerful, first, if democracy lasted for an extended period in the inter-war years and was revived in free elections after the end of the Second World War and, second, if the mobilization of political alternatives to communist party rule had begun already in the 1980s rather than in 1990 or thereafter.

Political Structure. Parties tend to be more organized around programmatic competition if the rules of the game ‘depersonalize’ political power and thus undercut client–patron relations and charismatic authorities in favour of ‘political teams’ coalescing around political platforms. Parliamentarism furthers programmatic competition, whereas presidentialism promotes a concentration of power on charismatic individuals and a disintegration of parties because personal competition prevails over the ‘team spirit’ (cf. Harmel and Janda, 1982: Ch. 6). Moreover, sitting presidents may systematically weaken cohesive parties to assert their dominance in the legislative process through ‘divide and rule’ strategies of governing with varying party coalitions by offering side-payments to particular legislators and club goods (for example, patronage) to their constituencies. Moreover, electoral systems matter for the programmatic unity of parties. Where electoral rules personalize competition – as in single-member-district plurality vote, single non-transferable vote, or proportional representation with personal preference vote systems – more factionalism and clientelism will emerge inside parties (Katz, 1980). Proportional representation, which fragments party systems, may be conducive to programmatic competition only up to a point. Extreme fragmentation may make it difficult for voters to distinguish the parties.

Structure of Authoritarian Rule and Democratic Transition. Constitutional designs are influenced by modes of democratic transition (Kitschelt,
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1992b, 1994) which, in turn, are influenced by the nature of non-democratic regime types (cf. Bratton and van de Walle, 1994). Communist regimes exhibit at least three different configurations characterized by variations in, first, the extent of ‘contestation’ over policy-making within and beyond the communist party elite, second, in the leeway for the articulation of popular dissent with the party, and third, in the extent of bureaucratic professionalism (competence, rule adherence, performance orientation) or patronage, corruption and nepotism as operating principles of the state apparatus.

What may be called *patrimonial communism* exhibits low opportunities for intra-elite contestation and popular interest articulation and low to intermediate rational-bureaucratic institutionalization. Such systems rely on hierarchical chains of personal dependence between leaders in the apparatus and their entourage, buttressed by extensive patronage and clientelistic networks. Opposition is severely repressed or coopted into the patronage system. Much of south-eastern Europe (Serbia, Romania, to a considerable extent also Bulgaria), Russia, Ukraine, Belarus and – as the most extreme cases – the former Asian republics of the Soviet Union exhibited many or all of the traits of patrimonial communism. Because of the weakness of opposition to communism in these cases, the transition typically proceeded through pre-emptive strikes launched by elements of the old elites who were able to impose their favourite constitutional design (presidentialism, personalizing election rules) on the emerging new regimes. Former communist elites prefer rules of competition that personalize power in order to capitalize on the name recognition of local and national leaders of clientelist networks and to divert attention from the big ‘collective good’ questions of radically rebuilding economic and political institutions.

In a second type of communist system, *bureaucratic-authoritarian communism*, political contestation and interest articulation are narrowly circumscribed, but the level of rational-bureaucratic institutionalization is high. Such rule-governed bureaucracies were not capable of rapid pre-emptive action and typically collapsed (‘imploded’) in the crisis of the communist camp. Implosion gives the old elite next to no bargaining power over the choice of new institutions. Hence, in the successors to bureaucratic-authoritarian communist regimes, the liberal-democratic opposition chose political institutions that depersonalize power, such as parliamentarism and list-based proportional representation. The prime examples of this type of socialism are the Czech Republic and the former German Democratic Republic. Slovakia is a hard case. Its regime and transition were dominated by the Czech pattern, but behind the veneer of bureaucratic-authoritarian communism and the implosion of 1989/90 one can easily discover distinct elements of patrimonial communism and a ‘pre-emptive’ mode of transition which is highlighted by the rapid disintegration of the anti-communist civic movement and the assertion of former communists in the nationalist successor parties.

The third type of communist rule, a *national or national consensus communism*, permitted intermediate levels of contestation and interest...
Figure 1. Determinants of the programmatic structuration of party systems.
articulation, at least since the 1970s, and instituted intermediate levels of bureaucratic professionalism. Communist elites invoked the popular desire to maintain national autonomy from the Soviet hegemony in order to craft political and economic compromises with domestic challenging elites who were rooted in the inter-war political experience and the Catholic church. The communist elites granted a modicum of contestation and interest articulation in exchange for compliance with the basic parameters of the system. In the transition period from communism, these elites negotiated with the opposition, yielding agreements on mixed democratic institutions with elements that personalize and that depersonalize political power (such as semi-presidentialism, mixed electoral systems with proportional representation, but also single-member districts). The primary examples for this type are Poland and Hungary, but in a number of respects also Slovenia and Croatia. As borderline cases, one might also include the three Baltic countries which had been absorbed by the Soviet Union in 1939, but where national independence movements voiced demands and became partners in negotiations with the communist elites well ahead of the collapse of communism in east-central Europe in 1989, let alone the demise of the Soviet Union in 1991.

Timing of Industrialization and Political Mobilization. Behind the different types of communist rule are historically varying patterns of economic backwardness (Chirot, 1986; Janos, 1989, 1994) and political mobilization (Offe, 1994; Schöpflin 1993). Bureaucratic-authoritarian communism emerged in regions with early industrialization and political mobilization of strong and radical working-class movements. National (consensus) communism prevailed in semi-peripheral regions of European capitalism with limited democracy and semi-authoritarian inter-war regimes. Working-class movements were weak before communism, but urban/rural and religious cleavages crystallized around the mobilizing middle class and peasantry. Patrimonial communism, finally, was situated in regions at the periphery of European industrialization before 1945, with authoritarian and patrimonial regimes in the inter-war period. After 1945, rapid industrialization created new urban strata of workers and white-collar employees which was entirely indebted to the communist regime for the dramatic improvements in the standard of living that followed the Second World War. Patrimonial communism was able to entrench itself in the popular consciousness more than any other communist elite, because it was not challenged by an independent stratum of intellectuals or middle-class professionals with origins preceding communism.

The logic driving the programmatic structuring of party systems is depicted in Figure 1. The correlation between the various historical and institutional conditions that shape the programmatic crystallization of parties may be too high for a multivariate analysis designed to sort out the independent causal effects of individual variables. Programmatic structuring most immediately
depends on the competitive ‘signalling game’ and the number of effective parties, which declines once the initial crowd of political entrepreneurs at the time of founding elections falls by the wayside and only a few parties prove viable. Causally prior but persistent determinants are the rules of democratic competition and their effects on depersonalizing political power. The choice of these rules, in turn, is influenced by the mode of transition to democracy, based on the type of communism found in a country. Further in the past, the timing and extent of industrialization and the nature of political mobilization in the inter-war period matter in shaping the more proximate conditions of programmatic party structuring.

The message of this model is that we cannot generalize about the extent of programmatic party competition in post-communist democracies. National and even subnational conditions and configurations of players may lead to rather different outcomes. To give a flavour of these outcomes, I have constructed four composite indicators which, taken together, yield a rough estimation of the likelihood that programmatic parties will emerge in post-communist countries (Table 1). Let me emphasize the purely heuristic value of the resulting overall index, which rates the chances of programme-based party formation. I cannot supply a compelling theoretical argument for the weighting of the individual indicators nor for the process of summing them up in the composite index. Moreover, some of the scores may be challengeable. Nevertheless, the table provides a general sense of the variance in programmatic party formation we might expect in post-communist regimes.

The first indicator, the timing of industrialization, is operationalized by the proportion of agricultural employment at the time of the communist takeover. Figures for the late 1920s would place Czechoslovakia at 25 percent agriculture (and the Czech Republic quite a bit lower, once Slovakia is factored out), Hungary at 51 percent, Poland at 65 percent, and Romania and Yugoslavia (not taking big internal regional variations into account) as well as probably Bulgaria and much of the later Soviet Union near or above 80 percent. The second indicator, constitutional stipulations, can be measured in a comparatively straightforward way. What cannot be neatly captured, however, is how interaction effects between electoral laws and executive design impinge upon programmatic party formation.

Most challengeable is probably the indicator of modes of democratic transitions in post-communist countries. Qualitative judgements would have to be backed up with detailed comparative studies. In my own mind, hard cases include Slovakia, some of the Baltic states, and particularly Russia. For example, the implosion of the communist regime in Czechoslovakia started in Prague, not in Bratislava. The political structures of the Slovak communist party and Slovakia’s historical background of industrialization, political mobilization and regime formation (Tiso fascist dictatorship?) before the advent of communism would have suggested a different transition by pre-emptive elite reform. In fact, what followed the initial implosion of communist rule in Slovakia is more compatible with that model than with the
Table 1. Predicting the extent of the programmatic structuration of party systems

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Timing of industrialization</th>
<th>Political constitution</th>
<th>Democratic transition</th>
<th>System time*</th>
<th>Index of the chances of programme-based party formation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
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<td>German Democratic Republic</td>
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<td>Poland</td>
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<td>Slovenia</td>
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<td>Slovakia</td>
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<td>Baltic States</td>
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<td>Russia, Ukraine, Belarus</td>
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<td>Serbia, most other former</td>
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<td>Soviet Union</td>
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*a Ordinal scaling, based on the size of the agricultural sector at the time of the communist takeover.

*b Ordinal scaling, based on (a) the existence of parliamentary (= 1) or more presidentialist constitutional designs (= 0) and (b) the existence of proportional representation (= 1) or plurality representation (= 0).

*c Ordinal scaling of the modes of transition through implosion of the communist elites (= 2), bargaining among the old and the new elites (= 1) or preventive reform of communist elite groups (= 0).

*d Ordinal scaling, based on (a) the duration of pre-communist (semi-)democracy in the inter-war and the post-Second World War period (max 1 point) and (b) the democratic system time since the start of the post-communist transition (1 = liberalization/pluralist groups before 1989; 0 = liberalization after 1990).

* Note the very different scoring of the Czech Republic and of Slovakia, where many members of the old nomenklatura dominate the new parties.

Czech pathway. Nationalist former communists could engage in a belated pre-emptive strike in the process of party formation and re-emerge in the new post-communist movements after 1989. Because of the complex interaction of internal and external influences on the transition, it may be difficult to score Slovakia either as implosion or as pre-emptive reform. Its political constitution, again, is more consistent with what we would expect after a transition by implosion, because it was driven by events in the Czech Republic from 1990 to 1992.13

Also, system time, the fourth indicator, is difficult to score. Pre-communist experiences can be distinguished rather easily, but the length of the political liberalization phase in the 1980s and the significance of having had two or three rounds of free elections since 1990 may be disputable. From the vantage point of future studies, democratic system time since the collapse of
communism will be very similar in all post-communist countries, regardless of whether the opening started before 1989 or only in the early 1990s.

In Table 1, countries are distributed along a continuum that ranges from configurations highly favourable to programmatic party formation to configurations quite unfavourable to such developments. For simplicity’s sake, these configurations can be grouped into four sets of cases: favourable, above average, below average and unfavourable chances for programmatic party competition. At the bottom, we find countries with strong personalization of politics and ‘delegative democracies’ around more or less unaccountable leaders and weak parties. By emphasizing variance among post-communist countries, the theoretical model thus buttresses empirical expectations that diverge from those who see the rise of ‘clientura’ systems rather than programmatic competition all over eastern Europe (Ágh, 1993, 1994).

What Programmatic Divisions and Cleavages Can We Expect in Post-communist Democracies?

Democracies may be characterized by at least three basic programmatic cleavage dimensions, each of which may yield different historically specific party divisions. First, the political struggle concerns the boundaries of citizenship. The key alternatives are between a universalist conception of citizenship and individual rights and a particularist definition of ethnic or cultural status attributed to particular collectivities, but denied to others. Second, politics is about the choice of collective political governance structures within the collectivity that is enfranchised. It consists of two subcomponents, issues of political participation (‘political liberalism’) and of individual autonomy (‘social liberalism’). Political and social liberals endorse participatory collective choice and a broad sphere of individual lifestyle choices beyond the reach of collective political determination. At the other extreme, social and political authoritarians dislike participatory politics and call for the authoritative governance of personal moral conduct. Third, political divisions revolve around distributive questions of income and property pitting parties, sectors or occupational groups against each other. Positions range from free-market economic liberalism to positions of economic populism that call for state-led resource redistribution in favour of or against particular social groups or for society at large. I will first develop a simple but evidently unrealistic model of how cleavages in post-communist democracies may evolve and translate into party divisions. I will then amend the model in different stages to make it more realistic, but unfortunately more complex.

The Simple Model of Economic Rationality

Support for market mechanisms of allocating scarce resources will be particularly pronounced among those who have the greatest capacity to adapt to
a new economy because (1) they have high education and skills, (2) they are young, (3) they reside in urban areas, and (4) they are male. In terms of education, it is less the specific skills acquired in the old communist regime than the higher-order capacity to solve problems and learn new information that advantages the better educated. Youth endows citizens with more motivational and emotional capacities to stomach change and typically fewer family responsibilities that make individuals more risk averse. Urban residence exposes individuals to more varied social networks and increased flows of information, thus enhancing the opportunities for market adaptation. Depending on the prevailing sex roles in family and society, cognitive, social and motivational advantages accrue to males that make them more capable of embracing market rules than females. Empirical studies have repeatedly shown that education, youth, urban residence and gender are related to economic liberalism.17

It is more difficult to employ occupation and sector as predictors of market liberalism because the fortunes of individuals and firms in the market-place vary so much. But in general, employees in heavy industry, the security apparatus, administrative clerks in most industries, peasants and pensioners have the least capacity to take advantage of market institutions, whereas business owners, professionals, service sector workers and part of the middle management nomenklatura are best positioned for success and therefore are likely to support market-liberal parties.18 In contrast, workers are over-represented among moderately populist nationalist or Christian parties whose leaders do not express unqualified support for the market. Interestingly, workers are no longer exceptionally keen on post-communist parties.19

A simple economic theory would further predict that those who like free capitalist markets also prefer social liberalism, political participation and universalist citizenship rights on the other cleavage dimensions distinguished above. Beneficiaries of the market prefer individual moral and lifestyle autonomy, are not worried about the uncertainties produced by participatory democratic competition and see no reason for collectivist conceptions of social identity with ethnic and nationalist friend/foe relations. Market beneficiaries do not shy away from an open society because they are confident they have the resources to prevail and to succeed without authoritarian control of the political process or people’s personal conduct. Conversely, those worried about their own viability in the market-place seek defensive mechanisms in the collectivist definition of morality and group membership and authoritarian politics. The simple economic theory thus predicts that parties appealing to market liberal, socially and politically libertarian and cosmopolitan positions will gather strong support. On the other side of the political divide, parties with populist and authoritarian as well as particularist appeals should thrive among the losers of the capitalist transformation. Moreover, the relative size of the parties representing winners and losers depends on the varying economic prospects of post-communist countries (Kitschelt, 1992a).
In line with this theory, empirical research finds that supporters of social and political libertarianism and ethnic cosmopolitanism are indeed younger, more educated or more urban. Furthermore, countries with comparatively advanced industrial structure and educational skills in the proximity to Western markets tend to be more supportive of social and political libertarianism in public opinion and political parties, whereas in countries with less favourable conditions populist and nationalist parties are stronger.

But the simple economic theory of political preference formation and party alignment is contradicted by some critical findings. Most importantly, post-communist parties with a more populist economic appeal have often been socially and politically libertarian and cosmopolitan. Conversely, not all market liberals are ethnically universalist and cosmopolitan (Evans and Whitefield, 1993). Finally, the relative salience of dimensions of political conflict and their interrelations vary across post-communist countries, a phenomenon for which the simple economic theory has no explanation. For this reason, the theory must be amended and modified in light of additional variables that shape competitive dimensions.

**Time and Experience with Economic and Political Liberalization**

The longer citizens and politicians follow democratic rules, the more likely it is that they perceive democracy as the ‘only game in town’. Alternatives look ever more risky and implausible, as they require a fundamental institutional shake-up. As a consequence, party divisions over the acceptance of political liberalism gradually wane. As a rule of thumb, after 20 years of democracy anti-system parties have tacitly accepted the democratic rules and will not stage a revolt. In post-communism, over time, the supporters of populist, anti-market economic policies find that they can exercise power by winning votes and even government posts, thus discovering that the political rules are not automatically biased against them. Moreover, to expand their electorate, they are likely to dilute their anti-system stance and make concessions to the advocates of the new system. As a consequence, in the political elites differential support for political democracy will no longer be clearly associated with economic or social liberalism but prevails among parties of all ideological stripes. Party elites take the divide between political liberalism and authoritarianism out of the arena of competition.

A parallel process takes place in the population. Over time, those who are disappointed with the new market regime will vote for ‘social-democratized’ parties of the post-communist left or for Christian and nationalist parties with populist slogans, but not for parties supporting a radical anti-democratic shift, such as neo-communist or fascist parties. Even when popular opinion signals a backlash against market capitalism, as is often the case once the initial cycle of economic reform and restructuring imposes sacrifices on broad strata (Przeworski, 1991: Ch. 4), such sentiments have less to do with wishes to undo market reforms than calls for slowing the pace.
of further increments of market liberalization. In this sense, the acceptance of market liberalization by light industry, retailing and services has been much greater than that by heavy industry and infrastructure.

The Origins and Salience of Social Libertarianism

In agreement with the ‘simple’ theory, empirical research finds a rather consistent correlation between market liberal and socially libertarian attitudes, but this overall picture ignores the fact that substantial minorities combine social libertarianism with economic populism, a tendency that surfaces in the support for social-democratizing post-communist parties in Hungary, Poland and other central-European countries. This ‘anomaly’, from the vantage point of the simple economic theory of post-communist cleavage formation, is due to the fact that social libertarianism is not entirely a product of economic self-interest, but also closely linked to educational sophistication, irrespective of economic market chances. High cognitive capacities increase preferences for the autonomous choice of lifestyles and reciprocity based on tolerance for disagreement in social and political relations. For this reason, in post-communist societies even those highly educated professionals who stand to lose from market capitalism in the short and medium run – such as those working in difficult-to-privatize social, health and educational services that have been starved of resources since the crisis of the 1980s – support social libertarianism, even though they often harbour ambivalent, if not negative attitudes toward market liberalism. Public-sector employees are thus an important clientele for parties more populist in economic terms, yet libertarian in social terms.

The extent to which particular topics that belong to the socially libertarian agenda – such as law enforcement, family policy and sexual morality, and the prosecution of former communist functionaries – can be politicized and linked to party alignments critically depends on the specific political and cultural setting of post-communist transitions. In formerly patrimonial communist countries where the old elites are still entrenched in key positions in all walks of life, the big issues are law and order and de-communization, but rarely questions of family and morality. Both post-communists and anti-communists support different aspects of an authoritarian agenda. Post-communist elites present themselves as the pillars of stability, capable of fighting crime and maintaining security, while blaming their antipodes for being the protagonists of chaos. Anti-communists call for strict de-communization, barring a loosely defined and therefore large group of former communists from equal participation in political and economic life. Since both positions are authoritarian mirror images of each other, it is not easy to find a distinct social libertarianism/authoritarianism dimension in the party systems of former patrimonial communist countries.

Where bureaucratic-authoritarian communism prevailed, issues of social libertarianism tend to lack sufficient salience to structure party competition.
In such countries early industrialization and secularization and strong working-class movements had marginalized social divisions over morality and authority while highlighting distributive economic struggles. Moreover, the old elites imploded and are not plausible protectors of law and order. In the post-communist era, Christian or rural parties may claim the flag of moral traditionalism, but command a modest following. It is not by chance that such forces are also most militantly anti-communist and call for the judicial prosecution and political exclusion of former communist functionaries from participation in the new order. It is unlikely, however, that the democratic party systems revolve around a strong libertarian/authoritarian political axis. Economic questions of property and distribution constitute the most salient dimension of party competition.

The salience of the division between social libertarians and authoritarians is greatest in formerly national communist countries with negotiated transitions. Because of early market reforms and concessions by the communist elites that sometimes date back to the 1970s, the economic policy divide between market liberalizers and socialist standpatters is less sharp than in other post-communist societies. Often the old party technocracy has become the main engine of market liberalization. In order to demonstrate party differences in the democratic competition, politicians seek to identify other dimensions of issue differentiation and therefore draw on social libertarianism versus authoritarianism. This is facilitated by the existence of political cleavages that antedate the advent of communism and that now divide political camps on questions of morality, family and religion. Social libertarianism versus authoritarianism often has also an international dimension. Libertarian positions embrace integration in the Western economic and civilizational sphere, whereas authoritarians insist on national autonomy to protect a unique cultural heritage that provides a line of defence against the libertarian civilization.

In the new post-communist democracies, all three elements of social libertarianism – law and order, family and morality, and de-communization – can be brought to bear on party divisions and are often fused with more nationalist or cosmopolitan views. Liberal parties tend to be secular, tolerant, primarily concerned with civic freedoms rather than crime prevention, lenient on de-communization, pro-market and cosmopolitan, supporting Western integration. In contrast, Christians/nationalists emphasize authority, order, collectivist morality, tough de-communization, populist correctives to the market-place and national autonomy. Post-communist or neo-social democratic parties, finally, share the liberals’ concern for social libertarianism but express a mild support for economic populism (Ishiyama, 1995).

The complexity of cross-cutting economic, social libertarian divisions makes it hard in such countries to employ the left–right language to differentiate political camps. Socialists are unambiguously ‘left’ because they tend to be libertarian on social issues and populist on economics. But what
about liberals who are ‘right’ on economics and ‘left’ on social libertarianism? And how to place Christian nationalists who are economically ‘centre’ or ‘left’, but clearly on the ‘right’ on questions of social libertarianism and nationalism?

Ethnic Divisions and Collective Economic Redistribution

The simple economic theory of political divisions postulates that potential winners of market capitalist reforms are cosmopolitan, whereas potential losers tend to define their interests in parochial, ascriptive terms of nationality and ethnicity as a protection against an unfavourable pure market allocation of resources. This argument appears to be borne out in ethnically relatively homogeneous and nationally consolidated post-communist countries, where nationalist and ethnic themes attract less educated, older and blue-collar voters. But in ethnically divided and nationally less consolidated countries the situation is more complicated. What makes the difference is the political position of citizens who individually stand to gain from market liberalization, but who belong to ethnic groups that collectively are disadvantaged in the acquisition of scarce economic resources. In the Baltic countries, this leads to a situation where even those who support market liberalism and social libertarianism endorse particularist, nationalist and exclusionary policies on citizenship (cf. Evans and Whitefield, 1993: 538; Klingemann et al., 1994; Whitefield and Evans, 1994).

Ethnic competition tends to be likely when a stable cultural division of labour is disrupted by economic and political change (cf. Ragin, 1987: 136). Individuals then tend to define their interests not only in terms of individual market chances, but also in terms of first whether their ethnic group has privileged or underprivileged access to scarce resources and, second, whether they belong to the numerical minority or the majority that might dominate the democratic process. Table 2 places group characteristics in the margins and individual winner/loser status inside each cell.

Individual losers of market liberalism, regardless of group status, will always have an incentive to define their stakes in ethnic-particularist terms to establish a non-economic principle of allocating scarce resources in a favourable way. Individual winners, however, may determine their ethnic views according to group fortunes. Where they belong to an economically privileged majority group, they need not worry that an ethnic minority might exploit democracy for economic redistribution against the well-off ethnic majority. They will therefore support a ‘cosmopolitan’ policy endorsing a full legal and material enfranchisement of ethnic minorities. In a similar vein, the elites of underprivileged minorities may hope for inclusive ethnic policies to improve their group’s lot through the market-place, once particularist restrictions are removed.

The political outlook may be different, however, among the elites of underprivileged majorities or privileged minorities. They may employ
Table 2. The definition of citizenship right contingent upon ethnic group status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Economic asset control by ethnic group</th>
<th>Relative group size</th>
<th>Majority</th>
<th>Minority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dominant privileged</td>
<td>WINNERS: inclusive citizenship</td>
<td>WINNERS: inclusive or ethnic particularist</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LOSERS: ethnic-particularist citizenship</td>
<td>LOSERS: ethnic-particularist citizenship</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Subordinated underprivileged</td>
<td>WINNERS: ethnic-particularist citizenship</td>
<td>WINNERS: inclusive citizenship</td>
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particularist ethnic policies, because their groups stand to gain or lose from the political mobilization of ethnic bias by the other group. The elites of economically underprivileged majorities may endorse exclusionary policies of citizenship to bring about a dramatic shift in resource endowments. Conversely, the elites of privileged minorities will try to stem such demands by mobilization of their own. Thus, whereas the simple model of voter and party alignments takes only individual assets of voters into account and predicts that winners of market liberalism are cosmopolitan, a more complicated group-based version of cost and benefit calculations arrives at different conclusions. Market liberalizers in economically disadvantaged majority ethnicities may call for exclusionary policies directed against privileged minorities, regardless of their own prospects for economic gain, even under a regime with universalist conceptions of citizenship.

Conclusion

Both the extent and the nature of programmatic structuring of party cleavages are likely to vary across post-communist countries. Empirically, the results of this article can be summarized in a series of alternative ideal-typical models that correspond to the empirical experience of existing post-communist countries to a greater or lesser degree.

In countries emerging from bureaucratic-authoritarian communism, the potential for the programmatic structuring of party competition is high and the division between economic populism and market liberalism on the
‘distributive’ dimension of party competition reigns supreme (Figure 2a). The liberal side initially has an advantage, but over time, with the progress of the post-communist economic stabilization crisis, the populist side may make a comeback. Parties appealing to social authoritarianism or exclusionary citizenship rights remain small. The bi-polar structure of post-bureaucratic-authoritarian communism with a single dominant competitive dimension and secondary further cleavages resembles the Scandinavian and, in some sense, the British pattern of party cleavage formation.

After national communist regimes and negotiated transitions, a tripolar structure of party camps is likely to emerge that tends to be somewhat more fuzzy in terms of programmatic structuration than in democracies following on bureaucratic-authoritarian communism (Figure 2b). A socialist and a liberal camp are united on social libertarianism and cosmopolitanism, yet divided primarily on economics, although even here the policy differences may be quite limited. They are set apart from a Christian-national-authoritarian camp that balances market liberal and populist economic concerns, but sets itself apart from the other camps by its distinctive social authoritarianism and traditionalism. Compared with western Europe, the tripolar structure with social democrats, Christian democrats and smaller liberal parties in Austria, Belgium, Germany, Holland, Italy and Switzerland comes closest to this model.

In the aftermath of patrimonial socialism, programmatic cleavage dimensions in the party system tend to be quite blurred. Programmatic political structuring does not proceed very far, because political competition remains personalized and the anti-communist parties have roots too shallow to produce a credible alternative to the hegemonic political camp that revolves around a ‘leftist’ post-communist party highlighting economic populism, authority, law and order, national autonomy, lenient de-communization and some hostility to political democratization. Here post-communist parties have not yet distanced themselves as much from the old regime as the neo-social democratic parties emerging after national communist regimes. The market-liberal and democratic forces in formerly patrimonial regimes are a mirror-image of the unreconstructed post-communist parties. They are militantly anti-communist, yet their issue stances often remain volatile and symbolic because of their lack of experience and intellectual elaboration. Whereas the post-communist sector preserves its dominance, the liberal sector is held together by loose umbrella organizations or splinters into numerous factions and sectarian parties (Figure 2c).

In all configurations of post-communist systems, party divisions are complicated by ethnic pluralism. Empirically, ethnic pluralism is most common in post-patrimonial regimes. In these settings, former communist parties are likely to pick up the flag of ethnic particularism either by nationalist slogans appealing to the majority population or by ethnic minority slogans as representatives of the minorities. Where additional nationalist or ethnic parties outside the post-communist sector emerge, they
Economic Populists -

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Christian Democrats

Secular Libertarians

Socialists and Social Democrats

Market Liberals

Economic Populists

Market Liberals

Religious Traditionalists

(a)

Secular Libertarians

Left Libertarians

Right Libertarians

Economic Populists

Market Liberals

Cultural Traditionalists

Religious Traditionalists

(b)
Figure 2. Ideal-typical configurations of post-communist party systems: (a) Bureaucratic socialism and implosion: dominance of the socio-economic cleavage; (b) National communism, negotiated transition and cultural conflict; (c) Patrimonial socialism, pre-emptive reform and regime cleavage; (d) Ethnic conflict, patrimonial socialism and pre-emptive reform.
also tend to endorse populist, or at most, centrist economic policies. The exceptions are the ethnic parties of underprivileged majorities in the former vassal regions of the Soviet Union.

In post-patrimonial regimes, ethnic divisions are likely to further weaken the liberal-democratic party camp and limit economic reform. Figure 2d represents an alignment that is plausible in a number of countries. It pits a weak, more or less cosmopolitan liberal-democratic camp against a nationalist post-communist party and an array of other nationalist parties. At the same time, minority particularists also lend little support to market liberalism.

The micro-logic of political cleavage formation in post-socialist regimes outlined in this paper cannot be reduced to a single, simple rule of thumb. The economics of individual citizens' personal resource endowments and citizens' positions in the occupational and sectoral division of labor clearly matter, but they are not solely responsible for the formation of political divisions that are articulated on the field of party competition. Historical experiences, in the sense of institutional pathways and elite strategies before, under and after communism, together with the ethnic division of labour that was installed under socialism, matter as well in accounting for different political cleavage lines and party alternatives.

Notes

1 On the ‘freezing’ literature, see especially Rose and Urwin (1970), Maguire (1983), Shamir (1984) and Bartolini and Mair (1990). In a similar vein, the literature on party realignment and dealignment addresses the issues raised by Lispet and Rokkan. See Dalton et al. (1984).
2 For the rise of new cleavages in western Europe, see Lijphart (1984: 130) and Kitschelt (1988).
3 This applies even to Downs’s (1957) theory of two-party competition. Although parties converge on the median voter, they must maintain a ‘minimum distance’ between their respective ideologies and issue positions in order to motivate the electorate to turn out to vote.
4 In this sense, recent debates in European political science about the entrenchment of a closed ‘political class’ and of ‘cartels’ of dominant parties are not about a new party ‘type’ in the sense of qualitatively new voter–party linkages, but the restriction of political competition to a specific set of parties that blend selective clientelistic and collective programmatic incentives in their voter appeal.
5 It goes without saying that programmatic parties are not the only force that consolidates democracy. I am not attempting to develop a full theory of democratic consolidation in this paper.
6 Ágh (1994: 219) writes that, as a consequence, election studies have little value, because ‘the large parties are too young and fragile to offer real political alternatives to the inexperienced electorate so that they could vote “freely”’.
7 On the logic of signalling games, see Gibbons (1992: Ch. 4).
8 Where the interruption of democracy is comparatively short, such as in Germany,
Italy, or Japan under authoritarian or fascist rule, electoral volatility is not exceptionally high after founding elections of new democracies (Turner, 1993).

9 In the Ukrainian founding election which was fought according to the plurality system, only 11 percent of the candidates for parliament bothered to seek a party affiliation at all and rather ran on their personal local reputation and their capacity to deliver patronage. See East European Constitutional Review 3(2) (1994): 26–8.

10 The extent of party system fragmentation is made possible by, but not determined by, the choice of electoral laws; cf. Taagepera and Shugart (1989) and Lijphart (1994).


12 Tables on electoral rules and presidential powers for each country published by the East European Constitutional Review, Vol. 3 (1994), Nos 1 and 2, provided the basis for scoring.

13 In a related manner, it is not easy to characterize the Russian transition. Under Gorbachev, it started out as a pre-emptive strike of an elite faction in the face of declining economic performance, but later it took on attributes of political implosion at the core of the system. It would be more difficult, however, to claim attributes of a negotiated transition or of a revolutionary transition for Russia.

14 For evidence from Russia and the Ukraine, see Kubicek (1994).

15 I am following a distinction made by Whitefield and Evans (1994).

16 In light of the three dimensions of political divisions, Lipset and Rokkan’s (1967) four cleavages in the development of west European politics are only special cases.


19 On nationalist and Christian party support amongst workers, see Toka (1993) and Hough (1994).

20 Only two democracies older than 20 years have ever been replaced by an authoritarian regime, those of Uruguay and Chile, and here after several decades of economic decline.


References and Further Reading


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