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Party Politics in New Democracies

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Conceptualizing the Institutionalization and Performance of Political Parties in New Democracies

Paul Webb and Stephen White

How relevant and vital are political parties in contemporary democracies? Do they fulfil the functions that any stable and effective democracy might expect of them? Do they represent citizens effectively? Do they help translate wants and needs into effective governmental outputs? Do they foster democratic involvement and support on the part of the citizen body? Or are they superseded by other mechanisms of linkage between state and society? These are the central questions which we aim to confront in this, the second of two volumes dedicated to a rigorous comparative analysis of political parties operating under broadly democratic conditions. The first volume (Webb, Farrell, and Holliday 2002) addressed these issues in respect of parties in established democracies, and here we employ the same intellectual framework to analyse the status and performance of parties in recently transitional settings. The methodological purpose of the division between the two volumes is broadly to pursue a ‘most similar systems design’, thereby constraining extraneous sources of variance in the dependent variable (Peters 1998: 57). However, while this approach facilitates comparison among the cases brought together in each volume, we are also in a position to attempt comparison across the two books, seeking out patterns of similarity and difference between established and new democracies.

PARTIES IN THE ESTABLISHED DEMOCRACIES

Political parties have long since figured prominently in the canon of Western social and political science, with the likes of Weber, Ostrogorski, Michels, and Bryce figuring among the earliest and most frequently invoked of their modern analysts. Parties have widely been regarded as central to the processes of democratic politics ever since (e.g. Schattschneider 1942; APSA 1950), but it

is evident that there has been widespread disquiet about their ability to live up to all of the aspirations that democratic theorists have had for them. In respect of the world's established democracies, this started to become apparent in the 1960s, as observers noted the persistence of anti-party sentiment among Western publics (Dennis 1966), and began to question their ability to perform the various political functions routinely ascribed to them: as Anthony King put it, 'we are entitled, at the very least, to a certain scepticism . . . concerning the great importance attached to parties in large segments of the political science literature' (1969: 140). He echoed the words of Otto Kirchheimer (1966: 200), whose own seminal contribution to comparative scholarship suggested that 'the political party's role in Western industrial society today is more limited than it would appear from its position of formal preeminence'. Subsequently, propelled largely by evidence of partisan dealignment and electoral instability across Western democracies in the 1970s, concern developed into a fully-fledged debate about the alleged 'decline of party'. This was the central issue that drove our research in the sister volume to this book, *Political Parties in Advanced Industrial Societies*. There it was argued that parties remain central to democratic political systems in various ways, especially in respect of facilitating government and political recruitment. However, they undeniably face challenges in various respects, including the representative functions, political communication, and fostering political participation. Though far from irrelevant to all of these things, parties have nevertheless been increasingly forced to share the stage with other actors, principally single-issue groups and the mass media. Such changes reflect the nature of advanced industrial society, which is more affluent, leisured, privatist, and cognitively mobilized (through the joint impact of education and the communications revolution) than the industrialized democratic world of 40 years ago. As a consequence, citizens are less closely bound to parties through old social group identities and less dependent on parties for their cognitive cues about public affairs.

Does this mean that parties are failing democracy? To a considerable extent this depends on the normative perspective from which they are observed. In *Political Parties in Advanced Industrial Democracies*, we followed Alan Ware's cue in identifying three core elements to democracy (Ware 1987). The weight accorded to each element inevitably affects the observer's perceptions of party performance. The first democratic element is *interest optimization*: That is, a democracy should be based on rules or procedures that 'optimally promote or defend the interests of the largest number of people in the relevant arena' (Ware 1987: 8). We conceded that none of the various commentators who prioritize the capacity of a system to interest-optimize—including market liberals, pluralists and social choice theorists—are likely to be satisfied with the performance of parties in modern democracies.

A similarly damning conclusion about parties is likely to emerge for any writer giving primary emphasis to the second element of democracy, which Ware refers to as the *civic orientation*. From this perspective, democracy is not fully realized

until citizens express their shared interests as members of the same community. Participation in the democratic process is vital to the political education of citizens if they are to develop this civic orientation. Contemporary political parties are unlikely to fare well by the civic democrat's standards, however. On normative grounds radical civic orientationists have usually argued that parties are inimical since they tend to articulate and foster narrow group interests to the detriment of the wider community. The only way around this is to adopt a far less demanding notion of civic orientation, according to which any kind of community consciousness, including group identity based on region, class, religion, or ethnicity, qualifies. This hardly helps, however, given the demise of the mass party. It is hard, therefore, to rate party performance in established democracies highly from a civic orientationist perspective.

However, from the perspective of the third element of democracy—*popular control*—the view of political parties may seem somewhat brighter. Notwithstanding any other shortcomings, democracy remains meaningful to the extent that it provides the opportunity for people to exercise a degree of choice and control over public affairs. At its simplest this means that parties are central to the definition of teams of political elites which electors can periodically hold accountable through the ballot box. Beyond this, we argued in *Political Parties in Advanced Industrial Societies* that parties help foster popular choice and control in so far as there remains a meaningful connection between the competing programmes put before electors and the policies that party governments implement. Notwithstanding a degree of left-right ideological convergence since 1960, parties do in fact continue to offer meaningful programmatic choices in advanced industrial democracies, and they generally follow through with those programmes when in office. In short, the party government model remains at the heart of modern systems of democratic accountability.

Overall, the evidence from the world's best established democracies suggests that parties remain central to the provision of popular political choice and control, although they stand on less secure ground in respect of the more demanding criteria of optimizing interests and instilling civic orientations among citizens. But what of their position in the more recently established or less secure democracies? Can they justifiably make even these limited yet important claims?

PARTIES IN RECENTLY TRANSITIONAL DEMOCRACIES: EASTERN EUROPE AND LATIN AMERICA

In this volume our perspective shifts as we consider the place of parties beyond the established Western democracies. The number of regimes in the world that purport to be liberal democracies has increased since the turn of the 1990s,

of course, such that it has become commonplace to speak of a 'third wave' of democratization (Huntington 1991). Following the collapse of the Soviet empire, a number of Central and East European nation states have established themselves as democracies, and one of the most obvious manifestations of this has been the emergence of newly competitive party systems. While it is hardly appropriate to pose the exact same questions about party decline which we asked of the more established democracies, it is nevertheless important to draw into the analysis parties in countries which have recently been undergoing democratic transition. Equally, there exist countries with longer traditions of democratic rule than the post-Soviet cases, but where democracy seems less stable than in the 'core' democracies of Western Europe, North America, or Australasia; prominent among these are a number of cases in Latin America, and it is interesting to place these under the lens of analysis. Our intention, therefore, is to focus on Eastern Europe and Latin America. Some readers whose interests are primarily regional may prefer to concentrate on one part or the other of the book, but the two parts do form components of an integrated package, adopting the same framework, and addressing identical issues.

Of course, the perspective from which we ask the key questions must alter slightly from that adopted in *Political Parties in Advanced Industrial Democracies*, but the overall issues and framework are generally applicable to both established and new democracies. For example, while it is plainly redundant to ask if competitive parties in recently transitional cases are 'declining' in any sense (given that they have only operated for a relatively short period in these countries), it is equally obviously appropriate to ask how relevant and vital parties are for democratic politics there. The scope of enquiry adjusts to issues of how quickly and securely independent and competitive political parties have taken root in the newer democracies, but in order to know this, many of the same basic indicators that were employed in respect of our analysis of parties in established democracies apply: as we shall see when recounting the analytical framework in due course, these indicators are designed to gauge parties' popular legitimacy and organizational development, as well as their capacity to perform key political functions. Scholars of parties in new democracies often deploy the concept of 'institutionalization' to denote these phenomena. As Mainwaring and Torcal (2006: 206) say:

An institutionalized party system, then, is one in which actors develop expectations and behavior based on the premise that the fundamental contours and rules of party competition and behavior will prevail into the foreseeable future. In an institutionalized party system, there is stability in who the main parties are and how they behave.

Thus institutionalization is concerned with the degree of consolidation, regularity, predictability, and 'systemness' of party politics. While Mainwaring and Torcal specifically refer to the institutionalization of a party *system*, the various dimensions by which this is operationalized reveal that it is as dependent on *party*

consolidation as on the stabilization of systemic interactions between parties. That is, stability in patterns of party competition is largely predicated on such things as the organizational development and autonomy of party organizations, and the extent to which they are grounded and legitimate within society. Thus, in addressing the institutionalization and consolidation of party politics in recently democratized polities, it is important to engage analytically with both parties and party systems. These factors are therefore taken into account in our own analytical framework, as we shortly explain. Before outlining this framework, however, it is useful to set the scene by exploring some of the more prominent themes in the existing literature on parties in new democracies.

THEMES FROM THE LITERATURE

In the early post-communist era, it was assumed by many that Eastern and Central European parties would gravitate towards Western models in the context of democratization. Some observers even felt that these parties would bypass earlier West European stages of development and move rapidly to catch-all or 'American' styles of party formation (Gross 1992). Communism, it was thought, had levelled socio-economic differences, and made it difficult if not impossible to establish secondary associations of a kind that might have helped to organize interests and sustain a close association between parties and voters. Changes in the economic environment made a further contribution, as patterns of ownership and employment began to change in unexpected ways (Bielasiak 2002: 189–90). However, these early expectations failed to give due weight to the historical and societal differences of East European nations, which in turn rendered patterns of cleavage development somewhat different.

For one thing, the early post-communist era was dominated by the theme of ousting the Communists, something that hardly typifies West European party system development. Thus, in the early 1990s independence movements, anti- or non-communist forces prevailed in Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Lithuania, Latvia, Slovenia, and Croatia, and made their presence felt in Estonia and Moldova. Subsequently, the various anti-communist forces usually splintered into new parties, or personality-based movements. Thus, the initial ousting of Communists was not generally followed by the immediate consolidation of new patterns of stable systemic interaction, but rather by considerable political fluidity and electoral volatility. Party system fragmentation was especially pronounced in Poland, where the largest party after the 1991 election was the Democratic Union with only 12 per cent of the vote (Lewis 2001: 7).

To the surprise of many, the former Communists, in the guise of various successor organizations, often re-emerged as significant political forces. Indeed

by the mid-1990s, the majority of post-communist states in Eastern and Central Europe were governed by communist-successor parties. In part, this reflected the advantage of their well-established organizational presence. As Michael Roskin (1997: 48) explains, ‘instead of patiently building party strength and gradually obtaining electoral success and parliamentary seats, (new) East European parties had to suddenly contest elections with little practice, organization or political skill’. By contrast, the communist-successor parties were able to draw on deep organizational roots, on at least a part of the membership, and sometimes on the funds and property of their predecessors. They were particularly successful where they faced no more than a weak challenge from other left-wing parties, as in Russia but not—for instance—in the Czech Republic (Bozóki and Ishiyama 2002: 4).

In part too, the re-emergence of successor parties reflected the disillusionment of many ordinary citizens with the high cost of political and economic transition. There was only a limited amount of evidence that suggested the communist-successor parties drew their support disproportionately from the elderly; those who were a little less than normal retirement age offered them more consistent backing, if Russian patterns were representative (Kiewiet and Myagkov 2002). But the collapse of publicly funded social security across the region in the early post-communist years created an obvious constituency for political parties that sought to defend local populations against the immediate effects of a changing economic system, and that campaigned against the ‘oligarchs’ who appeared to have gained more than anyone else from privatization. Reducing pensions, ending guaranteed employment, raising the cost of housing, and ending day care centres at industrial enterprises, as Rueschemeyer (1999: 6) has noted, ‘creates an electoral premium for those who promise—if not to retain the old system—to protect the interests of those hardest hit by restructuring the political economy’.

The success, or otherwise, of former ruling parties derived not only from the changing environment within which they worked, but from the extent to which they were ready to adapt their programmes and tactics accordingly. Some of the successor parties adopted a ‘left-retreatist’ strategy, and evolved into ‘anti-system’ opposition parties (such as the Party of Democratic Socialism in the former GDR). In Hungary and Poland, by contrast, party leaders followed a strategy of ‘pragmatic reform’, moving their parties towards classic European social democracy (and sometimes leaving behind a rump of irreconcilables). Grzymała-Busse devotes particular attention to these cases, and to the Czech Republic and Slovakia, where post-communists were able to ‘remake themselves into successful democratic competitors and governors’ by ‘cashing in’ the political resources they had acquired during the years of communist rule (2002: 265). A third, or ‘national-patriotic’, strategy is characteristic of Russia and the Balkans, in which there is little attempt to modify Marxist–Leninist teachings but they are combined with an appeal to nationalist and even chauvinist sentiment and lead sometimes to participation in a broader coalition of ‘national-patriotic’ forces (Bozóki and Ishiyama 2002: 4–6).

Other party families have so far received rather less attention. A recent collection that deals with centre-right parties, however, reflects trends elsewhere in the literature in emphasizing ‘agency’ rather more than larger structural variables, or the kinds of legacies that communist rule had left behind (Szczurbiak and Hanley 2004). In this newer literature, the choices made at key junctures could have lasting significance—for instance, what kind of institutional design was adopted at the time at which communist rule was coming to an end, and what kind of electoral system. A less proportional electoral system was likely (it appeared) to produce strong and coherent centre-right parties, and parliamentary regimes were more likely to do so than strongly presidential systems [which a wider comparative literature had already associated with the weaker development of parties in general (e.g. Linz and Valenzuela 1994; Stepan and Skach 1994)]. A strong centre-right presence was also encouraged by the existence of a strong, socially and ideologically coherent elite of the kind that existed, for instance, in the Czech Republic, but not in Poland (Szczurbiak and Hanley 2004: 4–6).

Parties of the centre-right were stronger in Central rather than in Eastern Europe, and they reflected a more developed and differentiated party system in those countries. Basing himself on the cases of Hungary, the Czech Republic and Poland, Kostecký (2002: 152) has argued that the pattern of post-communist change has shown three clear trends: a shift from personalized and non-political politics towards party politics; a gradual transition from the politics of symbols, identities, and hopes towards the politics of vested interests and rational choice; and an increasingly close relationship between social structures and political parties. In these respects, the party systems of East Central Europe were much closer to those of Western Europe in the early years of the new century than they had been at the outset of post-communist rule; they would probably continue to become more similar as European integration proceeded, but it was almost certain that they would ‘never become the classical cleavage-based party systems from the era of mass parties’ (a view that is shared by Lewis 2000: 24).

By the early years of the new century the shape of new party systems was becoming somewhat clarified. In part this reflected the hardening of cleavages as, for example, these societies became more class-differentiated. A number of typical party formations established themselves. In addition to the post-communist successors of various hue, these included Western-inspired social democratic organizations, agrarian parties, and a somewhat disparate right encompassing nationalist populism as well as elements of Christian democracy, liberalism, and moderate conservatism. A significant fault-line runs between, on the one hand, the countries that have emerged at the forefront of East European transition, all of which have been embraced by the European Union—Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and the Baltic states—and enjoy fairly well-institutionalized party structures and coherent patterns of party interaction between left and right (e.g. Kitschelt et al. 1999); and on the other hand the more peripheral cases where individual presidential power has rendered parliaments ineffective, and

retarded the development of pluralist party politics (as in Russia, much of the former Yugoslavia, Ukraine, Belarus, Romania, and Bulgaria). But across the entire region there were lower levels of membership and partisan identification than in most other parts of the world, or in other European countries at a comparable stage in their development (Mair 1997: ch. 8; van Biezen 2003: 208–12).

In Latin America democratic consolidation has generally been weak. In recent times, this geopolitical region has shared with Eastern and Central Europe the desire to marketize and liberalize its political economy, but does so from a far more unequal baseline, and therefore social injustice and dislocation is often far greater overall. In much of East Central Europe the social safety net of the communist system did not collapse entirely, and traditions of organized working-class politics, welfarism, and the context of strong sponsorship of democracy by the European Union have all helped to foster reasonably effective transitions, at least for those states in the vanguard of change. Latin America enjoys few of these advantages. Moreover, in Latin America a tradition of strong executive rule remains deeply rooted. This is frequently antithetical to the development of pluralist party politics and parliamentarism. While elected civilian presidents rather than military dictators have become the norm in recent years, the tendency to centralize and personalize power often remains evident. The impact of this on party politics has been profound: it has tended to leave parliamentary parties weakly institutionalized, volatile, undisciplined, and corrupt (Linz and Valenzuela 1994; Wiarda and Kline 1996). This means that the major Latin American cases considered in this book (Brazil and Argentina) may on the whole be expected to have more in common with the less well-consolidated East European cases (Russia and Ukraine) than with the better-consolidated democracies there (Poland, Hungary, Czech Republic, and Slovakia). This creates the possibility of interesting comparisons between similar institutional cases across geopolitical regions, thus enabling us to consider whether institutional patterns outweigh the influence of regional ‘contagion’.

COMPARATIVE STRATEGY AND FRAMEWORK OF ANALYSIS

The overarching themes of the role, popular standing, organizational development, and functional relevance to democracy of political parties lie at the core of our concerns. The analytical framework to which our contributors have worked challenges them to cover a considerable amount of ground. The chapters in this book are therefore necessarily long, at least by the usual standards of edited volumes of comparative scholarship. Given the inevitable space constraints within which we must operate, it has not been possible to devote a chapter to every case

that might fall under the broad categorization of ‘recently transitional democracy’, nor even to each one in the two geopolitical regions on which we are focusing. However, the book presents a selection of relevant systems from Eastern Europe and Latin America which is broad enough to achieve a number of purposes. First, we believe that this array of cases simply offers a reasonably representative survey of the contemporary experience of political parties in the democratizing world, at least in these two regions. Second, it provides scope for interesting comparative strategies. We have already alluded to the fact that it facilitates cross-regional comparisons that enable us to consider the impact of institutional settings. In addition, it enables us to gain some insight into the importance of stage of democratic development for parties. There is a very well-known and widely accepted story about the historical stages of party development in the ‘first-wave’ democracies of Western Europe: from the early ‘internally created’ cadre parties of parliamentary elites, major parties were first impacted on by the ‘socialist invention’ of the mass party, later to transform into the post-bellum phenomenon of the catch-all party and related models of electoral (and often state-dependent) contestation (Duverger 1954; Panebianco 1988; Katz and Mair 1995; Kirchheimer 1966). However, this cannot be taken to imply that all countries that have experienced subsequent waves of democratization will enjoy exactly the same pattern of party development. Will parties in newer democracies diverge from or converge with models found in the older established democracies? As van Biezen (2005: 148) poses the question:

Is there a generational or life-cycle effect of party development? Does a party’s genetic structure continue to be reflected throughout subsequent processes of structural adaptation that lead to different and co-existing types of party? Will some sort of period effect lead party organizations to converge?

If life-cycle effects dictate trajectories of party development, then all parties would develop in essentially the same way according to the stage of democratic development of a polity, irrespective of the region or era in which this occurs. Thus, the famous four-stage model to which we have alluded should hold for third-wave democracies around the globe: cadre to mass to catch-all to electoral-professional (or cartel). If, on the other hand, generational factors count for more, then we would expect quite distinctive patterns of party development between first, second, and third-wave democracies. Parties in the newer democracies could then be expected to conform to distinctive patterns reflecting the unique nature of recent processes of democratization. Finally, if period effects preponderate, then we would expect a pattern of convergence to occur across all cases, irrespective of the stage of democratization they had achieved or the wave of democratization in which they began operating. Something in the nature of the environment common to all parties across the contemporary democratic world would be impelling them towards a common model, enabling those in the recently transitional democracies to ‘skip’ stages of the life cycle experienced by parties in first or second wave democracies (van Biezen 2005: 150–3). We are able to shed light on these

alternative scenarios of development by comparing the cases in this book with those reported in *Political Parties in Advanced Industrial Democracies*. In particular, it should be readily apparent if parties in the newer democracies are skipping stages of development experienced by parties in the older democracies (thus implying a period effect), or simply developing in different ways without converging on the contemporary patterns found there (implying a generational effect).

In a slightly different way, the case of Costa Rica should further help us identify the presence of life cycle or generational effects. As we shall see, Costa Rica is a relatively well-established and functioning democracy by Latin American standards. By including it in this volume, we can make comparisons with cases already examined in *Political Parties in Advanced Industrial Democracies*; if it appears to be the case that parties in Costa Rica more closely resemble those of their counterparts in the established democracies than they do in the various cases discussed in this book, it would suggest that parties are generally shaped either by the stage of democratic development or by the particular generation in which they first came to operate. Alternatively, if parties in Costa Rica are generally more similar to those found elsewhere in Latin America than to those in the more established democracies, it would imply either that the 'contagious' influence of geopolitical setting counts for more, or that a period effect is leading all Latin American parties to converge rapidly on models found in the established democracies and beyond. If the latter is the case, then we should find little difference between any of the established or new democracies. Note that the inclusion of Spain in *Political Parties in Advanced Industrial Democracies* served a similar purpose. Spain only democratized after the death of General Franco in the mid-1970s, of course, and readers may be interested to note that there was some *prima facie* evidence from *Political Parties in Advanced Industrial Societies* to suggest that the stage of democratic development might count for something: there were, for instance, various indications that parties in Spain are generally held in greater regard than in most of the established democracies (Holliday 2002; Webb 2002: 439).

In order to achieve our stated objectives, an effective framework for comparative analysis is paramount. The one we developed for *Political Parties in Advanced Industrial Democracies* required our contributors to produce an original synthesis of secondary material, new research, and critical evaluation, and it is essentially the same framework and approach which we apply in this volume. Two preliminary points are worth making about the way in which they have applied the framework. First, throughout, we are hoping to emphasize *change* over time. This raises the question of the date of reference against which to evaluate change; for long-established democracies, we have focused on developments since 1960, for it was in the 1960s that concerns about party performance (re)surfaced and the term 'party decline' emerged soon after. Throughout this volume, however, all cases bar Costa Rica trace developments since the year of democratization. Second, the precise indicators which authors discuss vary from case to case, mainly because

of differences in material that are available from each country. This is apparent, for instance, in the context of mass attitudes towards parties, since there is little or no consistency in the questions regarding parties that national election surveys pose of respondents. Nevertheless, we believe that our authors have managed to uncover evidence that taps the same underlying dimensions of analysis.

What are these dimensions? Implicit in much of the literature is a distinction between three broad types of research enquiry into the performance and standing of political parties:

- Studies that focus on *party connections with the electorate* (by considering, e.g. partisan identification, electoral volatility, and membership change).
- Studies which examine the *development of party organizations* over time.
- Studies which investigate aspects of *party performance* on behalf of the wider political system.

The first two of these might also be considered facets of party institutionalization; the last one is dependent on institutionalization. This threefold categorization of research on parties provides a cue for systematic comparative analysis. Accordingly, each of the case studies which follow is divided into three sections, plus an introduction and a conclusion. Our authors seek to use their *introductions* for two purposes. First, they draw a brief outline of the most notable features of the party system under consideration (emphasizing recent developments); this should provide readers who may lack country expertise with a basic grasp of important contextual features such as the major actors in the party system and the prevailing pattern of party competition. For this reason, chapters routinely start with tables reporting national election results and the complexion of party governments. Second, where possible, authors also use their introductions to summarize the main themes in the country-specific literature. This introduction will serve both to outline key sources and references, and to raise themes to which authors may return in their chapter conclusions.

Following this, there are three major sections of empirical analysis, each dedicated to one of the dimensions implicit in the parties' literature. The first is concerned with what we call the *popular legitimacy of parties*. This focuses on the vibrancy and health of linkages between parties and society at large. There are two central questions about popular legitimacy as we conceive of it here: How stable and deep are links between party and society? And to what extent are parties generally held in esteem by citizens? Strong roots in society may logically tend to produce stable party system interactions, because they reduce the potential for electoral volatility. Moreover, the higher the esteem in which parties are generally held, the more stable the party, and indeed the democratic political system itself, are likely to be. Party politics becomes institutionalized where citizens see parties as a necessary component of a desirable (democratic) political system (Mainwaring and Torcal 2006: 206). These questions raise the

issue of how one measures the popular legitimacy of political parties. We have taken our cue primarily from previous work conducted on the theme of mass-level *anti-party sentiment* (Poguntke 1996). Poguntke suggested a number of types of indicator which could gauge the strength of party–society linkages: these include survey-based evidence of popular disaffection with parties in general, low levels of partisan identification and affinity, weak electoral turnout, and low party membership (Poguntke 1996: 325–38).¹ While these indicators do not necessarily constitute evidence of overt generalized mass-level antipathy towards parties, they are all consistent with a weak sense of ‘partyness’ in society.

It is important to examine these indicators for signs of consistent patterns across a number of countries. Thus, each author has sought wherever possible to report and discuss the following: survey evidence of antipathy, indifference or cynicism towards party politics in general, survey evidence of levels of partisan identity, survey evidence of electoral uncertainty, individual party membership levels [both raw figures and membership/electorate ratios, wherever possible (Mair and van Biezen 2001)], and national election turnout rates. In addition, these data are set in the context of developments in national electoral behaviour and party competition in so far as we report rates of electoral volatility [Mogens Pedersen’s well-known index (1979) of ‘total net volatility’ (TNV)] and party system fragmentation [Markku Laakso and Rein Taagepera’s measure (1979) of the ‘effective number of parties’²]. Indices of electoral volatility and party system fragmentation are aggregate-level indicators which could be expected to coincide logically with the low or unstable rates of party institutionalization or penetration of society. That is, a lack of definite partisan orientations among voters should logically coincide with a greater likelihood of their switching party preferences from one election to another (i.e. volatile behaviour), while it could also correlate with the emergence of new parties and/or the growth of support for small parties—often briefly lived ‘flash’ parties—both of which would generate a higher effective number

¹ Poguntke includes one other indicator, support for ‘anti-party parties’. We have decided to exclude this, however, on the grounds that it is questionable as to whether the existence of these organizations really represents any kind of retreat from party politics. In the final analysis, they remain parties themselves, and while they certainly stand against established parties, they could equally be interpreted as evidence of the adaptability and resilience of party politics.

² This is probably the most widely used measure of party system fragmentation. Laakso and Taagepera’s formula for counting the effective number of parties takes account of both the number of parties in the system and their relative strength. This is a very intuitive and useful technique of measurement since it tells us, e.g. that in any system comprised of just 2 equally strong parties, the effective number will indeed be 2.0, while a system consisting of 3 equally strong parties will generate an effective number of 3.0, and so on. This measure can be calculated either on the basis of party shares of the popular vote [the effective number of *electoral* parties (ENEP)], or on the basis of shares of seats won in parliament [the effective number of *parliamentary* parties (ENPP)]. As far as possible, we focus on the former in this volume since it is the effective number of electoral parties which is most likely to tap party penetration of society; the effective number of parliamentary parties can be heavily mediated by institutional factors like electoral systems.

of parties in a system. Thus, observers of recently transitional democracies have often sought evidence of the consolidation of stable party politics in signs of the emergence of moderate pluralism (Sartori 1976); that is to say, multiparty but not heavily fragmented patterns of centripetal competition. Stable democracy seems to require competition between relatively few (typically 3–5) main party organizations.

The second major dimension of analysis our authors investigate relates to *party organizational strength*. The central question here is: are parties developing as organizations? This is particularly important in a recently transitional setting since it implies the autonomy of enduring institutions of collective representation and mobilization from individual personalities. Moreover, strong party organizations tend to sustain deep penetration of society, and may well be conducive to aspects of political performance (such as the articulation of interests, or electoral mobilization). The concept of organizational strength should be understood to imply both the quantity of resources at the disposal of a party, and of the capacity to deploy those resources in a way that achieves the party's purposes. The latter criterion is important, for it is conceivable that the quantity of resources available to a party may decline without necessarily weakening its capacity to achieve its primary objectives (such as winning elections). Our country experts have therefore taken care to assess quantitative changes in resourcing in the light of this qualitative consideration.

Although the precise indications of party organizational development and strength may vary in significance from case to case, each chapter attempts to focus on a definite set of key measures of party organizational development. It should be said that the data in question are by no means universally and readily available, but our authors generally explain when this is the case. Specifically, each chapter seeks to uncover evidence of four aspects of organizational resourcing. The first is perhaps the most obvious: *party finance*. Specifically, contributors have attempted to find evidence of overall changes in patterns of income and expenditure, and wherever possible the sources of funding (members, donors, or the state) are identified. Second, *party staffing* has been examined where data are available in order to uncover changes in the number, type, and location of party employees. Third, *party membership* has been taken into consideration. Note, however, that here we are not interested in simple trends in the sheer number of members, which in any case will already have been considered as an indicator of party legitimacy. Rather, country experts discuss the implications of party membership developments for organizational capacity; for instance, is membership sufficient to enable parties to contest elections effectively? Finally, where relevant, each chapter seeks to address the issue of party access to, and/or control of, the *media* (including publications and broadcast media).

The final dimension of analysis is in many ways the most challenging. It is concerned with *the systemic functionality of political parties*. What might the empirical indicators of party legitimacy and organizational strength imply about

the broader utility of parties for the political system? Where we find evidence of weak legitimacy or poorly developed organizational presence, does this imply the inability of parties to function on behalf of the wider system? Conversely, where the indicators are more positive, could this reflect the growing relevance and centrality of parties? In general, we would argue that it is hard to see how any serious attempt to consider the relevance of parties for democratic politics can avoid reflecting on these questions. Although functional approaches to parties have sometimes been criticized (e.g. Shonfeld 1983), there is a very long tradition of paying attention to ‘what parties do, what function, what role, or what purpose is served’ by them (Scarrow 1957: 770). It is intuitive to ask these questions, and certainly very hard to overlook them when trying to assess the question of parties and democratic transition. If parties really are important to democratization, then must they not perform adequately in respect of some or all of the key tasks normally imputed to them?

But which functions should we examine? While Theodore Lowi (1963: 571) counsels against assuming an inventory of agreed functions of party ‘as though these were as regularly a part of the political process as stages in the passage of a bill’, it is clear from the considerable overlap between writers that something very like an ‘agreed inventory’ does in fact exist. True, they do not always use the same terminology, but frequently they are interested in the same phenomena. In view of the space constraints which must operate, the case-studies in this volume do not address the most extensive list of party functions imaginable, but they do nevertheless engage with the following activities which we regard as central to modern democratic systems, all of which are explicit in the classic account of structural-functionalism articulated by Gabriel Almond and his colleagues (1993: part 2).

Governance and political recruitment

Though analytically distinct, these functions are intimately connected. The central question around which the governing function revolves is: how far is government *party* government? Close consideration of this suggests that there are broadly two aspects to the governing function: personnel and policy. This is implicit, for instance, in Richard Katz’s widely cited criteria for the ‘partyness’ of government: first, Katz suggests, all government decisions should be taken by individuals chosen in elections which are conducted along *party* lines; second, policy must clearly emanate from within parties (or definite coalitions of parties); and third, ‘positions in government must flow from support within the party rather than party positions flowing from electoral success’ (Katz 1986: 43). While the first and third criteria prompt us to look at the personnel involved in the governing process, the second criterion points us towards the substance of policy. The recruitment function is intimately bound up with governance because, although it entails consideration of all kinds of elective and appointive political personnel, those who operate at

the various levels of government lie at its heart. Hence, our contributors examine the extent to which recruitment to public—and especially governmental—office is channelled through political parties.

With respect to the policy aspect of governance, we have sought to address the question of how far public policy emanates from parties. There are a number of factors to bear in mind when discussing this question. One is the cohesion of legislative parties, for without this it can become impossible for ‘governing’ parties to leave their mark on public policy. A second issue is whether there are any significant alternatives to parties when it comes to shaping public policy. The most likely such alternatives would seem to be bureaucratic power, interest groups, and personalized forms of political leadership. This last point would seem to be of considerable potential relevance given what we have already said about the presidential traditions of various regimes in both Latin America and Eastern Europe. A final consideration in respect of party government concerns the question of whether impersonal and structural constraints such as demographic developments, social trends, or international economic forces can prevent parties from ‘making a difference’ to public policy (Rose 1980).

Interest articulation and aggregation

These functions require parties (among other political agents) to act as mechanisms of representative linkage between state and society. The articulation of interests refers to the role played by parties and other institutions (typically single-interest groups or social movements) in publicly expressing and pursuing the political demands of particular social groups. The aggregation of interests refers to a related but broader process by which parties bundle together the demands of a variety of social groups. This task is not quite so straightforward as the articulation of a narrower set of interests, since it requires the prioritization of demands and the maintenance of coalitions of support whose component elements may be in tension with each other.

A number of issues related to articulation and aggregation fall within the remit of our case studies. In particular, our country experts attempt to consider whether single-issue group and social movement activity rivals or outweighs that of parties in articulating social group interests, and whether parties succeed in bundling together the demands of their various support constituencies in a coherent and stable fashion. Overall, we are interested in how efficiently parties respond to the challenge of mobilizing and channelling the various cleavages that surface in societies emerging from dictatorship.

Political participation

Almond et al show (1993: ch. 4) that this function overlaps with that of political recruitment, since holding elective public office is clearly a form of participation

in politics. However, here we are more interested in the capacity of political parties to foster mass political participation through their members' activities and/or through mobilizing electoral turnout. Although it is true that we have already referred to party membership as an aspect of both party legitimacy and party organizational resourcing, now our primary focus switches to the levels of activism of party members; this takes in the question of members' rights and powers within their parties.

Political communication and education

Political parties in democratic societies have traditionally played a significant role in helping to inform and educate citizens about public affairs. Prior to the era of widespread public access to television, this was accomplished largely through the activities of party members and through direct control of parts of the print media. Since then parties have helped shape the agenda and substance of current affairs coverage by the broadcast media. Here our contributors consider how parties interpret their roles in political education, and the extent to which they have been able to establish a role in setting agendas that communicate political information via the media.

It is apparent that there are points at which the three dimensions of our analytical framework overlap, most obviously perhaps, in the case of the party membership, which we have mentioned in the context of party legitimacy, organizational strength, and political participation. However, particular indicators have different meanings in different contexts and, where relevant, authors emphasize different aspects of indicators according to the dimension they are discussing. Thus, with respect to party membership, on the legitimacy dimension, the focus is primarily on trends in the *number* of party members; whereas on the organizational strength dimension, emphasis is placed on the *revenues and campaign work* flowing from party members (thus revealing something about how the party organization derives resource benefits from members); and in terms of the functionality dimension, authors focus on aspects such as the *activism* of party members, in order to say something about the degree to which parties succeed in fostering political participation.

CONCLUSION

Through the careful application of this framework, this book offers an insight into the changing nature and performance of modern political parties in some of the world's new democracies. In the conclusion to the book, we summarize the evidence and discuss overall questions of party institutionalization and vitality,

and trajectories of party development. Moreover, we reflect on the implications of our findings for democratic theory, and consider whether parties in these countries are in a fundamentally different position to their counterparts in the world's more established democracies.

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Russia's Client Party System

Stephen White

INTRODUCTION

Party development in Russia reflected that of other European countries but lagged notably behind it in the years up to the First World War. Parties and other public organizations began to be formed in the late nineteenth century, but they had no legal existence until the Tsar issued his October Manifesto in 1905 as part of the move to a more constitutional form of monarchy that followed the revolutionary events of that year. Under the detailed regulations that were issued the following year, all such organizations were strictly limited in their scope and activities; they could not exist at all if their aims and objectives were judged to represent a threat to public morals, and the police could close their meetings at any time if they appeared likely to 'incite hostility between one section of the population and another' (Chistyakov 1994: 207, 224). Parties had relatively few members under these circumstances—no more than 0.5 per cent of the population during the years before the First World War, and up to 1.5 per cent during the months leading up to the October revolution (Shelokhaev et al. 1996: 9). In spite of these restrictions, more than 40 parties were active on a countrywide basis in the early years of the century, and more than a hundred catered for the Empire's numerous minority nationalities (Zevelev et al. 2000: 9). The political left, organized in the Russian Social Democratic Workers' Party, was a member of the Second International and took part in its regular congresses in other European countries.

The Bolshevik revolution of October 1917 brought these early developments to an end and ushered in more than two generations of single-party dominance. Formally, there was no limit on the number of parties that could be created; the Bolsheviks were in coalition with the radical Left Socialist Revolutionaries for some months after the revolution, and other parties continued a de facto existence until the mid-1920s. But fairly soon, the boundaries of political contestation began to be narrowed: factions were banned in the Bolshevik party itself in 1921, and opposition leaders were marginalized, or in a few cases (in 1922) put on trial. According to the new orthodoxy, the working people had a single interest; that single interest was expressed through the Communist Party, which had a unique

understanding of the laws of social development; and with the establishment of public ownership of productive resources there was no social basis for the kind of political divisions that were to be found in capitalist countries. The Communist Party was one of the USSR's many 'voluntary associations', under legislation of 1932, although it was already dominant. The 1936 constitution spelt out its role more fully when, for the first time, it acknowledged the party as the 'vanguard of the toilers' and the 'leading core of all organizations'. The 1977 constitution, adopted during Leonid Brezhnev's leadership, made still more comprehensive provision for the party's political dominance when it defined the Communist Party in its sixth article as the 'leading and guiding force of Soviet society [and] the nucleus of its political system'.

The Gorbachev years, in the later 1980s, saw the dissolution of the Communist monopoly and the emergence of an 'informal' and then an organized opposition. The first largely competitive elections took place in 1989, with a choice of candidates in most seats if not yet a choice of parties. Then in February 1990 the Communist Party agreed to relinquish its leading role, and the constitution was amended accordingly the following month. In October 1990 a new law 'on public organizations' provided a legal basis for what had already become a multiparty society, although it was one within which the CPSU remained the most important source of political authority. The collapse of an attempted hard-line coup in August 1991 led to the suspension and later the banning of the party entirely (Gorbachev had meanwhile resigned as leader), and then in December 1991 the state itself dissolved into fifteen independent republics. The constitution of the Russian Federation, which was the largest of these successor republics, included a formal commitment to 'ideological diversity' and 'multiparty politics', provided the constitutional order was respected and that no attempt was made to incite social, racial, national, or religious animosity (Art. 13). The new Russia, evidently, would be multiparty: but what kind of multiparty politics remained unclear and, indeed, still does.

The elections of December 1993, at which the new constitution was adopted, were the first in modern times to take place on a formally multiparty basis. They incorporated a number of principles that remained in place for more than a decade. The new parliament, first of all, was to be a bicameral one. The upper house, the Council of the Federation, was directly elected in December 1993, but the constitution did not prescribe direct elections, and it has been filled since this time by representatives of the executive and legislature of each of Russia's eighty-nine republics and regions. A second and still more important principle was that the lower house, the State Duma, would be elected in two ways. Half of its 450 members would be elected by constituencies of roughly equal numbers of electors formed throughout the federation, with not less than one seat for each of its constituent units; nominations could be made by electors themselves as well as by parties and other organizations. The other half of the Duma would be elected by

a national party-list system, with seats allocated proportionately to the parties or movements that cleared a 5 per cent threshold. From 2007, according to changes that became law in May 2005, the Duma was to be elected entirely on this party-list basis.

The 1993 election regulations included parties among the 'electoral associations' that had the right to put forward candidates in the national party-list contest. Political movements had the same right, and both of them might combine in 'blocs' with other national organizations for the same purpose. At the same time it was clear that those who had framed it intended that the list system would encourage the development of a multiparty system in place of the single-party monopoly of the communist past. Their expectations, so far, have not been entirely fulfilled (Table 2.1). One reason is that independents, rather than party nominees, have enjoyed a great deal of success in the single-member constituencies. In 1993, 1995, and 1999 they won the largest number of single-member seats (in 2003 the second-largest), and in the 1993 election they won more seats than all the party-sponsored candidates put together. But the parties themselves have also been an unstable element, frequently splitting, merging, or disappearing entirely. The result is what Rose, Munro, and White (2001) have called a 'floating party system', one that leaves little opportunity for the electorate to pass judgement on a party's record since the previous election and in this way ensure the accountability of those who govern to those who elect them.

The 1993 constitution established two other principles that are basic to the operation of Russian parties. In the first place, it provided for a legislature with relatively little influence over the conduct of government. Under the 1993 constitution, the prime minister surrenders his powers to a newly elected president, not to a newly elected parliament. The government as a whole was required to be non-party, under the legislation on state service that applied until 2003, and it need not command the confidence of a parliamentary majority, although the president can dismiss it at any time. Deputies have a number of sanctions at their disposal: they can refuse to accept the president's nominee as prime minister, and they can vote no confidence in the government as a whole. These, however, are 'nuclear options': if the Duma rejects three consecutive nominations to the premiership, the president is obliged to dissolve it and call fresh elections. And if the Duma votes no confidence in the government twice within three months, the president must either appoint a new government or else dissolve parliament and (again) call fresh elections. There is accordingly no 'party government' in post-communist Russia, and although there were moves in that direction in the early years of the new century, the parties that secure a majority of seats at Duma elections can hardly be said to have 'won power'.

The second major change that was introduced by the 1993 constitution was a substantial enhancement in the powers of the president (how, indeed, could it be otherwise when the president had crushed what he defined as a 'parliamentary

TABLE 2.1. *Russian Duma election results, 1993–2003*

	1993				1995				1999				2003			
	List (%)	List seats	SMC seats	Total seats	List (%)	List seats	SMC seats	Total seats	List (%)	List seats	SMC seats	Total seats	List (%)	List seats	SMC seats	Total seats
LDPR	22.9	59	5	64	11.2	50	1	51	6.0	17	0	17	11.5	36	0	36
RC	15.5	40	30	70	3.9	0	9	9	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
CPRF	12.4	32	16	48	22.3	99	58	157	24.3	67	46	113	12.6	40	12	52
WR	8.1	21	2	23	4.6	0	3	3	2.0	0	0	0	—	—	—	—
AP	8.0	21	12	33	3.8	0	20	20	—	—	—	—	3.6	0	2	2
Yabloko	7.9	20	3	23	6.9	31	14	45	5.9	16	4	20	4.3	0	4	4
PRUC	6.8	18	1	19	0.4	0	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
DPR	5.5	14	1	15	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	0.2	0	0	0
OHR	—	—	—	—	10.1	45	10	55	1.2	0	7	7	—	—	—	—
Unity	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	23.3	64	9	73	—	—	—	—
FAR	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	13.3	37	31	68	—	—	—	—
URF	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	8.5	24	5	29	4.0	0	3	3
UR	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	37.6	120	103	223
Rodina	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	9.0	29	8	37
Others	8.7	0	8	8	34.0	0	32	32	12.2	0	18	18	12.5	0	23	23
Indepts	—	—	141	141	—	—	77	77	—	—	105	105	—	—	67	67
Agst. all	4.2	—	—	—	2.8	—	—	—	3.3	—	—	—	4.7	—	—	—

Notes: Figures show share of party-list vote, party-list seats, single-member constituency (SMC) seats, and total seats won by parties that in any election exceeded the 5% party-list threshold. In 1993, 1999, and 2003 there were no valid results in six, nine, and three single-member constituencies, respectively; these were filled in subsequent ballots. Turnouts (ballots cast as a percentage of the registered electorate) were 54.3, 64.4, 61.7, and 55.7, respectively. The 1993 results were reported by the CEC in relation to the total valid vote; in other cases, vote share and turnout are calculated in relation to total (valid and invalid) vote. Figures for the effective number of electoral parties (ENEP) have been calculated on the basis of the share of the party-list vote cast for each party and for 'against all'; this yields results of 9.35 in 1993, 9.28 in 1995, 6.75 in 1999, and 5.35 in 2003. Party abbreviations are LDPR—Liberal Democratic Party of Russia (competing, in 1999, as the Zhirinovskiy Bloc); RC—Russia's Choice (in 1995, Russia's Democratic Choice); CPRF—Communist Party of the Russian Federation; WR—Women of Russia; AP—Agrarian Party; PRUC—Party of Russian Unity and Concord; DPR—Democratic Party of Russia; OHR—Our Home is Russia; FAR: Fatherland-All Russia; UR—United Russia; and URF—Union of Right Forces. There were thirteen parties, 'electoral blocs' or 'electoral associations' on the ballot paper in 1993, forty-three in 1995, twenty-six in 1999, and twenty-three in 2003.

Source: Central Electoral Commission, incorporating amendments up to July 2005 (*Vestnik Tsentral'noi izbiratel'noi komissii Rossiiskoi Federatsii* no. 8, 2005: 215–19).

uprising' and submitted his own draft for popular approval?) The president defines the 'basic directions' of foreign and domestic policy, particularly in the 'annual address on the situation in the country' that he gives to both houses of parliament. He appoints the prime minister 'with the agreement of the State Duma', and nominates and dismisses deputy premiers and individual ministers. He forms and heads the Security Council, which under Vladimir Putin has assumed increasingly wide-ranging powers, and appoints representatives in each of the country's republics and regions as well as in the seven federal districts that were established by presidential decree in 2000. He can initiate legislation, and issue decrees that have the force of law throughout the federation. The president is subject to popular election, and can hold office for a maximum of two consecutive four-year terms. But he is almost entirely free of parliamentary constraints, as the procedure for impeachment is so complicated that it is unlikely ever to be successfully initiated. The present incumbent, Vladimir Putin, assumed office after winning the first round of the March 2000 presidential election, and was re-elected with a still more convincing majority in March 2004.

Russia's early post-communist experience has given rise to a range of issues, some of which are reminiscent of party-related discussion elsewhere and some of which are more distinctive. Perhaps the clearest difference from party systems in established democracies is the role that is played by the political executive at all levels in framing the rules of competition and forming parties themselves. In Russia, and many of the other former Soviet republics, this takes the form of a regime-sponsored 'party of power' (Oversloot and Verheul 2000; Glebova 2004). In 1993 the Kremlin vested its hopes in Russia's Choice, led by former acting Prime Minister Yegor Gaidar and with many other ministers in its list of candidates. Russia's Choice, however, failed to justify expectations, and in 1995 the Kremlin chose a different vehicle through which to promote its interests, Our Home is Russia, led by then Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin. With a modest 10 per cent of the party-list vote, it was another disappointment. At the following election, in 1999, a hastily formed grouping, Unity, enjoyed much more success, and after the election it merged with the Kremlin's main challenger, Fatherland-All Russia, to form a still larger party of power under the name United Russia. The task of the new party, declared its leader Sergei Shoigu, was to 'unite the society around the creative policy pursued by the president and around the head of state himself', and there was a 'tumultuous standing ovation' when Putin appeared at its inaugural congress (*Nezavisimaya gazeta* 4 December 2001: 2). Helped by the Kremlin's control of the mass media, it won by far the largest share of the vote at the December 2003 Duma election and established a dominant position in the new Duma, including chairmanship of all of its committees.

Viewed from this perspective, one of the largest issues that arises in present circumstances is indeed the extent to which parties will remain derivative of

powerful interests, including the state itself. The law on political parties that was adopted in the summer of 2001, for instance, advantaged the larger parties that were represented in the Duma, and gave the Kremlin considerable powers to regulate their activities—including, in certain circumstances, the right to suspend their activities. It also provided for the state funding of political parties in a manner that reinforced the position of the largest, as support would be directly proportional to vote totals. The new law on elections to the State Duma, adopted in 2005, abolished the single-member constituencies, which had offered opportunities to the smaller parties as well as independents, and raised the threshold for representation from 5 to 7 per cent, which was again more likely to benefit the larger competitors (*Rossiiskaya gazeta* 25 May 2005: 22–32). The Kremlin has not disguised that its longer-term ambition is to forge what Putin has called a ‘normal, civilized’ party system with two, three, or at most four parties represented within it (*Nezavisimaya gazeta* 29 February 2000: 3).

Parties that depended on the support of the regime itself, however, would find it difficult to oppose Kremlin-sponsored policies, even if they were unpopular and ill conceived. Depending more on favours from the authorities than the active support of members, internal party activity might often atrophy. Collecting dues might appear a slow and ineffective way of raising funds when commercial sponsors could more readily be obtained. The priorities of members and of a wider constituency might take second place when the party leadership in the Duma traded its votes for various kinds of pay-offs, including direct ones. But the more a party became the client of powerful interests or of the regime itself, the less ordinary people would regard it as an effective means of advancing their own concerns. They would have no reason to join a party of this kind, or trust it; they might not vote at all, or they might vote ‘against all’, which was a distinctive and increasingly popular option on the Russian ballot paper until an amendment to the law removed it in 2006. In December 2003 nearly three million exercised this option, which was enough to make it the fifth most popular ‘party’ of the twenty-three that were in contention, and more than twice as many voted ‘against all’ the candidates in the single-member constituencies (calculated from *Vybory* 2004). Many, denied the opportunity to articulate their preferences through the political parties and—from 2007—by voting against all of them, were likely to move outside the party system entirely, and to engage in strikes and other forms of unofficial action. The Western literature on ‘disengagement’ has considerable resonance in Russia and most of the other post-Soviet republics; indeed the survey evidence suggests most Russians believe they have even less influence on government, in spite of multiparty elections, than they did in the late Soviet period (White 2005; Levashov 2006). Recovering a role for political parties that allows them to represent citizens to government is accordingly a task that has much wider significance than for the parties themselves.

THE POPULAR LEGITIMACY OF RUSSIAN POLITICAL PARTIES

Parties in modern Russia operate in the difficult circumstances of a former single-party regime, which to a large extent appears to have compromised the concept of 'party' itself (see, for instance, Kertman 2007). According to the national public opinion research centre, more than half the population see parties as a 'source of nothing but harm' (52 per cent); another 17 per cent believe party leaders are concerned only about their own well-being, and 10 per cent believe quarrels between the parties undermine social stability (*Vremya MN* 12 September 2001: 3). Russians, it was reported in 2006, have very mixed feelings about the multiparty politics they have enjoyed for more than fifteen years. Fully a quarter (25 per cent) would still prefer a 'single national party, permanently in power'—in effect, another CPSU. Rather more (29 per cent) favour 'two or three mass parties', but another 20 per cent believe there is no need to have parties at all, in current circumstances—better a few 'real leaders', like the Liberal Democrats' Vladimir Zhirinovskiy. Indeed, almost half (49 per cent) believe that 'weak, small parties' should have no right to exist at all (*Izvestiya* 16 January 2006: 2).

A more direct measure of party legitimacy is the extent to which respondents are willing to 'trust' political parties as compared with other institutions. The national public opinion research centre has asked questions of this kind since the early 1990s (see Table 2.2). Consistently, the church and the armed forces enjoy the highest levels of confidence. The presidency, after a bad patch in the later Yeltsin years, exceeded them both in the early years of the new century but might not continue to do so. Local government was normally more widely

TABLE 2.2. *Trust in parties and other institutions, 1998–2006*

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
President	2	2	45	54	61	59	62	54	56
Church	32	37	39	38	40	37	41	44	38
Army	28	35	35	33	28	27	28	30	20
Media	24	25	26	24	23	22	26	25	22
Security organs	18	20	21	23	23	23	20	23	23
Regional govt.	15	19	20	22	19	13	19	20	19
Local govt.	18	22	19	21	21	15	18	16	16
Courts	12	11	12	14	16	13	13	16	14
Government	4	8	20	22	24	16	12	14	14
Trade unions	11	9	11	11	13	13	10	12	9
Parliament	7	4	10	11	11	9	9	10	11
Parties	4	4	7	6	7	5	5	4	4

Note: 'Courts' from 1998 to 1999 refers to law enforcement generally (courts, police, and procuracy); references to 'parliament' from 2001 are for the State Duma. Figures report percentages who 'completely trust' a given institution. *Source:* Derived from All-Russian Public Opinion Research Centre (VTsIOM) and (from 2004) Levada Centre data as reported in *Monitoring [later: Vestnik] obshchestvennogo mneniya*, various issues.

TABLE 2.3. *Levels of support for Russian parties, 2000–7*

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
United Russia	14	13	16	17	33	21	29	26
Communist Party	22	23	18	20	11	11	9	10
Liberal Democrats For a Decent Life	4	4	5	8	6	6	6	6
Yabloko	5	6	3	6	1	1	2	2
Rodina	—	—	—	—	3	2	2	4
All others	15	14	15	12	6	8	6	5
Against all	8	8	7	8	7	5	5	—
Do not know	17	15	19	17	12	16	18	20
Would not vote	15	18	18	12	22	22	14	17
Might or might not vote	—	—	—	—	—	7	7	8

Notes: United Russia figures for 2000 and 2001 are for its predecessor, Unity; Rodina figure for 2007 is for its successor, Fair Russia. The question wording was ‘For which of the following parties or blocs would you be most likely to vote if there were elections to the State Duma next Sunday?’

Source: VTsIOM/Levada Centre data consulted at www.russiavotes.org on 5 April 2007; figures are for May in each year, but for August in 2000, in rounded percentages.

respected than central government, and the media were more widely respected than the agencies of law enforcement, which were more often associated with corruption and maltreatment than with the administration of justice. Political parties, however, have consistently come at the bottom of the list, below even the parliament in which they are represented. And these are findings that are replicated in other investigations; the only case in which political parties have not been the least trusted civic institution appears to have been when respondents were asked, on a single occasion, to express their confidence in a list that included the investment funds that had (for the most part) defrauded ordinary citizens of the vouchers they had obtained as a result of the privatization of state property (Rose 1998: 59).

A further set of questions has invited respondents at regular intervals to choose among the parties that currently exist, also allowing them to choose a variety of other options. The results are set out in Table 2.3. The figures show the strong but weakening base of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation, a decline in popular support for the liberal Yabloko party led by Grigorii Yavlinsky, and a low but more stable level of support for the right-wing nationalist Liberal Democrats led by Vladimir Zhirinovskiy. United Russia, the pro-presidential party established in late 2001, has maintained a substantial level of support since the December 2003 Duma election, when it won more than a third of the party-list vote. Some of the variation over time stems from differences in question wording, and still more so from changes in party leadership. These hardly diminish the most striking result of all, which is the very large and growing proportion of the electorate who refuse to identify with any of the parties on offer: clear evidence, on the face of it, of a Russian *Parteienverdrossenheit*.

There have been different views about the extent to which partisan identifications have developed in post-communist Russian politics. These variations stem, not least, from the different question wordings that have been employed, and from the different time-periods in which surveys have been conducted (in particular, immediately subsequent to an election or at a time of greater political tranquillity). Among the most 'optimistic' assessments are those that have emanated from the University of Iowa, extending not only to Russia but also to Ukraine and Lithuania. Respondents, in their surveys, are asked if there is a particular party that 'expresses your views better than any other party'. If the answer is yes, the next question asks which party the respondent has in mind, and how close the respondent feels to that party. On this basis, 'survey data collected in 1992, 1995 and 1997 reveal a significant growth in party identification among elites and ordinary citizens' (Miller et al. 2000: 462). In Russia, at the mass level, party identification increased from 16 per cent in 1992 to 52 per cent in 1995 and then 'skyrocketed' to 61 per cent in 1997 (Miller et al. 2000: 462, 486; similarly Miller and Klobucar 2000). The question, however, assumes that at least one of the parties will reflect the opinions of respondents, rather than asking whether any of the existing parties can do so; and responses will also have been raised by the decision to show respondents a list of parties from which to make their choice (Colton 2000: 114).

Other studies have asked somewhat different questions and have come to rather different conclusions. White, Rose, and McAllister, for instance, using data that were also gathered in the mid-1990s, speak of the 'absence of party identification', basing themselves on the low proportion—just 22 per cent—that are prepared to 'identify with any particular political party or movement' (1997: 134, 136). But this, others have objected, assumes respondents will know what it means to 'identify' in this way (Miller et al. 2000: 461). Miller, White, and Heywood, in a study that extended across Russia and four other post-communist states, asked respondents if, 'generally speaking', they thought of themselves as a 'supporter of any political party'; no more than 26 per cent did so, in Russia, a lower level than almost everywhere else (1998: 170). Colton, in his examination of the 1995 and 1996 elections, used another question entirely, asking respondents if they felt any party or political movement was 'my party, my movement, my association?' This was a broadly worded prompt that might have been expected to draw a positive response from a wider constituency than those who associated themselves with a political party as conventionally defined. Nonetheless, on this basis only 14 per cent were 'strong' and another 15 per cent were 'moderate partisans'; no other respondents were prepared to identify any of the parties or movements as 'their own', although a small proportion (20 per cent) were prepared to identify one of the parties or movements as more likely to reflect their 'interests, views, and concerns' than the others (2000: 114).

In a 2005 survey, the author and associates asked two different questions: whether respondents considered themselves to be 'a supporter of a political party',

and whether they thought there was ‘a political party that was closer to you than others in its policies (*po svoim pozitsiyam*)’.¹ Almost a fifth (19.6 per cent) thought of themselves as party supporters; rather more (29.6 per cent) thought there was a party that was closer to them in its policies than others. But although almost all party supporters thought there was a party with whose policies they could identify (91 per cent), not nearly as many of those who thought there was a party with whose policies they could identify were party supporters (60 per cent). Measures of partisan identification have not been uncontroversial in the established democracies, and here also much depends on the wording of the question (e.g. Miller and Niemi 2002: 175–9; Sanders, Burton, and Kneeshaw 2002; Bartle 2003). When all allowances have been made, however, it remains difficult to contest that Russia has low levels of partisanship in broadly comparative terms, still more so in comparison with established democracies such as the UK (where 86 per cent have some form of partisan identification) and the USA [where nearly 92 per cent identify with either of the two main parties (Webb, Farrell, and Holliday 2002: 20, 318)].

Low levels of party identification would normally be associated with high levels of electoral and other forms of volatility. Pedersen’s measure of total net volatility (1979) has been applied throughout these two volumes; nonetheless, it has severe limitations in the context of post-communist Russia. Most obviously, it can readily be applied only to the party-list contest for half of the seats in the Duma and not to the single-member constituencies, for which no party share of the vote is officially reported (nor would a figure be meaningful, when few of the list parties in recent years have contested as many as half of the single-member seats). The figures that emerge from an application of the Pedersen measure to the party-list vote, counting ‘against all’ as another party, are high in comparative terms although they have been steadily falling: 9.4 in 1993, 9.3 in 1995, 6.8 in 1999, and 5.4 in 2003. It would be reasonable to expect these levels to fall further, reflecting the Kremlin’s attempts to model a more stable and coherent system, but it is unlikely that for some time they will approach the levels of the established democracies (if they do so at all).

The Russian system is also characterized by a remarkably high level of split-ticket voting—three times higher than, for instance, in an American presidential election (White, Rose, and McAllister 1997: 139). According to the survey

¹ Our survey was conducted by the UK-based agency Russian Research, under the supervision of Dr Igor Galin. Fieldwork took place between 23 March and 20 April 2005. The number of respondents was 2,000, selected according to the agency’s normal sampling procedures; it was representative of the population aged 18 and over, using a multistage proportional representation method with a random route method of selecting households. Interviews were conducted face to face in respondents’ homes. The sample was then weighted in accordance with sex, age, and education in each region. There were 97 sampling points, and 150 interviewers were employed; local fieldwork supervisors checked a 20 per cent sample of each interviewer’s returns, and the standard logical checks were used during data entry and cleaning. Funding was provided by the UK Economic and Social Research Council under grant RES-000-23-0146 to Stephen White, Roy Allison, and Margot Light.

evidence, just 23 per cent of Russian voters in the 1995 Duma election opted for the same party in the party list and constituency contests; by contrast, 38 per cent reported casting a vote for a different party, and 39 per cent 'probably' did so or were unable to answer the relevant questions. Ticket-splitting in Russia is accordingly more widespread than in other systems; indeed it may attain the 'highest levels . . . anywhere in the world'. In the USA, to compare again with an established democracy, just a quarter of voters split their tickets during the 1980s, while three quarters voted a straight party ticket. The main explanation in the Russian case appears to be the motivation of individual voters, as a consequence of low levels of partisanship, rather than the opportunity structures provided by the political parties; although the electoral system also makes a contribution by allowing two distinct and unrelated choices. The evidence suggests that ticket-splitting of this kind is likely for some time to remain a 'key feature of the Russian electoral system' (McAllister and White 2000: 571, 575).

A high level of volatility has not discouraged Russians from taking part in elections themselves; indeed, unlike the experience of most other European countries, there has been a small net increase in turnout over the entire post-communist period, although the trajectory by the end of the period was clearly downwards. The lowest point to date was December 1993, when the ratification of the new constitution required a turnout of at least 50 per cent of the electorate and 54 per cent was officially declared (independent sources suggested the real figure was rather lower, between 38 and 43 per cent (Rumyantsev 1994: 216–17)). Elections to the Duma are valid if at least 25 per cent of the electorate takes part, and this has never been in doubt (turnout increased to 64 per cent in 1995 and 62 per cent in 1999, then fell back to 56 per cent in 2003). A higher threshold of 50 per cent is required in presidential elections, but this was easily satisfied when nearly 70 per cent of the electorate turned out in the first round of the 1996 contest, 69 per cent in the first and only round of the 2000 contest, and 64 per cent in the first and only round in 2004.

In other respects, however, the presumption of volatility is entirely justified. In part, this simply reflects the fact that there has been a high level of turnover in the parties themselves. In all, more than eighty parties or blocs contested at least one of the Duma elections between 1993 and 2003, but only three contested all four of them, and only two—the Liberal Democrats and Communists—won party-list seats in each (Yabloko, the third party to have contested all the post-communist elections, fell below the threshold in 2003). To put this another way, all of the parties or movements that contested the 1993 party-list election, taken together, won no more than 32 per cent of the party-list vote in 2003 (only five of the original thirteen appeared on the ballot paper). Conversely, nearly two-thirds (63 per cent) of the party-list vote in 2003 was won by parties or blocs that had not contested a single previous election; this included two of the four parties that reached the 5 per cent threshold, which between them took almost two-thirds of the seats that were available for distribution on a party basis.

The individual-level evidence also suggests that there is a greater degree of change in party support than in the established democracies—even among the parties that are on the ballot paper in successive elections. The only party to retain even half of its 1993 vote in the Duma election two years later was the Communist Party of the Russian Federation, which kept 68 per cent of its earlier support. The two other parties that contested the 1993 election and secured at least 5 per cent of the vote in 1995 were the Liberal Democratic Party, which retained 47 per cent of its earlier support, and Yabloko, which retained 43 per cent; but at the other extreme, just 19 per cent of Russia's Choice voters in 1993 opted for Russia's Democratic Choice two years later (Wyman 1996: 278–9; the ephemeral nature of the parties makes such calculations problematic, even across two elections). A level of volatility of this kind points to a number of the distinctive features of post-communist politics, not just in Russia, particularly the fluidity of social structures, of popular attitudes, and of parties themselves, all of which made it difficult to sustain continuing patterns of support. As a consequence, levels of volatility are much greater than those in Western Europe, and greater even than those in other European countries at the stage of development in which their party systems were taking shape (Mair 1997: 182–3).

THE ORGANIZATIONAL STRENGTH OF RUSSIAN PARTIES

The organizational context within which political parties operate is defined by the law on political parties that was adopted in the summer of 2001. The debate raised a number of controversial issues (for an overview see Zaslavsky 2003: 74–80). One of the issues that attracted most discussion was the minimum number of members that would be required. Without rich sponsors or support from government structures, it was argued, many of the prospective parties might find it difficult to attract as many as 10,000 members, which would deny political representation to a substantial section of the society. Any restriction upon the right to form regional or local parties, in addition, would limit the rights of ordinary citizens in a manner that might well be unconstitutional, and would certainly operate to the advantage of the powerful interests that had the most widely extended national networks (Ivanchenko 2001: 34). But supporters of the draft insisted on the importance of a 'single political space', otherwise local parties using the levers of influence that were available to their governors might squeeze out the regional sections of national parties, which would encourage the development of regional separatism and reduce the ability of the federal government to influence developments throughout the country (*Izvestiya* 20 February 2001: 4). The chairman of the Central Electoral Commission certainly left no doubt that so

far as the regime itself was concerned, there could 'only be all-Russian parties' (*Izvestiya* 24 May 2001: 4).

The introduction of state funding of political parties was a particularly controversial development. There was a risk, some thought, that this would undermine the parties' independence, and it would certainly be unpopular with Russia's long-suffering electorate, which would damage the position of political parties even further. If they were unable to pay teachers their hard-earned salaries, objected a deputy from the Union of Right Forces, how could they possibly defend the funding of political parties? (*Nezavisimaya gazeta* 10 November 2000: 3). Others argued that the sums involved were insufficient in any case: either there should be adequate funding, or none at all (*Izvestiya* 16 January 2001: 4). But Communist deputies took a different position: all the parties in the world, explained their leader Gennadii Zyuganov, took money from the state, and this made them independent of oligarchs (*Izvestiya* 23 May 2001: 3). The presidential view was very similar: that state funding would help to free parties from the wealthy sponsors that would otherwise control them (*Izvestiya* 20 February 2001: 4). In the end, a funding formula was agreed, which would take effect immediately after the December 2003 Duma election; but an amendment was adopted that allowed parties to do without state funds if they wished, and the Union of Right Forces (which had more access to private support than almost all the other parties) made it clear that it would make no call on the funds that would be placed at its disposal (*Izvestiya* 23 May 2001: 3).

The law, as adopted, regulates all aspects of party activity ('O politicheskikh partiyakh' 2001). In order to register, a party must have a membership of at least 50,000 (the law had originally specified 10,000, but was amended in December 2004: 'O vnesenii' 2004). In addition, it must have branches in more than half of the Russian regions, each of which must have a membership of at least 500, and any other regional party branches must each have at least 250 members (Art. 3). The main aims of a political party, under the terms of the law, are the formation of public opinion, political education, the articulation of the opinions of citizens on any question of public life, and the nomination of candidates at elections to representative institutions and elective office at all levels ('O vnesenii' 2004). As in many other countries, parties are not allowed to advocate extremism, or to incite social, racial, national, or religious antipathy; nor may parties be formed on an occupational, racial, national, or religious basis (Art. 9). Parties must be registered by the state at national, or local level on presentation of the appropriate documentation (Art. 15); they must have a statute (Art. 21) and a programme (Art. 22). Members must be at least 18 years old, and may belong to no more than a single party (Art. 23). Parties, under the law, may take part in elections and referendums, hold meetings, and otherwise propagate their views (Art. 26). Parties, in fact, are the only bodies that are allowed to put forward their own candidates at elections, although individuals could also be nominated in the single-member constituencies that accounted for half of the seats in the

Duma between 1993 and 2007 (Art. 36); and if they fail to do so over a five-year period (in other words, in two consecutive elections), they are dissolved on the instructions of the Supreme Court (Arts. 37, 41).

The 2001 law also defines the various sources from which a party may draw its material support, including membership dues, donations, and income from its activities, including commerce (Art. 29). Donations from private individuals in any year may not exceed ten times the minimum wage that prevails the previous March (in 2006 this meant that they could not exceed 8,000 roubles or approximately \$280). Donations may not be accepted from foreign states, companies or citizens, or from Russian companies with more than 30 per cent foreign ownership, from international organizations or government bodies, from military or police units, from charities or religious organizations, or anonymously. No donation in a single year from a single body may exceed a hundred thousand times the minimum wage, and the total from all sources may not exceed ten million times the minimum wage (Art. 30). The law introduced a new system of state support for political parties, although on a modest scale. The total sum available, under the amended legislation that was adopted in July 2005, is 5 roubles (\$0.17), multiplied by the total electorate; individual parties are able to claim the same level of payment provided they obtain at least 3 per cent in the national party-list contest, or if their candidate wins the same share of the vote in a presidential contest. Payments are annual, following each Duma election, or once only, in the case of presidential elections, and are indexed to take account of inflation (Art. 33).

Overall, just over 1 per cent of the adult population regarded themselves in our 2005 survey as a member of a political party; this compared with 2 per cent who were members of a residential association, 3 per cent who were in a musical or artistic society, 6 per cent who were in a sports club, and 12 per cent who were members of a trade union. Comparatively considered, these are very low levels of membership. The figures made available by the parties themselves vary widely and are often problematic. Indeed there was some evidence that parties maintained three different lists of members: one for public consumption, another for the Ministry of Justice, and a third for internal use (*Nezavisimaya gazeta* 13 January 2003: 1–2). The Liberal Democratic Party, for instance, told the Justice Ministry it had 19,100 members, but claimed 600,000 in its public statements. The Communist Party, similarly, claimed 19,300 in its registration documents, but 500,000 in its official statements; and United Russia appeared to maintain another, fourth column, for reporting to its Kremlin masters (it had promised a million members by the end of 2002 but had fallen short). Specialized firms were available that would take care of all of these arrangements, including a statute and members, for a payment of \$200,000; many of these parties were likely to secure fewer votes in national elections than the number of members they had nominally recruited.

Membership totals have also varied over time. The Communist Party, in the early years of the new century, was the largest, with half a million or more (*Izvestiya* 5 August 2002: 4); but its membership has steadily drifted downwards, and by the time its records had been scrutinized by the Ministry of Justice at the start of 2006 it could claim no more than 184,000 (*Izvestiya* 20 January 2006: 3). United Russia, by contrast, claimed a membership of 300,000, all of whom had been enrolled since its foundation at the end of 2001 (*Izvestiya* 20 February 2003: 3), and by 2005 it had enrolled more than a million members (*Argumenty i fakty*, no. 12, 2006: 8); but many had evidently been recruited in a somewhat 'Soviet' manner, on the basis of directives passed down from above. In a shopping complex in the Moscow region, for instance, each retail unit had been told it would have to provide two members (*Izvestiya* 3 March 2003: 1); in the town of Velikie Luki, local employees were being fired or had their wages withheld unless they took out membership (*Novye izvestiya* 3 July 2003: 1).

All the parties had to demonstrate they had at least 50,000 members by November 2006, failing which they would be de-registered. In the event, just nineteen parties satisfied the Federal Registration Service of the thirty-five that had been in operation at the beginning of the year (see Table 2.4). The number fell further when three of the newly registered parties—Rodina, the Russian Party of Life, and the Russian Party of Pensioners—merged shortly afterwards into a new grouping, 'Fair Russia', which conceived of itself as a 'Social Democratic Party in the

TABLE 2.4. *Russian parties after registration, November 2006*

Name of party	Membership (as of 1 January 2006)
United Russia	943,000
Rodina	135,000
Communist Party of the Russian Federation	134,000
Agrarian Party	133,500
Russian Party of Life	108,000
Russian Party of Pensioners	97,200
Liberal Democratic Party of Russia	86,000
People's Party	74,200
Democratic Party	60,200
Patriots of Russia	59,400
Party of Peace and Unity	57,300
Union of Right Forces	56,900
Yabloko	55,300
Free Russia	55,000
People's Will	53,400
Socialist United Party	51,900
Greens	51,700
Party of Russian Revival	51,600
Party of Social Justice	50,700

Source: *Kommersant* (27 October 2006: 2).

European sense of the word' and based itself on the Russian Party of Life as its leader was a 'personal friend of the president', which ensured the administrative support of the state apparatus (*Izvestiya* 18 September 2006: 3). The head of the Central Electoral Commission predicted that no more than about ten parties were likely to be in a position to contest the December 2007 parliamentary election (*Kommersant* 27 October 2006: 2), completing the move to a party system that was more coherent than at any time in the post-communist period but also more subordinate to the Kremlin authorities.

Members, as elsewhere, represented one of the parties' most important sources of income; but the financing of Russian parties, as President Putin complained in his parliamentary address in the spring of 2003, remained a 'secret under seven seals' for many electors (*Izvestiya* 17 May 2003: 3). In practice, there were several sources from which Russian parties could draw the resources they needed. For those with the largest membership bases (most obviously the Communist Party), the dues paid by individual members were a significant source of income. A further source of support, as we have seen, was the state funding that was made available to parties that enjoyed a given level of support at Duma or presidential elections (the first such payment at the new level of 5 roubles a vote was made in March 2006, a total of nearly 270 million roubles—or about \$9.5 million—divided among the nine parties and blocs that had secured at least 3 per cent of the vote in the December 2003 Duma election (*Novye izvestiya* 11 April 2006: 2)). More controversially, parties could be directly supported by individuals or corporate bodies. The law on political parties limited the nature of this support, but its provisions could easily be evaded, and the most important source of support for most parties was more often than not the country's wealthiest corporations and individual oligarchs. How much the parties were paid, by whom, and in return for what kind of favours has been a matter of (sometimes quite extravagant) speculation.

Parties, under the law, are subject to inspection by the tax authorities, and have to produce regular accounts for the Ministry of Justice or (since 2006) the Central Electoral Commission. Party leaders made clear in interviews that they would provide little information on matters of this kind, at least to journalists (Zhirinovskiy, for instance, insisted that the finances of his Liberal Democratic Party were a 'party secret' (*Izvestiya* 24 May 2001: 4)). The Communist Party was the only one to claim that members' dues—1 per cent of incomes—represented its most important source of revenue. But it also raised funds from trading its substantial vote in the Duma, and from the sponsorship of 'left-patriotic' entrepreneurs as well as from the indirect support of its members who had been elected governors (*Izvestiya* 5 August 2002: 4). There was a short-lived sensation when the country's leading oligarch, Boris Berezovsky, appeared to indicate that he was ready to support the party; but the Kremlin administration persuaded the oil giant Yukos and the holding company Interros to find the funds that were needed to get the party out of its difficulties and avoid it becoming dependent on a hostile sponsor

(*Argumenty i fakty*, no. 12, 2003: 4). Yukos executives, later on, were prominently represented on the party's federal list of candidates; but, as with other parties, places were apparently available for any of the party's sponsors if the contribution was large enough (*Argumenty i fakty*, no. 8, 2003: 7).

The Liberal Democrats, at the other extreme, had no regular income from their members of any kind: 'if they can, they pay', its leader explained to the press, otherwise they might leave altogether. But for a party to function 'normally' in Russian conditions, it needed \$500,000 a month or \$6 million a year. The Liberal Democrats' own central apparatus cost about \$20,000 a month to maintain; some of its local organizations could finance themselves, but most of them needed a central subsidy. So, Zhirinovskiy explained, 'I ask everyone for help'; this included sponsors, mostly from the Russian regions, although the party had none that supported it on a long-term basis. The Liberal Democrats favoured state funding for political parties, otherwise criminal elements would exercise an undue influence. In the meantime, they were attempting to raise funds from the sale of party publications—the better off could subscribe for a year, the poor for just a month (*Moskovskie novosti*, no. 50, 2002: 7). The party attracted additional support from 'lobbying', or in effect the sale of its Duma votes; informed sources suggested that a party could hope to secure 5–10 per cent of the value of the legislation it promoted (or successfully resisted) in the Duma, as well as various services in kind. Elections, accordingly, were 'not so much a competition of party programmes as an auction' (*Argumenty i fakty*, no. 12, 2003: 4).

Yabloko, on the centre-left, was somewhat more forthcoming. It charged 12 roubles a year for the renewal of its membership cards, but this generated no more than 400,000 roubles (\$12,600) a year, which was not enough to run a political party in Russian circumstances. Its normal income from all sources was 9–12 million roubles a quarter, occasionally much more than this; but there were also periods when income was not sufficient to cover expenditure. Most of the party's income came in practice from 'several dozen sponsors'; the party aimed to have as many as possible so as to keep the influence of any single sponsor to a minimum, and it attached great importance to their reputation. Its costs included the rent of premises in Moscow and the regions, domestic and foreign travel, equipment, and the payment of its full-time staff (*Moskovskie novosti*, no. 48, 2002: 7). Other sources identified the media magnate Vladimir Gusinsky as one of the party's early sponsors, followed by a commercial bank and then—at the Kremlin's instigation—the oil giant Yukos (*Argumenty i fakty*, no. 12, 2003: 4). Yukos' chairman, Mikhail Khodorkovskiy, himself announced in the spring of 2003 that he would be supporting Yabloko and the Union of Right Forces in the forthcoming Duma election (*Moskovskie novosti*, no. 14, 2003: 8); this, it was thought, was one of the reasons that led to his arrest the following October on tax evasion charges.

The Union of Right Forces drew much more of its support from Unified Energy Systems, headed by the party's cochairman Anatolii Chubais, although party

rules did not allow a single sponsor to contribute more than 10 per cent of its income and the party itself claimed to receive support from ‘almost all’ of the country’s oligarchs. Nor, indeed, could Chubais use the funds of the state energy monopoly as he wished and without taking into account the various opinions of its shareholders (*Argumenty i fakty*, no. 12, 2003: 4). The URF had been the only party to vote against the state funding of political parties, and its dues were very modest: just 300 roubles (\$10.30) a year, or a symbolic 20 roubles (\$0.68) for students, pensioners, those in state employment, invalids and others receiving benefits (*Argumenty i fakty*, no. 12, 2003: 26). Its largest expenses were on its apparatus in the centre and the regions, outside election periods, but party leader Boris Nemtsov refused to make any details available to outside investigators. It was, he suggested, much less well resourced than United Russia, but in a broadly similar position to Yabloko or the Communist Party (*Moskovskie novosti*, no. 4, 2003: 8).

A more comprehensive system of party accounting has emerged in recent years, although there is much that remains opaque (see Table 2.5). United Russia, dominant politically, is also dominant financially, with a declared income more than ten times that of any of the other parties. All the large parties, except the Communists, derived more than 80 per cent of their income from private companies and organizations. The Communists, by contrast, had a significant income from

TABLE 2.5. *Party income and expenditure, 2005*

	CPRF	LDPR	Rodina	URF	UR	Yabloko
Total income (million roubles)	61.7	93.2	130.9	45.0	1,007.1	35.1
Of which (%)						
Membership dues	47.6	0.1	0	0	3.8	0
Donations from individuals	22.7	0.2	2.5	15.9	0.6	12.2
Donations from legal entities	15.2	95.7	96.7	81.3	93.1	83.7
Profit from business activity	5.2	0.1	0	0	0.0	0
Earnings from civil transactions	2.7	0.1	0	0	0.1	0.1
Federal budgetary funds	6.2	3.7	0.7	2.7	1.1	3.7
Other earnings	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.1	1.2	0.3
Total expenditure (million roubles)	59.2	93.7	121.7	38.2	989.5	29.3
Of which (%)						
Holding congresses and conferences	4.1	0.0	5.3	4.6	3.1	4.7
Maintenance of leading party bodies	12.2	0.9	37.5	17.9	17.1	7.6
Maintenance of regional branches	47.7	2.1	37.9	34.3	55.5	32.2
Election activity	6.9	28.3	10.9	23.0	7.5	17.3
Public events	3.3	1.9	0.4	1.4	3.2	0.1
Propagandistic activity	19.8	60.9	7.6	16.3	6.7	7.7
Other expenditure	4.9	5.8	0.2	1.4	5.7	30.3
Net profit (loss)	2,495	-501	9,204	6,889	17,580	5,813

Note: In December 2005, \$1 was worth 28.9 roubles, £1 was worth 49.6 roubles, and 1 Euro was worth 34.2 roubles.

Source: Adapted from party financial statements on the Central Election Commission website, www.cikrf.ru, accessed on 30 June 2006.

individual donations, and drew nearly half of their income from the dues that were paid by party members (in no other case was this a significant source). Patterns of expenditure were less disparate: a substantial share in every case went to the support of central and regional party offices, and further sums were used to conduct elections and campaigns of other kinds. The Liberal Democrats stood out for the share of their income that was used for campaigning, and were the only one of the larger parties that made a loss over the year; but like other parties, they carry forward a positive balance from the previous year, and all the 36 registered parties, taken together, earned more than 170 million roubles (or about \$6 million) more than they spent (*Izvestiya* 26 April 2006: 4).

Again taking all the parties together, more than 90 per cent of their income came from 'legal bodies', in practice private business. According to the head of one of the Moscow think tanks, entrepreneurs had three main reasons for investing in a political party. The first was the hope that its success would ensure a stable business environment—which was why the biggest donations went to the parties that were closest to the Kremlin, United Russia and the Party of Life (which was headed by the speaker of the upper house). The second was the hope that a financial contribution would secure a place in a party's electoral list; in this case it was worth supporting a wider range, as there was not enough room to accommodate all the ambitious regional leaders on the list of the 'party of power'. A third motivation was ideological, which explained the donations that were made to liberal parties and the Communists; but there were few current businessmen with such 'exotic convictions', and it was hardly surprising that United Russia had accumulated one and a half times more in commercial donations than all the other parties taken together (*Izvestiya* 25 April 2006: 4).

In addition to these declared sources of income, Russian parties have many other opportunities for increasing their revenues—their votes, for instance, can be traded by party leaders in return for favours from business, and in some cases it has been suggested that they have established a relationship with organized crime. An 'index of the corruption of political parties' was made public in early 2006 by a group of independent scholars; it took no account of United Russia, the 'party of power', because its subordination to the Kremlin and high degree of centralization provided very little scope for private enrichment. The most corrupt of the other parties, on a 10-point scale, was the Communist Party (8.6 points), followed by Yabloko (7.9), the Union of Right Forces (7.3), and Rodina (6.5). The conclusion was that 'the oppositional political structures that claim[ed] to be trying to make things better [were] infected by the same ailments as officialdom itself', and there was little prospect of improvement apart from far-reaching and unlikely changes among the opposition parties and more open methods—primaries—of selecting their lists of electoral candidates (*Izvestiya* 31 March 2006: 3).

The level of funding that they enjoyed allowed few of the Russian parties to employ a substantial full-time staff, although it was difficult to distinguish between paid officials, volunteers who worked on a full-time basis, the assistants that were available to members of the Duma, and employees who became de facto members of the campaign staff of candidates who held government positions. The Liberal Democrats claimed to employ 50 on their central staff, but had at various times employed up to 300 (and had 3 Volga cars available for their use) (*Moskovskie novosti*, no. 50, 2002: 7). The Communist Party indicated that the cost of its central apparatus was not particularly large, as most of its staff worked on an unpaid basis (*Izvestiya* 24 May 2001: 4). Yabloko also claimed to spend 'relatively little' on its full-time staff but still employed ninety in its central office, and each of its seventy regional sections had two or three paid officials (*Moskovskie novosti*, no. 48, 2002: 7). The Union of Right Forces employed rather fewer, with just forty-two full-time staff in its central office (*Moskovskie novosti*, no. 4, 2003: 8). All of these numbers, clearly, were expanded considerably when national elections were in progress.

They fell, however, after elections had taken place, particularly if a party failed to secure sufficient seats to be of continuing interest to its corporate sponsors. The Union of Right Forces told interviewers that funding had almost entirely ceased after the December 2003 election, in which it failed to reach the party-list threshold; even Unified Energy Systems, headed by one of its leading members, had reduced its support. Yabloko was even more seriously affected, given that not only had it failed to reach the party-list threshold but its main sponsor, Yukos, had encountered serious difficulties after proceedings began against its chief executive. The party was left with no more than its unspent funds, the support of small and medium business and the modest amount of state sponsorship to which it was now entitled, and had to reduce its headquarters staff to ten or fifteen, just a tenth of the numbers it had maintained before the election. The action that had been taken against Yukos was a clear signal that the Kremlin would make life difficult for 'disloyal' oligarchs who supported opposition parties—for instance, by launching a detailed investigation of their accounts by the tax inspectorate (*Izvestiya* 6 April 2004: 3, 23 September 2004: 3).

The Russian media, as in other industrial countries, are dominated by television, and television in turn is dominated by the state itself, which largely or entirely owns the first two national channels and exercises a powerful influence over the others. This has meant that election coverage, up to the present, has been strongly biased towards the parties and candidates that are most loyal to the Kremlin. The December 1999 Duma election saw a particularly blatant use of state television to boost the position of Unity and to damage the standing of Fatherland-All Russia, which appeared to represent a serious challenge to the Yeltsin 'Family'—a term that came to be used in something like its Sicilian sense (White, Oates, and McAllister 2005). The independent channel NTV, which had been more

supportive of opposition parties and particularly of Yabloko, was taken over by the state gas monopoly in the spring of 2001 (its owner, oligarch Vladimir Gusinsky, was imprisoned and then forced into emigration). At the following election, in December 2003, international monitors found a 'clear bias' in favour of United Russia and against the Communist Party, and that state television—which had by far the largest national coverage—had 'openly promoted United Russia' (OSCE 2004: 16).

The balance was to some extent redressed by the daily press, although circulations were much lower than in the Soviet years and the political influence of an individual title was rarely significant. There was, however, a party press, and it allowed some degree of communication among members if not necessarily with a wider public. The Communist Party was the best placed to make use of these opportunities, not least because of its membership base and its inheritance of large-circulation dailies from the Soviet period. The party paper *Pravda* had a circulation of about 65,000 in 2000, and about a third of its copies were produced outside Moscow with an insert of regional news. *Pravda Rossii*, originally an insert in the paper *Sovetskaya Rossiya*, appeared weekly with a circulation of about 74,000, addressed mainly to members. The regional party press issued 800,000 copies weekly, and what the party called the 'left-patriotic' press as a whole had a circulation of more than 2 million. There was a party-aligned radio station, and in 1997 a party website was established that had received half a million visitors by 2000 (party leader Zyuganov had a site of his own) (*Spravochnyi material* 2000: 66–74).

With the possible exception of the Communist Party, it was difficult to argue that parties as such had much organizational strength in post-communist Russia. The state itself was dominant in almost every way, particularly through its control of the electronic media, but also through the 'administrative resource' that allowed it to use the apparatus of government in support of its favoured parties and candidates (Zvonovsky 2001; Oreshkin and Kozlov 2003). This might include office transport and secretarial services, meeting rooms, printing and publicity services, and the ability to distribute public investment in such a way as to 'reward' local officials in regions that had been strongly supportive of the Kremlin and its favoured parties and candidates, and to 'punish' those whose efforts had been less successful. An element of pluralism was introduced by the oligarchs, who could use their private resources to sustain parties and movements that were independent and sometimes critical of the Kremlin: Boris Berezovsky, another political exile, was able to use his considerable fortunes to establish a party known as 'Liberal Russia' (from which he later parted company), and he retained a presence among the print media. But the arrest of Khodorkovsky, followed by an eight-year prison sentence in 2005, was a clear warning; and he had neither established a political party of his own, nor funded a media outlet that was openly oppositional.

THE SYSTEMIC FUNCTIONALITY OF PARTIES IN RUSSIA

Given their formal powers, and the membership and the organizational resources on which they could draw, what part do Russian parties play in the process of government? To what extent do they form administrations, recruit a political class, and shape the process of political articulation and aggregation? To what extent, indeed, do they allow their own members to choose party leaders and influence the formation of party programmes? The short answer must be: to a very limited extent; but there is considerable variation by party and level of government, and the regime itself is engaged in an attempt to reshape the political system in a way that would, deliberately, give political parties a more central role in the future. The Russian experience, accordingly, is relevant to more general questions of 'institutional design' (Elster, Offe, and Preuss 1998; Goodin 1998), and the extent to which government can be provided with a party basis in an environment in which parties are otherwise relatively weak.

Governance

Parties, up to the present, have not been central to the Russian process of government or of policy formulation. The key issues in Russian public life, complained the journalist Otto Latsis at the end of 2001, such as foreign debt or the country's demographic crisis, 'should be the subjects of public debate and accordingly should be included in the programmes being proposed to society by various parties'. But thanks to the Kremlin, Russia had 'come under the sway of a different political style, under which all these things [were] decided without the involvement of political parties'. In this sense, he went on, there were 'no parties in the generally accepted meaning of the term'; and the prevailing view in the governing apparatus must be that 'this [was] the most convenient way of running the country' (*Novye izvestiya* 4 December 2001: 1–2). It was indicative of this situation that neither Boris Yeltsin nor Vladimir Putin had a declared party affiliation (although Putin did make clear his personal sympathies before the 1999 and 2003 Duma elections); equally, that Putin's successors as prime minister did not belong to any of the parties in the Duma, least of all the party that had won the largest number of seats.

There were several reasons for the relatively low salience of parties in the process of government in the early years of the new century. One was certainly the constitutional framework. Government was not accountable to parliament, but to the president: which meant that Russian parties were unable to 'win power' at a parliamentary election, and in no position to compel the formation of a government that reflected the composition of a new Duma. When Prime Minister Chernomyrdin's party, Our Home is Russia, won just over 10 per cent of the vote in the 1995 parliamentary election, he did not resign but told journalists that the

election result would make no difference to the composition of the government or the policies it pursued (*Segodnya* 20 December 1995: 1). When Boris Yeltsin dismissed the entire government three times in 1998–9, equally, it had nothing to do with a change in the party balance in the Duma, still less a national election. Under the terms of the law on state service that applied until 2003, indeed, ministers were classified as ‘category A’ public officials and required to have no party affiliation, and under the law on the government until it was amended in 2004 they were not allowed to hold office in a party or public organization; this reflected the Soviet view that the business of government was to administer affairs of state, but not to set national priorities. In the Soviet period policy was determined by the leadership of the Communist Party, and then implemented by government; after 1991 the ‘main directions’ of foreign and domestic policy passed into the hands of the president, whose powerful position was a consequence of its elective nature as well as of the provisions of the constitution.

There were some signs, as the post-communist system consolidated itself, that the strongly presidential nature of the constitution might at least be reconsidered. Yeltsin, and then Vladimir Putin, gave little indication that they thought their considerable powers should be circumscribed. But there was considerable support in other sections of the political class for a constitutional change that would balance an overpowerful presidency by strengthening the position of parliament. The Duma, these commentators suggested, had too little influence on the conduct of government. Appointments to important ministries, such as defence and foreign affairs, should require the approval of the Duma. The Duma, in its turn, should have the right to question ministers and to express its lack of confidence in individual ministers, not just the government as a whole; and it should be required to give its approval to the dismissal of the prime minister, not just to his appointment (White 2000: 101–6). The logic of these changes was a semi-presidential system, along the lines of the French system in which the president appointed the government but the government required the support of a parliamentary majority (Elgie 1999). There was some indication that, as a first step, the president might in future consider the appointment of a prime minister who commanded the confidence of deputies (Putin spoke of the formation of a ‘professional, effective government relying on a parliamentary majority’ in his address to the Federal Assembly in the spring of 2003 (*Rossiiskaya gazeta* 17 May 2003: 4)). At least implicitly, this was a step towards party government; but it was only a modest step so long as it reflected no more than a change in political conventions, and one that applied only if there was a parliamentary majority that was supportive of the president and his policies.

Interest articulation and aggregation

Parties have enjoyed no monopoly of the right to nominate candidates at local or national elections. In the first Duma elections in 1993 a whole series of public

organizations put forward candidates within the framework of a larger association, including the All-Russian Society of Invalids, the Chernobyl Union, the Union of the Women of the Navy, and two trade unions. In 1995 the Russian Union of Advocates and the Union of the Residential-Communal Economy put forward their own lists of candidates in the party-list contest, and many more formed part of a larger bloc of candidates, including the Union of Afghan Veterans, the Tatar Centre for Cultural Enlightenment, and the Association of Independent Professionals. In 1999 another varied set of public bodies formed part of a larger bloc of candidates, including Jurists for a Worthy Life, the Movement for the Support of the Army, Defence Industry, and Military Science, and the Union for Support and Assistance to Small and Medium Business. After 2001, only bodies that had registered under the law on political parties and whose objectives included the nomination of candidates at elections would be able to do so; but independents could still contest the single-member constituencies, and they accounted for a large proportion of the candidates that successfully contested them.

One reason for the continued strength of independents was that very few of the party-list contenders put forward candidates in more than a minority of the 225 single-member constituencies. In 2003, 32 parties put forward candidates, a total of 1,689 as compared with 1,338 independents. But none of the parties put forward a candidate in every seat, and only 7 put forward candidates in a majority of the 225 seats. The most active were the Liberal Democrats (186), all of whose candidates were unsuccessful, followed by the Communist Party (175); United Russia put forward 144, and Rodina, the other party that secured party-list representation, just 55 (*Vybory* 2004: 49–51). The United Russia won 103 of the single-member seats, but independents won 67; and independents, across all the single-member seats, took 26.3 per cent of the vote, more than all the other parties (calculated from the constituency returns in *Vybory* 2004: 49–51).

The outcome of an election was in any case a very approximate guide to the composition of the Duma over the course of its four-year term. The Duma is organized on the basis of ‘fractions’ and smaller ‘groups’ of deputies, which are formed when the new parliament assembles. But even fractions based directly on political parties do not necessarily correspond to the seats the same parties have notionally won in the preceding election. After the 1995 election nearly all the independents joined one of the organized groupings, some of them established after the election had taken place, while at the same time some of the deputies that had been elected on a party ticket chose to become independents; and there were party fractions that gained deputies that had been elected under entirely different auspices (*Vybory* 1996: 207). In 1999, almost a third of the seats had changed hands by the time the new Duma assembled in January 2000; nearly all the independents joined one of the organized groupings, and two new ones were formed after the parliament had been elected (Rose, Munro, and White 2001: 425–7). In 2003, similarly, United Russia won 223 seats at the election but had 300 at its disposal when the new Duma convened for its first meeting, as newly

TABLE 2.6. *Political parties and regional government, 1995–2000*

	Number of candidates	Of which party-nominated	Number elected	Of which party-nominated
Executive heads				
1995–7	424	80 (18.8%)	70	10 (14.3%)
1998–2000	724	53 (8.4%)	67	5 (7.6%)
Legislatures				
1995–7	17,906	4,452 (24.9%)	2,870	533 (18.6%)
1998–2000	14,794	2,602 (17.0%)	2,066	311 (15.1%)

Sources: Derived from *Vybyry* (1997: 42–8, 1998: 587–9, 2001, vol. 1: 86, 72).

elected members traded their vote for the patronage of a party that would evidently be able to offer them the support of the regime itself, and by the summer of 2006 its numbers had increased to 309 (www.duma.gov.ru, accessed on 30 June 2006).

Political recruitment

In these circumstances, parties have been of marginal significance in terms of political recruitment, not just nationally but also locally. Parties served as vehicles of legislative recruitment, but up to a third of the seats were won by independents; party lists were not necessarily composed of party members; and in any case ‘parties in parliament’ diverged substantially from election outcomes. Only in a limited sense, moreover, were there ‘parties in government’: governments did not necessarily correspond to the party balance in parliament and ministers were not selected from among the party leaders, nor chosen for their various portfolios by the parties themselves, as for instance, in Australia. The same was true for lower-level institutions of government (see Table 2.6). Of the executive heads of regions (governors or presidents), a very small proportion had a party-political background. The proportion with a party background, moreover, was declining rather than increasing; and where party-sponsored candidates competed with independents, it was the party-sponsored candidates that tended to lose ground. Parties were slightly better represented in regional legislatures; but again their share was falling, and there was a similar tendency for party-sponsored candidates to lose ground to independents.

Parties have, however, been important in structuring political recruitment at least in one important characteristic: the representation of women. There are consistent differences, first of all, in the gender balance of deputies returned through party lists as compared with the single-member constituencies. Conventionally, women are expected to do better under proportional than majoritarian systems. One reason is that parties are likely to make some effort to balance their lists of candidates in order to appeal to all sections of the electorate, whereas the outcome of individual elections in single-member constituencies need have no overall logic. Globally, women account for 10.8 per cent of deputies in majoritarian

systems, 15.1 per cent in mixed systems, but 19.8 per cent in proportional systems, making women 'twice as likely to be elected under PR [as under] majoritarian electoral systems' (Norris 2000: 349).

The fortunes of women candidates in Russia have also been influenced by whether they stand on a party list or in a single-member constituency. All the parties are obliged to provide 'equal opportunities' for men and women in drawing up their lists of candidates. The most important single variable, however, was whether Women of Russia, with an exclusively female list of candidates, had reached the 5 per cent threshold. In 1993, there were fifty-nine women deputies (13 per cent of the total); thirty-four represented a party list and twenty-one Women of Russia, who also won two single-member constituencies. In 1995, however, the Women of Russia vote fell from 7.6 to 4.6 per cent, which meant that they secured no party-list seats at all although three of the party's candidates won individual constituencies. Overall, female representation fell to forty-five (10 per cent of the total), fourteen through a party list but more than twice as many in single-member constituencies. In 1999 the Women of Russia vote dropped to 2 per cent and female representation fell still further, to 8 per cent, although once again more women were elected in single-member constituencies than on a party list; in 2003 Women of Russia did not put forward a party list of its own, although female representation recovered slightly to forty-five (10 per cent). This still left Russia well below the global average for lower houses of 15.6 per cent, and below all other parts of the world except the Arab countries (Aivazova and Kertman 2004: 102–3).

Increasing numbers of women, in fact, were being nominated as candidates (they accounted for 7 per cent of all party-list candidates in 1993 but 16 per cent in 1999 (Aivazova and Kertman 2000: 11)). What made the difference, as in other systems, was whether women were well represented on party lists that had a chance of exceeding the 5 per cent threshold. In Russia, it was clear that larger parties with the best chance of doing so were in fact less likely than others to include women in their lists of candidates. The Zhirinovskiy Bloc were the least likely of all to include women in their list of candidates, with just 3 per cent; and only one of the larger parties, the Union of Right Forces, included a woman in one of its top three places, which maximized the chances that she would be included in the party's allocation of seats (Aivazova and Kertman 2000: 11–12). In the December 2003 Duma election, women were more successful in the party-list contest (where they won twenty-four seats) than in the single-member constituencies (where they won twenty of the seats that they contested; three further seats were filled at subsequent by-elections). As of the following January, when the Duma assembled for its first meeting, there were 28 women among the 306 deputies in the United Russia fraction, and 6 among the 52 Communist deputies; there were 4 women among Rodina's 38 deputies, just 2 among the Liberal Democrats' 36 deputies, and 4 among the 15 deputies that were still unaffiliated (Aivazova and Kertman 2004: 35–6).

Political participation and communication

Levels of activism within Russian parties are not particularly high in comparative terms, although they exceed levels of membership. In our 2005 survey, no more than 1.1 per cent regarded themselves as members of a political party; nearly three times as many (3.2 per cent), however, devoted some proportion of their spare time to party activities. There were relatively few age or gender differences but very large differences by party, with the most active overwhelmingly concentrated among those who had voted for the Communist Party at the previous election.

Levels of activism, as in other countries, are defined in part by the rights with which members have been entrusted under their party rules.² Many of the rules, in fact, are reminiscent of those of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, and not just those of its obvious successor, the Communist Party of the Russian Federation. The rules of United Russia, for instance, took 'a great deal of their content' from the rules of the CPSU: 'But then', asked newspapers, 'where else could they have got it from?' (*Kommersant* 3 December 2001: 3). Members of United Russia, as in the CPSU, have to pay dues, take part in the work of a party branch, implement the decisions of the leadership, and undergo party instruction. As in the CPSU, they have somewhat vaguely defined rights to 'receive information' about the party, to appeal against the decisions of higher party bodies, to 'express their views freely', and to 'address questions' to party organs at any level; they can also take part in 'party referendums' whenever they are held. Members are obliged to take an appropriate part in election campaigns on the party's behalf, and if they are elected themselves to a legislative body they have to join the party fraction and act in accordance with the party's instructions. The party, commented newspapers, clearly intended to 'keep its members on a short leash' (*Kommersant* 3 December 2001: 3).

The rules of the Communist Party are the most directly inspired by those of the CPSU, and for obvious reasons. The CPRF bases itself, as the CPSU had done, on democratic centralism, including the obligation on lower party bodies to carry out the decisions of those above them. It also provides for the right of criticism, and of a minority to set out their views and have them considered in the taking of a decision. The principle of 'constant renewal' was to be observed in party elections (not less than a fifth of all elected bodies should be replaced on each occasion). All the major parties elected their leadership indirectly; in the

² Texts of the party rules are taken from the relevant party websites: www.sps.ru (Union of Right Forces), www.edinros.ru (United Russia), and www.yabloko.ru (Yabloko). The CPRF rules as adopted in 1998 are in *Kommunisticheskaya partiya Rossiiskoi Federatsii v revolyutsiyakh i resheniyakh s"ezdov, konferentsii i plenimov TsK (1999–2001)* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo ITRK, 2001), pp. 22–6. There are general studies of Russian party formation in Zaslavsky (2003) and Popov (2003); several book-length studies of individual parties are also available, including Manikhin (2003) and White (2006) on Yabloko, and Urban and Solovei (1997), March (2002), and Volokhov (2003) on the Communist Party of the Russian Federation. For a recent comparative study of party programmes and statutes, see Komarovskiy (2004).

Communist Party, for instance, the Central Committee, elected by the Congress, elected the party chairman. The liberal party Yabloko shared many of the same organizational principles, including the binding character of higher-level party decisions and the indirect nature of the election of its leadership, although it also allowed for the possibility of a 'preliminary all-party vote' before the choice of a party leader or presidential candidate. Yabloko, as well as United Russia and the Union of Right Forces, had 'supporters' as well as ordinary members; these were citizens who supported party policy but were not bound by the rights and duties of formal membership. The Union of Right Forces appeared to be the only party that allowed members the right not to fulfil decisions with which they were not in agreement, although they could not oppose their implementation.

There has so far been relatively little research into levels of activism within Russian parties, and of the ways in which members engage with their organizations at local level. A study of three regions in the middle Volga—Samara, Tatarstan, and Ul'yankovsk—is likely to be broadly representative of 'middle Russia' (Hutcheson 2003). Overall, interview and survey evidence suggested that the Communist Party was the 'most open to internal debate', and the party that 'most directly encourage[d] the contribution of members to discussion of party business'. The Liberal Democrats were the 'least receptive to the views of its members', with the other three parties that were considered—Fatherland-All Russia, the Union of Right Forces, and Yabloko—'somewhere in between' (Hutcheson 2003: 88). There were corresponding differences in levels of engagement, with Communist Party members involved in some form of party activity at least weekly, 'and in a majority of cases practically every day', while Union of Right Forces members were, for the most part, only very occasionally engaged. This strengthened the impression that the Communist Party was the one with the 'firmest base of activists' (Hutcheson 2003: 97–8).

The same impression emerged from the pattern of responses to a question about 'how close' members were to their party. Nearly two-thirds of the Communist Party members, at least in these central Russian regions, had a 'very strong' relationship with their party (62 per cent), and another 29 per cent had a 'strong' relationship. Members of the Union of Right Forces were again at the other extreme, with only 19 per cent who declared a 'very strong' relationship (slightly more—21 per cent—had no identification at all). Overall, there appeared to be 'two quite different types of members: loyal communists of many years' standing, most of whom were already members of the CPSU and the vast majority of whom seemingly joined on their own initiative; and a more detached URF membership which identified weakly with the party and joined in response to social group networks and television advertising' (Hutcheson 2003: 95). There were, as this suggested, many ways in which members could engage with their party of choice: the Liberal Democrats, for instance, operated a women's and a youth movement, sports clubs, and even a farm (Hutcheson 2003: 101–2).

CONCLUSION

Political parties in modern Russia operate within what is perhaps a uniquely adverse environment. The long experience of misrule by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union was scarcely an encouragement to the development of the multiparty politics for which the 1993 constitution provided; indeed it seemed almost to have discredited the very word 'party', as appeared to be implied by the way in which so many Russian parties found other labels with which they could describe themselves. As we have seen, parties are viewed with scepticism, or even hostility, by the mass public. Given a chance to vote for a party-sponsored candidate or an independent, in the single-member constituencies, party-sponsored candidates lose ground. There is only a loose relationship between election outcomes and party representation in the Duma; and the Duma itself has little to do with the composition of government apart from its ability to reject nominations to the premiership and to declare its lack of confidence in the government as a whole, both of which would normally lead to an early general election. Parties have relatively few members, and they can draw on relatively few human or material resources apart from the covert support of the richest corporations and individual oligarchs. Most important of all, the contest for the presidency itself—in a system in which the head of state enjoys unusually extensive powers—is conducted on an almost entirely non-party basis.

Parties, at the same time, provide the main vehicle through which candidates can stand at elections to the Duma or to regional assemblies. And under the Putin presidency, as we have seen, efforts have been made to give them a more prominent role as part of an explicit attempt to engineer a 'managed democracy'. Parties, first of all, have a monopoly of the right to nominate candidates under the law on political parties. But parties can register only if they have a substantial membership drawn from a large number of republics and regions, and to secure representation within the Duma they will have to secure an increasing share of the party-list vote. The largest parties have been the principal beneficiaries of the funds the state began to make available because the level of funding is directly proportional to their electoral support, and they are likely to be well represented among the parties that reach the threshold in future Duma elections. This means they will be able to nominate a presidential candidate in the future without collecting the signatures that would otherwise be necessary.

But how far could a party system be shaped from above, in the interests of the regime itself? Across Europe, there was a generalized crisis of political engagement: turnouts were falling, parties were losing members, and political institutions were losing the trust of ordinary citizens. In the former communist countries, and particularly in the former Soviet republics, memberships remained very low, parties were more distrusted than all other institutions, and substantial numbers at elections were voting 'against all' candidates where they had an

opportunity to do so, or not voting at all. Russia had a number of factors that might ordinarily have been expected to encourage political engagement, including high levels of education and a substantial pool of professionals. But the long experience of communist rule had choked off the development of a civil society—of independent forms of association that could help to sustain a viable party system—and there was little sign of its emergence in the first decade or more of a post-communist administration. It was possible, even probable, that the continuation of a ‘top-down’ approach to the development of Russia’s post-communist parties would deny them the organizational autonomy that would be necessary before an authentic citizen politics could hope to develop.

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Political Parties in Ukraine

Virtual and Representational

Andrew Wilson and Sarah Birch

INTRODUCTION

Political parties are certainly important in Ukraine, if only because almost every major politician has at one time or another had one of their own. The 1999 Kyiv (Kiev) edition of *Political Parties in Ukraine* listed 84 parties as worthy of mention (Andrushchak *et al.* 1999; see also Yakushik 1996; Yablons'kyi and Latko 1999), rising to 124 in February 2003, before stabilizing at 126 in 2006. However, although the political spectrum is certainly full to the point of overcrowding, Ukraine does not yet have a fully functioning party system as such. Nor are most parties properly institutionalized. Indeed, it was often said in the 1990s that Ukraine had only two real political parties—Rukh and the Communists. The Communist Party of Ukraine is a little-reconstructed successor to its Soviet-era equivalent; ‘Rukh’, meaning ‘movement’, is the party that emerged in 1993 from the Popular Movement of Ukraine, the eponymous anti-communist umbrella movement which spearheaded the drive to independence in 1989–91. Throughout the 1990s these were certainly the two largest parties in terms of votes, seats in parliament, and organizational strength, and the two parties with the greatest amount of ideological purpose, structural coherence, and representational function.

To say these are the only two ‘real’ parties in Ukraine, however, is to limit this category to political organizations defined by ideology—what Herbert Kitschelt terms ‘programmatic’ parties. But as Kitschelt also points out (Kitschelt 1995; Kitschelt *et al.* 1999; see also Lewis 1996; Mair 1996), ideology is only one of a number of mechanisms available for aggregating interests in situations like that of post-communist Ukraine. It is more accurate to say that Ukraine has a hybrid system containing at least four main elements: (a) ideological commitment and bottom-up interest aggregation; (b) the need for political fronts for corporate interests, which has led to the creation of a series of ‘virtual’ or ‘shell’ parties that serve as mechanisms for converting economic capital into political capital

and vice versa; (c) the desire to undermine the electoral coherence of rival groups by the establishment of ‘spoiler’ parties; and (d) small-scale political vanity, fanaticism, and whimsy, which have generated a penumbra of tiny ‘divan’ or ‘taxi’ parties (so called because all their members can fit on a single sofa or in a single taxi cab). It was only after the 2002–4 election cycle that the balance began to shift in favour of parties of the first type.

It is worth emphasizing that these different motives do not translate straightforwardly into different party types for two reasons. First, given the number of people and the degree of organizational capacity necessary to form and sustain a political party, it is unlikely that a single motive would drive all those involved in such an activity. In this sense nearly all of Ukraine’s parties—and parties in other countries as well—are functional hybrids of some kind. Second, parties change over time, and they change most rapidly in newly competitive states. Organizations established as fronts for the powerful may take on ideological coherence as the common policy interests of their members become more important (as was the case with the Popular Democratic Party), or a party established for ideological motives may be ‘hijacked’ by corporate groups intent on using it as a vehicle to promote their own interests (as happened with the Green Party during the 1998 elections).

These themes will be developed over the course of this chapter. But before moving on to a detailed account of the parties themselves, it is also worth considering the role of parties in the institutional architecture of Ukrainian politics since independence in 1991 (Kuzio and Wilson 1994; D’Anieri 2006). To an even greater extent than in Russia, Ukraine’s strong executive presidency has traditionally meant that parties do not play a large part in determining who commands the summits of power. Neither of Ukraine’s first two post-communist presidents was a party member during their period of office, and until 2003 governments were not formed by parties but by prime ministers chosen by the president. Though the government must be approved by parliament, parliament was not strongly disciplined along party lines, and party affiliation per se was not the most important criterion for the distribution of portfolios. Only after the constitutional changes agreed during the Orange Revolution in 2004, and enacted in 2006, did this seem likely to change.

Nor, until 2004, was party affiliation the most important factor in electoral politics. In the first post-Soviet elections held in 1994, half those elected to the parliament’s 450 single-member seats had no party affiliation (see Table 3.1). For the second elections four years later, the electoral law was changed so that half the parliamentary deputies were chosen through party lists and only half in single-member constituencies. This ensured a higher overall level of party affiliation, but among those elected in the single-member constituencies, half (51.6 per cent) were again independents, with the figure still high (41.4 per cent) when the same system was used again in 2002 (see Table 3.2). A second notable feature of the electoral results is the number of new parties that entered the electoral arena in both 1998 and 2002 and the dramatic change in fortunes of some of the established

TABLE 3.1. Results of the March–April 1994 parliamentary elections

Party	Number of seats contested	Vote share (%—1st round)	Number of seats won	%
Communist Party	294	12.72	86	25.44
Socialist Party	166	3.09	14	4.14
Village Party	55	2.74	19	5.62
Party of National Salvation	1	<0.01	0	—
Total Left		18.55	119	35.21
Party of Democratic Rebirth	47	0.83	4	1.18
Liberal Party	76	0.60	0	—
Labour Party	25	0.40	4	1.18
Social Democratic Party	30	0.36	2	0.59
Labour Congress	16	0.29	0	—
Party of Greens	37	0.25	0	—
Civic Congress	23	0.25	2	0.59
Justice Party	15	0.14	0	—
Party of Slavic Unity	8	0.06	0	—
Economic Rebirth of Crimea	5	0.07	0	—
Solidarity & Social Justice	6	0.04	0	—
Constitutional Democratic Party	6	0.04	0	—
Liberal Democratic Party	9	0.03	0	—
Beer Lovers' Party	2	0.01	0	—
Total Centre		3.37	12	3.55
Rukh	214	5.15	20	5.92
Republican Party	126	2.52	8	2.37
Congress of Ukrainian Nationalists	55	1.25	5	1.48
Democratic Party	67	1.08	2	0.59
Ukrainian National Assembly	22	0.51	1	0.30
Christian Democratic Party	31	0.35	1	0.30
Ukrainian Conservative Republican	28	0.34	2	0.59
Social Nationalist Party	21	0.17	0	—
State Independence of Ukraine	11	0.09	0	—
Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists	11	0.06	0	—
Peasant Democratic Party	8	0.04	0	—
Ukrainian Christian Democratic Party	6	0.02	0	—
Ukrainian National Conservative Party	6	0.02	0	—
Free Peasant Party	2	<0.01	0	—
Total Right		11.60	39	11.54
Independents		66.48	168	49.70
Total seats filled			338	100
Seats unfilled			112	

Source: Calculated from the 'Vybory-1994' database constructed by the Petro Mohyla Scientific Society of Kyiv.

players. Continuity was more apparent in 2006 (Table 3.3), when all five parties that made it into the Rada had contested the previous elections in the same or similar form.

Until then, however, party flux and volatility were hallmarks of party development in Ukraine, and the Ukrainian party 'system' was highly fragmented

TABLE 3.2. Results of the 1998 and 2002 parliamentary elections in Ukraine

	List votes	List seats	SM votes	SM seats	Total seats	Total (%)	List votes	List seats	SM votes	SM seats	Total seats	Total (%)
Communist Party	24.65	84	14.69	38	122	27.11	19.9	59	10.4	7	66	14.8
Socialist Party ^a	8.56	29	4.49	5	34	7.56	6.9	20	3.8	2	22	4.9
Progressive Socialists	4.05	14	0.98	2	16	3.56	3.2	0	NA	0	0	0
Other left	4.16	0	0.83	1	1	0.22	3.3	0	NA	0	0	0
Total Left	40.63	127	20.99	46	173	38.44	33.3	79	14.2	9	88	19.7
Party of Greens	5.44	19	0.83	0	19	4.22	1.3	0	NA	0	0	0
Popular Democratic Party ^b	5.01	17	4.17	12	29	6.44	—	—	—	—	—	—
Hromada	4.68	16	3.72	7	23	5.11	—	—	—	—	—	—
Social Democratic Party (United)	4.01	14	1.90	3	17	3.78	6.3	19	2.4	5	24	5.4
For a United Ukraine	—	—	—	—	—	—	11.8	35	16.4	66	101	22.6
Other centre	18.07	0	11.48	21	21	5.15	9.8	0	NA	9	9	2.0
Total Centre	37.04	66	22.10	43	109	24.23	27.9	54	23.4	80	134	30.0
Rukh ^c	9.40	32	6.34	14	46	10.22	—	—	—	—	—	—
National Front bloc	2.72	—	2.71	5	5	1.11	—	—	—	—	—	—
Our Ukraine	—	—	—	—	—	—	23.6	70	14.5	41	111	24.8
Tymoshenko bloc	—	—	—	—	—	—	7.3	22	0.1	0	22	4.9
Other right	1.11	—	0.96	1	1	0.22	0.4	0	NA	0	0	0
Total Right	13.23	32	10.01	20	52	11.56	31.3	92	14.6	41	133	29.7
Against all	5.26	—	—	—	—	—	2.45	—	—	—	—	—
Independents	—	—	46.90	116	116	25.78	—	—	41.5	92	92	20.6
Invalid	3.09	—	—	—	—	—	3.71	—	—	—	—	—

^a In 1998 the Socialists ran in alliance with the Village Party.

^b In 2002 the Popular Democratic Party was part of the For a United Ukraine bloc.

^c In 2002 both branches of Rukh were part of the Our Ukraine bloc.

Sources: For 1998: *Uryadovyi kur`yer* 9 April 1998, p. 5; 21 April 1998 pp. 4–10; *Holos Ukraïny* 18 April 1998, pp. 3–9; 28 April 1998, p. 3; *Holos Ukraïny* 18 August 1998, p. 2; *KIS, Vybory '98: Yak Ukraïna holosovala*, Kyïv, 1998. For 2002: Calculated from data at the Central Election Commission of Ukraine website at www.cvk.ukrpack.net. See also Birch (2003b). Only 222 out of 225 seats were filled at the first attempt; three races were declared invalid.

TABLE 3.3. *Results of the 2006 parliamentary elections in Ukraine*

	List votes	List seats	Total (%)
Communist Party	3.66	21	4.6
Progressive Socialists	2.93	—	—
Other left	0.96	—	—
Total Left	7.55		
Party of Regions	32.12	186	41.3
Lytvyn bloc	2.43	—	—
Viche	1.74	—	—
Other centre	5.86	—	—
Total Centre	42.15		
Socialist Party	5.67	33	7.3
Our Ukraine	13.94	81	18.0
Tymoshenko bloc	22.27	129	28.7
Kostenko/Plyushch bloc	1.87	—	—
Pora, Reforms and Order	1.01	—	—
Other right	0.22	—	—
Total Right	39.31		
Against all/Invalid	1.77		

Source: Central Election Commission (2006) at www.cvk.gov.ua

in consequence; according to the Laakso–Taagepera (1979) index, the ‘effective number of parties’ in parliament was 13.3 following the 1994 elections and 9.8 after the 1998 parliament was elected.¹ Party politics is thus only part of the story of political competition in Ukraine. This chapter attempts both to describe how parties negotiate their position on the Ukrainian political scene and to assess how well they perform the functions traditionally ascribed to them.

THE POPULAR LEGITIMACY OF UKRAINIAN POLITICAL PARTIES

Having experienced ideological hypocrisy and widespread corruption under communism, many in Ukraine hoped the advent of electoral competition would bring cleaner, more accountable government. The public was disappointed in this as in so many of its aspirations in the post-independence period. When asked ‘Whose interests are advanced by Ukrainian political parties?’, 24 per cent of respondents in a 1999 survey by the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES)

¹ Note that each independent is treated as a party for the purposes of calculation. When performing such calculations, many analysts treat independents as a collective party, but there is little theoretical rationale for this, and it would give a highly deceptive result in the Ukrainian case. Inasmuch as each independent candidate forms his or her own political support base, ideology, and campaign tactics, each one is effectively operating as a ‘party’ and should be treated as such. On the 1994 elections see Arel and Wilson (1994).

indicated that parties served the interests of their leaders, while only 12 per cent thought they served the interests of citizens of Ukraine (IFES 1999). In this context, trust in parties is indeed exceedingly low. Between 1995 and 1997, the proportion who trusted them to any extent at all was a meagre 3 per cent (Demokratychni initsiatyvy 1998a: 10),² while two-fifths of the population did not trust them at all, and just over a fifth did not trust them very much (the remaining third were undecided). This made parties in general less trusted than the army, the police, the media, trade unions, and even astrologers, not to mention the president, the government, and the parliament (Demokratychni initsiatyvy 1998a: 13). More worrying still, many Ukrainian citizens do not see the need for multiparty competition at all. In response to the question 'How important do you think it is for Ukraine to have at least two political parties competing at each election', only 12 per cent replied 'very important' in 1996. In 1997 that figure rose dramatically to 37 per cent, before declining to 23 per cent in 1998 and to 21 per cent in 1999.

Not surprisingly, these attitudes have traditionally translated into very low levels of party identification in Ukraine, even by East European standards. In 1993–94 party identifiers made up between 10 and 15 per cent of the voting-age population, depending on the survey (Evans and Whitefield 1995; Rose 1995; Wyman et al. 1995). In a 1993 cross-national survey carried out by a team at the University of Glasgow Ukraine was also found to have the highest level of 'negative identification' among the five post-communist states where interviews were conducted (the others being Russia, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Hungary). In a later survey 71 per cent in Ukraine agreed with the statement 'None of the existing parties represents the interests and views of people like me', while the regional average was 60 per cent (Miller, White, and Heywood 1998: 170). Even when IFES (1999) asked citizens explicitly 'Which party best reflects your own views and interests', they found that 63 per cent of respondents either did not know or could not answer. The Glasgow study also found that more respondents in Ukraine than in any of the other states supported the banning of certain parties under various conditions (Miller, White, and Heywood 1998: 165). By the time of the 1998 elections, party identification had risen to barely 25 per cent according to a survey conducted by the authors.³ Following standard survey procedure, the question on party identification was asked in two stages: respondents were first asked if they felt 'a little closer to one of the political parties than the others'. A total of 19 per cent answered in the affirmative. Those who gave negative answers were then asked if they felt 'a little closer' to one party than to the others. This

² The New Democracies Barometer data for questions on trust in parties indicate slightly higher levels, 7 per cent in 1994 and 8 per cent in 1995, but these are still extremely low, and Ukraine falls at or near the bottom of the league table of ten Eastern European countries on this measure. See Rose and Haerpfer 1994 and Rose 1996.

³ The survey was carried out by the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology. Further details are available from the authors on request.

follow-up question induced a further 6 per cent to plump for one party over the others.

One of the reasons for Ukrainians' aversion to parties is the lack of perceived difference among them. The 1999 IFES survey referred to above found that 37 per cent of the electorate saw no clear differences between the parties, although this figure was in decline, having fallen from 49 per cent in 1996. Certainly the inability of voters to distinguish between parties does not appear to have deterred them from making choices on the party list that confronted them for the first time in the 1998 parliamentary elections. Although they had the option of voting 'against all' the parties, only 5.3 per cent chose to do so. A further 3.1 per cent spoiled their ballots, and 29.2 per cent of the registered electorate failed to vote at all. All in all, 64.9 per cent of those registered managed to select one from among the thirty parties and party blocs presented to them on the ballot paper (calculated from *Tsentral'na Vyborcha Komisiya* 1998).

Dislike of parties is thus not a deterrent to participation in selecting party members as leaders. Indeed, turnout in Ukraine is higher than in most countries in post-communist Eastern Europe. It fell precipitously after 1985, with the de facto end of compulsory voting (93.4 per cent in 1989, 84.7 per cent in 1990), but has levelled off at about 70–75 per cent since the 1994 presidential election (69.3 per cent in 2002, back up to 74.9 per cent in the first round of the closely fought 2004 presidential election, and 77.3 per cent in the final, 'third', round, and 67.7 per cent in 2006). However, as in most countries, voting in elections appears to be the only form of political participation in which the majority of the population is willing to engage; very few are willing to go so far as to join parties.

Table 3.4 presents data on the number of members claimed by each major party between 1991 and 1999. There are reasons to believe that some of these figures are not wholly accurate. The most obvious example is the patronage party *Hromada*, whose claimed membership soared from 14,000 in 1998 to 391,400 a year later. If these figures are taken at face value, approximately a million people were party members in Ukraine in 1999. But after the exile of its patron former Prime Minister Pavlo Lazarenko in 1999, *Hromada* disintegrated just as rapidly. A truer estimate of the total number of party members at the start of the new millennium is probably closer to 700,000,⁴ which represents 1.8 per cent of the total electorate. However, given that this estimate is largely based on parties' own

⁴ These calculations are biased by three factors: first, as mentioned above, they rely largely on figures reported by the parties themselves, which can be expected to be inflated (especially inasmuch as parties tend to keep on their books names of people who have long since stopped paying their dues and who no longer consider themselves to be members); second, they do not include a host of smaller parties, several of which claim sizeable memberships; third, they are based on figures gathered at different points in time, so they do not reflect a true cross-section. To a certain extent these biases can be expected to cancel each other out. Nevertheless, it is advisable to treat these estimates with some caution; they can be assumed to provide only a rough indication of the level of party membership among the population.

TABLE 3.4. *Party membership data in Ukraine**

Party and date of registration	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Left									
Communist Party (5/10/93)	—	—	120.0 ^d	130.0 ^g	NA	220.9 ^b	NA	92.6 ^c	142.0 ^d
Socialist Party (25/11/91)	50.0 ^a	30.0 ^d	NA	30.0 ⁱ	NA	37.7 ^b , 29.4 ^d	34.8 ^d	11.3 ^c	30.5 ^d
Village Party (3/3/92)	—	NA	NA	NA	NA	16.6 ^b	NA	73.0 ^c	90.0 ^d
Progressive Socialist Party (12/7/96)	—	—	—	—	—	0.8 ^b	NA	3.2 ^c , 2.5 ^{ds}	11.4 ^{ds}
Slavic Party (former Civic Congress) (10/6/93)	—	—	1.4 ^d	NA	NA	1.3 ^b	NA	0.9 ^c , 10.0 ^d	NA
Party of Justice (9/2/93)	—	—	1.5 ^f	NA	NA	0.1 ^b	NA	3.0 ^c	30.9 ^d
Centre									
Party of Greens (24/5/91)	~10.0 ^a	NA	5.2 ^d	NA	NA	2.7 ^b	6.0 ^d	6.1 ^c	14.0 ^d
Popular Democratic Party [2/96]**	(4.0 ^a)	(3.5 ^c)	—	—	—	(9.6 ^b)	NA	21.9 ^c , 43.0 ^d	60.4 ^d
Hromada (22/3/94)	—	—	—	NA	NA	3.7 ^b	NA	14.0 ^c	391.4 ^d
Social Democratic Party (United) (1/7/96)	—	—	—	—	—	NA	NA	79.8 ^d	43.6 ^c
Agrarian Party (30/12/96)	—	—	—	—	—	100.0 ^d	106.0 ^d	18.7 ^c	176.6 ^d
Party of Reforms and Order (24/10/97)	—	—	—	—	—	—	NA	1.6 ^c	10.0 ^d
Party of Labour (27/1/93)	—	—	10.0 ^d	NA	NA	36.7 ^b	NA	15.1 ^c	NA
Liberal Party (10/10/91)	0.4 ^a , ^d	NA	4.0 ^d	NA	15.2 ^d	46.8 ^b , 27.7 ^d	67.6 ^d	72.5 ^c , 43.5 ^d	43.8 ^d
Ukrainian Christian Democratic Party (14/11/91)	7.0 ^a , 8.0 ^d	NA	NA	NA	NA	4.6 ^b	NA	1.0 ^c , 6.4 ^d	NA
Christian Popular Union (27/3/97)	—	—	—	—	—	—	NA	3.5 ^c	NA
Christian Democratic Party (23/11/92)	—	1.1 ^d	12.0 ^d	NA	NA	15.9 ^b , 13.0 ^d	NA	12.6 ^c , 26.0 ^d	NA
Democratic Party (28/6/91)	4.0 ^a , 3.0 ^d	NA	NA	NA	NA	8.3 ^b	NA	12.1 ^c	18.6 ^d
Party of Economic Rebirth (11/3/93)	—	—	NA	NA	NA	15.8 ^b	NA	57.5 ^c	NA
Right									
Rukh (1/2/93)	—	—	60.0 ^d	NA	NA	89.3 ^b	61.0 ^d	62.5 ^c , 25.0 ^d	21.0 ^d
Congress of Ukrainian Nationalists (27/1/93)	—	—	NA	50.0 ^h	NA	8.2 ^b	NA	9.3 ^c	NA
Ukrainian Republican Party (5/11/90)	12.0 ^a , ^d	NA	NA	NA	NA	15.8 ^b	14.8 ^d	16.4 ^c	10.5 ^d
Ukrainian Conservative Republican Party (21/7/92)	—	0.6 ^d	NA	2.5 ^d	NA	1.8 ^b	NA	0.8 ^c , 3.5 ^d	NA
Total	~80	~90	~260	NA	NA	560–610	NA	522–641	700–1,000

Parties that won at least 1 per cent of the list vote in the 1998 elections only; thousands of members.

* Includes candidate members.

** The NDP was created through the merger of the Party of Democratic Revival of Ukraine (registered on 27/9/91) and the Labour Congress of Ukraine (registered on 24/4/93). Figures in brackets represent the (combined) membership of these two parties.

Sources: ^a Lytvyn, Volodymyr, 'Pro suchasni ukrains'ki partii, ikhnykh prykhil'nykiv ta lideriv' *Politolohychni chytannya* 1992/1, pp. 62–101; ^b *Statystychnyi shchorichnyk Ukraïny za 1995 rik*, Kyiv: Tekhnika, 1996 [data for 1/1/96]; ^c *Statystychnyi shchorichnyk Ukraïny za 1997 rik*, Kyiv: Ukraïns'ka entsyklopediia imeni M. P. Bazhana, 1999 [data for 1/1/98]; ^d *Politychni partii Ukraïny*, Kyiv: K.I.S., 1999; ^e Andrew Wilson and Artur Bilous, 'Political Parties in Ukraine', *Europe-Asia Studies*, 45.4 (1993), pp. 693–703; ^f *Uryadovyi kur"yer* 5 February 1994, p. 8; ^g *Uryadovyi kur"yer* 17 February 1994, p. 6; ^h *Uryadovyi kur"yer* 3 March 1994, p. 6; ⁱ *Uryadovyi kur"yer* 19 March 1994, p. 6.

reports of their membership bases, which can be expected to be biased upwards, it is not surprising that survey evidence indicates lower figures. The authors' 1998 survey found that 1.2 per cent were party members, and the 1999 IFES survey found party membership to be 1 per cent. The differences between these various calculations are well within the margin of error in both cases. It can therefore be assumed that true party membership in Ukraine is somewhere between half and three quarters of a million, or 1–2 per cent of the voting-age population. Nevertheless, the available data indicate that party membership in Ukraine is on the rise (especially in the centre of the political spectrum), and the increase appears to be directly related to electoral activity. The anticipation of elections provides parties with incentives for recruitment drives, and the results of elections provide voters with an indication of which political organizations hold, or at least exercise some, power. Significantly, much of the recent growth has come from the clientelistic centre parties, building up wide but shallow selective benefit support bases.

It remains in this section to consider how 'systematic' the Ukrainian party system is. One way of approaching this question is through the examination of electoral volatility. It is not possible to calculate the most common measure of party volatility (the Pedersen index) in the Ukrainian context due to the high level of party turnover at each election; parties have formed, merged, and split at such a rate in post-independence Ukraine that the only reliable unit of analysis is the party camp. In this context, Bartolini and Mair's (1990) measure of 'bloc volatility' is more appropriate. Bloc volatility for the 1994–98 elections in Ukraine was 11.4 per cent.⁵ This is high by the standards of established democracies, but closer analysis reveals that the volatility is accounted for almost entirely by the recent rise of the centre. As revealed in Tables 3.1 and 3.2, there was very little change in the overall vote strength of the right during this period (11.6 per cent in 1994 vs. 10.0 per cent in the single-member constituency races of 1998), and only slightly more change in support for the left (18.6 per cent as opposed to 21.0 per cent). Voting for centrist parties rose dramatically, however, from 3.4 per cent in 1994 to 22.1 per cent in 1998, making it the strongest of the three camps in the constituency races, as also in 2002, with incomplete results indicating 23.4 per cent.

As noted below, much of the change in this sector of the political spectrum can be accounted for by previously independent politicians adopting party labels for the purposes of the 1998 race. The volatility measure is thus a bit deceptive. The real story behind these figures is the stability in the overall performance of the left and the right which anchor Ukrainian politics (at least until the reinvention of the

⁵ 'Block volatility' is calculated here on the basis of the amalgamated voting strength of each of the three party camps at each of the two elections, bearing in mind that the camps included different parties at the two different points in time. The vote strength of parties in 1998 is measured in terms of their support in the single-member constituency races, as this is the most comparable to the vote totals for 1994.

right in 2002 and the decline of the Communist Party with the rise of the Party of Regions in 2002–6). Most of the flux in party fortunes has been due to changes among members of the political elite, while the behavioural proclivities of the voters have remained relatively stable (Wilson 1997*a*; Wilson and Birch 1999; Birch 2000*b*)—arguably even after the Orange Revolution in 2004. Ukrainian voters are perhaps justified in viewing their nascent party system with some suspicion. Deputies elected from one party are often members of another by the time of the next election, sometimes having sojourned in several more in the interim. Nevertheless, the broad outlines of a party system are now established, and they are evidently recognized by the electorate.

THE ORGANIZATIONAL STRENGTH OF UKRAINIAN PARTIES

Ukrainian parties vary considerably in the organizational resources they command. The differences among political organizations stem from historical factors as well as from differences in the nature and level of support they receive. This section considers three aspects of party resource capabilities: finance, activists and support staff, and media access/control.

Party finance

According to the 1992 law ‘On Civil Organizations’, which regulated party activity from 1992 to 2000, parties receive no direct subsidies from the state, although the state does provide parliamentary factions with offices, cars, and a small salaried secretariat. There are also a number of restrictions on private fund-raising. Parties are not allowed to receive money from foreign states, organizations, or citizens (or international sources), or from Ukrainian state organs, state enterprises, or institutions (except as set out in the law), enterprises in which the Ukrainian state or foreign parties have a stake of more than 20 per cent, non-legalized organizations or anonymous donors (Art. 22). Furthermore, parties cannot engage in commercial activities outside the sphere of collective gatherings, agitation, and information dissemination, such as festivals, exhibitions, educational activities, publication, production of materials displaying the party’s logo, etc. (Art. 24). The law requires the annual publication of a list of people whose contributions to parties exceed an amount to be established by the Verkhovna Rada (parliament). A special parliamentary commission oversees party finances and reports annually to a plenary session of the Rada (Art. 26),⁶ although it has clearly not been able to prevent the law being widely flouted.

⁶ The new law ‘On Political Parties’ submitted to parliament in 2000 adds charitable and religious associations to the list of organizations from which parties cannot receive contributions (Art. 15). It also requires parties to publish their income and expenditure on a yearly basis (Art. 17).

While there are no comprehensive data available on overall party income and expenditure, regulations on the funding of electoral campaigns require parties to disclose their campaign income by source. Given that electoral campaigning undoubtedly represents the biggest cost to any political party, these data provide a valuable insight into party funding. According to Article 37 of the 1998 electoral law,⁷ fund-raising is regulated through a system of individual accounts set up by parties for the purpose. Contributions to such funds can be made by the parties themselves, as well as by Ukrainian citizens and corporate bodies (*yurydychni osobi*), but not by foreign, international, or anonymous donors, or by state organizations. These procedures were designed to introduce a degree of transparency into the process of campaign funding, yet they did not prove entirely effective. In part, this is the fault of the law, which does not explicitly prohibit the use of alternative sources of financing. A statement on the campaign funding of the thirty parties and blocs that contested the elections was published in the state press on 26 March (e.g. *Uryadovi kur"yer*: 4–6). Seven parties, including Rukh and the Progressive Socialists, managed to circumvent the scrutiny of the electoral commission by simply declining to open special election accounts altogether. Furthermore, the declared figures are open to doubt on a number of counts. The roundness of some of the figures themselves strain credibility; the Party of National Economic Development, for instance, essentially a front for Prominvestbank, Ukraine's then largest bank, appears to have raised exactly 700,000.00 UAH (then about \$2,800) for its campaign.

These caveats notwithstanding, the data do provide some indication of the fund-raising capacity of many parties, both in terms of the sums involved and their sources (see Table 3.5). The way in which parties used (or failed to use) their campaign accounts also yields insight into the parties' tactics and, indirectly, into the nature of their support bases. The parties that declared the greatest expenditure were in the main centrist parties allied with the government (the Popular Democrats) or business/banking interests (the Greens, the 'Razom' coalition, the Party of National Economic Development, and the United Social Democratic Party). The bulk of funds raised by these big-spending parties came from corporate sponsors. A different pattern is evident on the left of the political spectrum, where far more modest sums were raised, most of which came from individual donations. The Communists, Socialists, and Villagers are evidently able to rely on their well-established grass-roots support bases both to minimize the costs of winning voters and to generate sufficient sums for low-key campaigns. Though these parties may well also benefit from undisclosed sources of income, the lack of visible large-scale expenditure by leftists at election time suggests that their declared income may not be very different from the 'real' figures. Official

⁷ The law governing the 1998 elections was passed on 24 September 1997, and came into effect when it was published in *Holos Ukraïny* on 25 October 1997. On the 1998 election itself, see for instance Birch (1998).

TABLE 3.5. Sources of campaign finance in Ukraine, 1998

Party	Declared campaign funds (hryvni)	Sources of declared campaign funds, as proportion of total		
		Party (%)	Individual donors (%)	Corporate donors (%)
Popular Democratic Party	1,915,936	0.05	0.00	99.95
Green Party	1,128,488	0.00	0.09	99.91
Party of Regional Rebirth	793,569	0.00	4.89	95.12
NEP	742,000	12.40	0.00	87.60
Razom	705,935	0.00	0.00	100.00
Party of National Economic Development	700,000	0.00	0.00	100.00
Social Democratic Party (United)	529,900	0.00	0.00	100.00
Working Ukraine	406,600	0.00	4.92	95.08
Christian Democratic Party	217,062	0.00	13.39	86.61
Hromada	190,132	100.00	0.00	0.00
Social-Liberal Association	131,483	0.00	90.10	9.90
Agrarian Party	125,000	8.80	10.40	80.80
Socialist Party-Village Party	106,967	0.00	81.30	18.70
All-Ukrainian Party of Workers	56,558	0.39	0.00	99.61
Forward Ukraine	35,000	57.14	0.00	42.86
Ukrainian National Assembly	30,400	0.00	68.75	31.25
Women's Initiatives	28,240	0.00	0.00	100.00
Communist Party of Ukraine	24,935	0.00	90.01	9.99
National Front	7,401	0.00	100.00	0.00
Social Democratic Party of Ukraine	5,522	100.00	0.00	0.00
Party of Spiritual, Economic, and Social Progress	3,772	0.00	0.00	100.00
Fewer Words	728	0.00	100.00	0.00

Sources: *Uryadovyi kur'yer* 26 March 1998; pp. 4–6; 9 April 1998; p. 5.

spending patterns reflect the relative pattern of expenditures across the party system—although the actual overall total may be several times higher.

Activists and support staff

Ukraine's first post-communist parties tended organizationally to be of two types. On the one hand, there were the parties born of the grass-roots protest movements against the Soviet regime (Rukh, the Greens). These were initially loose entities reluctant to take on the formal structures of party organization, reliant on their early success at popular mobilization to keep them going. Of the new parties, Rukh most closely resembled a mass party born of, and supported by, grass-roots mobilization, which provided a convenient pool for recruiting activists (Clem 1995). But under the former dissident V'yacheslav Chornovil, its leadership (1992–99) was less than democratic, resulting in gradual attrition as erstwhile supporters—especially of the younger generation—gravitated to more modern and open parties.

On the other hand, there were those parties which adopted or adapted the traditional Leninist model of strict party organization and discipline. Not surprisingly these included the Socialist Party and, when it was allowed to re-form in 1993, the Communist Party, which were able to benefit from the Soviet-era Communist Party's extensive organizational infrastructure and material resources to provide a ready-made support base and source of party activists (Clem 1995).⁸ The parties of the left also benefited from highly committed activists, a large proportion of whom were retired and thus had time to spare (Clem 1995; Wilson 1997c).

Some parties of the right were also of the tightly structured type, most notably the Ukrainian Republican Party (URP), the first new party to register in 1990. The URP was led by former dissidents with extensive experience in Soviet prison camps, who since the 1960s had been (intermittently) involved with various covert and overt protest groups such as the Ukrainian Helsinki Union. When it began operating, the URP employed the techniques of workplace organization, tight discipline, and pragmatic power-seeking that had served its opponent, the CPSU, so well. But in the post-Soviet context this style was bound to generate resentment, and the party was subject to repeated splintering as one group after another broke away. Despite its strong organization and shrewd alliances, it never managed to position itself as the main party of the nationalist right. Rukh managed to retain this role even though it suffered from shambolic organization and chronic internal power struggles. Many of the fringe rightist parties that formed in the 1990–94 period were also close-knit cadre parties. The Ukrainian National Assembly, the Social National Party, and State Independence of Ukraine never attempted to form mass support bases, preferring tight discipline and semi-clandestine tactics which often took on paramilitary overtones.

The second generation of parties formed in the 1994–8 period and were mostly based on configurations of power established within or on the fringes of governmental politics, which now required formal organizational structures in order to generate the mass support needed for electoral success. An early forerunner of this type were the Liberals, a party of industrial directors from east Ukraine. Although unsuccessful in 1994, their tactics—generating a mass following through public largesse and grass-roots mobilization—pointed the way forward for other business parties at the 1998 elections. Whether these parties were created afresh, as with the Popular Democrats, or refashioned out of existing parties, as with Hromada and the Social Democrats, the technique was similar: they associated themselves with or generated mass and special interest organizations in order to enlarge their support base. Nevertheless, grass-roots linkage remains weakest in this sector of the political spectrum due to its somewhat artificial nature.

⁸ The other main party of the left—the Village Party—never developed the same level of organizational coherence due to its heavy reliance on the organizational structures of the Agrarian Union which spawned it (see Wilson 1997c).

Without the Soviet-era mass organizations that subtend the left and the anti-Soviet protest movement organizations that underlie right-wing support, the special interest parties of the centre are left with little option but to try to attract activists and voters by offering selective incentives and currying favour with local notables.

The decision-making style of Ukrainian parties varies considerably, from the well-articulated formal structures of the Communist Party and the Popular Democratic Party to the autocratic-style characteristic of a party with a single dominant political leader such as Hromada. Parties in Ukraine were created largely from above, from within parliament or sections of the late Soviet-era political elite, and they invariably suffer from difficulties in binding their members to the party line. Even at the parliamentary level factions have been notoriously unstable, and differences of opinion (or simple ambition) among members have frequently led to splits in the extra-parliamentary organizations of their parties. The only truly disciplined party faction has been that of the Communists, albeit as a persistently negative anti-government block (at least in terms of public posture). Surveys have indicated that left-wing deputies consider constituency work to be more important than their right-wing counterparts, whose main focus is on committee work (USAID 2000), and parties of the left have devoted less energy to law-making, somewhat diminishing their effective strength as a parliamentary force (Wilson 1997c). The 2006 constitutional reform introduced the so-called 'imperative mandate' that prohibited parliamentary deputies from shifting factions once elected. But during the first decade of multiparty politics, parties were caught between the organizational needs for both coherence and cohesiveness, and many a party succumbed to the struggle between the two.

Parties and the media

Party relations with the mass media take two forms in Ukraine. On the one hand, parties have their own media outlets which are explicitly labelled as such. On the other hand, they often exert considerable influence over the editorial policy of nominally independent media. Only the largest parties have media outlets that are more than just political advertisement sheets. Even these are mainly papers of record, containing conference resolutions and other documents aimed more or less exclusively at party activists. Rukh, for example, has managed an ever-changing family of publications since 1989, albeit with more overtly political sheets such as *Narodna hazeta* being replaced by the would-be professional paper *Chas*, officially registered in 1998. *Chas* failed to win a mass market, however. Its circulation was only 10,000, less than the party's membership. The main left parties also have a long publishing history: the weekly Socialist paper *Tovarysh* began life in 1992 (its circulation as of 2000 was 61,150), the rival *Komunist* in 1994 (circulation 107,417). The Socialists have a theoretical journal *Vybir*,

the Communists relaunched *Komunist Ukraïny* (which had previously appeared between 1925 and 1991) in May 1999.⁹

More important in terms of popular impact are the political parties that stand behind the increasing corporatization of Ukraine's mainstream media. For the most part this means the shadowy 'centre' parties. Not surprisingly, supporters of President Kuchma had a strong position on state TV and in the regional press (regional papers still tend to outsell national papers in Ukraine), but most of the major players also control their own papers. In the capital, the United Social Democrats have outlets (through Hryhorii Surkis) in the newspapers *Law and Business*, *Alternative*, and *Kiev News*; while Green Party patron Vadym Rabinovych (before his exile from the country in 1999) controlled *Capital News*, *Business Week*, the UNIAR news agency, and the radio station. Regional Revival and the Democratic Union (through Oleksandr Volkov and Ihor Bakay) stand behind *Facts and Today*. The Village and Socialist parties used to be guaranteed a good hearing in *Village News*, which is the closest thing to a national paper in Ukraine. Hromada built up a powerful media empire (*Truth of Ukraine*, *All-Ukraine News*, *Kiev News and Politics* and the TV channel UTAR) before party leader Pavlo Lazarenko's spectacular fall in 1998–99. Presidential candidate Yevhen Marchuk of the Social Democratic Union is associated with Ukraine's one-time leading quality daily, *The Day*. The bias in such publications is surprisingly overt to Western eyes, even in *The Day* when it is covering Marchuk.

Ukrainian TV has been less subject to overt party control in so far as the influence of Ukrainian oligarchs is more interlocking and as much personal as party-based. The state retains considerably more control over the main national companies, UT-1 and UT-2 and the semi-independent 1 + 1, with over two-thirds of the national audience between them. Paradoxically, a truly national Ukrainian TV market was created under Kuchma rather than his predecessor Kravchuk. The former tried to build up the 'national message' of UT-1, but huge numbers continued to watch Russian state TV (ORT), whose backing for Kuchma was a key factor in the 1994 presidential election. Since 1994 the situation has been transformed by the blocking of direct foreign broadcasts in 1995, the launch of UT-2 to displace ORT in 1996, and the debut of the younger rival 1 + 1 in 1997. Oligarchs close to the authorities also have their own mini-empires. As well as controlling Hravis TV, Volkov has a strong influence on UT-1 and 1 + 1, while backing 'Era', UT-1's main current affairs programme and, with Bakay, ICTV and the 'New Channel'. Increasingly, however, control has been concentrated in two groups: with Inter, UT-1 and 1 + 1 belonging to the United Social Democrats; and STV, New Channel and ICTV controlled by Viktor Pinchuk of Labour Ukraine,

⁹ *Chas*, 28 May 2000: 8; *Tovarysh*, no. 10 (March) 2000: 8; *Komunist*, no. 10 (March) 2000: 4. A full list of the Communist central and regional press (79 titles in all, most no more than few xeroxed pages) can be found in *Komunist Ukraïny*, nos. 1 and 2, 1999 (whose own initial print run was only 2,000).

who also inherited the powerful regional channel '11' in Dnipropetrovsk after the fall of Lazarenko. On the other hand, the right, through business supporter Petro Poroshenko, backed the new Channel 5 after 2003.

Both newspapers and TV have been heavily criticized for the disproportionate coverage they give to pro-government parties and their lack of coverage of those parties most opposed to the current power-holders (mainly the Communists, but also Hromada between 1997 and 1999).¹⁰ The OSCE report on the 1998 elections concluded that 'state television was clearly under the control of the government, which used both state channels for the promotion of the party of power'.¹¹ In 1998 this meant the Popular Democrats, and in 1999 Kuchma himself and the then pro-government 'troika' of the Labour Party, Democratic Union, and United Social Democrats. The advantage of the pro-government parties is more pronounced in television coverage than in the print media; opposition parties benefit from a number of sympathetic newspapers, whereas the broadcast media are more tightly controlled by the state. The OSCE report on the 2002 elections commented that 'the media performance during the campaign was mixed. In general all media and in particular the electronic media remained highly biased. Nonetheless, all major candidates, parties, and blocs had greater access to television and other media, through the welcome innovation of organized debates, free airtime, and paid advertising. By contrast outside Kyiv, parties, blocs, and candidates in opposition often found their access to electronic media restricted by local authorities. Moreover, the state-funded national television channel gave disproportional coverage to the pro-presidential contestants' (OSCE 2002).

THE SYSTEMATIC FUNCTIONALITY OF POLITICAL PARTIES IN UKRAINE

One of the most prominent legacies of the communist period in Eastern Europe as a whole has been the lack of a densely articulated civil society through which people can discover and promote their interests. This situation has both advantages and disadvantages for party formation and development. On the one hand, there are few *organized* alternatives to parties competing for political power and influence. Party supporters also have few mechanisms through which to pressure their leaders, so political parties are largely free to decide their policies and plan their political strategies on their own. On the other hand, the relative weakness of civil society in Ukraine, at least before the Orange Revolution in

¹⁰ See, e.g. the *Ukrainian Monitor*, various issues, 1998.

¹¹ OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation, *Republic of Ukraine Parliamentary Elections 29 March 1998*, 1998:17.

2004, made it difficult for parties to put down roots and build stable support bases, which also hampered political communication and helped perpetuate the perception that parties are not tuned in to the popular will. The five aspects of party functionality considered in this section—parties and governance, political recruitment, interest articulation and aggregation, political participation, and political communication and education—are all strongly conditioned by the relations of parties to the outside world, and most notably by their relations to civil society.

Governance

Despite the increasing importance of parties as channels of influence, there are still significant alternatives to party government in Ukraine. This is most true of the executive branch, where political power is still highly personalized (Wilson 1997*b*, 1999). To the politicians of the shadowy ‘party of power’ who have traditionally dominated the Ukrainian government and presidential administration, politics was until the 1998 elections almost ostentatiously non-party (the claim to be above ‘mere politics’) and clan-based (Bilous 1997: 40–2). Patronage and loyalty networks still count for more than party cards, even though the former now express themselves through virtual party frameworks. This is even more true of local government, where regional bosses predominate.

Parliament has become more partified since 1998, but in this sense it is out of step with the other branches of government. The Rada’s increasing structural effectiveness, especially after a centre-right ‘New Majority’ was finally (temporarily) formed in January 2000, may in time encourage emulation by the other branches of government, although President Kuchma’s plans (in the abortive referendum held in April 2000) to introduce a second chamber made up of the regional bosses briefly threatened to reverse this effect. The switch to a fully proportional system for the 2006 parliamentary elections was once again specifically designed to encourage the creation of a permanent ‘majority’. In his public rhetoric, Kuchma talked of encouraging party development, but his private practice (divide and rule of his opponents, refusal to associate with ‘minority’ forces) achieved the opposite. He wanted the best of both worlds, demanding the creation of the ‘New Majority’ in parliament, but refusing to be bound by it.

Elsewhere, the bureaucracy of the state is easy prey for powerful clans and corporate lobbies, for if political parties have traditionally been weak, civil society has been even weaker. Where ‘interest groups’ do exist, particularly the trade unions, they are often run from the top-down, much as the social ‘transmission belts’ of the communist era (Kubicek 2000*a*), and are certainly no rival to parties as such. It remains to be seen whether the sudden flowering of civil society both in advance of and during the 2004 Orange Revolution will prove a long-term phenomenon.

Political recruitment

In the established democracies of the West, the typical path of political recruitment starts with party membership that first involves a person in political activity. Activity in the party then provides him or her with a route to a position of state power. In Ukraine, however, parties do not play the central channelling role that they do in established democracies, and one or more of the stages typical of advancement in politics in the West is often bypassed. Many seek and attain power directly, without any help from formal political organizations. None of Ukraine's post-Soviet presidents has been a party member (even Viktor Yushchenko was forced to keep his distance from his 'Our Ukraine' party), and until 1997 neither had any of its prime ministers. Like the heads of state, many politicians kept their distance from organized politics, preferring to be fellow-travellers. Party membership is thus by no means a prerequisite to the attainment of state power, and parties can by no means be said to have a monopoly on political recruitment in Ukraine.

There are signs, however, that this may be changing. Not only is formal membership rising, but the 1998 parliament had only 25.8 per cent independents as opposed to 49.7 per cent four years earlier, falling further to 20.6 per cent in 2002. Much of this change can be attributed to the adoption of a semi-proportional electoral system for the 1998 and 2002 races. According to the new system, which was similar to the Russian system used from 1993 to 2003, half of the deputies were elected from party lists or lists formed by party blocs, and half from single-member constituencies. But it is difficult to distinguish the chicken from the egg in this case. It may well be that as parties began to assert themselves more in parliament a consensus was reached on reforming the law in such a way that they would be strengthened as institutions. Evidence for this supposition is found in the fact that whereas 71.6 per cent of the candidates in the 1994 election stood as independents, only 47.0 per cent of the single-member constituency candidates did so in 1998. Likewise, while only one of the six candidates who contested the presidential election in 1994 was a party member, eleven out of thirteen contenders in 1999 held party cards, as did all of the top six in the 2004 race. In reality the causal tide most likely flows both ways: the increase in strength of parties as institutions made electoral reform possible, and electoral reform consolidated the position of parties.

Still, parties remain relatively weak, and rather than parties promoting leaders to positions of power within the institutional structure, positions within the institutional structure have promoted leaders to positions within parties—often as leaders. Many of the members of the 1990–94 and 1994–98 parliaments elected as independents subsequently joined parties (see also Moser 1999). Likewise, ex-leaders have gone on to form parties or to play leadership roles in parties *after* their tenure of power—like former premiers Marchuk (United Social Democrats) and Lazarenko (Hromada), and former President Kravchuk (United

Social Democrats). These politicians use parties as surrogate structures to tide them over till they regain power and to launch them in their bids for new offices. It is therefore not surprising that leaders are not accountable to parties, because they are not beholden to them. Their links are ephemeral, consisting often of transient electoral affairs rather than long-term unions.

In socio-demographic terms, leadership positions in Ukrainian parties tend to be dominated by the social elite, though party members in elected leadership positions appear to be less likely to come from elite backgrounds than political leaders who are not party members. Lack of data on the social composition of party memberships precludes meaningful comparisons between leaders and rank-and-file members, but analysis of the parliamentary deputy corpus sheds some light on the social nature of the upper echelons of Ukraine's political class.

In the 1994 elections the new parties of the left and centre failed miserably in recruiting women to parliament. A mere 16 of the 412 parliamentarians elected to the 1994–98 parliament were women, of whom 5 were party members, 4 of those having been elected under the auspices of the Communist Party. In 1998, the situation improved somewhat and far more women were elected through political parties: thirty-five women won seats and thirty-two were party members. Of these, twenty were leftists, but the centre and the right also promoted a dozen women to power. Twenty-two women were elected in 2002; eight from single-member districts, fourteen from lists. It appears that parties became an effective means through which women could climb the political ladder, partly because of the move to a semi-proportional electoral law, and partly because of internal developments in the party system (Birch 2003*a*, 2003*b*).

The occupational structure of parliament also indicates that parties afforded members of less well-endowed groups with the resources to win election, while many political and economic elites could get elected without the need for party support. Whereas 45.6 per cent of the independents elected to parliament in 1998 were business elites and 31.6 per cent were state officials, the corresponding figures among party members were 28.7 and 23.4 per cent respectively. Members of the professions were more likely to be party-affiliated (only 15.8 per cent were independents, while 24.6 per cent were party members), as were those who worked in NGOs (6.1 per cent vs. 15.3 per cent), and members of clerical and manual occupational groups (0.9 per cent as opposed to 5.01 per cent). Again it is the parties of the left that are most willing to promote members of less privileged groups to positions of institutional power; all of the seventeen clerical and manual workers who were elected from parties came from the left (Birch 2000*a*). Though half of the party members elected to parliament in 1998 were from the most elite occupational groups, parties were still an effective vehicle through which members of less privileged groups could gain power. Thus, while parties in Ukraine are weak, they are gaining in organizational capacity, and as they do so they are increasingly becoming mechanisms through which new talent can be recruited into politics.

Interest articulation and aggregation

Given the large penumbra of tiny 'taxi' and/or ephemeral parties, Ukraine has perhaps only ten to twenty core parties of real significance. We attempt a fourfold classification based on mechanisms of interest articulation. 'Programmatic parties' are those with ideological coherence, organizational cohesion, and a degree of party discipline, combined with some genuine representational linkage to the electorate. These can be further subdivided. Some parties are new, others are communist-successor parties—'those parties which were formerly the governing party in the communist regime and which inherited the preponderance of the former ruling parties' resources and personnel' (Ishiyama 1999: 88). In Ukraine it is perhaps better to reverse the definition, in which case there are three main successor parties in the country that unquestionably derive a preponderance of *their* members and resources from the Communist Party of old: the Socialists, Communists, and the Village Party. One can also count as 'successor parties' other historical parties, most notably the Congress of Ukrainian Nationalists (KUN), an umbrella group set up in 1992 by the main descendant party of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) established in Vienna in 1929.

The second broad category is that of 'virtual parties', so named because of their lack of solid organizational infrastructure and firm support bases, and the fact that many exist only as media 'projects'. Such parties can still be important, however, if they operate close to the centre of power and/or are electorally significant. Like their programmatic counterparts, the virtual parties come in two categories. Some are virtual in the sense of being artificial 'spoiler' parties, the product of traditional Soviet tactics of divide and rule and the *kompromat* (or black propaganda) of opponents. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the old regime fostered divisions among its enemies on the right; during President Kuchma's first term (1994–99) they concentrated on the parties of the left. Parties such as the Defenders of the Fatherland, the All-Ukrainian Workers' Party and most famously the Progressive Socialists, whose leader Nataliya Vitrenko won 11 per cent of the vote when she stood for the presidency in 1999, were established with no purpose other than to draw voters away from the mainstream left. The first wave of left spoiler parties emerged for the 1998 parliamentary elections (winning, it might be pointed out, almost 12 per cent of the total vote), the second as the authorities sought to chisel away at all the left parties to create a 'New Majority' in parliament in 2000. Hence the dissolution of the Progressive Socialist and Village factions and the emergence of new alternatives to the main communist-successor parties—the Solidarity and Justice factions in the Rada, and eventually the 'Ukrainian Communist Party (renewed)'—to compete with the authorities' main rival, the Communist Party of Ukraine (*Komunist* 7 March 2000; Rakhmanin 2000). Such tactics were brutally effective. The 4 main left parties may have been elected with 172 deputies in 1998, but they had only 135 left by March 2000 (*UNIAN* 21 March 2000).

At the 2002 elections the right successfully reinvented itself, with former prime minister Viktor Yushchenko (1999–2001) building a centre-right coalition of Rukh and parties like Reforms and Order labelled ‘Our Ukraine’ (winning 23.6 per cent of the list vote). Together with the success of his former deputy Yuliya Tymoshenko’s eponymous block (7.3 per cent—see Table 3.2), this created a real threat to the authorities, who responded by creating new ‘right’ (Rukh for Unity) and ‘centre’ spoiler parties (Women for the Future, Yabluko, and KOP) and with a high level of dirty tricks in the presidential campaign.

Other parties are virtual in the sense of being mere facades, channels for the representation of private interests behind a variety of more acceptable public *personae*. The Greens are a party of (high-polluting) industrialists; the United Social Democrats, a party of bankers and energy traders. In parliament, Regional Revival is dominated by the energy suppliers who are bleeding the regions dry, Working Ukraine is led by one of Ukraine’s richest men and the son of the head of the Ukrainian Security Service. Fatherland is led by a woman, Yuliya Tymoshenko (who later formed her own bloc), and was initially little more than a vehicle for her United Energy Systems company, which previously functioned through Hromada, bizarrely misnamed after the Ukrainian intelligentsia clubs of the mid-nineteenth century. It is in the nature of virtual parties that particular groupings are often ephemeral. The attempt to unite all governing interests in the Popular Democratic Party in 1998 proved short-lived, as did the alliance of the Popular Democrats, Labour Party, regions and agrarian parties as ‘For a United Ukraine’ in 2002 (other oligarchic groups stood as the Democratic Union and the United Social Democrats) (Mostovaya 2000). The Donbas-based Party of Regions soon emerged as the most powerful component of the grouping after it was able to insist on the appointment of their own Viktor Yanukovich as prime minister in November 2002.

In one sense, even the existence of virtual parties is an improvement. They are at least channels for the representation of (sectoral, if not electoral) interests. In both the 1990–94 and 1994–98 parliaments Ukraine’s sectoral lobbies remained essentially non-party, but the semi-proportional system adopted in 1998 has at least encouraged them to organize as parties, or to work through or take over existing parties. It remains the case, however, that virtual parties are particularistic, and they do not *aggregate* social demands on government. Institutionalization and party longevity is also problematic. Virtual parties suffer from endemic splits when their main function is to champion the leaders’ economic interests rather than agree a common programme. Particular corporate interests simply rename themselves if their existing vehicle loses popularity. Oleksandr Volkov’s business interests, for example, have migrated from the Democratic Party in 1998 (attempting to freeride on the popular name of an established party, fatally subsumed in a disastrous alliance with other discredited business groups at the polls) to the pro-government Popular Democratic Party in its catch-all phase in late 1998, to Regional Revival in 1999, then the Democratic Union, and finally a flirtation with

Tymoshenko. Volkov also hedges his bets with influence in other parties such as 'Solidarity'.

Often 'real' and 'virtual' elements will coexist within the same party. A good example is the Popular Democratic Party, largely perceived at the 1998 elections to be a front party for government-linked interests. Their partial departure over the winter of 1998–99 allowed the party's ideological reformers to come to the fore. The Socialist Party in 1998–99 might also be placed in this category, during which time it had several major businessmen in its ranks, though not after November 1999, when 'administrative' pressure forced most to leave. A new set of sponsors was assembled for 2006, after the party entered the first post-Orange government. Definitive classifications are therefore not always possible. The agrarians could be considered a spoiler party, as they were originally founded with official support to challenge the Village Party. Because of their very success, however, many, even most, of the rural elite transferred their support, turning the agrarians into, in Ishiyama's terms, yet another communist-successor party (the Village Party won a mere 0.4 per cent in 2002, the agrarians were a key part of For a United Ukraine). The Progressive Socialists were originally 'encouraged' to emerge as a spoiler party, splitting from the Socialists in 1995–96. They then developed a life of their own in 1998, but seemed to wither on the vine with their original purpose apparently accomplished after the 1999 presidential election, only to be revived as a sideshow for the elections in 2002 (the 'Vitrenko Bloc' won 3.2 per cent), 2004 (Vitrenko won 1.5 per cent) and 2006 (2.9 per cent).

Inasmuch as parties evolve and change over time, this fourfold categorization is more a typology of elements of party strategy than of the parties themselves. Yet this taxonomy has important consequences for patterns of party competition. In one sense, party competition in Ukraine is also 'virtual', or at least important only at the margins of party overlap. In this sense there is no real national party system in Ukraine, only a series of (partially) interlocking regional subsystems. There may well be intense competition within each regional subsystem, but the sum total of local results tends to produce national vote shares which to date have been relatively stable (at least in the parliamentary elections of 1994 and 1998): a maximum of 20–25 per cent for the right (on a falling trend until 1999, recovering strongly in 2002), including about 3 per cent for far right parties such as KUN; a base figure of 40 per cent for the left (on a slight rising trend until 1999, after which the Socialists and Communists drifted apart, before a precipitous drop in the 2004 election when Viktor Yanukovych usurped most of the left's traditional themes); with the rest for the centre and independents (Craumer and Clem 1999; Wilson and Birch 1999; Kubicek 2000*b*). Competition has been most vigorous *within* party camps, as on the right between Rukh and KUN (which created the National Front for the 1998 elections), or between the Communists, Socialists, and Progressive Socialists, on the left.

That said, Ukraine has several *axes* of party competition. Herbert Kitschelt's classification of Ukraine as a 'patrimonial-communist' regime before 1991 helps

to explain the predominance and longevity of the 'regime divide' (Kitschelt et al. 1999: 39, 64–9). Ukraine's original anti-system party, Rukh, was still around more than a decade after 1991, despite serious splits in 1992 and 1999, long after the demise of equivalents such as Civic Forum in Czechoslovakia or Sajudis in Lithuania. Its perceived 'obsession' with continually raking the embers of the past is, however, a factor limiting its potential support.¹² Conversely, the Communists have benefited massively from nostalgia for the old regime, and in Kitschelt's terms again, the historical absence of 'an alternative vision and practice of modernization' to the Soviet Ukrainian experience (Kitschelt et al. 1999: 24). That said, the Socialist Party has increasingly distinguished itself from the Communists by distancing themselves from the latter's idealized vision of the *ancien régime*, whereas the Progressive Socialists have gone to the opposite extreme of mythologizing (only) the period of War Communism between 1917 and 1921.

The 'economic-distributive cleavage' is also increasingly important. Sharpening social divides help to explain the persistence, even the growth in the Communist (and general left) vote between 1994 and 1998, more than compensating for the shrinking support base predicted by the passing away of the party's elderly supporters. Ukraine's nascent middle class, on the other hand, has tended to support the more programmatic, and less obviously virtual, centre and centre-right parties, such as the Popular Democrats and Reforms and Order. Until 2004, the continuing viability of the 'patrimonial-communist' system and the current equilibrium of partial economic reform, however, helped explain the pervasiveness of rent-seeking social protectionists among the nominally 'centre' parties and the weakness of genuine liberal parties in Ukraine, as also did the small size of the nascent middle class.

As regards other axes of possible competition, younger and more 'cosmopolitan' voters favoured the Greens in the 1998 elections. The party's national vote was highly uniform, indicating the success of its TV campaign, but concentrated in urban centres. Too many new parties (plus the Greens again) competed for the favours of this group in 2002, with none winning the necessary 4 per cent. Viche was aimed at this group in 2006, but only won 1.7 per cent (mainly Russophones). The 'urban-rural' divide is also important, if lopsidedly. Rural voters, since 1992, have backed the Village Party, and since 1996 its agrarian (more pro-regime) rival. However, both parties represent the interests of rural oligarchs (collective farm chairmen and heads of agribusiness), rather than the rural population as a whole.

Centre-periphery, regional, and ethnic (ethno-linguistic) divides are also extremely important in Ukraine. They are also a key reason why it has been so difficult to establish truly national parties. Given the danger of centrifugal, federalist or separatist forces developing, several laws have specifically discouraged

¹² Authors' interview with Roman Zvarych, original head of the 1998 Rukh campaign, Steyning, Sussex, 19 February 2000.

the formation of explicitly regional parties (many were in the early phases of development—the Party of Economic Rebirth of Crimea, the Democratic Movement of the Donbas—before the law on political associations was passed in 1992). Many nominally ‘national’ parties have strong regional bases, maintaining or indeed financing sufficient numbers of ‘shadow’ branches elsewhere, such as Hromada, later the Labour Party (home base Dnipropetrovs’k), Razom, later the Party of Regions (the Donbas), and Soyuz (Crimea) in the 1998 elections. The Party of Economic Rebirth of Crimea dropped the ‘of Crimea’ in order to secure official registration in 1996. Regional and/or ethnic parties do exist (such as the Subcarpathian Republican Party), but often smaller groups have to sublimate their efforts in larger parties. For example, the Romanian population in Chernivtsi oblast backed the Party of Regional Revival in 1998. Both because of the law and the logic of nostalgia for overarching Russo-Ukrainian union, a new crop of parties has appeared since 1998 not with ‘minority’ Russian or Russophone labels but with names designed to evoke a lost era of East Slavic unity, such as the ‘Party of Rus’-Ukrainian Union’, the party of ‘One Kievan Rus’, and the party of ‘One Rus’.

As will be evident from the preceding discussion, Ukraine currently lacks the institutional structures which would guarantee effective bottom-up interest articulation and aggregation. Yet this does not prevent the language of interest articulation from being deployed. Interests are frequently projected onto sectors of the electorate by parties that claim to represent them, and in some cases parties are even successful at shaping people’s interests by offering them personal rewards for electoral loyalty. It is difficult to see how this situation will change until Ukraine develops a considerably denser and more active and participatory civil society.

Political participation

Despite turning out to vote in respectable numbers, the Ukrainian citizenry is not overly committed to political activity. Parliamentary elections can be expected to be a time of popular mobilization and a high point of political interest, but when asked shortly before the March 1998 elections whether they agreed with the statement that ‘Participation of the people is not necessary if decision-making is left in the hands of a few trusted, competent leaders’, only just under half of survey respondents (44.2 per cent) took issue with the statement, while over a third (34.5 per cent) agreed. There is thus a large minority of Ukrainians who are ideologically opposed to mass involvement in political life. Ideology aside, many Ukrainians’ views of political participation are undoubtedly affected by their lack of active interest in politics. Although Ukraine is undergoing a period of dramatic political upheaval, 50.5 per cent of survey respondents claimed they were not interested in politics, and only 9.6 per cent said they were ‘very interested’. These figures are more striking still when one considers that 20.9 per cent of respondents claim to be less interested in politics now than they were during the communist

period, and 37.4 per cent admit that there has been no change in their level of interest. Only 32.3 per cent have become more interested in politics under the competitive multiparty system. It appears that democratic politics has failed to capture the imagination of most Ukrainians. It is therefore not surprising that before 2004 only a handful have engaged in any form of political activity other than voting. Only 5.6 per cent of respondents claimed to have contacted an elected representative about an issue or a personal problem, and only 4.7 per cent admitted to having taken part in a strike, picket, march, or protest meeting within the past two years.

One of the reasons for this disillusionment with politics is undoubtedly the impression that the political situation has not been improved by the introduction of so-called democracy. Both representative bodies and the bureaucracy are perceived to be riddled with corruption and incompetence, despite a decade of party competition. When asked in 1998 to what extent the outgoing parliament had taken the views of the population into account, only 11.4 per cent of those surveyed said they thought the answer was 'a lot' or 'some' as against 24.7 per cent who answered 'not much' and a full 56.4 per cent who claimed the parliament had not taken the people's view into account 'at all'. When asked explicitly about corruption in parliament, only 1.1 per cent of respondents thought there was none, 5.5 per cent replied that 'most deputies are honest though some are corrupt', 23.8 per cent thought there was 'a lot' of corruption in parliament, 34.3 per cent claimed that 'most' deputies were corrupt, and 25.3 per cent said 'all' were. Similarly, when asked whether they thought they would be treated fairly by a government office, only 6.8 per cent gave an unconditional 'yes', while 41.5 per cent said 'no' and 37.8 per cent said something to the effect that they would only be treated fairly if they used connections or gave bribes (though this reply was not suggested to respondents).

It is difficult to argue that Ukrainian citizens are wrong about their political system—before 2004 at least. Lack of extensive political participation in post-Soviet Ukraine may well have been due to an entirely justified perception that democratic political activity would not yield the desired results under current institutional conditions. At the same time, mass political corruption can only persist so long as there is a lack of strong and active popular opposition. In confronting their political system before 2004, Ukrainians were faced with the fundamental Catch-22 of democratization: multiparty democracy does not work unless people believe in it, but so long as it does not work, people have little reason to believe in it. After 2004, there were hopes of creating a virtuous circle instead.

Political communication and education

Political parties in Ukraine are not in general extensively involved in political education. Many are constrained by the fact that the state media are heavily biased in favour of the executive powers and the 'parties of government'; they

are mostly also constrained by lack of activists and resources. Furthermore, the presidential system before 2006 focused responsibility for policy on an executive not directly or explicitly linked to any one party, leaving parties in a position where they have little responsibility for policy as such (and therefore little motive to explain individual policies to citizens) and much political mileage to be gained from criticizing government initiatives.

Political education takes place mainly at election time in the context of the electoral campaign. In carrying out political education, parties often employ rather devious means, disguising party political messages as objective information. Prior to elections many parties distribute free ‘newspapers’ containing a variety of useful information (television listings, etc) interspersed with partisan evaluations of the electoral alternatives. Upon inspection, it becomes obvious that the ‘news items’ in such publications are actually campaign publicity. Another common tactic is misinformation via rogue advertising designed to discredit the candidate or party nominally supported. For example, at the time of the 1999 presidential election campaign, fliers circulated on which Communist Party candidate Petro Symonenko was pictured dressed in a mixture of tribal African, native American, and Australian Aboriginal costume; the reverse of the flier contained the lyrics of a racist song. The message was evidently intended to be that this communist was a ‘barbarian’, though the writers declined to identify themselves. Other parties—especially those in the ‘national democratic’ camp—are more responsible, producing clearly labelled campaign material. Before 2004, however, the greatest perpetrator of dirty campaigning was undoubtedly the state itself, which limited media access for parties of the opposition and staged attention-catching news events in such a way as to inflict maximum damage on opposition parties at election time. This ‘Chancellor’s bonus’ is a common enough phenomenon in many states, but the Ukrainian authorities—especially since 1994—have been singled out by international observers as being particularly guilty in this regard.

The state has also committed serious sins of omission in the area of civic education. The electoral reforms of 1998 were especially poorly explained to the public, and the task was left to voluntary associations and parties. With three new electoral systems in use (one for parliamentary elections, one for regional elections, and one for municipal contests), the need was clearly urgent. Parties did not for the most part undertake this task, and when they did, their methods were not always commendable. In one television spot, purporting to explain the new mixed electoral system to voters, viewers were shown a copy of the ballot and told how it was to be filled in, but the example given was a vote in favour of the party that had made the time available. Clearly political education in Ukraine leaves much to be desired. When parties are mostly struggling to survive and win themselves a secure place in the party system, they may simply not have the resources or the motivation to engage in this type of work.

CONCLUSIONS

The two most notable characteristics of party politics in Ukraine are the high level of inter-electoral volatility and fluidity of the nascent party 'system', and the relatively low level of institutionalization that characterizes individual parties. Yet both these generalizations are subject to caveats, as there are considerable variations across the party spectrum. The question that interests the student of party systems is the extent to which these attributes are transitional features that will fade away as the party system 'settles down', as comparison with the early party systems of certain established democracies might lead us to expect. The discussion presented in this chapter suggests, on the contrary, that much of the flux evident in the fortunes and even the existence of given political parties may be due to conscious strategies of political and economic actors who view parties as 'disposable' commodities. This 'structural volatility' is likely to persist so long as rent-seeking (both the strictly economic and the leveraging of political office for pecuniary gain) coexists with electoral competition. Yet underneath the changing names and fortunes of Ukraine's parties, the basic outline of a party system is evident. Since the early days of electoral competition there has been a remarkably stable division among the electorate along the main left-right axis. The irony of Ukrainian politics lies in the fact that, although the main left and right parties are important, they are not decisive, for they merely frame the centre, which is where political battles are lost and won.

Competition among centrist elites in Ukraine is organized primarily around personal networks and power bases created by individual actors. Sometimes these coalesce into parties, but they are for the most part not born of parties. Parties are thus not the building blocks of Ukrainian politics the way they are in many states, and they play a relatively peripheral role in structuring political competition. Instead they are institutional channels that are used in a variety of ways for a variety of ends; for all politicians they are mechanisms through which to identify current allies, they are means of legitimizing the leadership role of political actors who have no state position, and they are labels to which images and ideas can be attached prior to an election in order to attract votes. For some political actors they are also podiums from which to propound their views; for others they are tools for trading economic for political power and using political power for personal economic gain; and for others still they appear to be little more than fashion accessories. In few cases are parties truly structures for articulating and aggregating the grass-roots preferences of their adherents as classical Western party theory would have it. Yet classical Western parties may well be the exception rather than the norm, and the functional diversity evident among Ukrainian parties finds parallels in numerous democratizing states—not least those represented elsewhere in this volume.

The political convulsion that took place in Ukraine from the end of 2004 onwards had obvious implications for its party system (for a full account see Wilson 2005). In the first instance, Viktor Yushchenko won the presidency in 2004 with the backing of the three main opposition parties that first emerged in 2002: his own 'Our Ukraine', Yuliya Tymoshenko's eponymous bloc and the Socialists, whose split from the Communists had progressively widened since 1999. The main force backing Yushchenko's opponent Viktor Yanukovych was the Party of Regions, which had built up a powerful machine in East Ukraine and in one region particularly, the Donbas. So strong, in fact, that the Communist vote was squeezed down to 5 per cent. Yanukovych was also backed by the other regime parties like the United Social Democrats.

Political parties were therefore more prominent than at previous presidential elections in 1991, 1994, and 1999. On the other hand, the regime backed a host of virtual candidates to try and blunt Yushchenko's challenge (Vitrenko won 1.5 per cent, fake nationalists were paid to damn him by unwanted association). Yushchenko's eventual victory after the Orange Revolution, however, promised to usher in a new era of more open politics, diminished corruption and civic engagement. On the other hand, at the height of the Revolution on 8 December 2004 Yushchenko agreed a package of constitutional amendments to be enacted on 1 January 2006, as the price of ensuring a fair final election and avoiding bloodshed. The package shifted power to parliament, and agreed that the next elections due in March 2006 would be fought using a national party list system for all deputies (rather than half, as in 1998 and 2002), with a barrier for representation one point lower, at 3 per cent rather than 4 per cent. The new 'imperative mandate' was designed to ensure the creation of a stable party-based 'majority' that would last for the parliament's extended life of five years. That majority would then pick the prime minister, though the president would still directly appoint leading 'force' ministers (defence, interior, security, and foreign affairs).

The election results were remarkably similar to those of 2004, with the Party of Regions dominating in the east, but with the 'Orange' camp, which had been briefly united in government from February to September 2005, now again split between Our Ukraine, the Tymoshenko bloc and Socialists ahead as a whole (see Table 3.3). Two smaller Orange parties, the Kostenko/Plyushch 'People's Party' bloc, which collected many of the remnants of Rukh, and Reforms and Order in alliance with the youth protest group Pora, won almost 3 per cent between them. Tymoshenko's block, however, leapfrogged over Our Ukraine, as the latter took more of the blame for arguments and disappointing performance in government in 2005–6. The new authorities refrained from large-scale abuse of 'administrative resources' and the media climate was much freer. Fake 'virtual' parties were still around (like Vitrenko), but were much less successful than in 1998 or 2002.

Optimists hoped that the changed political climate and a more parliamentary–presidential constitutional system would help stabilize the party system further. Pessimists noted the survival of rent-seeking interests in all of the main parties

and worried that the new system might actually give too much power to party leaders.

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Poland

Party System by Default

Krzysztof Jasiewicz

INTRODUCTION

Ever since the introduction of democracy in 1989 the party scene in Poland has confused its observers, domestic ones as much as foreign. This confusion is reflected even in the very titles of scholarly publications on the subject. When Wesołowski (2000), the dean of Polish political sociologists, published a collection of essays on parties, he chose as the title *Parties: Never Ending Troubles*. Doing so, he followed the lead of authors of books and articles such as *Proto-parties and Proto-system?* (Nalewajko 1997), *Party Non-system: Nascent Political Parties, Elites, and Electorate* (Szklarski 1995), or *Party System: A Construction Site* (Grabowska 1991). Interestingly, the last-cited author eight years later entitled another of her articles 'Political Parties: Unwanted but Successful Children of Polish Transformation' (in Wiatr 1999). Aleks Szczerbiak, the author of perhaps the most comprehensive study of Polish parties available in English, included a tentative question mark in the title of his book: *Poles Together? The Emergence and Development of Political Parties in Postcommunist Poland* (2001a). Yet another prominent analyst of (and participant in) Polish politics, Aleksander Smolar, writing almost a decade after the democratic breakthrough for a renowned international journal (Smolar 1998), cautiously titled his article 'Poland's Emerging Party System'. This caution may be quite justified, because, as has been observed by Peter Mair, 'the very notion of a newly emerging party system may be a contradiction in terms, in that to speak of a system of parties is to ascribe some degree of stability and predictability to the interactions between the parties concerned' (1997: 175). It is fair to say that interactions within the Polish party scene are anything but stable or predictable.

Among the more obvious reasons for this confusion is the proliferation of parties (370 parties officially registered between August 1990 and September 1997; after the new law raised the registration thresholds in 1997, 246 parties registered or re-registered by March 2006), and their constant mergers and

secessions. Mystifying is also their nomenclature: in accord with a tradition that dates back to pre-communist times, only a few include in their official name the word 'party' (*partia* or *stronnictwo* in Polish), while most prefer instead concepts such as union (*unia* or *zjednoczenie*), alliance (*porozumienie* or *sojusz*), or movement (*ruch*). In addition, there is often no compatibility between the names of parliamentary factions and grass-roots party organizations. Most confusing of all are the subtleties of parties' ideological and policy profiles. Their programmatic statements tend to be general and vague; seemingly similar policies may be advocated by parties of different self-identifications and traditions, and the diversity of ideological standpoints within one party may be as great as among several parties. The traditional left-right dimension, while commonly used in political discourse, obscures rather than highlights parties' positions in ideological space. For instance, parties that identify themselves as rightist very often opt in favour of socio-economic policies that are traditionally associated with the socialist or social-democratic left (expansion of welfare programmes, special protection of labour, and opposition to privatization). Classification of parties according to their origins has also only limited utility as, for instance, the many parties stemming from the Solidarity movement represent practically all colours of the political spectrum. Still, this classification remains relevant for the understanding of contemporary Polish politics. It is used in this chapter, in addition to a four-fold ideological typology, presented below. It should be remembered, however, that historical or ideological labels only approximate parties' actual positions, and do not constitute any sufficient basis for predictions of electoral alliances and coalitions.

Yet, apparently, there is method in this madness. Despite the alphabet soup of political parties and ever-changing governments and coalitions, there are remarkable elements of stability and continuity in Polish politics. First, all governments since 1989, regardless of their party composition, have conducted largely similar domestic and foreign policies, aimed at the development of a market economy and pluralist democracy as well as Poland's integration into European and Atlantic structures. Second, as will be demonstrated below, voters seem less confused ideologically than political elites, as they tend to support parties from within the same political field in successive elections, regardless of their current names and mutual alliances or animosities. Hence, the obvious choice of a focus for this chapter is the issue of functionality of parties and the party system: have the unquestionable achievements of Poland in her democratic transition been generated within a political process in which parties played a significant and functional role, or has Poland succeeded *despite* her complex and confusing party scene?

No sooner were the first free elections conducted in Poland and elsewhere in East Central Europe than scholars began to speculate about the prospects for development of pluralist democracy and competitive party systems across the region. With hindsight, two articles by Kitschelt (1992) and Evans and Whitefield (1993) stand out among these early analyses. These authors employed disciplined

theorizing informed by the literature on both Western and Eastern Europe, as opposed to the speculative reflections that were common in the field at that time. Furthermore, both articles have been widely read and cited by scholars within the region itself and have become the inspiration for hypotheses that have been tested empirically (e.g. Grabowska and Szawiel 1993 and 2000; Nalewajko 1997; Kitschelt et al. 1999; Mateju, Rehakova, and Evans 1999). In his article, Kitschelt suggests that the party competition space in the early stages of transition to market economy is likely to be defined by two cross-cutting cleavages, between spontaneous market allocation of resources versus political redistribution and between libertarian/cosmopolitan versus authoritarian/particularist political values. He hypothesizes further that the main axis of party competition in Eastern Europe will run, in a fashion diagonal to the lines reflecting these cleavages, from the combination of pro-market and libertarian preferences to a position blending political redistribution with authoritarianism. With the progress of transition, this axis should rotate by 90°, with the ends of the political continuum defined, as in Western Europe, by a libertarian and distributive left and an authoritarian and pro-market right. In subsequent work (Kitschelt 1995; Kitschelt et al. 1999), Kitschelt further developed and refined his analytical scheme, but its core elements remained in place.

Evans and Whitefield, accepting the central premises of Kitschelt's analysis, have pointed out that the actual patterns of party competition may be country-specific, involving at least three dimensions: socio-economic, ethnic (in multi-ethnic states), and valence (like the issue of nation-building in breakaway states). For Poland, they predicted that socio-economic cleavages would become the main basis for party competition, in the absence of sizeable ethnic minorities or the breakaway factor, with specific issue dimensions defined by redistributive, authoritarian, anti-Western attitudes vying with pro-market, liberal, and cosmopolitan ones. The authors foresaw Poland as a relatively orderly polity, with political actors (parties) competing to represent relatively well-defined group interests. They seemed undeterred on the one hand by the fact that the original cleavage dominating the 1989 election was of a purely ideological nature (rejection of communism), and on the other by the proliferation of parties and dimensions of competition so conspicuous in the 1991 general election.

Analysts within the region itself were more cautious than Evans and Whitefield at the time, but shared with them and with Kitschelt the emphasis on the multi-dimensional character of party competition and/or voter identification. The virtual impossibility of distributing Polish parties and their constituencies along a single continuum, and in particular the irrelevance of the left-right dimension, has been pointed out by several authors (see, among others, Grabowska 1991; Gebethner 1992; Jasiewicz 1993; Tworzecki 1996; Rozumiłowicz 1999; Wesołowski 2000; Wiatr 2000; Ziółkowski 2001). All these approaches tend to overlap with one another and, more remarkably, seem congruent not only with the Kitschelt and Evans/Whitefield schemes, but also with the classical outline of political

cleavages in Western Europe presented by Stein Rokkan and Seymour Martin Lipset more than thirty years ago (1967), or the four-dimensional framework introduced by Giovanni Sartori (1976: 336) for the purposes of analysis of party systems in advanced pluralist democracies.

Despite the many differences among them, and regardless of whether their focus was on party competition or voter identification, all the cited authors agree on the salience of two cleavages. The first, of a socio-economic nature, represents the discord between support for neoliberal free-market/free enterprise policies and support for state intervention in the economy and welfare state-type social policies. The other, labelled in various ways by different authors, reflects a conflict of an ideological or even axiological nature. On the most general level, it can be understood as a choice between universalistic and particularistic visions of social and political order. In terms of specific attitudes it manifests itself chiefly as a conflict between confessional and secular approaches to politics and policies, and is closely related to contrasting assessments of Poland's communist past and opposing stands on the issue of decommunization. Unlike Western Europe, in the language of Polish politics this ideological cleavage, not the socio-economic one, is defined as the left-right dimension.

The salience of these two cleavages, as well as their cross-cutting configuration in the political spectrum, has been well documented in empirical studies (Markowski and Tóka 1993; Żukowski 1994; Jasiewicz 1995, 1998; Kitschelt et al. 1999). The examination of this orthogonal pattern allows us to identify four major political fields present in Poland today:

1. The combination of relatively strong support of secularism/universalism and a free-market/free enterprise orientation may be described as the *liberal-democratic* field. Over the past decades, among parties active in this field have been, at various times, Democratic Union (*Unia Demokratyczna*, or UD), Liberal-Democratic Congress (*Kongres Liberalno-Demokratyczny*, or KLD), Freedom Union (*Unia Wolności*, or UW), and Civic Platform (*Platforma Obywatelska*, or PO), all stemming from the Solidarity movement.
2. The combination of pro-market attitudes and high religiosity (with the emphasis on Christian values and economic nationalism) brings about the *conservative* field (usually in a Christian-democratic version). This field has been notoriously fragmented, with only a temporarily successful attempt at unification under Electoral Action Solidarity (*Akcja Wyborcza Solidarność*, or AWS) umbrella during the 1996–2000 period. In the *Sejm* elected in 2005, as well as in its 2001–5 predecessor, it is represented by the Law and Justice (*Prawo i Sprawiedliwość*, or PiS) and the League of Polish Families (*Liga Polskich Rodzin*, or LPR), whose success at the polls and subsequent cooperation indicate potential for reintegration of this field.
3. Support for state interventionism combined with religiosity/particularism gives the *populist* field. Polish Peasant Party (*Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe*, or PSL), the successor to a Communist ally before 1989, dominated this field in the

1990s, but in the 2001 and 2005 elections was outpolled by the more radical Self-Defence (*Samoobrona*).

4. State interventionism combined with secularism may be identified as the *socialist* field. In this field, the post-Communist Democratic Left Alliance (*Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej*, or SLD) loomed large, until its spectacular demise in 2003–4. Among other actors in this field are the Labour Union (*Unia Pracy*, or UP), an organization with mixed, Solidarity and reform Communist roots, and, since 2004, Polish Social Democracy (*Socjaldemokracja Polska*, or SdPI).

While it is possible to associate each of the major parties with one of the four such defined political fields, it should be remembered that positions of particular parties are usually strongly articulated in relation to only one of these cleavages, and more ambiguous in relation to the other. For instance, the constituency of the SLD is defined much more by its secularism than by its position on economic issues, while the supporters of Self-Defence articulate above all their strong desire for state intervention to a point that makes the issue of religiosity irrelevant for the definition of their identity; their particularism manifests itself in a strong anti-EU stand.

The development of the four political fields has been shaped by—and simultaneously contributed to—a specific legal framework. The first Law on Political Parties was adopted in 1990 (Ustawa z 28 lipca 1990 o partiach politycznych (1990) *Dziennik Ustaw* no. 54). It established a register of political parties at the Warsaw Voivodship (Provincial) Court, and allowed for automatic registration of any party that presented a list of fifteen founding members. Many parties registered under these rules have never initiated any meaningful activities; many remained in the register after a formal dissolution or a merger with another organization. The law was criticized for setting the registration threshold too low and was eventually changed in 1997.

The new Law on Political Parties (Ustawa z 27 czerwca 1997 o partiach politycznych (2001) *Dziennik Ustaw* no. 79) raised the registration threshold to 1,000 founding members and stipulated re-registration of all parties. By March 2006 the register contained the names of 246 parties, of which 91 were legally active at that time. The new law is also more specific than the old one in relation to party finances, allowing for public financing of all parties that gathered at least 3 per cent of the popular vote in the most recent *Sejm* election. Significant amendments to this section of the law were adopted in 2001; they established the state budget as the main source of financing of political parties. Each party that in a given election won more than 3 per cent of votes nationwide, or was a member of coalition that won more than 6 per cent of votes, is entitled to receive a state subvention until the following election. The amount of subvention reflects the number of votes cast for a given party, albeit in a steeply regressive manner. The amendments specifically forbid such sources of party financing as contributions

from anonymous donors or businesses in which a party is a principal investor, and specified the permitted forms of investment.

In addition to specific laws on political parties and related constitutional changes, a critical role in the definition and shaping of the four major political fields of Polish politics and of the party system itself has been played by electoral regulations and by the elections themselves, presidential (in 1990, 1995, 2000, and 2005) and parliamentary (in 1989, 1991, 1993, 1997, 2001, and 2005) as well as local.

The June 1989 elections in Poland played a pivotal role in the collapse of communist regimes across Central and Eastern Europe. In these elections, held on 4 and 18 June 1989, Solidarity won all but one of the seats it contested, that is, 161 (out of the total of 460 seats) in the *Sejm* and 99 (out of 100) in the Senate. The (Communist) Polish United Workers' Party (*Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza*, or PZPR) acquired its allocated seats in the *Sejm*, but none in the Senate (for an analysis see Olson 1993). The outcome reflected the high level of political polarization in Poland throughout the 1980s. The election was, by and large, a plebiscite for or against communist rule. It should be noted, however, that turnout was relatively low at 62 per cent, and a significant number of voters (almost half of those participating) neither rejected the old regime completely nor supported the opposition unequivocally, using their multiple votes in favour of both Solidarity and Communist or pro-Communist candidates. Still, in the opinion of some experts (e.g. Grabowska and Szawiel 2001), this election left a permanent legacy for the developing political spectrum and party system by generating two 'tracks', post-Communist and post-Solidarity, within which distinctive patterns of political identity, loyalty and alignment have developed. In that sense, the 1989 election was the true founding election of democratic Poland.

The 1989 electoral law and the simultaneous changes in the constitution did not explicitly introduce a multiparty pluralist democracy. Their design, intentionally or not, seemed rather conducive to the ossification of the existing system of communist hegemony, with the important addition of a new, Solidarity-generated actor. Yet the scale of Solidarity's electoral victory rendered such designs inadequate. Nonetheless, Solidarity itself, despite or perhaps because of its sweeping victory at the polls, did not transform into a political party.

The next step in the development of the party system came at the time of the November 1990 presidential election. The major contenders in the race rallied behind them constituencies from the already emerging major political fields: Christian-democratic/conservative (Lech Wałęsa, the eventual winner), liberal-democratic (Tadeusz Mazowiecki), socialist (Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz), and nationalist/populist (Stanisław Tymiński). The further development of these fields occurred during the competition of parties and quasi-party groups seeking representation in the *Sejm*, the major chamber of Poland's legislature in the October 1991 general election. This competition took place in a legal environment conducive to proliferation of parties, introduced by the 1990 law. Consequently,

the political dichotomy of the 1989 election (Solidarity vs. the old regime) was replaced in 1991 by a highly fragmented polity, with more than 100 parties and quasi-parties contesting both the Senate and the *Sejm* elections. The elections resulted in a highly fragmented parliament, with the strongest party in the *Sejm* controlling a mere 13.5 per cent of the seats and no majority coalition of fewer than five parties possible. The level of political fragmentation differed, however, from one political field to another, with the socialist field being the most, and the conservative the least consolidated (see Table 4.1).

Among bills approved by this *Sejm* were amendments to the electoral law, designed to limit political fragmentation. It gave the expected results. In the September 1993 general election the stronger parties were awarded additional seats, while the weakest were altogether eliminated from the *Sejm*. While the fragmentation of the parliament was overcome, it was achieved at the expense of serious distortions of proportionality. The SLD/PSL coalition that emerged after the election received together only 36 per cent of the votes, but commanded a majority of 66 per cent of the seats. Thus one dysfunction of the democratic order, unstable governments generated by a fragmented parliament, was replaced in 1993 by another: a stable government without sufficient legitimacy (see Table 4.2 for a listing of successive administrations since 1989).

Two years later, the major contenders in the November 1995 presidential race also mobilized support from within the respective four political fields: socialist (Aleksander Kwaśniewski), Christian-democratic (Wałęsa), liberal-democratic (Jacek Kuron), and populist (Waldemar Pawlak). As the campaign progressed, a high level of re-polarization of the polity along ideological lines emerged, even before the first round of voting had taken place. Eventually, in the run-off, Kwaśniewski, a former Communist apparatchik, narrowly defeated Wałęsa, the legend of Solidarity.

In the following election in September 1997 only five parties and coalitions cleared the threshold, but this time they represented 87.8 per cent of all valid votes. More importantly, the political equilibrium returned to the *Sejm*, since several parties of the fragmented right united this time under the Electoral Action Solidarity (AWS) umbrella and won a plurality of the vote. However, the competition of the left and the right led to weakened support for the centrist parties, and to the further re-polarization of the polity along ideological lines.

Another major political realignment began with the October 2000 presidential election. The incumbent president, Aleksander Kwaśniewski, won his bid for re-election by a very comfortable margin, contributing to the further consolidation of the socialist political field. The relatively strong showing by the runner-up, Andrzej Olechowski, the former minister in a couple of post-1989 governments, who ran as an independent and a self-described centrist, indicated the strength of moderate, middle-of-the-road attitudes among the electorate. Marian Krzaklewski, the candidate who attempted to rally behind him all the

TABLE 4.1. *Sejm electoral results, 1991–2005*

Political field	1991			1993			1997			2001			2005		
	Party	Votes (%)	Seats	Party	Votes (%)	Seats	Party	Votes (%)	Seats	Party	Votes (%)	Seats	Party	Votes (%)	Seats
Christian-Democratic/ Conservative	KPN	7.5	46	KPN	5.8	22	AWS	33.8	201	AWSP	5.6	0	PiS	33.7	155
	PZZ	0.2	4	BBWR	5.4	16	ROP	5.6	6	PiS	9.5	44	LPR	8.0	34
	WAK	8.7	49	Ojcz.	6.4	0				LPR	7.9	38			
	Sol.	5.1	27	Sol.	4.9	0									
	PC	8.7	44	PC	4.4	0									
	PL	5.5	28	PL	2.4	0									
	ChD	2.4	5	KdR	2.4	0									
	PChD	1.1	4												
KKP	0.2	1													
Socialist	SLD	12.0	60	SLD	20.4	171	SLD	27.1	164	SLD/UP	41.0	216	SLD	11.3	55
	SP	2.1	4	UP	7.3	41	UP	4.7	0						
	RDS	0.5	1												
	WPiP	0.2	1												
Liberal-Democratic	UD	12.3	62	UD	10.6	74	UW	13.4	60	UW	3.1	0	PO	24.1	133
	KLD	7.5	37	KLD	4.0	0				PO	12.7	65			
Populist	PSL	8.7	48	PSL	15.4	132	PSL	7.3	27	PSL	9.0	42	PSL	7.0	25
										S-O	10.2	53	S-O	11.4	56
National Minorities	GM	1.2	7	GM	(0.7)	4	GM	(0.4)	2	GM	(0.4)	2	GM	(0.3)	2

Abbreviations: AWS—Electoral Action ‘Solidarity’; SLD—Democratic Left Alliance; UW—Freedom Union; PSL—Polish Peasant Party; ROP—Movement for the Reconstruction of Poland; UP—Labour Union; KPN—Confederation for an Independent Poland; BBWR—Non-Party Bloc in Support of Reforms; Ojcz.—coalition ‘Fatherland’ (led by the ZChN—Christian National Union); Sol.—‘Solidarity’; PC—Centre Alliance; PL—Agrarian Alliance; UD—Democratic Union; KLD—Liberal Democratic Congress; KdR—Coalition for the Republic; PZZ—Polish Western Union; WAK—Catholic Electoral Action (led by the ZChN); ChD—Christian Democracy; PChD—Party of Christian Democrats; KKP—Cracovian Coalition in Solidarity with the president; SP—Solidarity of Labour; RDS—Social-Democratic Movement; WPiP—For Wielkopolska and Poland; AWSP—Electoral Action Solidarity of the Right; PO—Civic Platform; PiS—‘Law and Justice’; SLD/UP—coalition of the SLD and the UP; S-O—Self-Defence; LPR—League of Polish Families, GM—German Minority.

TABLE 4.2. *Party composition of Polish governments, 1989–2006*

Prime minister	Tenure	Party composition on the day of investiture (<i>in parentheses party composition on the last day of tenure, if different</i>):
Tadeusz Mazowiecki (Solidarity/UD)	12 September 1989– 14 December 1990	Solidarity 12 (0) PZPR 4 (0) PSL 4 (3) SD 3 (3) independents 1 (10) UD 0 (6) PSL 'S' 0 (2)
Jan Krzysztof Bielecki (KLD)	12 January 1991– 5 December 1991	KLD 4 PC 2 ZChN 1 UD 1 SD 1 independents 11
Jan Olszewski (PC)	23 December 1991– 5 June 1992	PC 4 ZChN 3 PL 2 independents 8
Hanna Suchocka (UD)	10 July 1992– 20 September 1993	UD 5 (5) ZChN 5 (5) KLD 4 (0) PL 4 (4) PChD 1 (0) SLCh 1 (0) PPG 1 (0) independents 4 PPL 0 (5) KP 0 (2)
Waldemar Pawlak (PSL)	26 October 1993– 28 February 1995	SLD 6 (5) PSL 8 (8) independents 6 (7)
Józef Oleksy (SLD)	6 March 1995– 26 January 1996	SLD 8 (8) PSL 6 (7) independents 7 (6)
Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz (SLD)	7 February 1996– 17 October 1997	SLD 7 (6) PSL 7 (7) independents 7 (6)
Jerzy Buzek (AWS)	31 October 1997– 19 October 2001	AWS 17 (15) UW 5 (0) independents 1 (4)
Leszek Miller (SLD)	20 October 2001– 2 May 2004	SLD 10 (11) UP 1 (1) PSL 2 (0) independents 2 (5)

(Cont.)

TABLE 4.2. (Continued)

Prime minister	Tenure	Party composition on the day of investiture (<i>in parentheses party composition on the last day of tenure, if different</i>):
Marek Belka	2 May 2004– 31 October 2005	SLD 7 (5) UP 1 (1) SdPI 0 (1) independents 10 (10)
Kazimierz Marcinkiewicz (PiS)	10 November 2005– 14 July 2006	PiS 11 (11) S-O 0 (2) LPR 0 (2) independents 7 (5)
Jarosław Kaczyński (PiS)	14 July 2006– (current in August 2006)	PiS 12 S-O 2 LPR 2 independents 6

Abbreviations: AWS—Electoral Action ‘Solidarity’; SLD—Democratic Left Alliance; UW—Freedom Union; PSL—Polish Peasant Party; PC—Centre Alliance; PL—Agrarian Alliance; UD—Democratic Union; KLD—Liberal Democratic Congress; PChD—Party of Christian Democrats; PZPR—Polish United Workers’ Party; SD—Democratic Party; PSL ‘S’—Polish Peasant Party ‘Solidarity’; ZChN-Christian-National Union; PPG—Polish Economic Programme; PPL—Polish Liberal Programme; SLCh—Peasant Christian Party; SdPI—Polish Social Democracy; S-O—Self-Defence; LPR—League of Polish Families.

post-Solidarity forces, suffered a humiliating defeat, which led to the re-fragmentation of the conservative field. This realignment continued through the next general election, in September 2001, which resulted in a landslide victory for the left-wing SLD/UP coalition, while a number of new actors entered parliament in the three remaining fields: PO (liberal-democratic), Self-Defence (populist), as well as PiS and LPR (Christian-democratic). The UW and the rump AWS failed to clear the threshold.

On 1 May 2004 Poland joined the European Union. The issue of Poland’s place in the EU is certain to play a most significant role in Polish politics in years to come. In the elections to the European Parliament on 13 June 2004, the PO emerged as a clear winner with nearly a quarter (24.1 per cent) of the vote, followed by the LPR (15.9 per cent), PiS (12.7 per cent), Self-Defence (10.8 per cent), the SLD/UP coalition (9.4 per cent), UW (7.3 per cent), PSL (6.3 per cent), and the new Polish Social Democracy (5.3 per cent). The outcome of this election indicated, in addition to the rapid decline in popularity of the ruling SLD/UP coalition, the growth of the moderate, strongly pro-EU centre (liberal-democratic PO and UW and social-democratic SdPI), but also the consolidation of the Eurosceptic Catholic conservatives (LPR) and the radical populists (Self-Defence).

The 2005 parliamentary and presidential elections resulted in a major realignment of the political scene. On the one hand, the parliamentary election (25 September) returned to the *Sejm* the same six parties that had won any seats in 2001. This perfect continuity contrasts dramatically with the high level of party turnover in all previous elections and seems to indicate a growing stability of the party system. On the other hand, voter volatility remained very high (see section below), as the distribution of votes and seats has been this time very different than in 2001: the PiS won 27.0 per cent of votes and 155 seats, PO 24.1 per cent of votes (133 seats), Self-Defence 11.4 per cent (56), SLD 11.3 per cent (55), LPR 8.0 per cent (34), and PSL 7.0 per cent (25); two seats went to the German Minority. The presidential vote, held on October 9, generated similar results, with the leaders of the PO (Donald Tusk, 36.3 per cent) and the PiS (Lech Kaczyński, 33.1 per cent) dominating the field; after another two weeks of intense campaigning Kaczyński (54.0 per cent) defeated Tusk (46.0 per cent) in the run-off on 23 October. Against expectations of the public, the PiS and PO did not form a ruling coalition after the election; a PiS minority government was in charge until a minimal majority coalition of the PiS, Self-Defence, and LPR emerged in May 2006, with Euroscepticism and populist approach to social policies as its major unifying factors.

On the most obvious level of political analysis, the electoral pendulum in Poland has been swinging back and forth from the left to the right. Yet for party system development another swinging motion, from polarization to fragmentation, was more important. While political fragmentation has often been presented as the major ailment of Polish politics, it should be noted that reducing fragmentation (through the electoral law engineering analysed above) was usually achieved at the cost of serious distortions of proportionality. The value for the index of deviation from proportionality, calculated according to the formula provided by Taagepera and Shugart (1989), was as follows for democratic elections to the *Sejm*: 1991—9.5 per cent; 1993—37.5 per cent; 1997—18.5 per cent; 2001—9.6 per cent; 2005—13.1 per cent. Deviation from proportionality becomes even starker if the value of the index is divided by the number of parties contesting elections in a given year (only those parties contesting elections in more than one district are included: 1991—65; 1993—24; 1997—13; 2001—10; 2005—18). This average deviation from proportionality per party was 0.15 per cent in 1991, 1.56 per cent in 1993, 1.42 per cent in 1997, 0.96 per cent in 2001 and 0.73 per cent in 2005.

These calculations take into account parties that did not win any seats; the values would be correspondingly higher if the calculations were limited only to parties that won at least a single seat. For comparisons at that level we can use another measure, the effective number of parties in legislature. This measure has also been borrowed from Taagepera and Shugart (1989: ch. 8; see also Laakso and Taagepera 1979; Taagepera 1999), who define it as the inverse of the Herfindahl-Hirschman concentration index. The effective number of legislative parties was

10.7 in 1991, from which level it dropped to 3.9 in 1993 and 2.9, before rising a little to 4.0 in 2001 and 3.5 in 2005. While the very high level of political fragmentation in the early 1990s is reflected in the large number of effective parties in the *Sejm* elected in 1991, the realignments of both the 2000–1 and 2004–5 periods did not bring about any significant change in the value of the index. This is due in part to the domination of the SLD/UP coalition in the 2001 election, yet the values of both indices above all reflect the self-corrective qualities of the party system: from excessive fragmentation in 1991 to high distortions of proportionality in 1993, to stabilization at moderate levels since 1997. Radosław Markowski and Mikołaj Cześniak (2002), who use somehow different methodology to measure both deviation from proportionality and the effective number of parties, arrive at the same conclusions.

It should be added that since 1991 the political composition of the Senate has—with only minor deviations—paralleled the party composition of the *Sejm*. Interestingly, the Senate and the *Sejm* elections are conducted according to two very different sets of rules. Since 1989, the multi-member (until 2001 usually two, since 2001 two to four) voting districts in the Senate elections have been based on geography (not population), with senators elected by a candidate-centred bloc vote. In 1989, an absolute majority was needed to win a seat (with a run-off two weeks after the first round); however, for the subsequent Senate elections the run-off round was abolished and a plurality rather than an overall majority became sufficient for victory.

THE POPULAR LEGITIMACY OF POLISH POLITICAL PARTIES

Anti-party sentiment

The Polish public could hardly be more cynical about political parties. Opinion polls, certainly, show consistently low levels of generalized trust in parties. In their comprehensive study, Mirosława Grabowska and Tadeusz Szawiel (2001: 111) present the results of a nationwide survey conducted in 1995, in which:

- 88 per cent of respondents blame parties for causing conflicts and confusion in the state;
- 79 per cent see in parties just cliques of power-hungry politicians;
- 74 per cent believe that those who join parties care only about their own ambitions;
- 72 per cent agree that, in fact, nobody knows what parties really want;
- and only 28 per cent give parties any credit for trying to solve the problems of ordinary people.

In the New Democracies Barometer surveys conducted in the early 1990s, Polish respondents expressed less trust in political parties than in any other

public institution or actor (courts, police, public officials, government, media/TV, parliament, and churches), in which, however, they did not differ significantly from respondents from other post-communist democracies (Rose, Mishler, and Haerpfer 1998). The situation had not changed by the early 2000s, a decade after the democratic breakthrough. In a public opinion poll conducted in Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary in November 2000 (*CBOS* 1/2001), only 11 per cent of Polish respondents expressed trust in political parties, while 44 per cent expressed no trust at all and the remaining 45 per cent took an ambiguous position or offered no response. The national government fared little better (17 per cent trust, 42 per cent distrust), and there were similar results in respect of both houses of the national legislature (institutions that link the party system and the state), with 20 per cent trusting but 33 per cent mistrusting the *Sejm*, and 20 per cent trusting but 32 per cent mistrusting the Senate. There are also other institutions that suffer a confidence deficit: the trade unions (in Poland closely linked to political parties), local government, and the courts of law. By contrast, a positive balance of trust was found in the case of the president (56 per cent trust, 16 per cent mistrust), the churches (47 and 24 per cent), the armed forces (50 and 16 per cent), police (35 and 29 per cent), banks (42 and 20 per cent), and public television (51 and 15 per cent respectively). Still, it should be noted that trust in parties in Poland is somewhat higher than in Hungary (7 per cent trust, 52 per cent mistrust) or the Czech Republic (7 and 53 per cent, respectively).

Yet, even with these low levels of confidence and the far-reaching cynicism of the public, parties seem to be accepted as the means of aggregation and articulation of interests. In the above-cited work, Grabowska and Szawiel present also the following data from their survey:

- 93 per cent of respondents perceive parties as organizations competing for power in the state;
- 90 per cent see parties as institutions generating lists of candidates for elections to the legislature;
- 88 per cent appreciate the role parties play in the recruitment and selection of candidates for leadership positions in the state; and
- 64 per cent say that parties collect and aggregate the needs and wants of voters.

When presented with a hypothetical situation in which all political parties were obliged, for whatever reason, to cease their activity, only 18 per cent of respondents agreed this development would have beneficial effects for the country, while 43 per cent said it would be harmful (16 per cent were ambiguous, and 23 per cent had no opinion). Similar are conclusions from the 1997 Polish General Election Survey (PGSW 1997), where only 15 per cent of respondents agreed that parties cared what ordinary people thought, but as many as 60 per cent believed parties were necessary for the operation of the political system.

TABLE 4.3. *Electoral turnout in Poland, 1989–2005*

	1989	1990	1991	1993	1995	1997	2000	2001	2005
Turnout (in %)									
Parliamentary	62.1		43.2	52.1		47.9		46.3	40.6
Presidential (1st round)		60.6			64.7		61.1		49.7
Presidential (run-off)		53.4			68.2		NA		51.0

This perception of parties as a ‘necessary evil’ may stem in part from the lack of any well-articulated alternative. The authors of surveys and polls do not present their respondents with such alternatives, be it a consociational democracy or some corporatist arrangement, as such alternatives are not a part of the discourse at the political elite level (for an analysis, see the section on party functionality below). The only alternatives offered (e.g. in the NDB studies or the PGSW post-election surveys) are various non-democratic regimes, and these are, by and large, rejected. The public seems to long for a simplification of the party system, but not to the point of the return to a one-party monopoly: in a CBOS poll (*CBOS 3/2001*) 44 per cent of respondents expressed a preference for a two-party system, 22 per cent for a multiparty system, and only 12 per cent for a single-party one (1 per cent wanted something different from any of these, and 21 per cent had no opinion).

Electoral turnout

Parties may be the only political game in town, but the game itself is not very popular. Turnouts in elections have been consistently low, and significantly lower in parliamentary elections (where the parties compete) than in presidential ones (where the focus of competition shifts towards personalities), as Table 4.3 reveals.

Also in local elections, in which party-list PR has been used since 1990 in communities with more than 40,000 inhabitants (and, since 1998, for elections to representative bodies at the district and provincial levels), turnouts have been consistently low, in a range between 40 and 50 per cent for most communities. In the 2004 European Parliament election turnout was a mere 20.9 per cent. It should be noted, however, that in Poland, unlike all other post-communist countries, the turnout in the original, ‘founding’ election in June 1989 (which could be used as a benchmark for tracking levels of political participation) was also low, at 62.1 per cent. A full explanation of this phenomenon lies outside the scope of this chapter; suffice it to say that in Poland the first free and fair elections (and not quite at that) came after an almost decade-long period of stalemate between the communist regime and Solidarity, and hence lacked the climactic features of the first democratic elections in Czechoslovakia or Hungary. The enthusiasm of the ‘first’ Solidarity period

TABLE 4.4. *Electoral volatility in Poland, 1993–2005*

	1993	1997	2001	2005
Pedersen index	30.9	17.8	44.8	35.5
Bartolini–Mair indices				
Four fields	17.4	11.9	19.9	42.6
Two tracks	17.4	6.6	17.5	30.5

(1980–1) could not last throughout the 1980s, and, although it did re-emerge in 1989, it failed to reach the same levels among an exhausted and disillusioned population.

Polish non-voters tend to exhibit the same socio-demographic characteristics as non-voters in established democracies: they are less educated and poorer than those who vote regularly; and women are less likely to vote regularly than men. Yet demographic and socio-economic factors are rather weak predictors of habitual non-voting, with one significant exception. In a multivariate analysis of political participation presented by Grabowska and Szawiel (2001: 181), age turned out to be the best predictor of participation in elections: the older the person, the more likely he or she is to vote regularly. The authors refrain from interpreting this phenomenon; Polish political analysts usually point to factors such as the habit of participation in political rituals developed in people who crossed the voting-age threshold in communist times, the greater amount of spare time available to the older people (who often have retired from the workforce), and the general cynicism of the younger generation.

Voter volatility

Those who do vote often remain confused. The Pedersen index of electoral volatility has been consistently (although not excessively) higher than the 1948–77 average for West European party systems (Pedersen 1979: 9). With the 1991 general election as the starting point (since the 1989 election was only partially free and there was no inter-party competition for the seats in the *Sejm*), the Pedersen index¹ assumes the values reported in Table 4.4.

The values of the index are obviously influenced by the high level of political fragmentation at the time of the 1991 election and the scale of the political realignments that took place in 2000–1 and 2004–5. For that reason alone, the Bartolini–Mair measures of bloc volatility seem more appropriate in the Polish

¹ The index has been calculated with application of the following rules: (a) In the case of a change of a party's name in between elections, the votes in election $t + 1$ are treated as cast for the same party as in election t ; (b) in the case of a merger, the votes for all parties contesting election t that merged to form a party contesting election $t + 1$ are added up; (c) in the case of a break-up or secession, for the election $t + 1$ only the votes for the major surviving party are counted as the votes for the original party that contested election t ; all other parties emerging from the original party are treated as new ones and votes cast for them are counted accordingly.

case. We present here the Bartolini–Mair index calculated in two different ways. In the first, blocs are defined on the basis of the four political fields defined above. For the second, we accept Grabowska’s and Szawiel’s vision of the Polish party system developing in a form of two parallel ‘tracks’ (2001: 61–9, 183–96), the post-communist left and the post-Solidarity right. The way the parties were grouped into four ‘field’ categories is presented in Table 4.4; for the ‘tracks’ analysis, the social-democratic and populist fields are combined in a post-communist track, and the liberal-democratic and conservative fields in a post-Solidarity track. A few minor parties that cannot be unambiguously assigned to any of the four fields are omitted from this analysis.

The very high value of both the Pedersen and the Bartolini–Mair indices for the 2005 election (with the 2001 election as the base of comparison) reflects the collapse of the post-communist SLD and the general swing of the voters’ sentiments from the left to the right. Yet even for the previous electoral cycles, while the Bartolini–Mair indices eliminate the effects of fragmentation at the right end of the political spectrum, their values are still relatively high, higher (with just one exception, the volatility for two tracks in 1997) than the mean volatility for those West European elections in which a PR mode of seat allocation was used and which were contested by at least a dozen parties (i.e. in conditions comparable to the ones in place in Poland); the value of this mean was calculated by Bartolini and Mair at 10.7 (1990: 158). It should be noted, however, that a different methodology (specifically, a different way of grouping parties) may generate lower levels of volatility. For instance, Radosław Markowski (1999, 2001) examines volatility for three blocs (‘left’, ‘right’, and ‘liberal’) and ten families (socialist, social-democratic, conservative, Christian-democratic, nationalist, religious, ethnic, liberal, agrarian, and radical-populist) to conclude that electoral volatility in Poland reaches levels similar to those recorded during the early stages of democratic transitions in Southern European states (Spain, Portugal, and Greece), in Latin American democracies, or in Poland’s post-communist neighbours (Hungary, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia). Markowski’s analyses, however, do not cover the 2001 and 2005 elections, when volatility reached still higher levels. All the indices presented here confirm the observation that the Polish party system was undergoing a process of consolidation in the 1990s, which was reversed by the realignment that took place in 2000–1.

Partisan loyalty and party membership

This trend is reflected also in levels of party identification. In the 1997 Polish General Election Survey (PGSW 1997), almost half of all respondents (49.8 per cent) admitted that they felt close to a political party, while 14.5 per cent named such a party after an additional prompt. In an analogous survey conducted after the 2001 election (PGSW 2001), only 37.6 per cent named such a party in response to the first question, and 17.1 per cent after a prompt. With relatively high levels

of electoral volatility and low levels of party identification, it is fair to say that Polish political parties have thus far failed to establish their electorates. The empirical evidence suggests further that parties (or political elites) rather than the voters are to be blamed for this state of affairs. Individual voters tend to perceive the political spectrum as a one-dimensional entity, defined by the left-right continuum, and have a fairly good idea of the place they individually occupy in this space (Grabowska and Szawiel 2001: 217–67). These self-identifications correspond well with the positions voters take on policy issues, economic, social, cultural, and ideological alike. Voters have also a good idea how to place in this space parties that contest a given election. It is not voters' fault that parties use this space to play their musical chairs game. The only exception here may be the SLD, which, as Grabowska and Szawiel conclude, has been able to establish a stable, committed, and, until 2002, steadily growing electorate (2001: 196). Only more recently the PiS and the PO seem to have achieved similar stability of their respective electorates.

In this context, it should come as no surprise that the total membership of all parties is low. Most pollsters do not even include a question on party membership in their questionnaires, as the numbers of positive responses when the question is asked rarely exceed 1 per cent. In the 1997 and 2001 Polish General Election Surveys (PGSW 1997, 2001) the percentages of those declaring membership in a political party, association, or club were respectively 1.7 and 1.8 per cent. These numbers, given the nature of the survey and the liberal wording of the question, are more likely to exaggerate than understate actual party membership nationwide. If accepted as correct, they would yield almost exactly half a million party members in a 29.4 million strong electorate. A similar estimate (400,000 to 450,000, or no more than 1.5 per cent of the electorate) is given by Szczerbiak (2001*b*).

Political parties, collectively, enjoy no respect among the Polish public. Individually, they fare a bit better: each is perceived as a legitimate form of interest aggregation and articulation by at least its own supporters. Paradoxically, the strongest legitimization is reserved for the party system in its totality: parties as such may be viewed as petty and corrupt, but a party system is, in the minds of Polish citizens, an indispensable pillar of pluralist democracy.

THE ORGANIZATIONAL STRENGTH OF POLISH PARTIES

Membership and staff

The dominant type of political party in Poland is that of a 'couch party' (*partia kanapowa*). The expression itself, as well as its sarcastic meaning ('one can sit all the members of this party on a couch in his living room'), predates the times of the post-communist democratic transition and can be traced back at least

TABLE 4.5. *Reported party membership data for political parties in Poland*

Gebethner	Szczerbiak	Jasiewicz-Betkiewicz
PSL 190,000	PSL 150,000	PSL 140,000
SdRP 60,000	SLD 90,000	SLD 160,000
KPN 25,000	KPN 10,000	PO 16,000
ZChN 6,000	KPN-OP 10,000	LPR 10,000–15,000
UP 8,000	UP 3,500	UP 9,000
UPR 4,000	UPR 3,000	PiS 2,500
UW 18,000	UW 14,000	UW 10,000
	RS AWS 40,000	
	ROP 15,000	
	PPChD 13,000	
	KPEiR 27,000	
	SKL 18,000	
	SD 10,000	
	RKN 7,000	
	ChDIIIRP 6,000	
	ZChN 6,000	
	PLD 3,000	

Notes: Gebethner's figures are for 1995; Szczerbiak's figures draw on various sources covering the period 1994–2000; Jasiewicz-Betkiewicz's relate to 2001 (when Self Defence refused to report its membership figures).

Sources: Gebethner (1996: 130), Szczerbiak (2001b: 58), and Jasiewicz-Betkiewicz (2003).

to the 1920s. It reflects not only the modest membership of such parties, but also the simplicity of their internal structures. Couch parties are composed of their national leadership, with a more or less accidental following. Yet even the parties seemingly not covered by this expression, the ones that have established themselves and keep proving it by contesting general and local elections and actually winning seats, have often developed amorphous organizational structures and maintain high levels of secrecy regarding data on membership, staffing, income, and similar details. It is reasonable to assume that this secrecy is related to their embarrassingly low memberships, weak bureaucratic structures, and the murky finances. Still, information on those details, when revealed either to researchers or in official reports, is fairly consistent over time, as Table 4.5 reveals in respect of membership levels.

Less certain are the numbers regarding party staff, but in any case they are very low. Szczerbiak (2001a: 79) gives the number of full-time employees (including secretarial staff) in party central headquarters in 1997 at 20 for the PSL, 10 for UW, 4 for SdRP, 3 for ROP, and 1.5 for UP. No better is the situation at grass-roots level, where party cells only seldom employ (even if only on a part-time basis), a secretary or accountant. Grabowska and Szawiel, who in the mid-1990s conducted the most thorough study of parties at the local level that is presently available (2000, 2001), point out that many party branches did not have access to

fax and/or copying facilities, and sometimes not even to a telephone or office space. Similar information is given by Szczerbiak (1999) on the basis of his research in four medium-sized cities. Szczerbiak points out that this uninspiring condition is the fate of not only the new parties created in the 1990s, but also, albeit to a lesser extent, of the ‘successor’ parties, the SdRP/SLD and the PSL, which inherited certain assets from their communist-era predecessors. Of these two, it is the PSL that was able to use such assets more effectively and today possesses the best organizational infrastructure of all Polish parties. It enjoys an additional advantage, often overlooked by researchers, through its close connection to the vast network of the Voluntary Firemen Association (*Ochotnicza Straż Pożarna*). Waldemar Pawlak, the PSL chairman (1991–7 and since 2004) and former (1993–5) prime minister, has been the president of the OSP’s national board since 1991. Similar personnel overlaps between the PSL and OSP (as well as some other grass-roots organizations: see Szczerbiak 2001a) are common at the regional and local levels.

Finance

Limited access to organizational and communicational resources stems, obviously, from the sorry state of party finances. Marcin Walecki, the editor of a comprehensive study of the role of money in Polish politics, provides the following list of typical sources of party financing (2000: 87):

- Private financing:
 - Bequests
 - Collections (from individuals and corporations)
 - Investments (stocks, bonds, income from property rentals, etc.)
 - Internal financing (regular membership dues, special dues paid by public office holders recommended by the party and/or deputies elected on the party ticket, etc.)
 - Non-monetary services
- Bank credits and loans
- Public financing
 - Direct
 - Indirect (financing of *Sejm* deputies and senators, tax breaks, free access to public media, etc.)

A special role, rooted in tradition, has been played by collections from anonymous individual donors, who would purchase (during street or festival collections, door-to-door collections, or in party offices) so-called ‘little bricks’ (*cegiełki*), that is coupons marked with a certain nominal value, as proof of their contribution. This form of raising ‘soft money’ for parties (obviously, often, used as a disguise to hide substantial corporate donations) has now been forbidden by the 2001 amendments to the Law on Political Parties.

TABLE 4.6. *Sources of party funding in Poland*

Source	Polish Peasant Party			Freedom Union		
	1997 (%)	1998 (%)	1999 (%)	1997 (%)	1998 (%)	1999 (%)
Investments	77.5	88.0	90.1	—	0.9	4.9
Collections	17.5	7.2	4.2	87.3	70.5	23.2
Dues	0.3	0.4	0.8	3.4	15.8	62.8
State subventions	4.8	4.4	0.7	—	11.6	4.5
Bank loans	—	—	—	9.3	1.2	—
Total (in M PLN)	12.1	10.5	11.1	7.1	8.5	3.1

Within this framework, the actual income of particular parties varies widely, from party to party and from year to year, and so do relations among contributions from various sources. The official data on party income in 1999 submitted to the Provincial Court in Warsaw (which manages the register of political parties) cited by Walecki (2000: 89) are as follows (in PLN):

- ZChN: 71,308.23
- SLD: 2,688,353.67
- UW: 3,091,906.67
- UP: 146,885.27
- RS AWS: 527,031.65
- PSL: 11,146,614.80

The source of the huge disparity between the PSL and all other parties is revealed in the comparison of the structure of income for PSL and UW (for 1997, 1998, and 1999), also provided by Walecki (2000: 89), and reported here in Table 4.6.

There could be no better illustration of the role played by the assets inherited by the PSL (and, to a lesser extent, by the SLD) from its communist-era predecessor in providing not only organizational and communicational assistance, but simply a basis for the survival of the party. In the case of the PSL, particularly important has been the office buildings that until 1989 hosted local, regional, and central headquarters of the ZSL, and which since 1989 have been rented out for handsome fees to various companies and businesses. The seemingly much more powerful PZPR did not leave such assets to its offspring, as the issue of the ownership of real estate at its disposal until 1989 was very complicated from the legal point of view. The PZPR was never registered under any legal title and therefore could not legally own anything; the office space it used was in most cases owned by the state, which simply allowed the party to use it without any formal regulation. In a communist party state this was a rational, obvious solution; however, it backfired against the communist-successor SdRP/SLD when democracy and the rule of law were restored.

It should be noted also that the material base inherited from communist times is not a sufficient condition for party well-being, or even survival. The third party

that officially existed in communist times, the Democratic Party (*Stronnictwo Demokratyczne*, or SD), had a solid infrastructure (buildings, printing presses, and newspapers) at the central level in Warsaw as well as in the provinces, yet it effectively ceased to operate in the early 1990s, despite its contribution to the emergence of the Mazowiecki government in 1989. This fascinating case of opportunities lost still awaits a thorough analysis. One can hypothesize that the SD failure was due to the general weakness and division of the SLD leadership, but such was also the situation in the much more successful PSL. Without neglecting the poor leadership factor, one should point out also that the SD had a low membership in communist times (artificially low, one should add, as its levels were controlled by the Communists). Consequently, the SD appealed, unlike the PSL, only to a fraction of its prescribed constituency, the urban intelligentsia and middle classes. After 1989, these strata rallied behind the post-Solidarity parties on the one hand and the Communists-turned-Social Democrats on the other, leaving the SD practically no room for recruitment of members and supporters.

The competitive advantage the PSL enjoyed in the financial realm has come to an apparent end with the amendments to the Law on Political Parties that were approved by the *Sejm* in April 2001. The amendments specifically exclude investments (with only a few exceptions) as a source of party financing and increase the role of direct state subventions. For most parties it is a welcome solution, as they anyway have been able to survive to the present as clients of the state, chiefly through indirect subventions, and thanks to the budgets provided by the state to party's parliamentary caucuses. The bureaucratic staff employed to work for party's parliamentary caucus caters in addition to the needs of party national leadership, since usually top party leaders have been elected to the *Sejm* or the Senate. Furthermore, since each deputy and senator receives, in addition to a salary, an allowance to maintain an office in his constituency, this relationship carries over to the local level. As Szczerbiak (1999) discovered, party local headquarters usually share the postal address and phone/fax lines with the party parliamentary office in a given locality; in all likelihood the rent and utility bills are covered from the parliamentarians' allowances.

The financial dependency of a party's internal structures on its parliamentary faction has its political consequences, as it shifts the locus of power from the former to the latter. As Gebethner (1996) observes, party by-laws typically stipulate that binding decisions are made by some central governing body (central committee or national council), elected by party members, yet the party's deputies and senators routinely participate in the meetings of such a body, whether or not they are its formal members. This is true not only for 'couch parties', but also for the major players on the party scene. The SLD, before it registered as a party in 1999, was a rather loose coalition of several organizations, connected only through its parliamentary caucus. The new regulations on party financing provide additional incentives for parties to play the election game, and may in the long run

contribute to consolidation of the party scene (although the eligibility threshold for such subventions, set at 3 per cent of the nationwide popular vote, may prove insufficient to encourage mergers).

Media

Two more issues should be addressed here: the professionalization of party work and the role of the press. All Polish parties (Grabowska and Szawiel 2001: 322–3) suffer from a surplus of professionals, experts, and intellectuals. The downside of this phenomenon is obvious: there are too many individuals who claim to have great ideas and not enough people to implement them. Yet there are also obvious advantages, as many otherwise expensive services are often delivered to a party by its members or sympathizers for free. Still, parties have begun to hire professional companies, domestic and foreign, to perform specialized services, such as accounting or media campaigns. This practice has so far produced rather mixed results. For instance, KLD hired in 1993 the British firm Saatchi & Saatchi to run its election campaign. The foreign experts ran a colourful campaign, but completely misread the mood of the Polish public and the KLD failed to clear the threshold in the *Sejm* elections. Two years later, Aleksander Kwaśniewski's victory over Lech Wałęsa in a presidential race was to a great extent due to the input of professional expertise to his campaign, the input conspicuously absent in his rival's camp (Jasiewicz 1997). Although Kwaśniewski's staff declined any comments on this subject, the press (*Rzeczpospolita* 5 October 2000) reported that a decisive role had been played by Jacques Seguela, a former consultant to the late President François Mitterrand of France.

In the context of this 'intellectual overdrive' it might appear surprising that the party press in Poland is very weak. Both major successor parties have maintained their official 'press organs' from communist times, albeit often under changed titles (the old PZPR's People's Tribune, or *Trybuna Ludu*, has become just The Tribune), yet their readership dwindled to mere thousands, or tens of thousands at the most. None of the new parties has been able to come up with an attractive daily or a magazine. The most successful daily newspaper, *Gazeta Wyborcza* (The Electoral Gazette), established in 1989 as the electoral bulletin of Solidarity, and since 1990 associated in the mind of the public with the milieu of the UD (later UW), has been, in fact, vehemently independent politically (although, admittedly, with a liberal-democratic ideological bent). Another major newspaper, *Rzeczpospolita* (The Republic), has established itself as a paper of record, without any obvious political bias. Paradoxically, Lenin's principle that the press should be a 'great organizer' seems to be best understood among the religious right in Poland. While parties of this political milieu are notoriously weak, they have been kept together by several vocal and unabashedly partisan publications, such as the dailies *Nasz Dziennik* (Our Daily) and *Nasza Polska* (Our Poland), and, above all, the Catholic

radio network *Radio Maryja*. Father Tadeusz Rydzyk, *Radio Maryja*'s manager and editor-in-chief, was instrumental in setting up the LPR shortly before the 2001 election and, prior to this, the Polish Family coalition (for the 1998 local elections). Rydzyk's organizational skills and aggressive campaigning on the waves of *Radio Maryja* account for the decent electoral fortunes of these organizations. Lech Kaczyński owes, at least in part, his election as president in 2005 to Father Rydzyk's explicit endorsement.

In fact, the weakness of the party press in Poland may be due to the attention political elites in general pay to the role of broadcast media, in particular television. Control over personnel appointments in the public broadcast organization, Polish Radio and Television, has been one of the most contentious political issues over the past decade. The State Council of Radio and Television, which was created in 1994 as the central body overseeing all broadcasts in Poland, public and private, and originally designed to play a non-partisan role, has for its part become one of the most politicized state bodies. This seems to confirm David Olson's observation that parties in Poland and other Central European new democracies do not emulate the patterns of party development in the West, but rather 'leapfrog directly into the mass communications video age' (Olson 1998: 445).

THE SYSTEMIC FUNCTIONALITY OF POLITICAL PARTIES IN POLAND

Governance

In Polish politics, parties are the only game in town, even if only by default. There are no serious alternatives to parties and parliamentary democracy. They do not exist in the form of actual political structures, and seldom are they articulated within the framework of a broader political discourse. If they are articulated at all, it happens usually in the context of purely academic discussions. After the 1989 democratic breakthrough, ideas voiced by two scholars gained some attention. As early as 1991, Jacek Tarkowski (1992) was predicting that parties, organized on the basis of ideological slogans rather than well-structured interests (in part because of the absence of interest structuralization in a transitional society), would fail in their representative function and contribute to political disenchantment and chaos; instead of democracy, an ochlocracy would emerge. As a solution, Tarkowski suggested a neo-corporatist network of institutions, within which group interests could be articulated and negotiated, and accepted policies effectively implemented. These ideas were received rather coldly, often misread as an attempt to curtail a freewheeling democracy in the spirit of the

old regime, and after Tarkowski's death (he died before his article was published) found no serious continuators.

A different approach to neo-corporatism is presented by Jadwiga Staniszkis in her prolific writings. She claims (1999) that all major post-communist states, including Russia and Poland, have in fact adopted neo-corporatist solutions as the essence of their systems of governance. In her analyses, Staniszkis regards parties and parliaments as irrelevant window dressing. Instead, she focuses on the more or less informal networks of connections between the old *nomenklatura*, the emerging class of entrepreneurs, the military, the secret service, and other groups. She attaches the label 'political capitalism' to the new social, political, and economic system, in order to emphasize the role of political connections (old and new) in generating economic power. While Staniszkis's analyses are always provocative and often penetrating (no one can deny that the political privileges of the communist *nomenklatura* gave it an enormous advantage in a developing market economy), she usually provides only fragmentary empirical evidence to support her claims. With regard to political parties in particular, Staniszkis fails to recognize their role in regulating access to positions of economic control.

Certain elements of quasi-corporatist arrangements are nonetheless present in the political system in the form of institutionalized links between parties and trade unions. Both major parties of the 1990s, the SLD and the AWS, emerged originally as broad coalitions of various organizations, among which trade unions (Solidarity in the AWS, the post-communist OPZZ in the SLD) had particular political clout, if only because of their relatively large membership numbers. Still, no formal corporatist structures have ever emerged, and there is not much evidence of informal corporatist bargaining within either the SLD or the AWS. On the contrary, at various occasions trade unions technically allied with a given government opposed its policies because of their alleged anti-labour features.

The only real challenge to party government may come from the attention given by the public to individuals rather than to organizations and institutions. In the last decade of communist rule, pro-government forces rallied behind the personality of General Wojciech Jaruzelski, while the charisma of Lech Wałęsa dominated the opposition (yet another charismatic leader, John Paul II, exercised enormous influence over the course of Polish politics from afar). Both Jaruzelski and Wałęsa failed, for different reasons, to transform their leadership potential into a viable Polish variant of *caudillismo* or another type of autocratic government. In the early years of the democratic regime, both the public and the political elites seemed interested in the development of parties and parliamentary (as opposed to presidential) democracy as an antidote to the autocratic designs of particular leaders, and specifically Lech Wałęsa. Wałęsa's refusal to transform the Civic Committees (Solidarity's electoral machine) into a party, and his general reluctance to organize or even endorse any parties, had its roots in his belief that he

could be 'the president of all Poles' and that any intermediary structures between him and the people were redundant. This attitude contributed to the failure of his bid for re-election in 1995, as he ran the campaign virtually without any supporting grass-roots level organization (for a more detailed analysis of this issue see Jasiewicz 1997).

But no matter how sceptical about autocracy, the public was also confused by the proliferation of parties and the lack of well-defined links between their positions on various issues and the structure of group interests. Consequently, the public invested more time and effort in supporting individual candidates rather than parties as organizations. As noted above, the turnout in presidential elections has been consistently higher than in parliamentary ones; presidential elections, indeed, have arguably been the most important single factor shaping Poland's party system. In 1990, the four top candidates rallied behind them the voters from the four emerging political fields (as we have defined them above). In 1995, the Wałęsa-Kwaśniewski rivalry led to a deep repolarization of Polish politics, along the lines defined by the assessment of Poland's communist past. The 2000 election, with the emergence of catch-all (Kwaśniewski, Krzaklewski), non-party (Olechowski), and anti-system (Lepper) candidates, led to a major realignment in Polish party politics, reflected in the results of the 2001 general election. Also in 2005, the voters in the parliamentary election, despite the fact that it preceded the presidential one by two weeks, were not unmindful of personalities of party leaders: from the Kaczyński twins of the PiS, to Donald Tusk of the PO, to Andrzej Lepper of the Self-Defence; for the socialist left, the absence of an heir-apparent to Aleksander Kwaśniewski was not irrelevant either. The attention given by the public to personalities rather than to parties has been recognized by the lawmakers, who, for the October 2002 local elections, introduced the direct popular election of mayors and other heads of local administration. Yet all this focus on personalities does not undermine, in the long run, the foundations of party-centred politics. Non-party or anti-party candidates either recognize (sooner or later) the need to root their popularity in well-established structures, or fall into oblivion (as evidenced by Wałęsa's fate).

Potentially more dangerous are anti-system candidates, such as Stanisław Tymiński, Wałęsa's runner-up in 1990, or Andrzej Lepper, the leader of Self-Defence, which controlled 50-plus seats in the *Sejms* elected in 2001 and 2005. Tymiński attempted to capitalize on his personal success and enter party politics, yet his Party X was a complete fiasco. Lepper, who had been present on the fringes of Polish politics throughout the 1990s, owed his 2001 success to his consistent rejection of the commonly accepted rules of the game: in the parliament, in party politics in general, or at the level of the political system as a whole. His attitude acquired some popular credibility, as the various shortcomings of consecutive governments, in particular incompetence and corruption, have eroded the legitimacy of party-centred government. The extent of this erosion

is not yet life-threatening: Lepper's Self-Defence in 2005 won still only 11 per cent of the popular vote, while he himself did somehow better, polling 15 per cent in the presidential vote. Attempts to 'domesticate' Lepper were unavailing, at least until his elevation in May 2006 to the Deputy Prime Minister post.

Political recruitment and participation

The viability of a party-centred government in Poland seems to stem from the virtual monopoly the parties enjoy in the areas of political recruitment and interest articulation and aggregation. Even if this monopoly emerged by default (at the onset of democracy trade unions attempted to enter the electoral game and behave as quasi-parties, charismatic personalities failed to generate acceptable alternatives to party governance, etc.), it is kept in place by design. The 1997 constitution and the subsequent reforms of public administration have de facto introduced a Polish equivalent of the American 'plum-book': a list of positions to be filled by political nominees—individuals trusted by the government currently in power, usually recruited from the ranks of parties constituting the ruling coalition. This semi-formalized list includes not only positions in the central administration (in addition to ministers, secretaries, and undersecretaries of state), but also in the state apparatus at the provincial level (governors and their deputies) and, perhaps most significantly, on the boards of state-owned companies. Analogous solutions have been adopted at all levels of local government. Such regulations and practices have effectively diminished the intended role of the civil service, which was introduced simultaneously with other public administration reforms as an apolitical corps of well-trained, competent bureaucrats. The entire system bears an eerie resemblance to the communist *nomenklatura*, with, however, the obvious difference that, in the last instance, it is subject to the approval of the electorate.

The possibility of gaining access to positions of power and privilege seems to be the chief motivation of those who formally join parties, or even party-affiliated youth organizations. As reported in the Polish press (*Polityka* 11 September 2002), almost all members of the SLD (estimated at 120,000) expressed interest in running for seats in municipal councils or for posts in local government in the October 2002 local elections (the total number of positions open for contest was about 50,000). Self-Defence, similarly, had no problems with the recruitment of candidates for local elections. In this case the recruited received an additional incentive: Self-Defence, as a new player in the spoils game, offered much more open channels of upward mobility than would have been the case with longer-established organizations. Research on political elites in Poland confirms the common-sense expectation of a large-scale personal turnover during the last decade. According to Jarosław Pawlak (1997: 317), among leaders of major parties in 1993, only 23 per cent had been members of the Communist Party and

affiliated organizations, while 44 per cent had Solidarity roots and the remaining 33 per cent were political newcomers. Pawlak also points out the youthful age of central-level leaders of new parties: 45 per cent were in their twenties and thirties. This phenomenon, however, does not extend to the local level. As observed by Jerzy Bartkowski (1996) and Agnieszka Jasiewicz-Betkiewicz (2000), local party leaders in the 1990s tended to be, on the average, older than national leaders at that time, and older than local leaders under the former regime. All in all, research on political elites (see also Grabowska and Szawiel 1993; Szelenyi, Treiman, and Wnuk-Lipiński 1995; Nalewajko 1997; Wasilewski 1997) indicates that throughout the 1990s there were no significant barriers for individuals seeking a political career through the channels available within the party system; on the contrary, several parties suffered shortages of members and individuals willing to assume leadership responsibilities at the local level. Yet by the end of the 1990s the pool of positions within party structures at the central level and posts within state structures subject to political appointment had become saturated with relatively young incumbents, shutting down the channels of upward mobility for the incoming generations. This situation contributed, in all likelihood, to the political realignment of 2000–1 (and, specifically, to the popularity of Self-Defence).

Aggregation and articulation of interests and political communication

With regard to interest articulation and aggregation, parties occupy centre stage. Institutionalized interest groups, while present on a notable scale, do not constitute an alternative to the party system, chiefly because of the blurred lines separating the two. As Szczerbiak notes (2001a: 255), in Poland interest groups (he mentions trade unions, but this observation also applies to other organizations) behave like political parties, contesting elections and forming governments, while political parties (e.g. the PSL) behave like interest groups. Only some very specific interest groups, usually narrow in scope and desperate in their attitudes (workers in bankrupt enterprises and/or industries, farmers in certain regions and/or sectors of agriculture) tend to reject the articulation of their interests through channels provided by the party system. Yet even these actors may eventually generate party-like structures, as evidenced by the case of Self-Defence. This situation reflects the actually existing state of interest crystallization: the structures generated by the old regime disintegrate, while new ones emerge and take their place. This fluidity of group interests, in the view of many authors (Tarkowski 1992; Mokrzycki 1992; Rychard 1993; Jasiewicz 1993; Wnuk-Lipiński 2001; Szczerbiak 2001a, among others), may be the most important social factor underlying the development of political institutions. Without a network of well-defined group interests to guide voters' preferences, patterns of voting behaviour and party allegiance are shaped by cultural factors, sentiments, and resentments stemming from the past, rather than by debates regarding social and economic policies, current or future. As this author has observed elsewhere: 'the primary axis of voter identification is

not diagonal to, but virtually identical with one of the lines defining the political space. It reflects the cleavage between Catholic traditionalism, with a strong anti-Communist component, on the one hand, and cosmopolitan secularism, indifferent to Poland's Communist past on the other... The other cleavage defining the political space, between political and market modes of resource allocation, plays only a secondary role (that is, it is helpful in identifying positions of less important actors)... [W]hen one wants to predict how a Pole will vote, one should ask him not "How thick is your pocketbook?" but "How often do you say your rosary?" (Jasiewicz 2003).

Perhaps the most serious constraints on party-centred politics come from the fourth power, the printed and electronic media. As noted above, parties, due to their organizational weakness and limited resources, have not been able to dominate the newspaper or magazine market, seeking instead opportunities to influence the electronic media, in particular television. The independent press, such as the dailies *Gazeta Wyborcza* and *Rzeczpospolita*, or weekly magazines *Polityka* and *Wprost*, are truly vigilant in their pursuit of partisan abuses in the government and public administration.

As this suggests, political parties in Poland face serious problems on both the supply and demand side. On the one hand, they are weak and fragile as institutions; on the other, there are no well-defined group interests and social structures to stimulate and feed party development. Yet one can hardly disagree with Grabowska's conclusions in her article 'Political Parties: Unwanted but Successful Children of Polish Transformation' (1999). She points out that the democratic opposition of the 1970s and 1980s was highly distrustful of political parties, which attitudes it preserved when it was charged with governing responsibilities after the 1989 breakthrough. The public, as we have seen, had also little respect for political parties. However, miraculously (as Grabowska puts it), parties have emerged, exist, and fulfil their functions: they recruit and socialize their members, present political programmes that are subjected to public debate, they compete for power by selecting and promoting candidates for leadership positions on the one hand and mobilizing support among voters on the other, and, finally, they represent the interests of their constituencies (Grabowska 1999: 27–8).

CONCLUSION

Examined outside the broader context of the political system, Polish political parties appear extremely weak. They are low in membership and have unstable, volatile followings. The media and the public resent them. Their internal structures are amorphous or almost non-existent. They lack basic resources, from office

space and the means of communication to personnel, and are chronically short of money. This situation makes them dependent on state financing, which they are able to secure, at least at a minimal level, because they themselves provide the decision-makers: deputies, senators, and government ministers. This virtual monopoly that parties enjoy in the recruitment and selection of incumbents of the top positions in the state, the scope of the spoils associated with winning a general (or even local) election, and the leading role played by parliamentary causes in internal affairs of particular parties—all these factors together indicate that Polish parties seem to be evolving towards the cartel party model (as presented by Katz and Mair 1995; Koole 1996).

This development has been noted by several authors (Nalewajko 1997; Grabowska and Szawiel 2001; Szczerbiak 2001*a*), who also agree that other models (or, in some instances, phases) of party organization, such as mass and cadre parties (Duverger 1954), catch-all parties (Kirchheimer 1966), electoral-professional parties (Panebianco 1988), or alternative parties (Kitschelt 1989), may be represented in Polish politics by some specific cases. Thus, the PSL displays some features of a mass party, the SLD, AWS, and also UW at least have attempted to structure themselves as catch-all parties, several organizations in the conservative field have functioned as electoral-professional parties, while the PO seems to approximate Kitschelt's alternative party model. All in all, however, the cartel party model, emphasizing the overlap and mutual interdependence of state and party structures, seems best suited for the description and understanding of Polish party politics. Paradoxically, the cartel party emerged in Poland despite the many weaknesses of parties and the party system, and not as an outcome of 'collusion' among powerful actors on the political scene. The choice of parliamentary democracy at the outset of democratization—the choice preferred by both public and elites—came about as a result of a more or less conscious rejection of alternative solutions, in particular of a presidential democracy. Certain shortcomings of political and institutional imagination, as well as the demonstration effect of successful parliamentary democracies in Western Europe, also played a role. Once this choice was made, the central role of parties in the political system has become a self-fulfilling prophecy. The cartelization of parties was simply the institutionalization of a system that had emerged virtually by default.

Whereas it would be fair to say that Poland has many political parties, but not yet a party system, the progressing consolidation of the four major political fields constitutes a first step towards the emergence of a stable and mature party system, despite the setback it suffered in the wake of the 2000 presidential and 2001 general elections. While voter volatility is still high at a party level, analyses of voting behaviour indicate that this volatility occurs usually within a given political field. Political alignments, a decade after the establishment of democratic institutions, have assumed a more solid shape. Moreover, the four political fields correspond to political divisions formed decades ago in West European democracies, which

may be perceived as a good prognosis. On the other hand, the repolarization of the polity along axiological lines, if it were to last, might hamper the development of a party system. It could lead to the creation of two ideological camps, loosely organized and internally heterogeneous in respect to economic and social policies, but each united in its hostility towards the other. Thus far, however, parties, despite all their weaknesses, fulfil their basic functions and contribute not just to the survival, but also to the consolidation and sustainability of Poland's post-communist democracy.

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Building Party Government

Political Parties in the Czech and Slovak Republics

Petr Kopecký

INTRODUCTION

Political parties have become the key players in Czech and Slovak politics. While the comparative literature on political parties in established Western democracies recurrently discusses the alleged decline of parties (cf. Lawson and Merkl 1988; Webb 1995), these two countries in East Central Europe provide examples of an extraordinary ascendancy of partisan politics in the everyday functioning of their recently inaugurated democracies. Having gradually acquired a new legitimacy, however weak, as the principal managers of government and state institutions, Czech and Slovak political parties now also possess some capacity to constrain choice and to manage the political and social environment for their own ends. They operate within institutional structures where party strength plays a crucial role—structures, one should note, which were devised and gradually changed by the same political entrepreneurs who transformed the initially loose amateur parties into more professionalized and effective party organizations.

However, the reality of party politics in contemporary East Central Europe differs greatly from the era of mass party politics and mass participation in Western Europe. While the consolidation of modern mass democracy before and after World War II may still occasionally represent the key marker with which we judge contemporary parties and party systems, there cannot be any hiding the fact that the Czech and Slovak post-communist democracies have come into existence in different social and political circumstances. The existence of already mobile and individualized populations, now also increasingly stratified by emerging market exchanges, undermines mobilization based on large and permanent collective identities. In contrast to the incremental introduction of electoral democracy in Western Europe, democratization in East Central Europe also involves establishing the principles of electoral competition at a time when citizens had already been mobilized and politicized by the previous communist regime (cf. Mair 1997; van Biezen 1998). As a result, political parties tend to

confine their roles to activities associated with the conduct of office, while their social anchorage and social activities remain weak.

This chapter charts the emergence of Czech and Slovak parties and explores both their rise and persistence as the almost sole organizations of political power, as well as their willingness and ability to adapt to the social environment of post-communist politics. In addition, the chapter also explores the cross-national variation. While it may seem reasonable to assume that the broadly similar social environment of East Central Europe will induce a broadly similar party structure, the internal developments in each country have followed their own path, set by variations in institutional arrangements, legacies of communism, the scale of economic crisis, and other factors. In this respect, the Czech and Slovak Republics—not long ago still one state—represent a very interesting comparative case study. For while they appear to differ in respect of some of the ways in which their parties and party systems developed, both countries started their independent existences at the end of 1992 with a more or less identical institutional design and a similar social, economic, and political environment.

PARTY SYSTEMS

The structure of party competition represents perhaps the most striking difference between the Czech and Slovak Republics. The now well-grounded research shows that the pattern of party competition in the Czech Republic is essentially unidimensional, with the dominant conflict structured by a socio-economic approach (Huber and Inglehart 1995; Krause 1996*a*; Markowski 1997; Evans and Whitefield 1998; Kitschelt et al. 1999). The Czech parties compete primarily on positions clustered around questions of social security, redistribution of resources, and the role of the state in the economy. The other existing issues are important for individual parties: nationalism for the now almost defunct extreme-right Republican Party (SPR-RSČ), together with the unreformed Communist Party (KSČM) and, at times, also for the Civic Democratic Party (ODS; see Hanley 2004); and religion for the centrist Christian Democrats (KDU-ČSL). However, these issues play a significantly less important role in shaping the overall pattern of competition.

The composition of government coalitions has so far been a perfect embodiment of these bipolar and strongly pronounced lines of conflict: the right-of-centre coalition of ODS, the Civic Democratic Alliance (ODA), and KDU-ČSL formed the government in 1992 and in 1996; the left-of-centre Social Democrats (ČSSD) formed the (minority) government in 1998 and, together with the KDU-ČSL and US (Freedom Union), after the 2002 elections. The coalition formed in 2002 was least consistent in this respect, uniting centrist KDU-ČSL and leftist ČSSD with a liberal US. It was also the coalition that has experienced biggest

internal tensions and reshuffles: for example, the government broke down in June 2004, in no small part because of the internal tensions within the ČSSD, where many leading politicians and party activists started to question the coalition with the more right-of-centre parties, following a disastrous party performance in the elections to the European Parliament. However, the 2006 elections have again seen a dramatic return to a bipolar pattern of competition, with both ODS and ČSSD featuring as the key rivals in a campaign dominated by economic themes. Indeed, the elections ended in a political impasse, with both the left and the right controlling an equal number of 100 seats in the lower chamber of the parliament, making government formation nearly impossible.

The origins of the Czech party system date back to the early 1990s in the Federal Czechoslovakia, when the electorally dominant but ideologically diverse opposition movement—Civic Forum (OF)—started to disintegrate into a number of distinct parties. With a few exceptions, the Czech and Slovak parties already had national mandates and bases of electoral support, reflecting the rapidly diverging social and economic realities of the two constituent parts of the Federation. And it was at that time that, in the Czech part of the Federation, the now dominant left-right divide started to crystallize and replace an amorphous cultural conflict centred on the communist/non-communist divide. The elite that eventually seized power within OF formed around a group of liberal economic technocrats led by the founder of ODS, the former Prime Minister and now President Václav Klaus, who largely succeeded in modelling emerging institutions in accordance with a highly individualistic liberal blueprint, and who framed social and political conflict in terms of a struggle for allocation of economic resources.

As Table 5.1 shows, there have been changes, sometimes dramatic, in the electoral fortunes of individual parties, as well as several splits and mergers between political parties. Most notably, these involved near extinction of the small conservative ODA and its replacement by the Freedom Union (US)—a party which itself is the product of a dramatic split of the ODS at the end of 1997 which precipitated the fall of Klaus's second right-of-centre government. The US then fell into oblivion following the 2006 elections; the party was replaced by the Greens as the fifth formation represented in the lower chamber. Similarly, the parties representing Moravian regionalist sentiments (HSD-SMS) fell into oblivion by the 1996 elections, after two successful electoral campaigns (in 1990 and 1992). Contrary to most predictions, the extreme-right SPR-RSČ did not return to the post-1998 elections parliament, while the party previously enjoyed two electoral terms as a 'pariah' of the same institution.

However, these changes have not significantly altered the dominant pattern of party competition, nor can they be simply interpreted as signs of underlying party system instability. In fact, the fragmentation of votes has gradually decreased in the Czech Republic, with the same parties accounting for the largest share of votes. The stability is in part effected by the electoral system and, most

TABLE 5.1. *Czech Republic: electoral results (main parties)*

	1992		1994		1998		2002		2006	
	Votes (%)	Seats	Votes (%)	Seats	Votes (%)	Seats	Votes (%)	Seats	Votes (%)	Seats
ODS	29.7	76	29.6	68	27.7	63	24.5	58	35.4	81
ČSSD	6.5	16	26.4	61	32.3	74	30.2	70	32.3	74
KDU-ČSL	6.3	15	8.1	18	9.0	20	—	—	7.2	13
US	—	—	—	—	8.6	19	—	—	0.3	—
KDU-ČSL/US	—	—	—	—	—	—	14.3	31	—	—
KSČM	14.1	35	10.3	22	11.0	24	18.5	41	12.8	26
SPR-RSČ	5.9	14	8.0	18	3.9	—	1.0	—	—	—
ODA	5.9	14	6.4	13	—	—	0.5	—	—	—
SZ	0	—	0	—	1.1	—	2.4	—	6.3	6
Other parties	31.6	30	11.2	—	7.5	—	11	—	5.3	—
Volatility	—	—	24.3	—	16.1	—	11.9	—	17.6	—

Source: Derived from www.volby.cz

importantly, by the growing experience of voters with its mechanics. The votes of supporters of parties whose popularity oscillates below the 5 per cent electoral threshold have increasingly been absorbed by their larger competitors (within the ideological blocs), because voters are afraid their votes might be ‘lost’ and redistributed among the parties they do not support. Thus the effective number of electoral parties (using the Laakso-Taagepera index of fractionalization) has decreased from the 6.3 in the ‘defining’ 1992 legislative elections to 4.8 in the 1998 elections, and it remains one of the lowest in the region (see also Enyedi and Tóka in this volume).

In contrast to the Czech Republic, the Slovak party system can be characterized by several dimensions of competition, of which a dimension clustered around national and collective identity questions appear to be the most important in structuring the party political conflict (Krause 1996*b*; Evans and Whitefield 1998; Učeň 1999). While other dimensions exist, most notably a socio-economic dimension, they mainly provide the potential for disagreements among parties within the two now existing blocs of parties, rather than the potential for structuring the conflict between the two blocs. The composition of government coalitions has so far encapsulated these dimensions of competition (and the existence of two-party blocs): the Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (HZDS) and the Slovak National Party (SNS), which formed coalition governments in 1992 and 1994 (in the latter case together with the Association of Slovak Workers—ZRS), were united on national and identity questions but significantly divided on socioeconomic issues. Moravčík’s temporary government (1994) consisting of a similarly ideologically diverse set of the ex-communist Party of Democratic Left (SDL), the Christian Democrats (KDH), and the right of centre Democratic Union (DU), governed with the tacit support of Hungarian minority parties. Largely the

same parties (with different names), united mainly against Mečiar's HZDS and its allies, formed the government coalition after the 1998 and 2002 elections.

Similarly to the Czech Republic, the formation of the current party system in Slovakia commenced with the disintegration of a broad umbrella opposition movement—Public Against Violence (VPN)—during the politically turbulent years of the Czechoslovak Federation. However, the conflict within VPN started primarily as a struggle over the defence of Slovak national interests. Shortly after the split of Czechoslovakia, this conflict centred around the right to claim legitimacy as either a founder of the new Slovak state or a committed federalist. These incipient frames of party competition later evolved into a sharp cultural meta-conflict, involving both personalities as well as institutions, between the two blocks of political parties over the meaning and norms of democracy and political participation, undermining the process of democratic consolidation in Slovakia (Kopecký and Mudde 2000).

Table 5.2 documents changes in the electoral fortunes of the main Slovak parties. These have been dramatic, and so were the fissions and fusions on the party political scene. Most notably, these involved several parliamentary splits of the HZDS and SNS between 1992 and 1994, the protagonists of which later formed a new party, the DU. Because of the underlying character of party competition, and the successful attempts of the then ruling HZDS to change the electoral system in a way which significantly undercuts the chances of (a coalition of) smaller parties (Lebovič 1999), the DU later formed an electoral coalition (or party)—called the Slovak Democratic Coalition (SDK)—with the KDH and several other smaller parties, thus imaginatively avoiding the higher threshold that would otherwise

TABLE 5.2. *Slovakia: electoral results (main parties)*

	1992		1994		1998		2002		2006	
	Votes (%)	Seats	Votes (%)	Seats	Votes (%)	Seats	Votes (%)	Seats	Votes (%)	Seats
HZDS	37.3	74	35.0	61	27.0	43	19.5	36	8.8	15
SNS	7.9	15	5.4	9	9.1	14	3.3	—	11.7	20
KDH	8.9	18	10.1	17	—	—	8.2	15	8.3	14
DU	—	—	8.6	15	—	—	—	—	—	—
SDK(U)	—	—	—	—	26.3	42	15.1	28	18.4	31
SDL	14.7	29	10.4	18	14.1	23	1.4	—	0.1	—
ZRS	—	—	7.3	13	1.3	—	0.5	—	0.3	—
SMK (Hun. parties)	9.7	14	10.2	17	9.1	15	11.7	20	11.7	20
SOP	—	—	—	—	8.0	13	—	—	—	—
KSS	0.8	—	0.7	—	2.8	—	6.3	11	3.9	—
ANO	—	—	—	—	—	—	8.0	15	1.4	—
SMER	—	—	—	—	—	—	13.5	25	29.1	50
Other parties	19.7	—	12.3	—	2.3	—	12.5	—	5.0	—
Volatility	—	—	18.2	—	43.8	—	40.3	—	28.1	—

Source: Derived from www.volby.statistika.sk

apply to them. Moreover, though the effective number of electoral parties in Slovakia remains close to the East Central European average (5.3 per cent in 1992; 5.9 per cent in 1994; 5.3 per cent in 1998; Enyedi and Tóka in this volume), the Slovak party system also witnessed the emergence (and, in one case, subsequent extinction) of several newcomers: the ZRS entered the parliament and government in 1994; the Party of Civic Understanding (SOP) entered the parliament and government (and even presidential office) in 1998. The Direction (Smer), Alliance of a New Citizen (Ano), and the Slovak Communist Party (KSS) entered the parliament after 2002 elections.

In comparison to the Czech Republic, party system stability in Slovakia is thus far more questionable, both in terms of the fortunes of individual parties as well as in the nature of political alliances (Rybář 2002). First, the polarization of Slovak politics and society brought the parties representing the Hungarian minority close to one political camp, eventually securing them ministerial posts in the post-1998 government. This seemed unthinkable only few years previously, when all the major Slovak parties, however divided between themselves, emphatically rejected overt cooperation with the Hungarian parties. What was initially a tripolar competition has thus changed into a bipolar pattern.

Second, and perhaps more important, the issues that used to divide the major party alternatives in Slovakia may neither survive the predictable change of elites nor may they command consistent long-term support among the electorate. The results of the 1998, and especially the 2002 and 2006 elections, indicate that, as new voters who never experienced anything but the new Slovak state enter the electoral arena, mobilization based on the threats to the state and nation is losing its appeal and may give way to hitherto concealed socio-economic and regional issues. Indeed, the electoral campaign prior to the 2006 elections was probably more dominated by economic issues than at any other time in the country's post-communist history. Although the coalition of SMER, HZDS, and SDL brought back to power two parties that were parts of the political polarization of the 1990s, all three coalition parties also appear to share a leftist political agenda and a strong critical stance towards the economic reforms of the previous right-of-centre government.

PARTY LEGITIMACY

Societal anchorage has clearly been seen as the major weakness of not only the Czech and Slovak political parties, but of parties in the whole post-communist region (Ágh 1996; Lewis 1996; Bielasiak 1997). The data in Table 5.3 show variations among the Czech and Slovak parties concerning the number of individual members (i.e. fee-paying members). In fact, compared with the rest, KDU-ČSL and KSČM in the Czech Republic can be characterized as mass membership

TABLE 5.3. Party membership (main parties only)

Czech Republic			Slovakia		
Parties	members	member/voter (in %)	Parties	members	member/voter (in %)
ODS	20,412	1.7	HZDS	45,000	8.2
ČSSD	16,000	1.1	SDKU	4,115	3.9
KDU-ČSL	55,000	10.2	SDL	15,500	4.5
KSČM	107,813	12.2	KDH	27,348	10.0
US	3,000	0.6	SMER	5,200	2.2
			ANO	4,083	2.4
			SMK	9,800	3.8

Note: Member/voter figures based on 2002 electoral results, except for KDU-ČSL and US (1998 results).

Sources: Party web pages and personal interviews for Czech parties, Rybář (2002) for Slovak parties.

parties. Assuming that members are also party voters, the figures on the member/voter ratio show that every fifth KSČM voter, and every tenth KDU-ČSL voter, were party members, which indicates that they rely on a relatively stable base of supporters. However, these are exceptions to the rule: both parties benefit from the organizational legacy of a long-term uninterrupted existence prior to the transition. Moreover, while these parties possess a membership base greater than the majority of the newly emerged parties, all of them have suffered a loss of members, many of whom joined under the communist regime for instrumental reasons only. In the case of the former Czechoslovak Communist Party (now KSČM and SDL), the drop in membership has been dramatic, from almost 2 million before 1989 to around 123,000 currently for the KSČM and SDL together.

The organizational legacy of these parties also partly explains the relatively high level of organizational density in the contemporary Czech and Slovak Republics. If we take the available data on party membership of all Czech and Slovak parties, the total membership in the Czech parties in 1995 represented just over 6 per cent of the electorate, and just over 5 per cent in Slovakia. Perhaps surprisingly for a post-communist democracy, the figures are close to the average for 11 West European democracies at the end of the 1980s (Kopecký 1995), and are substantially higher than levels of party membership in Hungary (about 2 per cent of the electorate: Wyman et al. 1995; Enyedi and Tóka, in this volume), or in Poland (1.5 per cent of the electorate: see Mair 1997; Szczerbiak 2001).¹ However, it is precisely the KSČM and KDU-ČSL that account for about

¹ Note that figures on Eastern Europe from Wyman et al. (1995) are survey figures, whereas figures in Table 5.3 are figures reported by the parties themselves. More comprehensive survey data are reported in Miller, White, and Heywood (1998). The most recent figures (Mair and van Biezen 2001) put Czech party membership at 3.94 per cent of the electorate (4.11 per cent in Slovakia).

60 per cent of party members, yet they polled only some 20 per cent of the votes in the 1992, 1996, 1998, and 2002 elections.

Establishing local networks and a strong presence on the ground demand personnel and money, resources not in abundance for the new parties. Thus, after the initial influx of members, which many newly established parties worked hard to achieve in order to secure both the functioning of the organization and its basic legitimization, membership levels have stagnated at a level far below any mass scale, as is underlined by the generally low member/voter ratios of the parties involved. For some of the parties, like the ODA and US in the Czech Republic, and the SNS and DU (SDK, SDKU) in Slovakia, the minimal level of membership represents an obstacle to their active involvement in local politics. The results of municipal elections in both countries indicate that parties with at least 15,000 members were electorally most successful, not least because smaller parties have been unable to field candidates outside the larger city areas. Moreover, local elections in general have been dominated by independent candidates, running either on their own or on the lists of established parties. For example, 68 per cent of all candidates fielded in the 1998 local elections in the Czech Republic had no party affiliation. The candidates fielded by the five parties currently in the parliament represented 26 per cent of the total number of candidates.

True, most of the Czech and Slovak parties have been successful in establishing links with sympathetic associations, churches, trade unions, foundations, and local networks of entrepreneurs. It can be argued, for example, that the significant victory scored by the anti-Mečiar opposition in the 1998 Slovak elections was in large part due to the campaign efforts organized on its behalf by a network of civil society associations and independent media. However, popular involvement in such organizations tends to be as low as in the parties themselves and activities usually peak only in times of elections or, as in the case of Slovakia, during a serious political crisis. With the exception of the Hungarian minority parties, allied with the 80,000 strong cultural union of ethnic Hungarians (CSEMADOK) living in Slovakia, no Czech or Slovak political party displays signs of a permanent and organizationally sanctioned relationship with a large interest group or social movement. Even the biggest trade unions or churches, however sympathetic and close to the left-wing or Christian Democratic parties in their respective countries, do not visibly influence party policies.

Moreover, many Czech and Slovak parties include provisions in their statute for the creation of ancillary organizations, with some parties (ČSSD in the Czech Republic and KDH, SDL, HZDS in Slovakia) providing such organizational elements with similar rights and status to their district organizations (fielding of candidates for elections, financial support, and to participation in party executive bodies). These affiliated organizations do provide some reservoir of activists and source of leadership recruitment (for example in the ČSSD), but none of the Czech and Slovak parties has been able to create and/or encapsulate more than a

few women or youth organizations, who themselves often stress their autonomous position rather than a close party affiliation.

The relatively low level of direct political involvement in or around parties can best be explained by the reluctance of individualized, atomized, and socially mobile Czech and Slovak citizens to take political action through such conventional means as active partisanship—a partisanship which was also highly discredited by more than forty years of one-party rule. There are several elements involved. Wyman et al. (1995) report that even though the citizens of the Czech and Slovak Republics are not particularly hostile to party competition, political parties as a whole are trusted less than other institutions.² Party members who are male, over 30, and former members of the Communist Party outnumber other members by 2:1 in each category. Given the established correlation between levels of party identification and party membership (Katz 1990), the reported high levels of Czech and Slovak citizens with no attachment to a party (Rose 1995; Mishler and Rose 1997) add another element to the mosaic of sociological factors underlying the relatively weak ties between parties and followers in both countries.³

To be sure, access to the media and the availability of modern campaign techniques which parties in both countries enjoy make a large party membership, whether individual or collective, less of a necessity, thus undermining the willingness of party leaders to invest in it. As most Czech and Slovak party leaders will readily confess, their parties are primarily built to win elections and to govern, rather than to serve as agents of social integration and mass incorporation. But there is no evidence to suggest that parties would erect, consciously or otherwise, any barriers to new members and activists to join. Indeed, those few exceptions driven by a desire to emulate ‘a mass party model’, such as the ČSSD in the Czech Republic or the HZDS in Slovakia, organized several campaigns to attract new members and to strengthen their collective backing. Yet such sporadic organizational strategies do not seem to have yielded much by way of positive effect after several years of effort. Even the HZDS in Slovakia—clearly a successful recruiter among the newly established Czech and Slovak parties (see Table 5.3)—admitted that its membership figures are overinflated by a significant cohort of inactive followers and ‘members on paper only’.

That said, it is striking to see that the Czech and Slovak parties enjoy a virtual monopoly of representation. Alternative channels of representation, such as social

² In a similar way, Mishler and Rose (1997) report that, on a 1 to 7 scale (distrust-trust), parties received an average of 2.8, thus being the least trusted of East Central European institutions. Individual scores were: 3.7, Czech Republic; 3.2, Slovakia; 2.8, Hungary and 2.6, Poland.

³ It should be noted, though, that the strength of attachment varies not only between countries, but also between individual parties. The available data show that the Czech and Slovak populations are generally above the Eastern European average; similarly, parties like the KDU-ČSL, KSCM, and even ODS in the Czech Republic, and the SDL and SMK in Slovakia display a significant cohort of stable followers.

movements, trade unions, or even distinctly anti-party movements, are either weak or non-existent. There also appears to be an expectation, clearly among the elites, but also (in the absence of alternatives) on a large part of the population, that parties are the crucial agents linking the citizens with the state. A good illustration is the emergence (at the end of 1999) of two civic platforms, 'Thank You, Now Leave' and 'Impuls 99', which organized several mass rallies in the Czech Republic, protesting against the 'opposition agreement' between ČSSD and ODS, and the perceived lack of dynamism and political innovation among Czech parliamentary parties. While expressing some anti-party sentiments, not dissimilar to the populist anti-institutional and anti-party positions of the early dissident movements in East Central Europe (Kopecký and Barnfield 1999; Mudde 2001), the primary critique of the platforms was directed against 'the elite' and against 'collusion between the ODS and ČSSD', rather than against parties per se (Dvořáková 2003). Interestingly, the organizers themselves have been juggling with the idea of turning these movements into a more conventional party format, while continuing to call for 'a restoration of a real competition of distinct party alternatives'.

Thus, despite both evidence of low levels of direct participation of citizens in political organizations as well as critical attitudes of citizens towards parties in general, parties appear reasonably well placed even at the societal level in the Czech and Slovak Republics. Party appeals structure the vote, and parties influence citizens' attitudes to political issues (Vlachová 1997, 1999; Tóka 1998). Electoral turnouts in national elections have, in general, been relatively high, even at times in which most opinion polls have suggested substantial dissatisfaction of citizens with the overall political situation: 97, 85, 74, 74, and 58 per cent in the 1990, 1992, 1996, 1998, and 2002 elections respectively in the Czech Republic; 95, 84, 76, 84, and 70 per cent in the 1990, 1992, 1994, 1998, and 2002 elections respectively in Slovakia. Overall electoral volatility has fluctuated in both countries, and remains higher than in most West European countries (Tóka 1996, 1998), though bloc volatility is much lower. Despite the high turnover of independent candidates at local elections, even the smaller local councils are often controlled by multiparty coalitions, not too dissimilar to those formed at the national level. While two-thirds of all candidates in the Czech 1998 local election were running as independents, their electoral return of 40 per cent of the vote compared unfavourably with the 57 per cent polled by the five parliamentary parties which fielded a mere 26 per cent of all candidates.

PARTY ORGANIZATIONAL STRENGTH

The problems that Czech and Slovak parties encountered in their efforts to establish themselves firmly on the ground, at least in numerical terms, have been compensated for by rather successful attempts to build effective and strong party

organizations at the national level. As a result, most of the established big players on the Czech and Slovak political scene now persist as organizations, regardless of occasional factional struggles or revolts of MPs, and subsequent defections in the parliament. Indeed, recent trends in (declining) parliamentary defections in both countries suggest that it is not so much that helpless parties cannot hold on to their initial number of parliamentary representatives, but rather that the MPs who now leave their parliamentary clubs are expelled by their party for breach of party rules. The cases of MPs being stripped of their mandates by the HZDS and SNS in Slovakia between 1994 and 1996 are now well publicized (Skalnik-Leff 1996), but even the split of the Czech ODS in late 1997 can be interpreted as the victory of a highly institutionalized organization over a group of rebels who grossly underestimated the mood and strength of their own party. In this sense, what was once perceived as an epitome of party organizational weakness (Ágh 1995; Olson 1997) now turns out to be a sign of growing maturity and party organizational strength.

The internal organization and functioning of Czech and Slovak parliaments suggests that parties have gradually consolidated their grip on individual members of parliament and, in this process, dramatically changed the picture of fragmentation, instability and MPs' freeriding behaviour associated with East European legislatures. Furthermore, the rules of the game within the parliament (i.e. Standing Orders) reflect the dominant conception that puts parties above individual MPs and other institutions within the parliament. The parliamentarians are, partly in institutional and almost fully in behavioural terms, the bearers of the party mandate; they are the creators and executors of party policy (Kopecký 2001). Roll-call analyses indicate a remarkably high level of voting cohesion in both parliaments (Malová and Krause 2000; Kopecký 2000). Moreover, the behaviour of MPs in parliamentary committees, the distribution of committee chairs and positions, as well as the make-up of other parliamentary bodies such as steering committees, all reflect the subservience of the parliamentary machinery to party politics in both countries.

Needless to say, in the case of many long-standing Czech and Slovak parties, the high level of fragmentation in the early 1990s helped to sort out the many unviable internal friendships, thus making (surviving) parties more homogeneous and ultimately less prone to fragmentation. In this respect, and as indicated above, the spectrum of Slovak parties still appears more volatile and vulnerable than the Czech one, largely because of the changing nature of political alliances, forced by the underlying political polarization of recent years. For example, the SDK—the winner of the 1998 elections—was no more than an electoral coalition consisting of five individual parties, each with its own organization and membership. Assembled together as a strategic coalition against Mečiar's HZDS and its coalition partner SNS, the alliances' internal cohesion and prospects for survival were questionable, and the alliance split before the 2002 elections. Equally, the Hungarian minority parties only recently formed one party (the Slovak Hungarian

coalition—SMK) from three previously self-standing parties with distinct ideological programmes. Because of the strong subcultural profile of the members and followers of these parties, the SMK's long-term prospects for persistence appear better than in the case of the SDK.

However, the number of executive posts created in the party in order to accommodate the interests of rival leadership groups suggests that the potential for intra-party conflicts remains high. The persistence of the many Czech and Slovak parties can be partly attributed to the gradual development of their organizations, which makes it simply more and more difficult for rebellious groups to walk away with the party label, and which provides vested interests and career paths for the individuals involved in the party. The position of parliamentary parties (read parliamentary *clubs*, *factions*, or *fracties*) remains important in the web of party hierarchies. This is not surprising given the fact that most of the Czech and Slovak parties emerged as 'parliamentary parties' in the first place, only later extending their organizations in a top-down fashion. However, since the major Czech and Slovak parties have by now also experienced one or more terms in government and one or more electoral defeats, most have started rapidly achieving an elaborate division of labour within their organizations. The extra-parliamentary party (i.e. its central office), for example, has been developing from a mere supporting clerical unit to an increasingly professionalized and active bureaucracy (Kroupa and Kostelecký 1996; van Biezen 2003), organizing and supervising subunits dealing with specific policy areas, overseeing fund-raising, and coordinating the activities of local party bodies. Since the resources in the hands of individual MPs (or parliamentary parties as a whole) are inferior to those of the central party office,⁴ the parliamentary parties and their members have become closely integrated into the party as a result.

In addition, the extra-parliamentary leadership, and in particular the party executive organs, are now stronger than the parliamentary parties—a tendency which can certainly be seen by the dominance of party leaders in government formation or coalition (re)negotiations. Of course, the personnel overlap between parliamentary parties and executive leadership tends to be high, particularly in the Czech Republic, where ministers (mostly party heavyweights) do not have to give up their parliamentary seat once selected for office. It also tends to be high, in both countries, in the case of parties with small parliamentary representation. This somewhat obscures the power relations that are involved and makes the two subunits highly interdependent, at least in the day-to-day business of parliament

⁴ The bulk of state subsidies in both countries is channelled from the state to the central party office (see below). The parliamentary parties in both countries are usually provided only with office space in the parliament, a car, a secretary, and a small monthly fee per MP (about \$100 in the Czech Republic). Interestingly, even the state subsidies for the MPs' (constituency) work are normally used by the majority of Czech and Slovak MPs to partly finance their local party; some deputies in both countries even pass part of their salary to the central party office (the KSCM and HZDS are known to be particularly insistent in this practice).

and government. However, the party statutes provide for ex-officio representation of parliamentary parties in executive meetings, and it is generally expected (in some cases, like the KSČM in the Czech Republic and the SDL in Slovakia, even codified by party rules) that resolutions of party executives will be followed by parliamentary parties. Indeed, several of the conflicts between party leaders and parliamentary parties that occurred in the past normally resulted either in the expulsion of rebellious MPs (the ČSSD in 1996; the KDH in 1995) or in parliamentary party splits (the KSČM in 1993), with executive leadership prevailing in all cases, and splinter groups and expelled MPs disappearing into oblivion.

Party finances

The organizational persistence of Czech and Slovak parties is also closely related to the institutional environment in which they operate. Needless to say, this environment is literally 'man-made' by the same parties who are to be regulated by it. Nowhere has this been more apparent than in the rules governing state subsidies for political parties. In both countries, political elites showed a remarkable consensus on the desirability of such a form of party financing already in the early stages of the post-communist period. In a 1993/1994 parliamentary survey, only 24 per cent of Czech and 33 per cent of Slovak MPs agreed with the statement that 'parties should do their own fund-raising and not rely on the state for financial assistance' (Kopecký 2001). By now, public funding represents perhaps the strongest bond and solidarity across Czech and Slovak parties, especially those represented in the parliament, despite opinion polls suggesting its unpopularity with the voters.⁵

Indeed, the state has provided subsidies to the parties in proportion to their electoral results (reimbursement of the costs of the campaign) in both countries and, in the Czech Republic, also according to the number of seats they hold in parliament. It is remarkable that the increases in the sums per vote, together with higher electoral thresholds, have been the most frequent changes in electoral and party laws in both countries. In Slovakia, parties polling at least 3 per cent of votes countrywide (formerly 2 per cent) receive 60Sk (about \$1.70) per vote (formerly about \$1.50), payable shortly after the elections as a reimbursement of campaign expenses. In addition, parties also receive a state subvention for the functioning of party, which is in total the same amount of money as that obtained for the reimbursement of campaign expenses, but paid on an annual basis. The contribution of increased subsidies to campaign expenditures can best be demonstrated by the situation of two long-established parties (the HZDS and KDH): in 1992 the

⁵ According to the opinion polls, only 23 per cent of the Czech population favour state financing of political parties. It is absolutely unacceptable for 67 per cent of the population, with a vast majority of 93 per cent thinking parties should be financed from membership fees. See *Lidové Noviny*, 15 July 1996.

HZDS received \$1.4 million for fifty-seven federal MPs and seventy-four Slovak National Council MPs. In 1994, it received almost \$1.8 million for only sixty-one MPs in the Slovak parliament. The KDH received \$363,135 in 1992 for fourteen federal MPs and eighteen Slovak National Council MPs; in 1994 it was almost \$512,000 for seventeen MPs in the Slovak parliament.

However, these relatively modest figures pale into insignificance compared to the sums obtained by Czech parties after the 1996, 1998, and 2002 elections. The regulations grant state subsidies in several forms: first, each party polling at least 3 per cent of the votes nationwide receives 90CzK (about \$3) per vote as a contribution to the costs of the electoral campaign. Second, each party polling at least 3 per cent nationwide receives an annual state subvention of 3 million CzK (about \$100,000), plus an extra 100,000CzK (\$3,333) for each one-tenth of their vote above 3 per cent, allocated up to 5 per cent of the votes (the maximum per year is thus 5 million CzK, that is about \$166,666). This is a subsidy for the functioning of the party. Finally, each party having a seat in the parliament receives an annual subsidy of 500,000CzK (about \$16,666) per seat, also as a form of subsidy for the functioning of the party. The effect on the overall income of parties cannot be underestimated: despite a marginal change in the number of its votes and seats between the 1992 and 1996 elections, for example, the ODS more than tripled its four-year income from the state, from a little over \$3 million to a little over \$10 million.

Given both generally low membership figures and low membership fees (often ignored by members anyway), public funding represents the bulk of their income for Czech and Slovak parties, especially at the national level. However, donations from private sponsors are allowed, providing they are declared in annual party reports available to the public. According to the parties, these financial sources represent the second highest proportion of party income, the amounts varying from party to party. In any case, indebtedness, especially to domestic banks and financial institutions, seems to be an enduring problem of parties in both countries, leading to pressures for higher financial assistance from the state, as well as to regular discussions about the ways of regulating campaign expenditures (which represent the single most substantial party expenditure).

These pressures have increased in recent years, after several scandals involving the illegal financing of parties: in the Czech Republic, the ODS failed to identify its largest sponsors, who gave gifts of 3.75 million CzK. When the press searched for the declared donors, both from abroad, one was found to have died several years earlier, while the other distanced himself from the action he appeared to have taken. Further financial scandals involving the ODS then led to the fall of its (minority) government and the split of the party at the end of 1997. This opened a chain of public and police investigations and virtually none of the major Czech parties (including the ČSSD and SPR-RSČ) avoided their own finance-related problems. The ODA paid perhaps the highest political price. The party disintegrated after its head of central office was investigated concerning a 52 million

CzK loan from a Czech bank, and after further press investigations proved the party's links with the industry during the process of privatization.

In Slovakia, such large-scale financial scandals had for long been avoided, not least because the previous Mečiar governments were able, through their complete party control of the majority of state institutions and media, to prevent public investigations. However, the widespread allegations of corruption, patronage, and illegal party financing of the HZDS/SNS/ZRS government did enter the academic debate (Leško 1996; Mikloš 1997); sleaze also dominated the pre-election strategies of the opposition and helped to turn the tide against the incumbents in the 1998 elections. In both countries, and even more so in the Czech Republic, radical reforms involving limits on private donations, stricter regulations on parties' economic activities, and so forth have now been tabled by governments and groups of MPs in a desperate attempt to improve the shattered public image of the political class, and of political parties in general. The truth is, though, that with the exception of a few party organizers and bureaucrats (in the Czech Republic), the parties have neither been successfully penalized nor prosecuted by courts for their questionable fund-raising activities, nor has any party gone bankrupt as a result of its debts.

Local party organizations

The financial assistance that is accorded to national parties, whether by the state or by private donations, rarely extends down to maintain and support local party activity. Membership fees, together with an occasional supplement of funds from local enterprises or from a local MP with an office in the constituency, thus represent the major source of Czech and Slovak local party income. On the face of it, this should make local parties highly dependent on the centre and restricted in the scope of their activity. Yet, with time, and taking into account different trends across different parties, local organizations, together with regional (county) party organs, have become integrated into the decision-making hierarchies of Czech and Slovak parties, developing their own organizational resources if not, in some cases, a potential to challenge the hitherto highly dominant party centres.

Party centralization has undoubtedly been a prevailing trend in both countries, most clearly visible in the selection of candidates for office at the national level. Regional and local party offices are generally responsible for drawing up the lists of nominees in both countries. Some parties, like the ODA and US in the Czech Republic, provide for the selection of candidates through intra-party primaries, in which members can vote directly for the candidates proposed by local branches. However, party executives retain a veto over the list and it is not uncommon to see the original nominations challenged by party executives before the elections. The seats that are made available for redistribution at the national level after the first-tier redistribution during the electoral process are also filled by party executives, rather than by local branches. More often than not, veto procedures

are not even employed, because high-profile Czech and Slovak MPs and party leaders tend to secure nominations without any major problems, and the scramble usually involves places well down the list of candidates.

Centralization has been part and parcel of often-successful party elite strategies to unify their organizations and make them less vulnerable to the disruptive internal conflicts that plagued many parties throughout the early 1990s. Moreover, centralizing efforts in some areas of party life, like candidate selection, financial management or policy formation, have been accompanied by a diffusion of power in other areas. For example, a decade ago it was difficult to recall a case where the party congress—the highest decision-making authority in all Czech and Slovak parties—was more than a regular collective ritual of leadership legitimation. An argument that could not be won at the party elite level could not usually be won at all, in spite of lengthy and often agonizing debates at party congresses. To some extent, such a situation prevails in many Czech and Slovak parties today. However, the innovation is that a potential leadership challenge or a profound change of policy and ideological direction now also requires conscious and time-consuming effort of rival elites to build support among the local and regional party delegates, with substantive outcomes often hanging on a delicate balance of power within the party organization.

In addition, the local branches of the Czech and Slovak parties are normally granted significant autonomy in their day-to-day management, in the selection of both local party leaders and local candidates, and in the financing of their own activities. Thus, while ordinary members provide relatively little input at the national level, especially in centralized parties like the ODS in the Czech Republic or HZDS in Slovakia, a great deal of activity has been going at the level of local government and, through patronage, in the public service. Indeed, the spoils associated with city administration, such as participation in boards of enterprises linked with local government or control over lucrative contracts for numerous building projects, partly explain why most of the Czech and Slovak parties have been able to develop and maintain relatively vibrant, even if numerically unimpressive, local party networks. In Slovakia, local and especially regional party organizations even serve as an alternative source of power within parties, because the mayors of Slovak cities are directly elected and the local administration is less centralized than in the Czech Republic. The powerful mayorship provides an additional premium for active local partisans, and it is not unusual to see MPs or, as in the case of the recently ousted leader of SNS, even party leaders holding simultaneously a position at the national and also at the local (or regional) level.

Party leaderships value local party organizations in other ways. While only negligible financial support will be directed towards localities, in all parties the central office will distribute discussion papers and party bulletins, organize opinion polls, or even endorsement votes. Local members and activists provide useful and unpaid sources of labour for organizing party rallies and campaign activities. In Slovakia, this has been particularly important because of the existence and

practical use of the referendum which (as one way of calling for it) requires a petition with 350,000 signatures. However, it is not surprising to find great variation among Czech and Slovak parties in terms of their density of territorial implantation and the scale of their local activism. Parties with an organizational inheritance are invariably better represented in the localities as compared with newly established parties: in the Czech Republic, for example, the KSČM and KDU-ČSL have 5,700 and 2,635 local branches respectively, while the two electorally biggest but recently formed parties—the ČSSD and ODS—have built from scratch just 1,500 and 1,100 local branches (January 2000 figures). Similar differences exist in Slovakia between the SDL on the one hand and all the other parties on the other, though the strong social group and/or regional basis of some Slovak parties (the KDH and the Hungarian parties) makes such discrepancies less apparent than in the Czech Republic.

As indicated earlier, the scale of territorial implantation bears on ‘partisan participation’ and, to a lesser extent, on the outcomes of local elections. In the case of Slovakia, it bears on the parties’ ability to collect signatures for a referendum. But it also bears on the persistence of parties. For the local organizations represent a useful fallback for the leadership when things go badly wrong: for instance, when a party needs to draw attention away from a poor electoral performance, an onslaught from other competitors, or a damaged public image. Again, if it was not for their organizational embeddedness, the ‘continuous or historical’ parties would probably not have survived both the factional divisions that beset them after the fall of the communist regime, and the unfavourable political climate (especially towards the [ex]communists) within which they had to operate. The near demise of the poorly implanted and organized ODA and US in the Czech Republic (after, respectively, a series of scandals and weak electoral performance) and the ZRS in Slovakia (after factional fights and poor electoral performance) are instructive in a similar vein, and so is the survival—outside parliament—and comeback of the well-organized SNS.

THE SYSTEMIC FUNCTIONALITY OF CZECH AND SLOVAK POLITICAL PARTIES

More than ten years after momentous changes in the Czech and Slovak Republics, the relevance of political parties for their new political system can hardly be doubted. Overall, if one examines the functioning of democracy in both countries, and the way both systems generate substantive outcomes, the political party—in all relevant aspects—is a crucial variable. Indeed, it is far from an exaggeration to say that Czech and Slovak parties have gradually been able to impose a party government (Katz 1986) order on their respective societies. The Czech and Slovak

political systems consequently allow relatively little exercise of independent authority beyond the reach of the parties.

Political recruitment

Recruitment to both elective and appointive public office is the most obvious sign of strong party control in both countries. Indeed, with respect to the former, parties have virtually no challengers in the selection of political personnel, because access to legislative and (thus) governmental positions is a matter of exclusive partisan considerations (Kopecný 2001). Independent candidates stand no chance in parliamentary elections. This situation largely stems from the electoral laws: only registered parties can present lists of candidates in both countries, and (in the Czech Republic) only parties are in a position to pay the financial deposit required to register for elections. But it is also a function of the increased organizational capacity of parties, who are now in the possession of enough cadres to avoid the early 1990s practice of enriching (and legitimizing) their lists with non-party candidates nominated by social groups, or with high-profile personalities from other sectors of society. In the Czech Republic, much hope was also invested by the champions of 'independent personalities' into the election to the upper chamber of the parliament (the Senate). However, even these elections have so far turned out to be predominantly party races.

To be sure, the possibility of using preferential voting, which allows citizens to alter the proposed lists of candidates, means that deputies in both countries might benefit from building up a personal reputation in their constituencies, and thus counter attempts by the parties to thwart their re-nomination. Indeed, the use of preferential votes has generally increased in both countries since its introduction in 1990. Yet the number of elected deputies who actually jumped the list has not increased at all, because preferences seem to be allocated in such a way that they fail to favour particular candidates. The partial and very important explanation is that a slight tinkering with the electoral rules, initiated by the Czech and Slovak parties before the 1992 elections, resulted in an increased threshold needed for a candidate to move up the proposed list, thus insulating parties from potential difficulties in controlling nominations and recruitment to parliament.

The selection of ministers conveys a very similar tale. Cabinet members are normally selected from within parliament and, in addition, even those recruited from outside parliament are normally party members. Several ministers—three in Mečiar's 1992–94 government and two in Klaus' 1992–96 governments—were appointed as non-political and non-partisan specialists from a wider circle of established experts surrounding the parties. Similarly, Tošovský's caretaker government in the Czech Republic (1998) included several non-partisan appointees. However, perhaps with the exception of the short-lived caretaker cabinet in the Czech Republic, these appointees acted within the strict political guidelines of the party which nominated them and their activity was subject to the same scrutiny

as that of a normal partisan appointee. Indeed, the two ministers nominated by Mečiar's HZDS in 1992 later joined the party.

Party sympathy plays an important role in the selection of candidates to non-elective offices of public bureaucracies as well. A change of government, and often even that of an individual minister, usually spells a significant turnover of higher ranked officials within each ministry, despite the fact that bureaucracies are supposed to provide impartial professional services for policy-defining politicians. In the early 1990s, such a practice was justified by Czech and Slovak politicians by reference to the 'communist heritage' of the civil service, presumably in need of incremental re-staffing to ensure its impartiality and professional competence. However, more recent trends in both countries do not seem to suggest any significant rise in the continuity of officials in higher administrative positions; indeed, both the change to Social Democratic government in the Czech Republic in 1998 and the victory of the anti-Mečiar opposition in Slovakia in the same year meant that not only a range of ministerial employees, but also several appointees to public agencies and advisory boards, were eventually replaced by sympathizers and/or members of parties constituting the new governing elites. Indeed, the politicization of the state appears to be greater in the Czech and Slovak Republics than in the other East Central European countries (Grzymała-Busse 2003; see also Kopecký 2006; O'Dwyer 2006).

Party control is predictably less apparent in the case of two Czech and Slovak institutions with appointed officials—the Constitutional Court and the National Bank. In both countries, these institutions are not accountable to parliament and have clearly defined functions and important constitutional prerogatives. The independence of the courts and the banks became, at least in the early years of democratization, one of the key political conceptions, embodied in the new constitutions. And the practice went some way to confirm the autonomous position of these institutions. In Slovakia, the Court became the only key institutional actor able to challenge Mečiar's governments between 1992 and 1998, adjudging numerous laws incompatible with the constitution. The outcomes of legislative activity in these extraordinary years of strong majority rule then normally depended on the subsequent ability of the government majority to avoid, reinterpret or simply violate the Court's rulings (Malová and Rybář 1999). Similarly, in the Czech Republic, the National Bank pursued its own overzealous anti-inflation policies at the time the Klaus government (1996–7) attempted to reverse the economic slump with a series of austerity measures. The ensuing conflict led to speculation not only about the replacement of the chairman of the bank, but also about the sustainability of the bank's autonomous institutional position.

Yet subtle partisan influences are far from absent even in these institutions, especially in Slovakia. Nominations for judges of the Court, as well as those for chief banker, are at least partly controlled by the Slovak parliament and government. Although the Court's judges are elected for a term (seven years) longer than that of parliament (both four years), prospective candidates are selected by

the legislators. The ten judges are appointed by the president from a pool of twenty candidates selected by the parliament. During the selection, each candidate inevitably acquires a partisan colour, because each party, or coalition of parties, tries to nominate persons close to its ranks. Thus, while parties clearly cannot control the final list of ten judges, each party is at least in a position to block the most undesirable candidates of other competitors. Similarly, although the chief and vice-chief central bankers are appointed by the Slovak president, this is done only on the basis of a proposal from the government, a priori approved by the parliament.

Such channels of influencing the selection of personnel for the Court and the Bank are more restricted in the Czech Republic. The fifteen Court's judges are appointed by the president for a ten-year term, and only the consent of the Senate is needed to approve the presidential list of candidates. The head of state thus possesses the crucial right of initial selection, not available to the Slovak president. In addition, the Czech president nominates the seven-member board of the Central Bank for a period of six years. The reach of party government is thus significantly less in the Czech Republic, at least in the formal institutional sense, even though constitutional provisions regulating appointments to the Court and the Bank have been subject of political battles, confirming the plain fact that even the strongest existing checks on party rule can be taken away by legislation.

Governance

These instances of political tinkering obviously underscore the importance of presidents as a potential constraint on party government in the Czech and Slovak Republics. Indeed, the (re-)election of Havel and Kováč in their respective countries in 1992 seemed to herald continuity in the 'above-parties' approach to presidential office, established with the election of Havel as the Czechoslovak Federal president in 1990. Though owing their election to a qualified majority in parliament, both non-partisan presidents were supposed to perform their (largely ceremonial) functions independently of the will of both the parliamentary majority and the political parties. The frequent clashes that have subsequently occurred in both countries between presidents on the one hand, and the governments and parliaments on the other hand, appeared to confirm such a trend (cf. Baylis 1996).

However, to interpret presidential activities (numerous vetoes on legislation or, in Slovakia, interference with the selection of ministers) as an obstacle to party influence on public policies would be a misinterpretation of the situation. For the Czech and Slovak presidents often tried to moderate the (unrestricted) rule of the majority, rather than to preclude the influence of parties per se. Indeed, under the prevailing tendency in both countries to politicize almost every issue, the presidents have found it increasingly difficult to operate 'above parties', even if they had wished to do so. Their autonomous base, derived from institutional

preconditions as much as from personal qualities, gradually evaporated in the case of both heads of state: the Slovak president had openly sided with the anti-Mečiar opposition until his term in office expired at the end of 1998; Havel's even stronger credentials as an independent statesman (and opponent of 'parties') have been seriously questioned ever since his involvement in the breakdown of Klaus's second government in 1996 and his overt building of political alliances with the coalition of smaller centre-right parties (Kunc 1999). Moreover, Klaus himself, elected as Czech president in 2003, is an ex-chairman of the largest party (ODS) as well as a staunch proponent of the party government model.

A similar fate of needing to forge political alliances, and thus conforming to the party government dictum, has awaited the activities of the major Czech and Slovak interest groups. As already noted, in the realm of the self-organized social sphere commonly referred to as 'civil society', Czech and Slovak parties neither succeeded in relegating independent groups to the status of affiliated and ancillary organizations through the processes of organizational encapsulation, nor did they attempt to do so. Parties nevertheless managed to establish a monopoly of control over the decision-making processes, whereby civil society actors' relative autonomy vis-à-vis parties is checked by their marginal input to the political process (Green and Skalnik-Leff 1997; Malová 1997). Policy demands originating from within civil society are channelled to the political arena on the basis of either a multiparty strategy, or through personal contacts with MPs, ministers, and bureaucracy. And since the fate of these demands ultimately depends on subsequent decisions within parties, governments and parliaments, the independent groups have been ready to win support of individual parties, rather than to develop a strategy aiming at reducing parties' overall role in the polity.

The trade unions—the largest and most powerful interest group in both countries—temporarily enjoyed a privileged position in their respective political systems in the form of the partial delegation of policymaking power to the instituted system of tripartite bargaining between unions, employees, and the government. The tripartite councils, established in the former Czechoslovakia as a means of preventing potential social unrest during economic transformation, might suggest the emergence of a corporatist form of governing, thus restricting the scope of party government. Yet such has been the determination of parties and governments to control the political agenda that, by the mid-1990s, most of the Councils' recommendations were either ignored by parliaments (whether left or right dominated) or, when endorsed, confined to the unions' relatively narrow economic, social, and legislative demands. Although the governments' exclusionary tactics, together with the growing assertiveness of the now reorganized and more credible union organizations, have led to an increase in protest and strike activities in both countries, the unions' position in terms of the issues of broader political significance remains negligible.

Political communication

The Czech and Slovak media have so far not greatly weakened the agenda-setting power of political parties either, despite the existence of privately (and foreign) owned television, radio, and newspapers in both countries. Parties themselves rarely own means of political communication of any importance: in terms of circulation, only the HZDS in Slovakia has been able to operate and control a daily newspaper, acting as the party's mouthpiece. The periodicals of other parties represent no more than low circulation papers, directed primarily towards their own members. However, the political programmes of the (still large) public electronic media often display pro-government leanings, or at least sheepishly follow the governmental agenda. As with the change of personnel in ministries, television goes through similar shake-ups following changes of government, as does the membership of boards and commissions overseeing the public media's coverage and finances. The changes in the personnel of the Slovak Councils for Radio and Television Broadcasting under the Mečiar governments in Slovakia, for example, received widespread international attention and criticism (Školka 1997).

To be sure, during election campaigns, both public TV and radio must, and generally do, observe the election law, which obliges them to provide a balanced coverage and political commentary, as well as regulating the airtime available to the individual parties. Similarly, the numerous independent newspapers and magazines, together with several private TV channels, provide political coverage genuinely challenging governments: the investigations led by two independent broadsheet papers launched a series of party financial scandals in the Czech Republic, resulting in the fall of Klaus's government at the end of 1997; political coverage of independent TV, radio, and press aided the campaign of anti-Mečiar opposition prior to the 1998 elections, counterbalancing the then almost total governmental control of the public media. Nevertheless, the existence of a healthy critique of government policies is not necessarily the same as would be a pursuit of issues that had not already been propagated by various parties.

Political participation and interest articulation

All in all, it appears that there are few visible obstacles to party influence in all major areas of Czech and Slovak government. The institutional constraints that exist in both countries, such as the powers of the Central Bank and the Constitutional Court, are a mere modification of what could otherwise be an ideal-typical form of party government, unattained in practice even in the era of mass party politics in Western Europe. Similarly, the fact that both countries have become members of the EU and NATO, together with their dependence on foreign capital, makes the range of feasible options in various policy sectors highly restricted, but perhaps not more so than in many other small West European states in which party

government has continued to flourish. Nevertheless, the factor which clearly does, and is likely to continue to, consistently undermine the scope of party government in both countries is the parties' limited ability to both increase political participation and monopolize interest articulation. Although we still know relatively little about actual patterns of activism, aggregate party membership figures are still relatively low. Local politics in large areas of both countries is in the hands of elected independents, and both parties and governments feature regularly in the polls as the least trusted institutions. Pop concerts, sporting events, and memorial rallies of all kinds seem to attract far more public attention than any mass event organized by political parties and attended by leading politicians, save for the relatively short periods of electoral campaigns. Similarly, the numerous single-issue groups, and even the media, probably account for a larger share of interest articulation than do parties themselves.

Put differently, the parties' linkage function, in the sense of being an outlet for civic activity and a channel of communication, founders on the low level of citizens' direct involvement in or around political parties, if not on the parties' indifference to forging solid links with their constituencies. The ability of Czech and Slovak parties to penetrate and organize state institutions appears significantly greater than their ability to penetrate society at its grass-roots level. Given the strong predisposition of both political systems to rely on intermediary forms of representation, and given that organizations of civil society other than parties appear to be relatively weak, this obviously raises some concerns, not least from the viewpoint of the sustainability of party government. For the delegative principle inevitably involved in intermediary representation is accompanied by a gap between party elites and their supporters, which largely reduces the whole process of (intermediary) representation to the single electoral act conducted at four-year intervals. True, no anti-party movement of any kind has gained prominence in the Czech and Slovak Republics, and even the anti-establishment forces of the far left and far right work through conventional, party-like organizations. But it is a (perceived) lack of credible and attractive alternatives, rather than strong party control, which makes parties both dominant in representation and, ultimately, the actors most responsible for fostering legitimacy and political participation in these two recently established democracies.

CONCLUSION

The speed and resilience with which the Czech and Slovak political elites have been able to erect and in many aspects reinforce party government is undoubtedly impressive, given the rapidly changing domestic political and social context in which democratization has taken place. While a high partisan penetration of society in terms of mass membership and the strength of party attachments has

always been unlikely in post-communist conditions, the parties' supremacy within their respective institutional environments is quite astonishing. While the real (as opposed to declared) differences between parties on major socio-economic issues may have been tempered by exogenous policy constraints and the existence of many widely shared ideological commitments, the party systems have nevertheless been able to generate competitive elections and governmental alternatives. The Czech and Slovak democracies do not differ in this respect: as this chapter has shown, both countries display behavioural and institutional features which, in the aggregate, provide for a strong form of party government. The parties control political recruitment; directly or indirectly, they are largely in charge of setting the agenda of the mass media; they enjoy their own autonomous power base; they control proceedings in parliaments; in the absence of strong challengers, they also enjoy a near monopoly over political representation.

It is also clear, however, that both countries represent their own version of the generic model of party government, both in terms of its particular configuration of behavioural and institutional features, as well as in terms of its temporal development. In comparison to the Czech Republic, party system stability in Slovakia has been more questionable, both in terms of the shape of individual parties as well as the nature of political alliances. In fact, the polarization of Slovak politics, where the dominant pattern of political competition revolved around the questions of national identity, and later evolved into an all-out struggle between rival elites over the control of the state, threatened some of the foundations on which party government is based. Before the 1998 elections, Slovak democracy, and with it party government, were perilously close to collapse, because the main objective of one group of competing parties gradually became to eliminate the chances of the other group of participating in electoral (and decision-making) processes. With the benefit of hindsight, this period of Slovak political development represented only a temporary and perhaps an extreme example of the application of majority rule—a situation which, after all, is perfectly compatible with the party government concept (Katz 1986). In the end, therefore, the threat to the party government did not come from any fundamental restructuring of the institutional apparatus of government—a potential which remained largely unrealized in Slovakia—but rather from the fact that political infighting of that period made the (party government) system vulnerable to the loss of both popular and (partly) elite support.

In any case, party government in the Czech and Slovak republics should be seen as a developing political strategy, rather than something of a given and historically predetermined nature. In the early 1990s, individual MPs, strong personalities, shifting coalitions cutting across party lines, and many other factors inimical to the concept of party government played an important role in the politics of both countries, to the extent that several observers became altogether sceptical about the possibility of party system institutionalization (e.g. Olson 1993). Why, then,

has party government been established, given that competing models of democratic governance were considered (e.g. 'anti-political politics' with broad and diffuse interest representation), and the whole idea of 'party' encountered strong normative opposition in the aftermath of the communist breakdown, particularly among some of the former dissidents? The partial answer might be found in Katz's suggestion that 'the strongest conditioning factor for party government at the present is to have had party government in the past' (Katz 1986: 55). However problematic it may be to attribute political conceptions in the contemporary Czech and Slovak Republics to the remote traditions of the First Republic (1918–39), it is striking to see that the role models of politicians from this period, together with many political symbols and rhetoric, were carried over to the post-communist period, particularly in the Czech Republic. The democratic First Republic had party government par excellence.

However, the more tangible answer surely is that institutional attributes of the Czech and Slovak political systems anchored in the 1992 constitutions, such as a parliamentary system of government and PR electoral systems, are highly conducive to strong party government. Of course, it may be argued that these institutional rules (or actually even the highly contingent decision from the 1989 round-table talks to carry on with the old communist constitution) only mandated a form of parliamentary system of government, but were not intended to set the process of party government formation in motion. This may have been so, but it is now apparent that these early decisions served perfectly the ambitions of several politicians, such as Klaus in the Czech Republic, and Mečiar and Černogurský in Slovakia, who quickly came to appreciate that a strong party organization was the best way to pursue their interests, both policy and personal, in an era characterized by a massive legislative agenda and huge popular expectations. Their advances in the political field made it abundantly clear to others that avoiding a party strategy would mean depriving themselves of a vital instrument for achieving their political ends.

In any event, the ambitions, and perhaps even very conscious intentions, of Czech and Slovak politicians to manipulate current institutional structures such that they reduce the environmental uncertainty in which their parties operate cannot be doubted. For the numerous modifications to constitutional, electoral and parliamentary rules in both countries since 1992 show a rather consistent trend towards reinforcing 'party-friendly' rules and, within these rules, towards adopting institutional devices that protect the privileges of established parties against potential newcomers. Czech and Slovak parties are unlikely to be in a position to structure the attitudes and the behaviour of citizens in the same way. But precisely because they have enjoyed the ability to define the rules of the game, and showed the willingness and capacity to do so, they put themselves into an excellent position to dominate the political systems in which they operate.

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The Only Game in Town

Party Politics in Hungary

Zsolt Enyedi and Gábor Tóka

INTRODUCTION

The decline of party thesis, born as it was in the established Western democracies, portrays a world where environmental change makes it impossible for ageing dinosaurs to hold on to their niche. Some lucky mutants survive on isolated islands, but the inertia instilled by a long period of ascendancy makes successful adaptation unlikely. This vision assumes a past where political parties often played a crucial role not only in the functioning of democracy, but more broadly in the development of mass societies and the consolidation of modern states (Apter 1965: 186 ff.). In such cases—most spectacularly, in some former colonies after the Second World War—party competition was one of the mechanisms that facilitated the transformation of isolated communities and deeply divided casts, classes, or orders into a nationally conscious citizenry. This historical role was possible, claims the standard interpretation, because many political parties did not confine their activity to purely political matters but engaged in providing social services (social security, education, entertainment, and so forth) for their constituencies.

The contrast could not be greater with party politics in Hungary. During the wave of democratization in East Central Europe that began in 1989, citizens were already incorporated, mobilized, activated, and politicized (Mair 1997: 180), and a unified national political market was already in existence at the onset of electoral competition. Political parties have usually played a marginal role in citizens' everyday life ever since, and even their contribution to the consolidation of democratic rule is questionable (Tóka 1997). Some sceptics—especially advocates of corporatist-style arrangements—go still further and argue that the party system sometimes represents a dysfunctional element in the developing East European social order and destabilizes the political system (Kulcsár 1997). In their view, the feeble new political parties just impose their volatile needs on an already overloaded governmental system, and do not serve as channels of interest aggregation and coordination between branches of government.

TABLE 6.1. *Percentage distribution of list votes in Hungarian parliamentary elections, 1990–2006*

	1990	1994	1998	2002	2006
MSZP	10.89	32.99	32.89	42.05	43.31
SZDSZ	21.39	19.74	7.57	5.57	6.50
MDF	24.73	11.74	2.80	41.07*	5.04
Fidesz	8.95	7.02	29.45		42.03*
KDNP	6.46	7.03	2.31	—	
FKgP	11.73	8.82	13.14	0.75	0.02
MIÉP	—	1.59	5.47	4.37	2.20**
Others	15.85	11.07	6.37	6.19	0.99
ENEP	6.40	5.21	4.41	2.82	2.69

* Joint list

** MIÉP-Jobbik joint list.

Source: Reports of the National Election Commission.

In this chapter we explore these issues from the perspective of Hungarian party politics.¹ Without claiming that a single country can represent a whole region, we do not see Hungary as an atypical outlier in East Central Europe. Although the Hungarian parties of today are largely the same organizations that were the chief actors during the transition to democracy (see Tables 6.1 and 6.2), under this surface of continuity in party names the fluidity characterizing post-communist party politics has been easily discernible. A brief headcount of the relevant parties will suffice to see that splits, mergers, major changes in ideology or coalition partners, and extraordinarily high volatility shook all of them, and fundamentally altered their place in the party system. Despite this apparent fragility of individual parties, parties as institutions became, in Hungary at least, by far the most important players in the political process.

The ruling party of the communist period had been overhauled half a year before the first free elections in March–April 1990, when its last congress dissolved the party and transformed it into the founding conference of its legal heir, the reformist Hungarian Socialist Party (MSZP). Less than one in every eight members bothered to re-register as MSZP members, and an orthodox wing set up its own party that has contested every national election since 1990 and collected up to 4 per cent of the vote, but otherwise had no political relevance. The continuity between today's ex-communist party and its communist-era predecessor is among the weakest in the post-communist region (Grzymala-Busse 2002).

Following the 1990 election the parties of the right (MDF, FKgP, and KDNP) were able to form a government.² All three of them, however, had come to

¹ We restrict the discussion to the seven parties that have satisfied Sartori's criteria of relevance (1976) for at least a whole legislative term.

² In Hungarian political parlance 'right-wing' stands for a Christian-nationalist and/or anti-communist orientation, while 'left' is associated with the socialist-communist legacy and, among elites, with a libertarian-cosmopolitan orientation.

TABLE 6.2. *Distribution of seats in Hungarian parliamentary elections, 1990–2006*

	1990	1994	1998	2002	2006
MSZP	33 (8.5%)	209 (54.1%)	134 (34.7%)	178 (46.1%)	190 (49.2%)
SZDSZ	94 (24.4%)	70 (18.1%)	24 (6.2%)	20 (5.2%)	20 (5.2%)
FIDESZ	22 (5.7%)	20 (5.2%)	148 (38.3%)	164 (42.5%)	141 (36.5%)
FKgP	44 (11.4%)	26 (6.7%)	48 (12.4%)	— (0.0%)	— (0.0%)
KDNP	21 (5.4%)	22 (5.7%)	— (0.0%)	— (0.0%)	23 (6.0%)
MDF	164 (42.5%)	38 (9.8%)	17 (4.4%)	24 (6.2%)	11 (2.8%)
MIÉP	— (0.0%)	— (0.0%)	14 (3.6%)	— (0.0%)	— (0.0%)
Independents	6 (1.6%)	— (0.0%)	1 (0.3%)	— (0.0%)	— (0.0%)
Others	2 (0.5%)	1 (0.3%)	— (0.0%)	— (0.0%)	1 (0.3%)

Note: The majorities of the incoming governments are printed in bold. Deputies elected in single-member districts as joint candidates of more than one party are counted according to the parliamentary party they joined at the first session of the respective parliament, including two ASZ candidates (one each in 1990 and 1994, respectively) who joined SZDSZ in exchange for receiving SZDSZ endorsement in the second round of the election.

Sources: As above, and press reports about the first session of each parliament.

the brink of electoral extinction by the turn of the new century. The demise of the Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF) was rooted mainly in the deep unpopularity of the 1990–4 governments, but did not stop after the landslide opposition victory in the 1994 election. The Democratic Forum (MDF) and the Christian Democratic People’s Party (KDNP) were further weakened by party splits over policy issues and coalition strategy, and by 1998 could only enter parliament through an electoral alliance with a formerly liberal party.

The agrarian-populist Independent Smallholders’ Party (FKgP) had already left the original coalition by early 1992. The government of the day only retained its legislative majority because three quarters of the FKgP deputies defied their party and remained on the government benches. Party leader József Torgyán led his party back into another right-wing coalition in 1998, but internal battles and scandals surrounding the party’s governmental activities made the FKgP disappear from parliament in the 2002 election. As did the Party of Hungarian Justice and Life (MIÉP)—a far-right splinter from MDF—after a short tenure in the 1998–2002 parliament.

The two parties representing the liberal pole in the early 1990s suffered fewer factional disputes, but altered considerably in their ideological orientation and coalition preferences. By 1992, the Alliance of Free Democrats (SZDSZ) had evidently decided that the MSZP was a far lesser evil than the Christian-nationalist parties, and in 1994 it joined a coalition government with the socialists. This led to a break-up of the already shaky alliance with the Alliance of Young Democrats (FIDESZ), which, after 1992, gradually adopted the policy agenda and rhetoric of the Christian-nationalist parties. The party changed its name to Fidesz-Hungarian Civic Party (Fidesz-MPP) in 1995, and to Fidesz-Hungarian Civic

Union (Fidesz-MPSZ) in 2003,³ and established itself as a centre-right formation capable of attracting large numbers of voters from all segments of the political arena. Meanwhile the SZDSZ became a relatively small and marginalized party emphatically rejected by the right as a possible coalition partner.

Hence inter-party relations changed considerably, but not chaotically. The non-communist parties emerged while the main (or only) relevant political divide concerned the speed and goals of the transition. Consequently, the ex-communists constituted one pole, and the radical opposition of the period (SZDSZ, FIDESZ, and FKgP) the other. It was not the inherent instability of the party system, but the end of the transition that altered the political agenda and replaced the previous system of alliances with something else. In the 1991–3 period, the traditionalist pole—that is the Christian-social KDNP, the agrarian-populist FKgP, and the conservative-nationalist MDF—were pitted against the two liberal parties on the one hand, and the socialists on the other.

The gradual return to a bipolar system of alliances after 1993 is best interpreted as a natural adaptation, in the absence of deep cleavages cross-cutting each other, to institutional variables that are largely cemented by the constitutional requirement of a two-thirds majority to alter them (cf. Tóka 2004). To avoid being sidelined, the smaller parties must, at least for the second round of elections, join an electoral bloc that has a chance of winning most single-member seats. Although the predominant element of the electoral system is list proportional representation with a 5 per cent legal threshold, the average district size and the method of seat allocation are rather unfavourable for parties with less than 10 per cent of the vote (Tóka 1995). In addition, over 45 per cent of the seats are allocated to single-member districts. The winner in the median single-member district can expect a hefty bonus in terms of seats, and the ticket leader of the biggest party in a new parliament has, according to the emerging informal convention, the right to be first to attempt to form a government—indeed they always ended up as the party of the new premier. Once installed, the prime minister can only be removed by a constructive vote of no confidence, thus making his seat very secure indeed, and there is no second chamber, federal division of power, or a strong presidency to weaken his authority.⁴

The concentration of executive power favoured the parties that could present a clear and self-sufficient alternative to the government of the day, and strengthened the prevailing winner-takes-all logic of the party competition. This logic is manifested by a high degree of partisan penetration into the public service and by adversarial inter-party relations. Accommodation between government and opposition occurs rarely, and then only on issues of low salience or legislation requiring a super-majority. Every election but one has, so far, brought about a

³ In the new label 'Fidesz' only refers to the Latin root of the party's previous name, and does not stand for 'Alliance of Young Democrats' any more.

⁴ We avoid gender-neutral language because all premiers to date were men.

straight alternation of government and (some) opposition parties (see Table 6.2). At least a few issue domains divide the major party alternatives predictably, consistently, and emphatically (Tóka 2004). Last but not least, no coalition, as yet, has bridged the sociocultural left-right divide.

THE POPULAR LEGITIMACY OF HUNGARIAN POLITICAL PARTIES

Most symptoms associated with party decline characterized Hungarian politics during the last decade more than they did Western Europe. Electoral volatility was high throughout the 1990s, emotional attachment to parties among the majority of the voters was loose, and citizen involvement in party politics and elections was low. Under communism, the development of a comprehensive welfare state, secularization, and the atomization of society via the erosion of communal forms of entertainment, associational life, and collective identities progressed further than in most of the West. Thus, the constraints on the parties' capacity to anchor themselves to specific social groups may be even greater in Hungary than in most of the modern world. Whether due to these obstacles, or simply because of the lack of will, Hungarian parties have established only weak links with most of their supporters.

The combined membership of all parliamentary parties has normally been around 2–3 per cent of the electorate, or a percentage point higher if all the smaller parties are added.⁵ Many civic organizations are, at least informally, affiliated with parties (Enyedi 1996, 2005), but their membership is rather small, leaving the bulk of the population outside the reach of party organizations.

While comparable to contemporary British, Spanish, French, German, or even Vietnamese data (Derbyshire and Derbyshire 1996: 99), Hungarian party membership figures are invariably referred to as 'low' or 'very low' in domestic political discourse. Regionally concentrated weaknesses in the membership base almost certainly were the reason for the recurrent failure of the FKgP, the KDNP, and the MIÉP to field candidates in every single-member district in national elections, and a major obstacle to greater partisan penetration of local politics in the villages. But the price that the parties actually pay for their relatively low membership figures must be estimated cautiously. An overwhelming majority of Hungarians live in localities where the council is firmly controlled by one multiparty coalition

⁵ Kurtán et al. (annual) published self-reported membership data for 7 years, which put the combined membership of the parliamentary parties at 198,400, 228,200, 234,200, 193,360, 225,500, 224,880, 106,100, 118,000 106,001 in 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2002, 2003, and 2004, respectively. The apparent drop in 2002 is mainly due to the fact that FKgP, which claimed the largest membership in Hungary, failed to make it into the parliament. Note, however, that FKgP membership reports were considered grossly inflated by most observers.

or another, and, as Ilonszki (1999) has shown, there are usually more candidates running for a parliamentary seat in Hungary than in most Western countries.

Subcultural institutions—foundations, open universities, farmers' clubs, etc.—perform some important functions for the political parties. Networks of professionals, executives, and entrepreneurs often contribute free (or not immediately reciprocated) services as think tanks, transmit the party line as respected public figures or political commentators, and find creative solutions to problems around the party coffers. Sympathetic associations or churches often prove valuable sources of unpaid labour in election campaigns. A strong party presence in the leaderships of civic associations can help obtaining endorsements—in election campaigns and daily political conflicts—from reputable non-partisan sources as well as representation on the public bodies supervising the public broadcast media. According to a 1993 survey of 124 MPs, 5 in every 6 parliamentarians were active in some non-partisan organization: 15 per cent paid dues in a trade union, 47 per cent participated in religious, 63 per cent in professional, 24 per cent in ethnic, 16 per cent in environmental, and 26 per cent in 'other' associations. At the same time 29 per cent recalled having been supported in their campaign by a religious organization, 12 per cent by a trade union, 30 per cent by a professional, 7 per cent by an ethnic, and 10 per cent by an environmentalist association (Montgomery 1996).

According to opinion polls, the reputation of parties in general is lower than of other political institutions (see Table 6.3). The initial reservation against parties can be explained in terms of the communist legacy, but the various scandals surrounding party politics have certainly strengthened negative stereotypes

TABLE 6.3. *Percentage of citizens who have 'great' or 'some' trust in various political institutions, 1991–2005*

	Constitutional Court	President	Government	Political parties	Parliament
1991	67	79	56	36	56
1992	48	56	32	26	32
1993	57	64	33	28	33
1994	64	76	55	39	51
1995	62	70	37	32	39
1996	63	69	37	30	36
1997	65	68	39	32	38
1998	69	73	53	40	50
1999	69	75	46	37	46
2000	67	74	43	35	44
2001	67	67	45	37	45
2002	68	66	54	42	52
2003	65	63	48	37	47
2004	65	65	42	36	44
2005	66	68	42	35	43

Source: Polls carried out by the Medián Public Opinion and Market Research Institute and kindly provided to us by Endre Hann and Gergely Karácsony.

concerning the actual motives of party politicians. In 1993, government-favoured (but not necessarily incumbent) parties received from the government and immediately sold some remarkably valuable office space; in 1996 government parties apparently demanded a hefty kickback for helping a lawyer to obtain a fabulously lucrative contract with the privatization agency; and the 1998 election campaign of an opposition party may partly have been financed in the (mistaken) expectation of political favours by a publicly owned commercial bank. All such instances of sleaze turned out to be beyond the reach of legal sanctions, but some of the related scandals are widely believed to have been major causes of drastic electoral losses for the FIDESZ in 1994 and the SZDSZ in 1998, and generated much cynicism about the moral integrity of the MSZP as well as political parties in general.

Yet trust in political parties—as in all other political institutions—started to recuperate after a tremendous drop early in the post-communist period (see Table 6.3). Some short-term ups and downs clearly reflected the electoral cycle, with trust declining midterm and rising again in the immediate pre- and post-election periods. Apart from this, long-term trends are closely related to the tides of economic expectations, with trust collapsing during the economic crisis of the 1991–2 period and growing reasonably quickly whenever average real income grew—especially in 1994, 1997–8, and 2001–2.

It is almost a commonplace that post-communist Eastern Europe is characterized by negative partisanship and by a dearth of open partisan identification (Rose and Mishler 1997; see also Table 6.4). In opinion polls conducted between two elections, around 40 per cent of respondents reported no party preference in the 1990s. Voters frequently switched party, and electoral volatility was staggering: 28.3 per cent of the vote changed hands between 1990 and 1994, 33.6 per cent between 1994 and 1998, and 20.2 per cent between 1998 and 2002.⁶

The turn of the new century, however, brought a considerable degree of stabilization and crystallization of partisan support in Hungary, with just a modest volatility of 8.2 per cent occurring between 2002 and 2006. The number of those who had no party preference declined (Gazsó 2000). In 1998, the percentage of citizens identifying with a party was still a bit lower than the average of third-wave democracies where comparative data are available from for the late 1990s—but by 2002 the Hungarian percentage even exceeded the average of established democracies around the millennium (cf. Table 6.4). Turnout at the parliamentary elections increased to a previously unprecedented—though still modest—level of 73 per cent in the 2002 run-offs, the politicization of the society reached unprecedented heights, and the volatility of party preferences markedly diminished. As the MSZP and Fidesz emerged as the uncontested representatives of the left and the right, respectively, the emotions of the voters focused on them.

⁶ The percentage figures cited in the text are half the sum of the absolute differences between the percentage distribution of party list votes in successive parliamentary elections.

TABLE 6.4. *Incidence of partisan identification in Hungary in cross-national comparison*

Old democracies	%	Third-wave democracies	%
Australia 1996	84	Bulgaria 2001	43
Canada 1997	52	Chile 1999	21
Denmark 1998	51	Czech Republic 1996	49
France 2002	57	<i>Hungary 1998</i>	<i>34</i>
Germany 1998	42	<i>Hungary 2002</i>	<i>52</i>
Germany 2002	35	Lithuania 1997	31
Ireland 2002	28	Mexico 2000	53
Israel 1996	64	Poland 1997	53
Japan 1996	39	Poland 2001	42
The Netherlands 1998	26	Portugal 2002	52
New Zealand 1996	53	Romania 1996	47
New Zealand 2002	53	Spain 1996	44
Norway 1997	53	Slovenia 1996	22
Sweden 1998	53	South Korea 2000	27
Switzerland 1999	37	Spain 2000	42
USA 1996	54	Thailand 2001	22
United Kingdom 1997	49	Taiwan 1996	34
Average	49	Average	39

Note: Table entries show the percentage of respondents who responded with yes (instead of no) to the following question: 'Do you usually think of yourself as close to any particular political party?' All data are based on interviews with national probability samples interviewed shortly after a national election.

Source: CSES (2003a, 2003b) weighted with demographic weights when available. Non-democratic countries covered by the data—Belarus (2000), Hong Kong (1997, 2000), Mexico (1997), Peru (2000–1), Russia (1999, 2000), Ukraine (1996)—are excluded from the comparison.

Accordingly, the 2002 elections attracted large, previously apolitical segments of the society into active political life.

After losing the first round of the elections, the leader of the Fidesz, Viktor Orbán, turned directly to voters and mobilized them with a powerful anti-Communist rhetoric. The result was impressive and unprecedented. Many hundreds of thousands gathered on the streets of Budapest to listen to the defeated, yet unquestioned leader, who urged the Hungarians to fight the Communist-Cosmopolitan-Capitalist menace. So-called Civic Circles began to mushroom across the country, with the dual task of trying to turn the electoral tide in the second round in favour of the Fidesz-MPP, and to organize bastions of civic resistance to any left-wing government. The Civic Circles recruited tens of thousands of activists within weeks. The informal but uncontested leader of this new movement was Orbán, and while the Civic Circles were not part of Fidesz, their political goals could not have been more partisan (Enyedi 2005).

It would seem, then, that by 2002 even the one obvious weakness of party organizations, the low membership base, was about to disappear. True, the readiness of right-wing voters to join the Circles, but not Fidesz, can be read as a clear indication of the unpopularity of parties in Hungary. But two caveats are in order at this point. First, the movement closely cooperated with the party and no

dissenting voices were heard when Orbán declared that his goal was to channel the movement's energy and personnel into the party. Second, many in the movement were more right-wing than Fidesz, and still harboured suspicions towards the old guard of this once left-liberal party. They had reasons to hope Orbán would eventually be willing to create a new right-wing party, based at least as much on the Civic Circles as on Fidesz. In other words, partisan-type ambitions motivated many in the movement, and anti-party sentiments were not relevant.

As many opinion polls have indicated, the voters' political attitudes are often influenced by party cues in less turbulent periods, too. Levels of satisfaction with the political system, but also with economic conditions and the country's future prospects, appear to be directly and moderately strongly linked to party preference. A comparison of 1994 and 1998 data even suggested that voters adopt more pro-market, pro-NATO, and pro-EU attitudes when their favourite party is in government, as those currently in office cannot help appearing to the public as the chief advocate of these goals (Hann 1998).

To assess the place of party in the political process, it seems more relevant to compare how parties and other political institutions fare relative to each other than to find an absolute measure of how important individual parties are for the voters in one respect or another. For instance, 'political parties', as we saw above, have commanded less confidence than the media, churches, parliament, government, the president, the Constitutional Court, and local governments ever since 1990. Yet the more consequential fact may be that the average citizen rates his or her 'favourite party' higher than any of the above institutions (Husz 1998). Similar findings were obtained when voters were asked about the extent to which various parties and other organizations 'express their views and interests' (Tóka 1996).

This seems to be a critical difference from the kind of situation postulated by the party decline literature. It would seem that in Hungary there are no readily available alternative channels to parties: anti-party movements, corporatist institutions, independent media, NGOs, unconventional or weakly institutionalized political movements do not threaten the political parties' virtual monopoly of political representation.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRENGTH OF HUNGARIAN PARTIES

Despite their modest membership base, the weakness of Hungarian party organizations is anything but obvious. The relevant parties rapidly achieved an elaborate division of labour and hierarchy within the organization (for two case studies see Balázs and Enyedi 1996). They have organizational subunits dealing with specific issue areas and social sectors (such as standing committees for agriculture, environment protection, etc.), branch offices all over the country, administrators and advisers specializing in fields like PR or party finance, as well as a permanent staff

of barristers, financial managers, and office workers. While the largest European parties, such as the Austrians, have 1 staff member working in the central office for every 87,502 voters, and the British parties 1 for every 660,958 (Webb 1995), the Hungarians have 1 for every 227,000 (Van Biezen 1998). Salaries in the party central office or in a municipal council may seem low, but there are compensations for demanding supporters. The governing bodies of the numerous public agencies where both opposition and government parties are expected to have representatives, the boards of the enterprises controlled by national or local governments, and the spoils in state and city administration offer many opportunities to reward key supporters.

As purely electoral institutions, the parties do not need many activists, but need some everywhere. They must collect signatures in the constituencies to get access to the ballot, and electoral success critically depends on running candidates in every single-member constituency, at least jointly with another party, because the remainder votes of non-winning candidates can earn mandates at an upper tier. The parliamentary parties nearly always could, if they intended to, put on the ballot a candidate in every single-member district in parliamentary elections. It seems that only in local elections and municipal politics in smaller communities is party influence over the political process hindered by the weakness of local party branches. In the 2002 local elections, only one in five candidates ran as a party-nominated candidate, and nearly two-thirds as independents.

Among the parties relevant for government formation, the MSZP alone resembles the mass party model, mostly by virtue of inheriting a small, but in absolute terms still significant portion of the former Communist Party personnel, local organizations, financial resources, real estate, network of experts and satellite organizations (Ágh 1995). The other offspring of the former Communist Party, the orthodox, extra-parliamentary Workers' Party (MP), also developed a strong and lively network of local party organizations. The radical nationalist MIÉP displayed even more the trademarks of a mass party: lively grass-roots organization, much direct contact with their voters, well-attended party rallies, a widely circulating party press, a network of civic associations around the party, plus ideological zeal and a comprehensive policy platform. Fidesz started with a thin organization, but during recent years increased its membership, established numerous sections within the party, and built up a very efficient network of activists around the country. The huge variation in the success of these four parties indicates, however, that organization in itself accounts for only a small part of their electoral performance.

Hungarian parties display a relatively high level of 'systemness' (Panebianco 1988): they are uniformly organized and bureaucratically integrated throughout the country, the constituent parts are strongly interdependent, and the subunits have little autonomy.⁷ Decision-making is centralized and the actual power

⁷ The MSZP's local organizations have a considerable autonomy.

hierarchies are not far from those prescribed in the party statutes. The internal decision-making processes of the major parties are reasonably institutionalized and the parliamentary groups have practically always been sufficiently disciplined in their voting behaviour (Hanyecz and Perger 1993; Németh 1997), except that scores of deputies defected from their original parliamentary faction in the 1990–8 parliaments.

The defection of individual politicians causes little trouble for parties. At one or another point in time, ex-presidents of the Smallholders, Free Democrats, Christian Democrats and Hungarian Democratic Forum, as well as the nationally most popular leaders of the FIDESZ and the Hungarian Socialist Party turned against their party, but the parties survived while most of the former leaders fell into political oblivion. The only caveat regarding the unimportance of the personal vote in Hungarian elections is that the trend may go in the opposite direction because of the increasing equation of some of the major parties with an individual leader (see below).

Hungarian parties are also autonomous. They are not the political arms of some pre-existing social group or organization. The two most obvious sponsors—the trade unions in the case of the Socialists and the Catholic Church in the case of the Christian Democrats—have suffered humiliating defeats when they tried to alter the party line. In the former case, the trade union allies continued to support the party despite major policy disagreements, while in the latter case the relevant church leaders eventually opted for another partner (Fidesz). Either way, the sponsors failed to keep the parties under control.

The autonomy of the parties is underlined by the fact that party leaders normally emerge from inside the organization. The parties do depend financially on the state, but this dependence does not have any observable impact on their behaviour. The cultural societies, professional associations, pressure groups, and other civic organizations that cultivate partisan ties are not in a position to blackmail the parties. Although some observers (Ágh 1995; Mair 1997: 189) have described the East European parties as having weak, permeable borders vis-à-vis corporatist structures and social movements, the Fidesz-Civic Circles relationship is the only present-day notable example of such symbiosis, with the clear dominance of the party. The phenomenon of collective membership is completely missing from the party statutes.

It is also worth noting that extra-parliamentary leadership has generally proved stronger than that of the parliamentary faction. Governmental coalitions are invariably decided by the extra-parliamentary party organs, and it is the party leaders who are consulted by the president before nominating someone for the premiership. When critical national security issues arise, as during the 1999 NATO bombing campaign against Yugoslavia or the attempted coup of August 1991 in Moscow, the prime minister of the day informally convened the party leaders, and not the leaders of the parliamentary factions in the first place.

The memberships of the parliamentary faction and the party's national board tend to coincide, but the statutes explicitly require the parliamentary factions to report on their activity to the extra-parliamentary party and to follow the guidelines of the latter. The Socialist statute stresses with particular vigour the right of the party's national board to instruct the MPs how to vote, but defiance is likely to provoke expulsion in all parties. The Fidesz and MDF statutes give the right to nominate the faction leader to the party leadership. In the FKgP, the Christian Democrats, and the Hungarian Democratic Forum, conflicts between party leader and the majority of the parliamentary caucus led to splits. But in all such cases, the party leadership prevailed, and the groups that revolted fell into electoral oblivion or joined other parties, regardless of the number of deputies and prominent persons who took their side. Thus, possession of the party label and of the party organization seems to be a decisive asset in Hungarian political struggles.

The predominance of the 'party in central office' is challenged, once again, only by the prime ministerial candidates. As far as they are typically members and even leaders of the party's extra-parliamentary wing, one can speak of an internal challenge. But during the 2002 campaign the two major parties tried to mobilize additional resources by creating a distance between the nominees and the party leadership. In the case of Fidesz, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán resigned from all his party positions two years before the elections. This was a merely symbolic gesture, however, since he remained the undisputed leader of the party, keeping his successors under firm control, and after the elections he returned to party presidency.

Yet it is telling that when Orbán resigned from the post of party leader, no Hungarian observer interpreted the move as a sign of his weakened authority. Quite the contrary, the general understanding was that he had become so strong that he could afford not to have any party position at all. Indeed, the previously unprecedented concentration of power in the hands of the prime minister under the Orbán government led political analysts to speak about the presidentialization of Hungarian government (Körösiényi 2000). This trend, logically rooted in the centrality of the premier under the constructive vote of no-confidence rule, seemed to have reached new heights during the 2002 campaign when the Socialist nominee for prime minister, Péter Medgyessy, was not even a member of the party. The MSZP's electoral campaign was jointly coordinated by him and by the party's actual leadership, but Medgyessy had the upper hand. The two years of the subsequent Medgyessy government were similarly characterized by a constant struggle between the personal team of the premier and the party organs, and it is yet to be seen whether his resignation in 2004 can be interpreted as a victory of the party, or merely a takeover by another relative outsider and his troops. In any case, the successor, Ferenc Gyurcsány, gained, in the aftermath of the 2006 election, an unprecedented degree of control of both government policies and party leadership chiefly because the

party saw him as the leader who single-handedly won that election for the MSZP.

The organizational structures of the parties have a number of uniform features (Lomax 1996). The highest decision-making authority is invariably assigned to a party congress that meets annually or every second year, and is composed of elected representatives of local party branches. The second tier is a national board, usually elected by territorial and—if any exist—functional subunits (youth organizations, ideological platforms, policy groups, etc.), with some *ex officio* members added. The board meets a couple of times a year. Each significant party has a sort of presidium too, meeting monthly or more frequently. The members are elected by the congress, except that the chairpersons of the faction and the national board usually have *ex officio* voting rights in the presidium.

In the first years after 1988–9, regional party organs were largely limited to coordinating and assisting the local organizations. Eventually, however, they obtained significant prerogatives and by the late 1990s have, to a considerable extent, come to represent the national leadership in their dealings with the ‘party on the ground’. This tendency was particularly pronounced in the FKgP, where, unlike most other parties, the members of the regional bodies were not elected by local organizations but consisted entirely of the chairpersons of local branches. The Smallholders were also unique in filling several party offices (including those of the regional secretaries) by appointment.

Centralization seems to have been the trend in every Hungarian party in the 1990s. While this may indicate less the vitality of the parties than the strength of the party leadership *vis-à-vis* the rank and file, it certainly contributed to most parties becoming more unified by the end of the 1990s than they were at the beginning of the decade. The formal powers of party presidents increased over the years, and their terms became longer (Machos 1998, 1999*a*, 1999*b*). By the late 1990s, the Smallholder statute even stipulated that the president (who, exceptionally among Hungarian parties, was to be elected by open ballot) must not be replaced until sixty days after the following elections. At the other extreme, the Socialists eagerly stress party democracy. Their organizational rules allow for a direct ballot of the members, firmly institutionalize ideologically based factions, and make a bigger effort to diffuse power within the party and prevent politicians holding multiple offices.⁸ Following the resignation of Prime Minister Medgyessy in August 2004, a democratic intra-party process was employed to select his successor from among multiple contenders, and, indeed, the nominee of the party leadership lost the vote.

⁸ A similar situation exists in MIÉP, which is, however, dominated by its leader. In 2002 Fidesz-MPP also introduced party ballots into its statute, but the party presidium still retains the right of ultimate decision, while in MSZP the will of one-tenth of the members can compel the party leadership.

Organizational structures and rules became standardized within parties. Special privileges, such as those given in the KDNP to the pre-1948 deputies of their predecessor, the Democratic People's Party, were reduced or abolished. Local organizations were required to adopt a uniform structure, for example having a single chairperson (Machos 1999a). Discipline in the local branches was at the same time greatly tightened. In Fidesz, for example, local organizations were disbanded for not supporting the MDF candidate in constituencies where the national party leaderships agreed to run joint MDF-Fidesz candidates in 1998. Such measures would have been inconceivable and widely criticized at the time of the 1990 election, which certainly limited the parties' capacity to negotiate electoral coalitions.

The right-wing parties achieved a particularly high level of centralization, partly in response to intense factional fights within their ranks. The strong prerogatives of their presidents were well illustrated by the case of the FKgP and, for some time, MDF, where the presidents alone became responsible for proposing a national list of candidates for parliamentary elections. The MSZP is the only party where the local branches seem to have retained their earlier level of autonomy, especially in the selection of constituency candidates, while unconditional loyalty to the party leader became a fundamental norm in Fidesz, the FKgP, and the MIÉP. Organized internal factions emerged, at one time or another, in every significant party. But it is only in the Socialist Party where the coexistence of factions led to an enduring equilibrium. In the other parties the vigorous activity of party 'platforms' signalled a crisis that ended with the ultimate victory of one over the others.

The way candidates are nominated depends on the type of elections and the party. Besides, in elections to parliament rather different rules apply for single-member districts, regional, and national party lists. Usually, a meeting of local organizations nominates candidates for election to local councils, while the regional lists for parliamentary elections are drawn up by regional boards and ratified by a national board.⁹ The national board has the final word on the national list, although in most parties the presidium makes the actual decisions. As an exception, the head of the party is expected to play a central role in drawing up the MSZP list that is formally accepted by the congress on the proposal of the national board.

There is a large variation among parties in the way they select candidates for single-member districts, and these practices seem to have less to do with the probability of the party winning such seats than with the overall distribution of power in the organization. In the Socialist Party and the KDNP, for instance, the task is left to constituency organizations, although higher-level party bodies were at the same time able to obtain veto rights. Typically national level organizations

⁹ As for exceptions, in the KDNP the regional organs, and in the SZDSZ the party presidium—in conjunction with the regional boards—decide about the lists.

have to approve every candidate, although the initiative usually belongs to lower echelons of the party (see also Ilonszki 1999 and Machos 1999a).

While parties are undoubtedly more professional organizations today than a decade ago, the self-reported data indicate some decline in organizational resources. The average parliamentary party had around eighty staff members in 1995, but only sixty in 2003. During this period the number of local organizations has declined from around 1,000 to 700 (calculated from Kurtán et al. (annual)). Efficiency seems to have required a sharper organizational focus, and more extensive reliance on collateral organizations and PR-companies. The MSZP streamlined its apparatus partly under government pressure: it was finally compelled to give up its office buildings rented from the state in the communist era. Detailed information is not available about the distribution of the staff members, but van Biezen's data (1998) suggests the superiority of the extra-parliamentary wing: in 1997 about 38 per cent of the party staff worked in the central offices of the parties, and only 25 per cent for the parliamentary factions.

Most of the declared income of Hungarian parties comes from annual transfers paid by the government budget. The party law—subject to a super-majority requirement—makes the allocation a non-linear function of election results, and parliament decides the annual increment of the entire allocation during the budget debate. Between 1990 and 2003 the subsidies to parties went up from half a billion forints (in 1990, approximately \$8 million) to two and a half billion (approximately \$10 million). Though this change may seem insignificant, given the considerable budget cuts in other areas they indicate the relatively privileged position of political parties in the national budget.

Meanwhile party expenditures have increased dramatically. The parties responded partly by organizing networks of sponsors. According to the party law, donations have no upper limit and can come from anyone except foreign governments and state enterprises. In practice, benefactors are keen to preserve their anonymity. In 2002, for example, the MSZP received 200 million forints, but only 6.3 million came from an identified source. According to their official records, duly published in the official gazette every year and routinely—though without much visible effect—ridiculed by the State Audit Office, donations are a less significant source of revenue than public funding, but far more important than membership fees.

The amount of money available from all these sources often falls significantly short of the parties' expenditure. So far, the gaps have been filled partly by the post-electoral patience of domestic commercial banks, which lent money for election campaigns even against the odds, and partly from the sale of headquarters buildings that the parties received for free from the state, as well as other forms of indirect reliance on public money. For instance, the fringe benefits of deputies—such as refunds for travel, and accommodation—have increased drastically over the years, and the parties have begun to tax their parliamentarians. Even more importantly, starting with the 2004 fiscal year another 2.2 billion forints of state

subsidies were allocated to the newly established party foundations. With this new source the overall amount of money that parties receive from the Hungarian state rose well above \$20 million.

At the end of the day, political parties just do not go bankrupt. No matter how desperately indebted some Hungarian parties became at some points, as long as they remained in the parliament they found the means to run their organization and were apparently not constrained in increasing their electoral appeal by lack of funding. The occasional scandals about party finances had little lasting impact on the electoral performance of the parties in question. While they can be cited as evidence of the parties' incapacity to raise the necessary revenues in legal ways, it is equally justified to see them as proof of an amazing ability to fill party coffers whenever and whatever is needed.

THE SYSTEMATIC FUNCTIONALITY OF HUNGARIAN PARTIES

Evaluations of the role of political parties in policy formation depend entirely on the frame of reference (Schonfeld 1983). The methods that have been employed for quantitative cross-national comparisons between Western democracies (e.g. Klingemann, Hofferbert, and Budge 1994; Alesina, Roubini, and Cohen 1997) all require a much longer time horizon than is available in the Hungarian context. Thus, instead of assessing the relationship between policy outcomes and party ideologies or election pledges, below we contemplate whether there are visible obstacles to party influence on public policies in Hungary.

Governance

The strongest brakes on party rule are probably the Constitutional Court and the Hungarian National Bank. Both have clearly defined priorities, procedures, and professional norms to honour in their decisions, and are not accountable to the parliament. To further reduce the importance of partisan considerations, the terms of the judges of the Constitutional Court (elected for nine years) and the chairman of the National Bank (elected for six years) bridge the lifetime of several parliaments.

At the same time, the judges of the court and the chief central banker are all elected by parliament. The nomination process is such that the candidates for the Constitutional Court and the candidate for the chairmanship of the Central Bank need to show some partisan colour. The political tensions between the chairman of the Central Bank and two different governments ended in the early replacement of the chairman in 1992 and 1994. The 2002–6 Socialist-Liberal government, however, got locked into a desperate and surprisingly open war with the bank. But this battle was also interpreted as a partisan one, since the bank chairman in

question was a minister of the previous government, who could in no way hope to be re-elected for another term after the Socialist victory in the 2006 election.

Thus, a degree of party influence is presumably present in both the court and the bank, even if this is never admitted. In practice, the court proved the more formidable check on governmental power. It annulled hundreds of politically salient government decrees and legislation, including a 1991 restitution law that might have been instrumental in keeping the then governmental coalition together, and nearly all social policy initiatives of the 1995 economic austerity programme. The court also prevented a few referendums from taking place. Yet the unusual assertiveness of the Constitutional Court does not reduce the government's accountability for intended or failed legislation. Thus the check provided by the court is not all that different from simple reality constraints on party government.

Other constraints that may be stronger in Hungary than usual include the high trade-openness of the economy, high—for most of the 1990s one of the world's highest—per capita foreign debt, and the sensitivity of the balance of payment to the profit expectations of a small club of foreign-owned corporations that produce roughly four-fifths of the country's total exports. Many observers have attributed a prominent role to similar constraints in making Hungarian governments of different political colours pursue relatively similar economic policies (cf. Greskovits 1998).

However, the scope of party government is vastly greater than usual because the post-communist transition created an expectation that any fundamental law could be swiftly changed by parliament, without much consultation with the interested parties. The range of feasible economic policy options may be restricted by the country's vulnerability to capital flight, but it was by the firm commitment of the major parties that Hungary went through a rapid and thorough privatization and economic liberalization in the 1990s, and attracted as much hot money and foreign direct investment as it did. Similarly, the powers of the Constitutional Court were granted and can be taken away by legislation. The relationship between 'objective' constraints and party government is, therefore, less obvious than it first appears.

On economic issues Hungarian parties are normally characterized by a broad consensus on principles, near-agreement on details, or simply a lack of alternative visions (Kitschelt et al. 1999). In the frequent absence of clear party initiatives, individual bureaucrats—or small, non-partisan groups of specialists, as happened when each parliamentary party delegated a pharmacist-turned-deputy to the committee that effectively determined the legal framework for the privatization of pharmacies in the early 1990s—may, on occasion, have a considerable influence in policymaking, but only as long as politicians do not mind and are ready to take responsibility. The public bureaucracy as a whole is certainly not a politically cohesive actor that would systematically follow a specific priority (like the court or the Central Bank is supposed to), and its professional ethos clearly recognizes that politicians are to define public policy. Besides, it is theory rather than reality

that the civil service law regulates employment, remuneration, and career in such detail that very little room is left for direct political influence on the functioning of public bureaucracies—in fact, such influence seems to be widespread although still not ever-present.

This is not to say that government bureaucracies can only suffer frustration in pursuing a specific policy objective against the apparent will of politicians. It is widely believed that during the 1990s the army's successive chiefs of command practically monopolized decision-making on a wide array of issues that they considered matters of exclusively professional judgement, while the civilian leadership of the Defence Ministry thought otherwise. Yet this seems to have been an exception limited to some relatively technical issue domains where the information asymmetry between politicians and professionals was particularly acute, and the unity, determination, and cohesion of the relevant bureaucracy was not undermined—but possibly enhanced, as in the above example involving pharmacists—by the opening of lucrative opportunities in the private sector.

More noteworthy—if less powerful—constraints were imposed on party government where specific policy objectives or interests were given privileged representation at the expense of the legislature and the national government. The independence (from any political influence) of the public broadcast media, the civil service, the prosecutor general, and so forth became central and commonly accepted articles of faith in political discourse for a few years after 1989. The ensuing trend towards the dispersion of political influence involved the institutionalization of tripartite talks about wages and some aspects of the budget between government, business and trade unions. According to legislation passed in 1991, self-governing corporate bodies, to be directly elected by the citizens from among trade union representatives, were to manage public health and pension funds. The first (and only) election to these bodies took place in 1993 and—unexpectedly—attracted almost as many voters as a parliamentary election.

As part of the same trend, 1990 saw the counties abolished as units of administration, and local councils granted not just wide autonomy but also half the income tax revenue collected from their residents by the central government. In a further blow to party government, in 1994 the direct election of mayors (and thus, the practice of divided government) was extended from villages to the urban municipalities, introducing a considerable incumbency advantage and personal vote in these previously straight partisan races.¹⁰ Finally, however, the trend towards centralization proved to be more decisive, culminating in the abolition of the tripartite Interest Reconciliation Council and the autonomous public health and pension funds in 1998–9. While the jurisdiction of local governments remained substantial, their fiscal strength and autonomy vis-à-vis the central government dramatically decreased compared to 1990. Several major parties proposed to bring

¹⁰ Roughly 70 per cent of incumbent mayors are regularly re-elected in local elections (Dénes and Kiss 2003).

the prosecutors under direct government control, and the civilian control of the army appreciably increased.

Meanwhile, the unicameral, fraction-centred structure of the legislature remained supportive of party government. While some parties are, in principle, committed to establishing a corporative second chamber, the proposal has slim prospects of ever being accepted by the necessary two-thirds majority in the parliament. Although a proposal passed in 1990 stipulates that seats must be reserved in the parliament for special representatives of ethnic minorities, the absence of agreed-upon procedure has so far prevented the election of such (non-party) deputies. The rules of the game meanwhile protect the 'established' parties from possible challengers. After 1990, 75 per cent of public party funding was distributed proportionally among the parties with over 1 per cent of the vote in the last election, and 25 per cent equally among the parties represented in the parliament (Juhász 1996). In 1994, the parties that are represented in the parliament but have no fraction of their own lost their share in the 25 per cent. Together with the raising of the threshold of parliamentary representation from 4–5 per cent of the vote, these modifications were intended to protect the parties against splits and newcomers, and to reduce the blackmail potential of the parties' internal opposition. Since 1994 only parties can have parliamentary fractions (previously independents also had this right); a minimum of fifteen deputies are needed to register a new one which did not run in the previous election, and deputies who defect from their fraction (or are expelled from it) must wait six months before they can join another. Those deputies who do not belong to a fraction cannot participate in the work of the committees, which play an even more important role in the Hungarian than the average West European legislature (Renwick 1998).

Paradoxically, the most serious challenge to the governing function of the parties may come from inside the parties themselves. Once a party leader becomes prime minister, his executive power is almost unlimited by the party. Since cabinet members can only be dismissed on the proposal of the premier, and not even the repeated loss of parliamentary votes makes them step down, it is the head of the government who solely bears accountability for their actions. Because of the constructive vote of no confidence, a premier can only be brought down after the parliament reaches a comprehensive agreement about a replacement, and—given the predominance of the premier after investiture—presumably also on the new portfolio allocation and government policies. No wonder that the first vote of confidence has yet to be tabled in the Hungarian parliament. What may seem more surprising is that even this way there was a prime minister who resigned at midterm—but even that move seemed much more like a miscalculated attempt to impose his will on the junior coalition partner, the SZDSZ, than the admission of diminished confidence in his leadership on the government benches of parliament.

Having this unusually powerful position, the Hungarian prime minister may well develop different priorities than his party. No matter whether a policy

initiative originated in the bureaucracy or in direct negotiations between interest groups and government, the backing of the senior party representative in the government makes it hard for party loyalists to argue that it does not represent the party line. This tendency was particularly apparent between 1998 and 2002 in Fidesz, which looked upon its leader as its major political asset. The fall of Prime Minister Medgyessy in 2004 was, however, widely interpreted as a sign of the predominance of parties over prime ministers. Thus, it seems that the significant role played by Hungarian prime ministers creates only modest variation within the generic class called party government.

Interest articulation and aggregation

While the decreasing fragmentation reduces, the high level of emotional polarization enhances the capacity of the Hungarian party system for interest articulation. The rival sides offer fairly clear choices on issues related to alternative visions of nationhood or the role of religion in social life (cf. Kitschelt et al. 1999), and justify their positions in highly ideological language, routinely declaring their opponents anti-democratic and/or enemies of the nation. But clear (not to mention pre-electoral) policy commitments are limited to relatively few issues, leaving much to be decided at the point where party and government policies cannot be distinguished. Financial crisis situations further constrain the capacity of parties to channel demands into government policies. To cite only the most spectacular example, no party body decided about the 1995 austerity programme (arguably the single most important government initiative in the 1990s) before its announcement.

Individual citizens, single-issue movements, interest groups, local councils, and the media probably account for a bigger share of interest articulation than parties. Yet the national political agenda—as reflected by newspaper headlines—is determined mainly by what the parties and the government talk about (Török 2003). Single-issue groups try to gain the support of as many parties as possible and, rather than developing an anti-party discourse, are ready to offer endorsements in elections. There are no serious reform initiatives to reduce the role of the parties, and little evidence that an anti-party appeal would work in the electoral arena. The anti-establishment forces of the far left and the far right, up to the present, seem perfectly happy to work through party-like organizations. Social movements and interest groups do have the ability to initiate referendums. But in practice they have so far been unable to overcome all the obstacles involved. The relevance of the party-dominated parliament vis-à-vis social movements was further increased in 1997 by an amendment that raised the number of signatures required for calling a referendum to 200,000. Only a 2004 referendum on the extension of citizenship-rights to those citizens of neighbouring countries who are of Hungarian origin

seemed to be an exception to this rule. But this referendum failed to pass a second hurdle in that it remained legally non-binding due to the low turnout.

Overall, it remains arguable from many perspectives as to whether Hungarian parties give effective representation to the policy preferences of ordinary citizens. But they do provide highly identifiable governmental alternatives and retrospective accountability. During the first decade of democratic development this proved enough to channel policy initiatives and dissatisfaction regarding virtually any aspect of the status quo to support—for some time, at least—one or another component of the existing party system, preventing political outsiders from making a major impact. At the same time the highly elitist and centralized structure of Hungarian parties contributes to the gap that exists between the agenda of the political elite and the primary concerns of the voters. In opinion polls citizens regularly rank issues related to religion, communism, and nationhood as marginally important, while the parties continue to base their political identities on the very same issues. This expressive orientation of Hungarian parties strengthens in the public the stereotype that parties—while emotionally relevant—are far removed from the ‘real life of ordinary citizens’. Recent years, however, have seen a marked increase in the centrality of very practical, bread and butter issues in election campaigns as well as the policy debates between the parties.

Political participation

The role of parties in structuring political participation is, as indicated by the low membership figures, small in absolute terms. But in relative terms parties are important in this regard as well. Since 1993 probably all political events—save public ceremonies—that attracted more than 10,000 people were, in one way or another, sponsored by political parties. Ekiert and Kubik (1998: 559) find a contrast with West European experiences in the ‘much smaller role of social movements in sponsoring protest activities and the relatively larger role of traditional organizations such as political parties, trade unions, or professional associations’ in East Central Europe. The parties sometimes welcomed civic organizations appearing as the chief organizer, and trade unions or farmers’ associations provided transportation for many participants. But without the parties’ endorsement, few of these events would have taken place and attracted a remotely comparable crowd. The exceptions were nearly all trade union-led demonstrations called to support narrowly economic demands. But trade unions are negligible when it comes to broader political issues. This is apparent from the fact that the 1991 trade union law (supported by some, but bitterly opposed by other unions), the 1995 austerity measures, and the dismantling of the Interest Reconciliation Council in 1999 were all carried out without the unions offering any serious protest.

Party members, however, rarely get together. The obligation to pay membership dues is taken more and more seriously, but its significance within the (official) party budgets is low, hardly ever accounting for more than 3 per cent of all revenues. Save the short periods of leadership contests, party members are often more active and more vocal in collateral organizations than in the party itself. Party leaders naturally encourage the members to join interest groups, parents' associations, vocational societies, and support the party policies in the name of these 'independent' social organizations.

The general inability of parties to anchor themselves firmly in the society went along with a low level of electoral participation. In the first round of the four parliamentary elections since 1990, some 65, 69, 56, 70.5, and 68 per cent of the citizens, respectively, voted. Local elections attracted even fewer voters, around 40 per cent nationally. Yet turnout in the second round of parliamentary elections has been increasing from 45 per cent in 1990 to 55, 57, 73.5, and 64 per cent in 1994, 1998, 2002, and 2006 respectively as citizens started to grasp the role of the run-off in government formation and the party system turned increasingly bipolar. Since the 2002 campaign, the parties have also proved to be able to mobilize many citizens as active participants of mass rallies—with the single best attended 2002 rally attracting, according to conflicting estimates, anywhere between 5 and 15 per cent of the adult population—and as the representatives of partisan ideologies in local communities. Especially the 2002 election proved that political apathy is far from inevitable and that the high stakes and the opposition of clear-cut governing alternatives may help parties in reaching wider social circles.

The two largest parties' (MSZP and Fidesz) statutes provide for a measure of direct democracy (their members can be balloted on non-financial issues), and other parties also provide for the use of similar techniques. The trend is, however, towards party congresses becoming ever more a formality—not much more than carefully staged PR events—and towards disregarding the interests of local party organizations whenever they conflict with the electoral interests of the party leadership. Within the MDF, the SZDSZ, and the MSZP, there often are dissenting voices, but ordinary members have little to do with the debates between the party leadership and the dissenters. The only noteworthy politicization and mobilization of the 'party on the ground' took place within the Socialist Party in 2004. Following the resignation of the premier, the party leadership intended to nominate a long-serving party figure as the new PM. The local party organizations demanded an open contest, however, and the delegates voted by a large majority for a rival candidate at the party congress called on their demand. The conflict was partly about different criteria, but the rank and file proved even more partisan than the leadership: the latter was looking for a politician who could take over the work in the cabinet without delay, while the activists were searching for a candidate with the best chance to win the next national election. Nevertheless, the rejection of the official nominee took the form of a grass-roots rebellion and the leadership suffered a humiliating defeat.

Political recruitment

Parties have no serious challengers in the selection of political personnel in Hungary. While some politicians were helped in their party careers by political capital that they acquired as journalists, environmentalists, trade union officials, or business leaders, their access to governmental and legislative positions remains a function of partisan considerations—although certainly not of formal party membership. Several ministers came from the wider circle of experts surrounding the parties and not the parties themselves, though ministers must still meet the expectations of the party. When tensions arise, the parliamentary fraction invites the minister for a direct meeting, and all ministers care to be seen as deferential at these informal discussions.

Following a change of government (or even an individual minister), many more employees than just the formally recognized circle of political appointees are eventually replaced in the ministries and government agencies. This fate has affected, for instance, the so-called administrative secretary of state (the highest-ranking career bureaucrat) in half the ministries shortly after each parliamentary election that produced alternation in power. As far as any trend is detectable, ‘political parachutists’ increasingly appear in ostensibly non-political positions in the ministries and public agencies, especially since the 1998 election, despite the expectation that continuity in the ministries would eventually rise as the years of regime change come to an end.¹¹

In a seeming contrast to this trend, after the 1998 election Fidesz placed far more non-party figures in high political office than its 1994–8 predecessor, and the same held for the 2002–4 Medgyessy government too. Yet these appointees were, for the most part, either opinion leaders of the political and professional groupings that allied with the main government party, or long-serving advisers to the party leadership. Clearly, the allegiance of these people to the government—and to the premier in particular—was only made stronger by their lack of a partisan power base. However, some other factors probably counterbalanced, at least until 2002, this reduction in the scope of party influence. In 1998–2002, in the ministries headed by seemingly non-partisan notabilities, Fidesz militants obtained junior positions and—according to some observers—effectively ran the apparatus. Similarly, the Orbán government introduced an administrative reform that greatly expanded—at the expense of the ministries—the role of the ‘chancellery’, that is the prime minister’s office, headed by a separate minister elevated in rank above all other cabinet ministers. As long as Orbán remained premier, this ensured that the party leader had close control over all policy areas. While the Medgyessy government softened the links between party and government, its successor, under Prime Minister Ferenc Gyurcsány, promised a return to a situation in which ‘the parties will have a government and not vice versa’. The immediate post-electoral

¹¹ See *HVG*, 21 August 1999, p. 63.

situation in 2006 did indeed confirm this, but in a somewhat ironical way. Probably more key figures from the leadership of the major government party received a cabinet position than at any time before, but all substantive decision rights were formally transferred from the ministries to the prime minister's office. Besides, it was agreed that the premier himself should soon become the formal leader of the party. The overlap between party leadership and government thus became fuller than ever, but the party itself became more than ever equated with its supposedly main electoral asset, the prime minister.

Independent candidates stand virtually no chance in parliamentary elections: in 1990, six of them were still elected, but just one in the next four elections together. The number of independent candidates sharply decreased from 198 in 1990 to 103, 53, 40, and 12 in 1994, 1998, 2002, and 2006, respectively. Not all candidates are party members—one-fourth of the Smallholders candidates in 1998, for example, were not—but the number of non-members or interest group representatives is small among the elected deputies, and they are expected to follow the party leadership on crucial issues.

The most spectacular example of deference to party was provided by the trade union officials elected on the Socialist lists in 1994 who, as deputies, loyally supported the 1995 austerity programme despite the unions' opposition to it. The non-socialist parties were less consistently successful in this respect. The Roma leaders elected to parliament on SZDSZ lists in 1990 eventually came to disagree with the party line on Roma issues, and the former chairman of the Chamber of Medical Doctors showed, as Fidesz deputy and Minister of Health Care, arguably more loyalty to guild than party on issues of health care reform.

Though generally disciplined in legislative voting, the partisanship of the elected deputies remained somewhat volatile until the third democratic election. Until 1998 on average one in seven deputies changed party affiliation, and by the end of the legislative term the number of independent deputies increased considerably. Since 1998, however, splits of parliamentary fractions and the defections of isolated individuals became a rare phenomenon.

Few deputies managed to build up a personal power base in the constituencies. Given the high electoral volatility, party control of nomination and recruitment facilitates a high turnover of backbenchers and government personnel. After the 1990 founding election, for instance, 95 per cent of deputies were new (with just twenty members of the outgoing parliament re-elected), but even in the 1994 and 1998 elections, only 36 and 47 per cent of the incumbents, respectively, held on to their seats. Only a handful of the 1998–2002 deputies—6 per cent in the Fidesz, nineteen in the MSZP, thirteen in the SZDSZ, and none in the MDF caucus—failed to run in the 2002 election, and only 31.6 per cent of the new parliament had never been a deputy before (Kurtán and Király 2003).

Local politics in small settlements is distinctly non-partisan. The official count of local elections—showing, for instance, that over 80 per cent of all elected mayors run as independents—always prompts some speculation in the media about the

unpopularity of party politics and voters' massive shift to non-partisan candidates. Yet the phenomenon can be much better explained by the lack of party branches in the smallest of the approximately 3,200 municipalities. In localities with more than 10,000 inhabitants 'independent' mayors are rare and get elected only as candidates of multiparty coalitions. In these municipalities over 90 per cent of all councillors are elected as party nominees.

Positions on the boards of state-owned companies like the national airline or the gambling monopoly are frequently treated as party spoils. The trends over time are somewhat ambiguous. The drastic reduction in the number of state-owned companies by the astonishingly fast privatization process of the 1990s may have reduced the number of spoils within easy reach, but probably not the number of spoils that were actually grabbed. While in 1990 the new parties simply lacked the vast number of cadres who could have been seated on company boards, after the 1998 election an increasingly assertive use of governmental prerogatives appeared in placing party soldiers in ostensibly non-partisan posts at the top of government agencies and even some football clubs.

Political communication and education

The tremendous economic and political changes after 1989 forced East European citizens to learn the fundamentals of their new regimes in a very short time. Parties and their politicians were in the forefront of the distribution of the necessary information, and they were also active in socializing the citizens into pro-democratic and pro-capitalistic beliefs. A knowledge of the rules of representative democracy, of a market economy, and of the European Union filtered down to citizens largely *via* the interpretation of the political parties. The channel of this education was, however, not the party organization or the satellite institutions of parties, but the mass media.

Party control of political communications is Janus-faced. The electronic media are obliged to provide balanced coverage and are barred from political commentary by the 1996 media law. In terms of sheer survival and firmness of party control, there have been just two successful (low circulation) party papers: the weekly magazine of the marginal and small MIÉP, and the periodical of the even more marginal Workers' Party.

Yet all broadsheet papers and many printed and electronic news magazines have a clear political leaning that determines issue coverage, framing, and tone to an extent that is unusual among the Western highbrow media (Lange 1994). As a new development, private radio and TV channels have been founded recently, with clear but informal partisan sympathies in the case of left-liberal organs (ATV and Klub Radio) and with more open organizational and/or financial ties to parties in the case of some right-wing outlets (Pannon Radió, Hír TV, and Lánchíd Rádió).

In the political programmes of public television the leading personnel go through major reshuffles after every change of government, and content oscillates

between government-leaning and government-propagating periods (Popescu and Tóka 2002). Although the 1996 media law provided for parity between government and opposition representatives on the parliament-elected bodies overseeing the public electronic media, the letter of the law proved insufficient to alter this situation even while it was observed—and then, there were periods when it was simply ignored.

All in all, major sections of the media function, for most of the time, as genuine party mouthpieces. This is particularly true for all right-wing organs, which are desperately dependent on politically motivated contributions. Yet political communication is the only area reviewed here where signs of party decline are noticeable over time. This trend is due to the launch of private television channels, which became possible in 1997. The foreign-owned commercial channels launched in 1997 provide fairly balanced political coverage, and even have the capacity and courage to explore issues that can occupy centre stage on the political agenda.

CONCLUSIONS

In terms of programmatic crystallization (Kitschelt et al. 1999) and electoral volatility (Tóka 1998), the Hungarian party system seems to have been an intermediate, rather than extreme case in the post-communist world. The radical decline in party system fragmentation, however, sets the country somewhat apart from its neighbours. While in 1990 the two largest parties commanded just 46 per cent of all list votes, the same figure was over 85 per cent in 2006. The effective number of legislative parties changed from an already moderate 3.7 in May 1990 to 2.9 in 1994, 3.4 in 1998, 2.2 in 2002, and 2.6 in 2006.¹² As discussed above, this shift of the Hungarian parliament towards a two-party system has been underpinned by a polarized political space and by the majoritarian elements of the institutional framework. The political, cultural, media, and religious elite have always had a largely bipolar structure. Parties close to the 5 per cent threshold have been repeatedly condemned by members of the elite for risking the defeat of 'their side' (Enyedi 2006). The fragmented public has finally yielded to the elite pattern, with only two minor parties retaining relevance to date.

The organizational and ideological position of the parties, the relations among them and their links to the society have changed as well, but the party system as such still appears to be one of the most stable social subsystems. The 2006 elections confirmed this by showing even aggregate volatility falling to 8.2 per cent. We believe this stability presents a major puzzle.

¹² The effective number of legislative parties is calculated the same way as the effective number of electoral parties, except that the percentage distribution of seats (rather than votes) in the election is used as the input data.

The international and domestic political and economic contexts of East European societies have undergone greater change since the early 1990s than the more stable parts of the world have known in decades. The various phases of the post-communist transformation have given rise to entirely different political and economic issues and conflicts. Consequently, the parties had to pass many tests of flexibility and adaptability. First, they were agents of political transition, defining themselves in terms of continuity–discontinuity with the late communist system. Within a few months they built up a national organization, developed an ideological profile sufficiently intelligible in Western terms so as to allow them entry into European party families, and got involved in the management of public administrations at both local and national levels. They also changed their organizational structures and leadership styles as building an identity, increasing their electoral strength or establishing credibility as coalition members took their turns at the top of the party agenda (cf. Harmel and Svaasand 1993). The main protagonists of the 1988–90 transition have experienced the radically different conditions of being in anti-system opposition, serving in government, and relegation by a democratic election into pro-system opposition.

Their impressive resilience aside, the lack of deep roots in society—or, at least, the fact that they constantly invite this characterization—is, or used to be, the most obvious feature of Hungarian parties. In some ways, this has been as much an asset as a liability. A high partisan penetration of society (a large membership, strong party attachments, etc.) may have been a mixed blessing from the point of view of regime consolidation (Pride 1970), and less flexible party positions on socio-economic issues might have hampered the parties' adaptation to a rapidly transforming society. True, the relative obscurity of between-party differences on major socio-economic issues may have undermined the parties' performance in their policy-representational role. But this would only be relevant if we were to examine the health of the democratic system as a whole, and not simply the strength of the parties.

We are inclined to judge the vitality of parties rather by the degree to which they reign supreme in their institutional environment. In this respect, Hungarian parties seem to fare reasonably well, notwithstanding their questionable popularity with the voters. The striking decisiveness of elections has provided for a strong dose of party government. It is not only that the party and electoral system reliably generate highly competitive elections, with rather clearly defined governmental alternatives and links between election results and government composition. The decisive role of elections is further increased by the remarkable stability of governments, strong party discipline in the legislature, the dearth of formal limits on the power of the parliament, the scale of politically sanctioned social changes, and the autonomous nature of the parties. No elected office-holder on the national level seems to doubt that politicians gain, keep and lose office according to the bargaining power of the parties behind them.

Among citizens, attitudinal support for party government is probably not very high, but, in the absence of attractive and credible alternatives, this generates neither calls for reform nor specifically anti-party sentiment. Political representation is nearly monopolized by parties, and recent years have witnessed an increase in stable, strongly held partisan attachments (see Table 6.4). A high degree of polarization may have a number of unwelcome consequences—in public parlance it is common pejoratively to refer to a ‘cold civil war’ between left and right—but it helps the development of crystallized political identities and generates support for individual parties.

Party government seems to be challenged more by forces from within than by interest groups, social movements, or citizens’ initiatives. Ministers, back-benchers, party delegates on various public bodies, even party-leaders-turned-premiers may have a stronger commitment to a wider political camp or a particular set of goals and norms than to their parties. As we pointed out, the relationship between prime ministers and the party that delegated them has become somewhat loose, and in the early years of the new century, the country was probably moving towards less party government as a result. To some extent this is inevitable and even increases the legitimacy of party government, but at the same it undermines both the power of party and the accountability of office-holders through elections.

Viewed from a broader perspective, political parties in post-communist democracies face similar challenges as their Western counterparts, from single-issue groups and highly competitive capital markets to increasingly supranational media and public administration. But they do not have to confront a comparably lively civil society and cannot rely on the institutions, inertia, and partisan loyalties of a long-established party system. Yet every hiatus also means an opportunity: while East European parties may have even more difficulty in shaping and directing mass attitudes and behaviour than those of the older democracies, they may be better able to control the power structures surrounding them.¹³ Placed in an excellent position to shape the momentous social and political transformation of their countries, they may well be able to impose a genuinely partisan order on society.

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¹³ In Ágh’s words (1995), the ‘political existence’ of Hungarian parties is stronger than their ‘social existence’.

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Parties and Governability in Brazil

Barry Ames and Timothy J. Power

INTRODUCTION

With 190 million people and the world's ninth largest economy, Brazil is not only the 'giant' of Latin America, but also an important political bell-wether. Its military coup in 1964 presaged a wave of authoritarian regimes in South America, and its political liberalization in the 1970s proved equally influential in the so-called 'third wave' of democratization. In 1985, when the generals finally turned over power to a civilian president, observers of Brazil imagined that the major challenges to the new democratic regime would be the country's stupefying socio-economic inequalities, the crushing foreign debt and resulting inflation, and the persistence of military tutelage. Few expected that political fragmentation and institutional underdevelopment would become towering challenges. Nonetheless, more than twenty years of democratic experience have given prominence to an interpretation of Brazilian democracy that sees political institutions as the Achilles heel of the new regime, and Brazil is often described as a nation in a permanent crisis of 'governability'.

Brazilian democracy—its most recent incarnation dates from 1985—has confronted crises of inflation, government waste and corruption, pension system deficits, grossly inadequate social services, violence, and social inequality. Substantial majorities of the population support proposals dealing with these crises. In the legislature, few parliamentarians oppose such proposals because of principles or voter pressure. And yet the proposals rarely emerge unscathed from the legislative process. Many, because they have no chance of passage, never arrive at the door of Congress. Others die in committees. Some proposals ultimately win approval, but long delays and substantive concessions weaken their impact. Rarely the president can avoid paying a high price, in pork barrel and patronage, for legislative support. Why is Brazil perennially plagued by such basic issues of governance?

Most observers attribute the situation described above to Brazil's national political institutions, especially to the rules and practices of electoral and legislative politics. At the heart of this institutional crisis lies the subject of this chapter,

the party system. Even in the subcategory of recently transitional democracies covered by this volume, where party systems are often in flux, Brazil stands out for its extreme fragmentation. In a study of eighteen Latin American countries in the 1978–2000 period, Payne et al. (2002: Table 6.10) found that the average effective number of parties in Brazil (6.70) was more than double the regional average (3.29; see Table 7.1). In an influential study of the institutionalization of twelve Latin American party systems, Mainwaring and Scully (1995: 17) placed Brazil near the bottom, along with Bolivia, Ecuador, and Peru—all markedly less developed in socio-economic terms.

No matter what definition of party institutionalization one prefers, contemporary Brazil's party system can be described as highly fragmented, highly competitive, highly volatile, and weakly institutionalized. The system is also extremely uneven in terms of parties' commitments to ideology and organization. A brief tour of the main parties illustrates these themes. As a general rule, only the parties of the left are strongly ideological, participatory, and permanently mobilized. Most of the centre and right parties are weakly programmatic, catch-all 'fronts'. Some are merely collections of legislators interested in trading their votes for whatever local pork barrel or jobs they can command. The best example of the former type—the only important ideological party in the Brazilian system—is the influential Workers' Party (PT), founded in 1980 by radical São Paulo unionists and independent Marxists. The PT gained national power in 2002 with the historic election of President Luiz Inácio 'Lula' da Silva (see Table 7.2), although its claim to be different from other Brazilian parties was undermined by a vote-buying scandal in 2005–6. The centrist Party of the Brazilian Democratic Movement (originally formed as an opposition front under military rule in 1966) and the centre-right Party of the Liberal Front (created by defectors from the military's party in 1984) clearly belong in the non-programmatic, catch-all category, and they were the only parties that managed to secure at least 20 per cent of the legislative seats in all three general elections held in the 1990s. The third most successful parliamentary party in the 1990s, the Party of Brazilian Social Democracy (PSDB), began life in 1988 as a European-style centre-left movement, but it began to drift towards catch-all status after coming to power with President Fernando Henrique Cardoso (1995–2002).

Beyond these important parties, several others in the small-to-medium range deserve mention. The leftish Democratic Labour Party (PDT) was dominated for twenty-five years by a pre-1964 populist warhorse, Leonel Brizola, who died in 2004. As his star faded in the 1990s, the PDT became a weak junior partner of the PT. Three right-of-centre groupings with misleading names—the Brazilian Labour Party (PTB), the Liberal Party (PL), and the Progressive Party (PP)—jockey for space as parties that almost always support the government of the day. The PTB and the PL are generally non-ideological and opportunistic, while the PP—descended from the sectors of the pro-military party that remained loyal to the end of the authoritarian regime—has a somewhat more distinct profile,

TABLE 7.1. *Parliamentary elections in Brazil, 1982–2002*

Parties	Election											
	1982		1986		1990		1994		1998		2002	
	Seats	%	Seats	%	Seats	%	Seats	%	Seats	%	Seats	%
PDS/PPR*	235	43.2	33	8.0	44	10.0	88	16.0	60	11.3	49	7.8
PMDB	200	43.0	260	47.8	108	19.3	107	20.3	83	15.2	74	13.4
PDT	23	5.8	24	6.5	46	10.0	34	7.1	25	5.7	21	5.1
PTB	13	4.4	17	4.5	38	5.6	31	5.2	31	5.7	26	4.6
PT	8	3.5	16	6.9	35	10.2	49	13.1	58	13.2	91	18.4
PFL			118	17.7	83	12.4	89	12.8	105	17.3	84	13.4
PL			6	2.8	16	4.3	13	3.5	12	2.5	26	4.3
PSB			1	1.0	11	1.9	15	2.1	19	3.4	22	5.3
PCB/PPS			3	0.9	3	1.0	2	0.6	3	1.3	15	3.1
PDC			5	1.2	22	3.0						
PC do B			3	0.6	5	0.9	10	1.2	7	1.3	12	2.2
PSC			1	0.4	6	0.8	3	0.5	2	0.7	1	0.6
PMN				0.1	1	0.6	4	0.6	2	0.5	1	0.3
PJ/PRN/PTC				0.0	40	8.3	1	0.4		0.1		0.1
PSDB					38	8.7	62	14.0	99	17.5	71	14.3
PST					2	0.9			1	0.3	3	0.6
PRS					4	0.6						

(cont.)

TABLE 7.1. (Continued)

Parties	Election											
	1982		1986		1990		1994		1998		2002	
	Seats	%	Seats	%	Seats	%	Seats	%	Seats	%	Seats	%
PSD					1	0.5	3	1.0	3	0.8	4	0.5
PSL						0.1			1	0.3	1	0.5
PRONA						0.0		0.8	1	0.9	6	2.1
PV							1	0.2	1	0.4	5	1.4
Others			0	1.7	0	0.7	1	2.3	0	2.2	1	2.4
Turnout		82.3		95.0		85.8		82.3		78.5		82.3
TNV/ENEP	N/A	2.64	35.2	3.55	33.8	8.95	17.6	8.54	12.9	8.26	14.6	9.22

* Includes PPB for 1986, and PTR/PP in 1990 and 1994.

Notes: % = percentage share of vote cast; TNV = total net volatility; ENEP = effective number of electoral parties.

PCB—Brazilian Communist Party; PDC—Christian Democrat Party; PC do B—Communist Party of Brazil; PDS—Social Democratic Party; PDT—Democratic Labour Party; PFL—Party of the Liberal Front; PJ—Youth Party; PMDB—Party of the Brazilian Democratic Movement; PMN—National Mobilization Party; PPR—Progressive Reform Party; PPS—Popular Socialist Party; PRN—Party of National Reconstruction; PRONA—Party of the Reconstruction of National Order; PRS—Social Reform Party; PSB—Brazilian Socialist Party; PSC—Christian Social Party; PSD—Social Democratic Party; PSDB—Party of Brazilian Social Democracy; PSL—Social Liberal Party; PST—Social Labour Party; PT—Workers' Party; PTB—Brazilian Labour Party; PTC—Communitarian Labour Party; PV—Green Party.

Source: Brazilian electoral data website (<http://www.iuperj.br/deb/ing/Indice.htm>).

TABLE 7.2. *Brazilian presidential election results, 1989–2002*

1989	Fernando Collor PRN (PST–PSL)	Luiz Inácio Lula PT (PSB–PC do B)	Leonel Brizola PDT	Mário Covas PSDB	Paulo Maluf PDS	Others	Turnout
1st Round	30.5	17.2	16.5	11.5	8.9	15.4	88.1
2nd Round	53.0	47.0	—	—	—	—	85.6
1994	Fernando Henrique Cardoso PSDB (PFL–PTB)	Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva PT (PSB–PC do B–PPS–PV–PSTU)	Enéas Carneiro PRONA	Orestes Quércia PMDB (PSD)	Others		
1st Round	54.3	27.0	7.4	4.4	6.9	—	82.2
1998	Fernando Henrique Cardoso PSDB (PFL– PPB–PTB–PSD)	Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva PT (PDT–PSB– PC do B)	Ciro Gomes PPS	Others			
1st Round	53.1	31.7	11.0	4.3	—	—	78.5
2002	Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva PT (PCB–PL–PMN–PC do B)	José Serra PSDB (PMDB)	Anthony Garotinho PSB (PGT–PTC)	Ciro Gomes PPS (PDT–PTB)	Others		
1st Round	46.4	23.2	17.9	12.0	0.5	—	82.3
2nd Round	61.3	38.7	—	—	—	—	79.5

Source: Brazilian electoral data website (<http://www.iuperj.br/deb/ing/Indexe.htm>)

with several prominent advocates of neoliberal economics. Of these seven parties that were the most electorally successful in the 1990s, only the PT was created from the 'bottom up'. The others all had their origins in parliamentary factions, personalistic movements, intra-regional rivalries, or military tutelage. Table 7.3 presents an expanded roster of noteworthy parties.

Though the panoply of parties shown in Table 7.3 is impressive, the absence of party institutionalization is evident not only in the extreme level of fragmentation, but also in the fact that the majority of the party leaders listed here (with the prominent exception of the PT and PC do B leaders) made their names in parties other than the ones over which they now preside. Most contemporary parties have a complex lineage leading back to the authoritarian regime of the 1960s and 1970s, when military elites forced politicians into a two-party system. Some parties can trace their roots back even further to parties created in the late 1940s by Getúlio Vargas, Brazil's wartime dictator. To study Brazilian party politics, one needs the ability to retain names, numbers, and acronyms.

This chapter resists the temptation to emphasize individual parties or their genealogies. Rather, it focuses on the structural characteristics of the Brazilian party system that both reveal and explain its overall lack of institutionalization. The chapter begins by considering some historical obstacles to party government to Brazil, with special attention to the electoral system as a causal factor. It then proceeds to a more detailed examination of the operation of the electoral system, demonstrating its pulverizing effects on parties. The third section turns to the systemic functionality of Brazilian political parties, focusing on such issues as governance and public policy, interest aggregation and articulation, and political participation, recruitment, and communication. Our findings shed light on the vicissitudes of an under-institutionalized party system, and we conclude by placing our findings in theoretical and comparative perspective.

OBSTACLES TO PARTY GOVERNMENT IN BRAZIL

Regardless of the regime of the day, political parties have generally not been strong, autonomous actors in the Brazilian polity. This section reviews some of the most prominent treatments of the roots of party underdevelopment and the continuing obstacles to party government. The discussion revisits a series of 'isms' inhibiting party development in Brazil: authoritarianism, federalism, presidentialism, statism, corporatism, personalism, and clientelism. Our primary explanatory focus is on the electoral system, but we recognize that the electoral system interacts with virtually all of the variables we consider below.

TABLE 7.3. *Prominent Brazilian political parties in 2006*

Party	Size*	Orientation and background	Principal leaders in 2006
Workers' Party (PT), founded 1980	82	Prior to 2002: left-wing; grew out of labour unrest in late 1970s; radically democratic and anti-corporatist; strong support from intellectuals, workers, state employees; best organized party in Brazilian history. Since 2003: sharp centrist turn, alliances with right parties, status quo economic policy, practices 'politics as usual' in Congress	Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, four-time presidential candidate and winner in 2002; Ricardo Berzoini, party president; Antônio Palocci, finance minister; José Dirceu, former chief of staff; Aloizio Mercadante, senator; Marta Suplicy, former mayor of São Paulo; numerous intellectuals and cultural figures active in party
Party of the Brazilian Democratic Movement (PMDB), founded 1966	81	Front party opposing military regime of 1964–85; began democracy as centre-left, but lost many social democrats to PSDB in 1987–88; currently centrist, catch-all, decentralized, many feuding 'owners'	José Sarney, former president 1985–90; Anthony Garotinho and Orestes Quércia, former governors; Renan Calheiros, president of Senate; numerous leaders and factions
Party of the Liberal Front (PFL), founded 1984	64	Conservative; last-minute defectors from military regime; pragmatic, clientelistic 'party of power'; core leaders supported every president from 1964 to 2002, military or civilian	Antônio Carlos Magalhães, senator; Marco Maciel, former vice-president of Republic; Jorge Bornhausen, senator; Inocêncio Oliveira, deputy; many experienced notables
Party of Brazilian Social Democracy (PSDB), founded 1988	54	Former progressive wing of PMDB; originally Western European-style social democratic; leaders influenced by European 'Third Way'; champion of 1990s pro-market reforms; supports parliamentarism; principal force of the modernizing centre	Fernando Henrique Cardoso, former president 1995–2002; Aécio Neves and Geraldo Alckmin, governors; Tasso Jereissatti, senator and party president; José Serra, mayor of São Paulo and 2002 presidential candidate
Progressive Party (PP), founded 1966, renamed 2003	51	Conservative: formerly the pro-military party in 1964–85, shrank drastically in 1980s, has changed names four times	Paulo Maluf, ex-governor; Severino Cavalcanti, former president of Chamber
Brazilian Labor Party (PTB), founded 1980	42	Centre-right; clientelistic; as a 'party for rent' has had unstable leadership; grew dramatically after 2002 as repository for opportunistic centre-right politicians wishing to support Lula	Roberto Jefferson, former deputy; José Múcio Monteiro, deputy; Luiz Antônio Fleury Filho, former PMDB governor of São Paulo

(cont.)

TABLE 7.3. (Continued)

Party	Size*	Orientation and background	Principal leaders in 2006
Liberal Party (PL), founded 1985	38	Centre-right; originally Thatcherite in economics, later catch-all and non-descript; in 2002 allied with PT on a pro-growth platform; grew substantially with Lula's victory	Valdemar Costa Neto, former deputy
Brazilian Socialist Party (PSB), founded 1985	28	Left party usually in orbit of PT	Ciro Gomes, minister; Luiza Erundina, former PT mayor of São Paulo; Eduardo Campos, deputy and former minister
Democratic Labor Party (PDT), founded 1980	21	Centre-left; personalistic; on-again, off-again partner of PT in 1980s and 1990s; mostly restricted to Rio de Janeiro and Rio Grande do Sul; fading since Leonel Brizola's death in 2004	Miro Teixeira, deputy; Cristovam Buarque, former PT governor of Brasília
Popular Socialist Party (PPS), founded 1922, renamed 1991	15	Descended from Moscow-line Brazilian Communist Party (PCB) founded in 1920s; abandoned Leninism and supported Gorbachev in 1980s; now centre-left	Roberto Freire, deputy
Communist Party of Brazil (PC do B), founded 1962	11	Prior to 2002: hard left, unreconstructed Leninists; defected from PCB in 1962 during Sino-Soviet split, later pro-Albanian until end of Cold War; after 1989 mostly satellite of PT; dominated national student union. Since 2003: pragmatic, reliable Lula ally	Aldo Rebelo, president of Chamber of Deputies
Green Party (PV), founded 1986	8	Pragmatic environmentalists, active in local politics; held environment ministry 1999–2002 under Cardoso	Sarney Filho, former environment minister; Gilberto Gil, culture minister for Lula; Fernando Gabeira, deputy
Party of Socialism and Liberty (PSOL), founded 2004	7	Former radical left faction of PT, founded by dissidents unhappy with centrist policies; key leaders were expelled from PT in 2003	Heloísa Helena, senator; Luciana Genro, deputy; Babá, deputy; Plínio de Arruda Sampaio, former deputy

* Seats held in the Chamber of Deputies (lower house of Congress) as of 1 March 2006. The total number of seats is 513. Parties shown here comprise 96% of the Chamber.

The state and corporatism

Social scientists have long stressed the predominance of the state in Brazilian political development. Drawing on that work, Souza (1976) viewed the state, principally in its post-Vargas corporatist form, as intimately intertwined with the creation and sustenance of modern political parties. Earlier analyses, Souza noted, emphasized the clientelistic nature of these institutions, but these analyses had done so only in a 'normative' way that failed to grasp the organic link between the state and parties. One of Souza's innovations was to cast clientelism not as a defect of political culture or a reflection of class domination, but as a distinctly *political* phenomenon related to the institutional viability of parties. In Souza's words, 'we cease to view "clientelism" as a specific characteristic of Brazilian politics, or even as a 'stage' of development, and understand it instead as a mode of control over political resources and of their utilization by political organizations (in this case, parties) which seek, in this way, to generate power for themselves and to consolidate themselves as institutions' (1976: 35). A second innovation was to point to the differential development of parties and the state apparatus—in other words, to stress the importance of the 'timing' of the crystallization of state and societal institutions. In Brazil, Souza argued, 'the existence of a centralized state structure *before* the advent of a party system constitutes, in and of itself, an obstacle to institutionalization [of parties] and a stimulus to clientelistic politics' (1976: 36). Souza's analysis remains convincing, and her emphasis on the close relationship between state and parties has influenced much subsequent work on party organization in Brazil.

Presidentialism

In the 1990s, presidential democracy was the subject of a debate crucially related to the comparative study of political parties. Juan Linz's now-classic essay (1994) made the argument that presidential democracy is inferior to parliamentary democracy. Presidentialism, Linz pointed out, is a winner-takes-all system that excludes losers from power for long periods. Presidentialism contains no mechanism to resolve competing claims of democratic legitimacy made by the executive and legislature. Its fixed term of office makes it much less agile than parliamentarism in replacing bad governments or responding to crises. Presidentialism is an inflexible system in which crises of government are prone to become crises of regime, thus making it an especially unattractive option for new, untested democracies (Linz 1994). Building on Linz, Mainwaring argued that multiparty systems exacerbate the problems of presidentialism. Multipartism promotes ideological polarization, makes inter-party coalition-building more difficult, and contributes to immobilism in executive–legislative relations (Mainwaring 1993*a*, 1993*b*).

Is presidentialism antithetical to party development? The first major comparative study of presidentialism (Shugart and Carey 1992) confirmed a strong

inverse relationship between the strength of presidents and of parties in democratic systems around the world. In detailing the strong presidency/weak parties syndrome, Shugart and Carey found Brazil, which in 1991 they called the most powerful presidency in the world, to be an extreme example of each tendency.

The themes of executive dominance and presidentialism's deleterious effects on political parties are old ones in the study of Brazilian politics,¹ but they re-emerged with a vengeance after the transition to democracy in 1985. Do governability problems result from the leadership styles of the post-authoritarian presidents, from the web of institutional incentives imposed by minority presidentialism, or from some combination of these two factors? Authors such as Abranches (1988), Mainwaring (1999), and Ames (2001) emphasize the institutional setting. Because Brazilian presidents lack consistent party support in Congress, they are forced to form and reform cabinets and legislative coalitions on a mostly ad hoc basis. As a result, policy outcomes are erratic and unpredictable. The vocal parliamentarist movement that emerged in Brazil's Constituent Assembly of 1987–8 reiterated these claims. Moreover, the parliamentarists argued, Brazilian political parties could only be strengthened if presidentialism were abolished first. The population, however, disagreed: in a 1993 plebiscite, Brazilians voted by a wide margin to maintain presidentialism.

Federalism

In his 1948 dissertation on *coronelismo*, Victor Nunes Leal (trans. 1977) offered the first systematic study of relations among Brazil's three levels of government—federal, state, and municipal—and their effects on parties and competition. Leal's point of departure was the Old Republic (1889–1930) and its famous 'politics of the governors'. In this period 'national' politics, in the sense of the post-Vargas era, did not exist in Brazil. Gubernatorial powers were at their peak, and the municipalities of the interior were so weakened that no rural political boss could come to power who did not 'conform politically to the ruling groups in the state' (Leal 1977: 132). Because all factions in any given municipality were continually struggling for the favours of the state government, a governor could easily pick his preferred lieutenant in each rural area. At the same time, out-of-favour local factions would continue to try to gain the good will of their state's elites. 'The position of the local leader in opposition is so uncomfortable that, as a general rule, he only remains in opposition when he is unable to attach himself to the government' (19). The result in Brazil was the 'exaggeratedly pro-government character of state and federal representation' (131).

¹ A classic statement of this was composed by a British envoy to Brazil in the 1930s (Ernest Hambloch 1936).

Leal's analysis of *coronelismo* drew heavily on two factors: the traditional social structure of the Brazilian interior and the unequal relationships among the three levels of government. Leal emphasized the fact that in the Old Republic, formal representative democracy was 'superimposed' on this 'inadequate' structure.² Political democracy and *coronelismo* combined with federalism to yield a plethora of weak, non-programmatic parties oriented only towards the necessities of local politics. Many students of Brazilian politics would argue that these phenomena are still visible today. Consider the following observation made by Leal with regard to the 1946 election: 'Anyone who observed the multiplicity of alliances made in the last state and municipal elections could not fail to conclude that our parties are little more than labels or pegs on which to hang the legal and technical exigencies of the electoral process' (1977: 132). This was as true in 2006 as it was in 1946, and this continuity has led more recent analysts (Lamounier and Meneguello 1986; Mainwaring 1999) to cite the continuing importance of federalism to the fragmentation and fragility of Brazilian political parties.

Clientelism

Political scientists, sociologists, and anthropologists have long stressed the importance of patron–client relationships in Brazilian social and political life.³ These networks were intertwined with oligarchic factionalism and *coronelismo* in the Old Republic of 1889–1930 and with the local proto-parties of the day. But clientelism was also present when modern Brazilian parties were created on the demise of Vargas's corporatist *Estado Novo* (New State) in 1945. When democracy began, Vargas's twin inventions, the PSD and the PTB (the Social Democratic Party and Brazilian Labour Party respectively, neither to be confused with present-day parties of the same names), were conscious efforts to preserve the extensive patronage networks he had constructed over the course of his fifteen-year dictatorship. Generalizing broadly, the PSD was given to local oligarchs to sustain a rural clientele, while the PTB exploited the corporatist structures that organized urban workers. The PSD and the PTB were the first truly national political parties in Brazil. Still, the resilience of patronage politics kept the Vargas-created parties from crowding-out older, personalistic parties in the most important states, including São Paulo and Minas Gerais. The main party of the anti-Vargas oligarchy, the UDN (National Democratic Union), was less identified with clientelism than its principal competitors, though the subsequent trajectory of its leaders suggests that this was due less to a rejection of traditional

² Cammack (1982) disputed the importance of this point, arguing that the minimal levels of political participation in the Old Republic tend to deflate Leal's claims about the macropolitical relevance of *coronelismo*.

³ The literature here is quite extensive. For a recent review see Banck (1999).

political practices than to the party's infrequent access to state power.⁴ The post-1945 parties integrated with little difficulty into the pre-existing environment of personalism and patronage, and these phenomena in turn fragmented the parties and gradually increased their number.

Recently, the clientelist perspective on Brazilian parties has enjoyed a resurgence in popularity.⁵ Like Souza, Lamounier and Meneguello (1986) attempt a more sophisticated analysis of clientelism, one based on rational behaviour by individual politicians.⁶ They argue that two factors discussed earlier—the powerful role of the state in Brazil and the federal organization of the country—have historically combined to make politicians value their access to state resources more than their allegiance to political organizations or parties. Politicians must first and foremost act as *procuradores*, interceding with the central government to obtain pork for their respective states and municipalities (Lamounier and Meneguello 1986: 59–60).

Though these observations referred to the party system of the 1946–64 democratic regime, their relevance in recent years has been increasing. Indeed, several newer works have documented a secular trend towards the intensification of clientelistic political practices. Both Cammack (1982) and Diniz (1982) have demonstrated the persistence of clientelism and machine politics among both the government and opposition parties under the authoritarian regime of 1964–85. Hagopian (1996) argued that the growth of 'state capitalism' under authoritarianism permitted elites to develop the kind of patronage networks that allowed them to survive, often unscathed, the transition to democratic rule. Mainwaring continued this story into the politics of the post-1985 democracy, suggesting that clientelism has become more pervasive (and more destructive of political and economic stability) than ever before in the history of Brazil. The decade of the 1980s saw the combination of three developments—the zenith of the interventionist Brazilian state, a newly competitive political system, and an unprecedented explosion in the number of clients (potential voters)—that exacerbated older traditions such as patronage politics and the patrimonial state (Mainwaring 1999: 200–7). This could not fail to affect the party system. Some parties, notably the PFL and the smaller right-of-centre parties supporting presidents José Sarney and Fernando Collor after 1985, practiced clientelism so intensely that they appeared capable of little else.

⁴ Hippolito (1985) characterized the contradiction between the UDN's anti-patronage rhetoric and its clientelistic orientation in practice as one of the many 'ambiguities of Brazilian liberalism'.

⁵ Mainwaring (1999: ch. 6) provides a useful overview of the concepts of clientelism, patrimonialism, and patronage, and their utility for studying parties and democracy in Brazil. See Jenks (1979: ch. 1) for a discussion of clientelism as an analytical perspective for the study of parties under authoritarian rule.

⁶ Ames (2001) uses the terms 'pork barrel' and 'patronage' instead of clientelism to escape the anthropological baggage of reciprocity and trust associated with clientelism. Regardless of the precise term utilized, we emphasize the market nature of the relationships.

In some countries, including the USA, Italy, and Chile, patronage has proven to be an effective party-building resource.⁷ Yet in contemporary Brazil, clientelism seems destructive of parties. Why is Brazilian clientelism so qualitatively different? The answer lies in two related phenomena: the incentives to political individualism provided by the country's unique electoral system (see below) and the resulting weakness of party authority over politicians. Personalism, localism, and the laissez-faire attitudes that often prevail in party politics tend to make patronage politics largely an individual affair; the benefits of clientelism accrue to individual politicians and are lost to the party as a whole. The incentives to clientelism in the post-1985 democracy have been so powerful that the traditionally fragile parties have been weakened even further (Mainwaring 1999).

Authoritarianism and democracy

Brazil's swings between variants of authoritarian and democratic rule have also obstructed the institutionalization of parties. This is such an obvious point that few analysts have chosen to dwell on it. But it is necessary to recall that all regime transformations in Brazil over the past half-century have also entailed a fundamental restructuring of the party system. Since independence in 1822, Brazil has had seven distinct party systems; four just since 1945. This implies an average 'life span' for the nation's party systems of around twenty-five years, and only about fifteen years since the end of the *Estado Novo*. As Lamounier and Meneguello point out, 'the shifts from one [party] system to another were always mediated by the coercive intervention of the central power, old or new. There can be no doubt that these interventions are one of the causes (although they may also be a consequence) of party instability' (1986: 20–1).

The electoral system

No discussion of Brazilian party weakness could be complete without reference to the country's unusual electoral system. Its most outstanding feature is the system of proportional representation (PR) with preference voting used in the electoral contests for the federal and state legislatures. 'Open-list' PR encourages fierce struggles not only among different parties, but also between candidates from the same party. This internal competition is clearly destructive of party cohesiveness. In the following section of the chapter, we treat the electoral system at length, arguing that it is the single most powerful explanatory factor in accounting for the unique weakness of Brazilian parties.

⁷ On Chile, see especially Arturo Valenzuela (1977).

THE INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT: HOW THE ELECTORAL SYSTEM WORKS

Brazil conducts legislative elections under proportional representation, with an 'open-list' rule determining who occupies each party's legislative seats. Voters may vote for a party label, but they may also cast their ballots directly for an individual candidate. About 90 per cent vote for an individual. After the election, the votes won by all the candidates of each party (plus the votes for the party) are summed, and the D'Hondt method determines how many seats each party receives. Each party's candidates are then ranked according to their individual vote totals. A party entitled to ten seats elects its ten top vote-getters.

All open-list systems shift power from party leaders to individual candidates, but the Brazilian system magnifies this tendency. Actual ballots, for example, do not include candidate names, so parties cannot list a preferred order. Instead, voters entering the polling area must know the name or code of their candidate. Unlimited re-election is possible, and parties are obligated to re-nominate incumbents desiring re-election, no matter how they voted in previous legislatures.⁸ Together, these details mean that party leaders lose an important means of disciplining deputies.

Other nations, including Finland and pre-1973 Chile, utilized open-list PR, but Brazil's version differs significantly. In elections for the national Chamber of Deputies, each state is an at-large, multi-member district with between eight and seventy seats. Lightly populated states, mostly in the North and Centre-West, are over-represented; heavily populated states, principally São Paulo, have too few seats.⁹ State parties, not national parties, select legislative candidates, and the states are important political arenas in themselves. In some Brazilian states, powerful governors control nominations and dominate campaigns (Abrucio 1998; Samuels and Abrucio 2000). In other states, local leaders deliver votes to deal-making candidates; in yet others, neither governors nor local bosses have much influence over individual voters.

Brazilian campaign regulations are both restrictive and permissive. Candidates may not buy advertisements on radio or television, but free TV time is allotted to parties (not individual candidates). Parties dole out TV time in proportion to the importance of the race, so the hundreds of congressional candidates get only a few seconds each week. Practically everyone advertises in newspapers, but these adverts seem to have little impact (Straubhaar, Olsen, and Nunes 1993). Candidates erect billboards and paint walls, but these activities are usually in

⁸ This long-standing mechanism, known informally as the *candidato nato* rule (literally 'birthright candidacy'), was suspended by a 2002 court decision and is now under review for the 2006 elections.

⁹ Until 1994, parties faced no minimum threshold for attaining seats in the legislature. In 1993, Congress approved a 3 per cent threshold, but a loophole minimizes the law's effects.

conjunction with other campaign efforts, such as participation in rallies or the delivery of public works.

Permissive spending laws allow aspirants for the federal legislature to finance the campaigns of state assembly candidates.¹⁰ Politicians engage in deals in which federal legislative candidates finance the campaign literature of state assembly candidates whose bases of support lie far away. The assembly candidates reciprocate by instructing supporters to vote for their benefactor for the national legislature. Such deals add little to linkages between representatives and their constituents.

Understanding the electoral system 'on the ground' is essential to grasping the fragmenting and fratricidal effects of open-list PR. Legally, candidates may seek votes anywhere in their states, but in reality most candidates focus geographically. The state-level spatial patterns that result can be seen in two dimensions, each based on *municipal* performance. *Municipal dominance* is the candidate's share of the total votes cast for members of all parties. If we measure a candidate's dominance at the municipal level and weight that dominance by the percentage of the candidate's total vote that each municipality contributes, we can see that candidates with higher weighted averages 'dominate' their key municipalities, while those with lower weighted averages 'share' their key municipalities with other candidates. A second dimension represents the *spatial* distribution of those municipalities where the candidate does well. These municipalities can be contiguous neighbours or they can be scattered. Combining the two dimensions yields four ideal-type patterns:

Concentrated-dominated municipalities. In the classic Brazilian '*reduto*' (literally, 'electoral fortress') a single deputy dominates a group of contiguous municipalities. Candidates' families may have long enjoyed economic or political pre-eminence in a particular region; they might have climbed the ladder of politics from local jobs; they may have struck deals with local bosses. Concentrated-dominant distributions often reflect traditional patronage and pork-based relationships between voters and politicians. Such distributions can also develop when skilled local leaders climb through the ranks from posts on municipal councils to mayor or state deputy.

Concentrated-shared municipalities. In large metropolitan areas, especially 'mega-cities' like greater São Paulo, blocs of voters may be so large that their votes alone elect many deputies. In the state of São Paulo, for example, candidates with working-class constituencies often get three quarters of their total statewide vote from a single municipality, the city of São Paulo. But they may never receive more than 5 per cent of the votes cast in the city or in any other single municipality, because they share these municipalities with many other candidates.

¹⁰ A good discussion of campaign corruption can be found in Geddes and Ribeiro Neto (1999).

Scattered-shared municipalities. Some candidates appeal to voter cohorts that are numerically weak in any single municipality. Examples include Japanese–Brazilians and *evangélicos* (Protestants, especially Pentecostals, who typically vote for church-sponsored candidates). These cohorts are cohesive and loyal, but they are small, so their candidates construct coalitions of small slices of many municipalities. Such candidates may also occupy ideological niches. One *paulista* conservative was notorious for his campaign to restore the monarchy. Nationwide, voters rejected his proposal by more than seven to one, but he found enough support across the state of São Paulo to win a Chamber seat.

Scattered-dominated municipalities. Some candidates specialize in deals with local leaders.¹¹ Former deputy João Alves, for example, got his votes in widely scattered municipalities, but where he got votes, he often collected 70 per cent or more of the municipality's total vote. In a neighbouring municipality, he might get nothing. Why? If he had the kind of support enjoyed by a local mayor or council member, a leader with a strong local reputation, Alves would have a single-dominant cluster of votes with a gradual tapering off as his local fame grew faint. If he appealed to some special bloc of voters, he would have only a small share of the total vote in any given municipality. Alves, by contrast, *dominated* his bailiwicks.¹² He did so by making deals with local bosses, deals that enriched him but required the supply of a constant stream of public works and jobs for the local bosses.

The flexibility enjoyed by politicians in constructing coalitions of voters makes the system enormously democratic. It makes no presuppositions about the kinds of societal cleavages that ought to be the basis of election. Open-list PR is unlike the single-member district, which favours locality as the dominant cleavage, or closed-list PR, which favours class. Rather, open-list PR—with districts of high

¹¹ This category also includes those who once held such bureaucratic posts as state secretary of education, a job with substantial pork-barrel potential.

¹² A violent crime in 1993 led to the unmasking of an extortion ring involving members of the Budget Committee and many big construction companies. The racket's basis was simple: deputies submitted, and the Budget Committee approved, amendments to the general budget law mandating the construction of certain public works. Only particular companies could build these public works, either because a particular company had already initiated the project or because the bidding was rigged. Because these colluding firms stood to make substantial profits, they could afford handsome kickbacks to the deputies, often 20 per cent or more of the project's value. The deputies laundered their kickbacks through the national lottery: they would go to the lottery office, buy someone's winning ticket for a small premium and receive 'clean' money from the lottery itself. The ringleaders of the scheme, a group of Budget Committee deputies known as the 'seven dwarfs' (because of their small stature) were investigated by a special parliamentary committee of enquiry. Most either resigned or were kicked out of the Chamber. One rapid resignation was that of the former chair of the Budget Committee, João Alves, a senior deputy from Bahia. Alves had come to the Congress in 1966 with no money; by the early 1990s he had millions of dollars in real estate and a \$6 million aeroplane (Krieger et al. 1994).

magnitude—allows the campaign itself to determine which cohorts of voters achieve representation.¹³

Thus open-list PR personalizes politics and hinders party-building. If the average number of voters per congressional seat is 50,000, a candidate with 200,000 voters who will follow the candidate to any party has enormous power. Whichever party attracts the candidate can be assured of four seats, that is, the candidate plus three others elected by the ‘extra’ votes. Party leaders will be very tolerant of the ideological deviations of such heavyweights. When party leaders ‘bid’ for star vote-getters, there is a trade-off between strong candidates and strong parties. Brazil’s system may be highly democratic, but openness and flexibility come at the cost of weak parties and personalized politics.

LEGITIMACY OF PARTIES

Although the legitimacy of political parties in Latin America is low in comparative perspective, Brazil has consistently scored near the bottom of the region on conventional indicators of support. For example, in both 1996 and 1997, the Latin Barometer asked citizens across the region how ‘close’ they felt to any political party. Brazil’s weighted score on this measure ranked 17th among 17 countries surveyed (cited in Payne et al. 2002: Table 6.3). A follow-up question in 1997 asked whether respondents viewed parties as ‘indispensable to the progress of the country’. Whereas 77 per cent of Mexicans and 65 per cent of Uruguayans responded in the affirmative, a paltry 27 per cent of Brazilians followed suit (only Paraguayans were more sceptical of parties’ importance). Every year between 1996 and 2001, Latin Barometer also inquired whether citizens had ‘confidence’ (*confianza*, also ‘trust’) in political parties in general. The average percentage of Brazilians claiming trust in parties was 17.6 per cent across the six-year period studied. For other major Latin American cases, the equivalent scores were 17.9 per cent for Argentina, 22.7 per cent for Costa Rica, 26.6 per cent for Chile, and 27.4 per cent for Mexico (Payne et al. 2002: Table 6.4).

Party identification is conceptually distinct from party legitimacy and, especially, from party *system* legitimacy. When asked ‘which political party do you prefer?’ respondents frequently cite a party, although this does not necessarily mean that they feel ‘close’ to the party or that they are satisfied with the party system in general. Using data from the respected DataFolha Institute, Carreirão and Kinzo (2004) draw four main conclusions about party identification in the 1989–2002 period. First, just under half of Brazilians express a spontaneous party

¹³ Closed-list PR in Brazil would undoubtedly benefit social class as the dominant cleavage, but in other societies race or gender might be advantaged; i.e., closed-list PR favours cleavages in which the contenders have relatively constant shares in each district across the entire nation.

preference: the average aggregate level of identification was 46 per cent across the period studied. Second, aggregate party identification fluctuates considerably and is highly sensitive to campaign effects and personalistic stimuli. For example, support for Fernando Collor's miniscule PRN grew rapidly during his presidential campaign and honeymoon in 1989–90, only to fade thereafter; a similar phenomenon occurred with Fernando Henrique Cardoso and his PSDB during his 1994 campaign and the euphoria of the Real Plan. Third, the positive effect of education on partisanship is strong and consistent. Fourth, the aggregate level of party identification conceals important differences across the parties. Between 1989 and 2001, the top two parties in terms of rates of identification were consistently the PMDB and the PT. The PMDB led in the early years of democracy, but in early 1998 (at the start of Lula's third run for the presidency) the PT took over the top spot and has maintained it consistently since then. When queried on party preference during the 1999–2001 period, about 18–21 per cent of respondents typically cited the PT, about 12–14 per cent cited the PMDB, about 5–7 per cent the PFL, and about 3–5 per cent the PSDB. A handful of other parties would receive mentions, but over half the electorate expressed no party preference at all (Carreirão and Souza 2004).

Bear in mind that most of the above polls were taken before the start of the 2002 presidential campaign, which Lula won easily, thus consolidating the PT's dominance in party preference. Surveys taken during the campaign showed an electorate breaking down along 50-25-25 lines. That is, roughly half of Brazilians had no partisan identification, and of the half who did, half of those supported a single party, the PT. Among the approximately 7 per cent of the electorate with a college education, the PT's dominance was even stronger, and Lula performed best among these voters in 2002. It may seem surprising that in the most fragmented party system in Latin America, half of all party identifiers prefer a single party. This is a testament, however, to the remarkable success of the PT's party-building efforts in the 1990s, a decade in which one in three Brazilians were exposed to PT government at the municipal or state-level prior to Lula's accession to the presidency. In terms of party identification, as with so many other dimensions of the Brazilian party system, the PT is the exception that proves the rule (Samuels 2006).

ORGANIZATION AND RESOURCES

The earlier discussion of factors, such as clientelism and personalism, is relevant to the story of party organization in Brazil, since such factors have in effect impeded its autonomous development. The PT is also the only party that maintains a highly active programme of grass-roots-level workshops, debates, and political

discussion groups for its members, many of whom simultaneously participate in like-minded interest groups (social movements, NGOs, human rights groups, and the left wing of the Catholic Church). This form of multi-frontal activism among PT adherents is known as *dupla militância*. Several of the other major parties (the PMDB, PFL, and PSDB) have educational arms styled consciously after the successful German party foundations (which are themselves very active in Brazil, helping to fund their local counterparts). But most Brazilian party foundations are purely ornamental, having few resources and little visibility outside their parties.

Reliable data on mass membership are hard to come by, but again the PT is the only party with numbers worth mentioning. At the time of Lula's election in 2002, the party had about 400,000 card-carrying members. This increased to half a million in the first 6 months of 2003, a period in which the PT was adding about 11,000 new members monthly. The PT's official membership dwarfs that of all other parties combined. Historically, internal party finances rely heavily on a 'tithing' system. Rank-and-file PT members must contribute at least 1 per cent of their income, government appointees between 6 and 20 per cent based on a sliding scale, and PT elected officials chip in with 30 per cent of their salaries. In 2003 party income surpassed US \$40 million, although investigations in 2005 suggested that some of these funds had been raised off the books by the party treasurer, who was forced to resign. A comeback by Mexico's PRI notwithstanding, the PT is easily the best organized political party in democratic Latin America.

SYSTEMIC FUNCTIONALITY

Interest articulation and aggregation

It should be obvious that Brazil's electoral system has serious consequences for interest aggregation. Few, if any, barriers constrain the creation of miniscule parties. Because the D'Hondt formula for apportioning legislative seats hinders small parties' chances of attaining the 'electoral quotient' that would entitle them to a seat, they often ally with larger parties so that their joint total, which determines whether they reach the quotient, is larger. A candidate whose personal total is insufficient to earn a seat—because the total of all that party's candidates is inadequate—may thus have enough votes as part of a multiparty alliance. These electoral alliances are truly just electoral: they imply no joint action in the legislature. While in other multiparty systems such alliances may really aggregate voter interests, in Brazil alliances function primarily to help individual politicians overcome the electoral quotient.

If electoral alliances are inconsistent across the states, delegations from the same parties from different states are less likely to share a common programme

at the national level. Consider the 1990 election. While the PMDB allied with the PFL in several important states, the PMDB aligned with the PSDB—against the PFL—in a number of others. The social-democratic PSDB aligned with the most right-wing party, the PDS (today the PP), in three states, and with the most left-wing party, the PC do B, in ten. Only two parties ran their own candidates in more than half of Brazil's twenty-seven states: the PT in twenty-three and the PMDB in seventeen. The only predictable pattern was that the PT and its smaller left-wing satellites tended to cooperate in most states. Outside of the ideologically left parties, astonishingly unpredictable alliances sprang up all over the national territory.

The apparent confusion of state-level alliances results from a conceptual muddle. With the major exception of the Workers' Party, Brazilian parties really exist only at the state level. At that level, moreover, parties can be surrogates for traditional factional disputes. Politics in Maranhão, dominated by the José Sarney clan since the 1960s, is either pro-Sarney or anti-Sarney; in Bahia the line-up is pro or anti-Antônio Carlos Magalhães. In the presidential election of 1994, *tucano* Fernando Henrique Cardoso defeated *petista* Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva in the first round of the election, but in the second round Cardoso supported the PT candidate for governor in the state of Espírito Santo. In some states the PT and PDT are fierce enemies, while in others they cooperate. The late Leonel Brizola, the PDT's founder, controlled the party in Rio Grande do Sul and Rio de Janeiro but had no influence in Paraná. An even stranger example is found in São Paulo. Not surprisingly, former Governor Orestes Quércia dominated a wing of the *paulista* PMDB (his own party throughout his career), but for a few years he also dominated the *paulista* PFL, which answered to him rather than the national PFL leaders.

The electoral system also ensures that lobbies, single-issue groups, and other forms of factional organization translate into the party system in unusual ways. A glance at the National Congress illustrates this. Caucuses of like-minded deputies occur naturally in legislatures. But when parties have little control over their members, issue caucuses are likely to cut across party lines. In the US Congress, for example, a single legislator may belong simultaneously to the Black caucus, the steel caucus, and the women's caucus. Another legislator may belong to the textile and tobacco caucuses. These issue-specific caucuses usually have regular meetings and permanent staff, and they constitute an important form of representation in a legislature basically organized around spatial communities, that is, around single-member districts. Through issue caucuses, deputies represent the economic, ethnic, and social interests of their constituents.

Remember that seats in Brazil's Chamber of Deputies are filled from multi-member districts. Because each district elects many members, political scientists characterize Brazil as a country with 'high district magnitude'.¹⁴ Given open-list PR and high district magnitude, communities lose the privileged position

¹⁴ Japanese districts, by contrast, traditionally send between three and five representatives to the Diet.

they hold in a single-member district system. Any politically mobilized cohort of sufficient size can elect a deputy whose sole function is the representation of that cohort. The late deputy Amaral Netto, from the state of Rio de Janeiro, occupied a unique ideological niche: he ardently defended the death penalty. His electoral support was remarkably even. With the exception of the lightly populated north-eastern end of the state (where he campaigned little), Amaral Netto received 3–5 per cent of the vote in nearly every municipality. In Rio de Janeiro and its populous suburbs, where crime is a huge problem, his vote was at the high end; in more bucolic regions the death penalty was less important. Though Amaral Netto was unsuccessful in promoting the death penalty, no one doubted the authenticity of his ideological base.

Observers of the Brazilian Congress identify at least fifteen caucuses. The largest, with about 100 deputies each, are the agricultural (or rural) caucus, the construction industry caucus, and the health caucus, followed by Petrobrás (the national oil company), Catholics, bankers, evangelical Protestants, and communications, each with 50–80 members. Caucuses of 20–30 members include education, the welfare system and its employees, state banks, civil servants, multinational firms, auto dealers, and unions (Veja 1994). These estimates, however, are guesses: no caucus, even those meeting regularly, has permanent staff or a fixed membership list.

In the issue caucuses of the US Congress, and in cases like the Brazilian deputy advocating the death penalty, the authenticity of a claim to representation is based on the interests of the voters sending that deputy to the legislature. In the House of Representatives, members of the steel caucus come from steel-producing regions. No one would expect a member of the steel caucus to own a steel mill *personally*, such a tie would be a conflict of interest. In Brazil, however, such ties are often exactly the motivation behind caucus membership. A deputy from Rio Grande do Sul represents the interests of the civil construction industry in the Congress. A map of his vote-base reveals no concentration of construction workers or firms. Rather, the construction industry supports his campaigns, and he reciprocates by working for their interests. The health caucus includes doctors lobbying for improved public medical facilities as well as doctors lobbying for the private hospitals they own.

The Brazilian Congress, then, shelters multiple bases of representation. Some are direct. The prominent ‘evangelical’ caucus lobbies for subsidies for Protestant churches and schools, but caucus members get their votes from precisely the interest they represent. Direct ties with voters also characterize the caucuses representing unions and civil servants. But self-representation, that is, representation of an economic group in which a deputy has a personal interest, describes many of the members of such caucuses as health, civil construction, and state banks.

To examine self-representation further, consider the rural caucus, perhaps the strongest organized interest in the Congress. The rural caucus is so large and so unified that it can derail most major agrarian reform efforts. In 1994 the

TABLE 7.4. *Personal interest versus constituency interest in the rural Caucus*

Logistic estimation of support for rural caucus on two votes affecting agricultural interests in the 1991–94 legislature

Parameter	Estimate	Wald chi-square	Pr > chi-square
Intercept	-1.783	52.09	0.0001
Agricultural interest	1.411	27.95	0.0001
Northeast region	-0.553	1.74	0.1867
South region	0.719	1.95	0.1630
Rural base	0.070	3.75	0.0529
PFL	1.155	11.56	0.0007
PDS	0.434	0.93	0.3341
PTB	1.040	3.68	0.0552
Evangelical	1.419	4.45	0.0348

Likelihood ratio significant at 0.0001 level, n = 408

Notes: The Conservative Partido Democrático Social (PDS) is now known as the Partido Popular (see Table 7.3).

caucus prevented the government from pushing through its economic stabilization package until it bargained on completely unrelated issues involving agricultural debt. Caucus members claim, of course, that they represent farm interests. The question, however, is whether they represent districts where agriculture is central to the economy or whether they represent their own personal interests. In Table 7.4 we search for the determinants of two votes that were central to the interests of the rural caucus during the 1991–4 legislature. One issue concerned a tax benefiting the welfare system but calculated in terms of agricultural production; the second concerned a tax increase penalizing non-productive rural properties. Farm interests opposed both taxes. Ames (2001) combined support for the two rural caucus positions, scoring each deputy as pro-rural caucus or anti-rural caucus. The explanatory variables included measures of personal economic interests, region, the economic base of a deputy's voters, party affiliation, and membership in the evangelical caucus. Biographical directories facilitated the identification of deputies with 'agricultural interests', that is, owners of large estates or significant agricultural enterprises.¹⁵ The indicator 'Rural Base' (the inverse of 'urbanization') came from the 1980 census. The characteristics of the municipalities where each deputy received votes were then aggregated, and weighted by the percentage of the deputy's total votes that the municipality contributed.

Table 7.4 offers striking results. Deputies' personal agricultural interests were by far the dominant influence in their voting on agrarian issues. Those who owned rural properties essentially made up the rural caucus, and their votes

¹⁵ These sources included *Perfil Parlamentar Brasileiro* (Istoé 1991) and *Repertório Biográfico* (Câmara dos Deputados 1991). Ames also consulted the lists prepared by DIEESE, the union research office in Brasília. The government agricultural extension agency Embrapa had also prepared its own list of deputies who held substantial rural property.

defended their economic interests. Region turned out not to matter significantly, although deputies from the supposedly traditional and backward northeast were actually a bit more likely to support agrarian reform than their 'modern' southern colleagues.¹⁶ A rural electoral base made deputies more likely to oppose agrarian reform, but the relationship was much weaker than the linkage between support for reform and personal economic holdings.

This examination of the rural caucus supports the contention that the rules of the Brazilian electoral system distort representation and accountability. Obviously not all caucuses are self-representing. Unions, evangelicals, and civil servants trade voting support for direct representation. But like the ruralists, caucuses representing civil construction, telecommunications, and state banks have a whole different claim to legitimacy. The ordinary voters electing a deputy who clearly and unequivocally represented civil construction did not elect that deputy to represent their construction interests, because the overwhelming majority of the deputy's voters have no tie to that industry at all.

Open-list proportional representation and high-magnitude districts seem to be necessary, but probably not sufficient, conditions for self-representation. The inevitable vagueness of voter-deputy ties in Brazil makes hiding self-representation easy, and in turn self-representation further weakens deputies' accountability to voters. Brazil's tradition of corporatism in the executive branch also encourages self-representation (Schmitter 1971). The corporatist state sanctioned, regulated, and controlled the participation of economic interests in policymaking. With government financial support and a guaranteed place at the policymaking table, economic interests found it profitable to penetrate the state, both from inside the state apparatus and from the legislative branch. This corporatist legacy, combined with the effects of federalism and open-list PR, has made it difficult for modern political parties in Brazil to serve as effective vehicles of interest articulation and aggregation (Power and Doctor 2004).

Political participation

The transition to democracy made suffrage universal. Illiterates received the vote in 1985, and the voting age dropped to sixteen in 1988. Voting is compulsory for all but illiterates, 16- and 17-year-olds, and persons over 70. Because of mandatory voting (used in all but three countries in Latin America) we caution that turnout is not always the best indicator of political participation: the data show that not even compulsory voting can force all citizens to the polls. From 1989 to 2002, turnout in presidential elections (first round only) averaged 83 per cent. From 1986 through 2002, mean turnout in legislative elections was 85 per cent.

¹⁶ It is precisely the south that in recent years has been the site of many violent conflicts between huge, modern agricultural operations, and the landless poor.

In the first two decades of democracy, voters had plenty of chances to exercise their rights. Direct elections for mayors of major cities were held in 1985 and every four years for all cities beginning in 1988. Senators, deputies, governors, and state legislatures were also elected quadrennially, beginning in 1986. Presidential elections were held in 1989, 1994, 1998, and 2002. If we include second ballot run-offs and the 1993 plebiscite on parliamentarism, voters in large cities could have been called to the polls as many as twenty-three times between 1985 and 2004.

In addition to the high frequency of elections, Brazil has undergone one of the most rapid and extensive expansions of the franchise in recent world history. The electorate grew by more than 40 per cent in the 1980s alone. The potential electorate now stands at nearly 125 million, the third largest among democracies after India and the USA. But the explosion of electoral participation quickly revealed some of democracy's growing pains. In the legislative elections of 1986, 1990, and 1994, the percentage of blank and spoiled ballots averaged 40 per cent of all votes cast. Power and Roberts (1995) found that the combination of rapid suffrage expansion, compulsory voting, and increasing multipartism under open-list PR inhibited the effective incorporation of new voters and facilitated an increase in invalid votes. However, the adoption of a widely praised, user-friendly electronic voting system in 1996 has reduced voter error and caused invalid voting to drop by half in legislative elections (Nicolau 2002: 286–93).

Given Brazil's legacy of state corporatism, political parties never became vehicles for political participation, as they did in neighbouring countries such as Uruguay, Chile, or Venezuela. But in the post-1985 democracy, Brazilian parties (with the exception of the PT) have become even *less* important in channelling participation. Two secular trends in the socio-demographic context are important here. First, the tremendous growth of the informal sector means that a new generation of workers is available for mobilization *outside* formal political and union structures. Populists such as President Fernando Collor de Mello (1990–2) recognized the electoral potential of urban marginals. Tapping into this amorphous social base facilitated the election of the charismatic, anti-party Collor in 1989 (Singer 1990; Weyland 1996)—even though Collor could not use the informal sector organizationally after he assumed power, nor could that sector hold the president accountable.

A second, countervailing trend in Brazil is the phenomenal post-1980 growth in civil society. The last two decades have witnessed an explosion in participation in voluntary associations such as social movements, professional groups, churches, environmental and feminist lobbies, and other non-governmental organizations (Hochstetler 2000; Power and Roberts 2000). These two social trends are contradictory: even as Brazilian society has become more organized 'at the top' (in terms of a burgeoning civil society), it has become somewhat less organized 'at

the bottom' (in terms of the growth of the informal sector). Both trends tended to pulverize parties as channels of political participation—the former trend because NGOs and social movements are effective rival channels of participation, and the latter trend because parties have been less successful than populists in addressing the concerns of urban marginals. The major exception to this generalization is again the PT, which has successfully developed organic linkages with many of the progressive social movements and NGOs which emerged during and after the 1980s.

Political communication and education

Except for the PT and some small left-wing parties, Brazilian parties are virtually irrelevant as vehicles of political information and socialization. Because of Brazil's low levels of educational attainment and high levels of poverty, electronic media cast a far wider shadow than any other source of information. Today, television sets are found in more than 90 per cent of Brazilian households, that is, televisions are more common than refrigerators. Television dwarfs the print media, but within the TV industry itself one player predominates. Despite the proliferation of cable and satellite dishes, many areas of Brazil still receive only the potent Globo network. The 1964–85 military regime subsidized TV purchasing and infrastructure while helping TV Globo to build a virtual monopoly, in exchange for favourable political coverage (Straubhaar, Olsen, and Nunes 1993: 121). Since then, positive coverage by Globo has become a precious commodity for politicians. In the 1989 elections, Globo provided none-too-subtle support for the campaign of Fernando Collor de Mello (Lima 1993), and the network backed him as president until the corruption scandals of 1992. Globo also gave favourable coverage to Fernando Henrique Cardoso in the campaign of 1994, once again illustrating the network's impressive impulse to support the government of the day. In a remarkable about-face from its position in 1989, Globo was also very solicitous of the victorious Lula (PT) during the presidential transition of 2002–3. Although Globo's influence is often exaggerated in leftist discourse, there is no denying that presidents and Globo cultivate each other's support.

Telecommunications policy in Brazil is highly undemocratic. Since 1985, licences to operate TV and radio stations ('concessions') have routinely been awarded to federal legislators in return for political support (Costa and Brener 1997). Efforts to alter licensing policy in a more transparent direction have been thwarted by legislators and by the centralization of authority in the Ministry of Communications (Aufderheide 1997). Politicians who have won concessions from the Ministry have developed media empires in their home states. They use these stations to influence, subtly or overtly, their coverage on local TV and radio news and in major newspapers they own or control. In some states, more than half of the local congressional delegation owns a TV station, a radio station, or

both. Politicians generally employ these media resources in ways that favour their own personal and factional advancement rather than the interests of their parties. Even though federal law guarantees that parties have access to free television time during electoral campaigns (in proportion to their congressional representation), the time is usually dominated by the party's candidates for president, governor, or mayor. Rarely is television time given over to any serious discussion of party organization or ideology. The PT, as always, was the exception for the most of the period under study here: prior to 2002, its internal political culture discouraged candidates' self-aggrandizement, and it used its TV time largely for political education. After the inauguration of Lula in 2003, the party began to emphasize personal attributes of the president, and as he prepared to seek re-election in 2006 his strategists began to craft a media campaign that would be independent of the party label.

Political recruitment

Formally, political parties in Brazil are indispensable to political recruitment. Because the law prohibits independent candidacies, potential candidates need to find a party willing to put them on the ballot. On the other hand, parties have little ability to constrain the behaviour of politicians, because party interests are marginal to deputies' political calculations. It is easy and common for politicians to switch parties, even in the middle of legislative terms. In each of the last two legislatures, more than eighty deputies (about 15 percent of the lower house) changed parties within a year of winning election, and up to 35 percent can be expected to switch parties over a full four-year term. When legislative office-holders disagree with their parties' positions or tactics, they simply move to another party. Given the electorate's weak party loyalties (compared to most democratic polities), deputies often suffer little penalty in subsequent elections. But even if they foresee electoral risk—inter-session turnover in the national legislature is between 50 and 60 percent—they may switch parties anyway, because *their central goal is not immediate re-election*. Rather, they seek to maximize income over a lifelong career. In other words, deputies may plan another run for the legislature, but they may first run for local mayor, return to the private sector, or begin a stint in the state or federal bureaucracy. Four or eight years later, these same deputies may return to the legislature.

Because the Brazilian system puts such a premium on the reputations and vote-getting abilities of individual politicians, career politicians are disadvantaged as competitors for office. Since 1986, the percentage of federal deputies who previously served in state assemblies, local mayoral, or council positions has declined. Instead, greater numbers of candidates developed their reputations as broadcasters, Protestant ministers, or entrepreneurs. Their entrance onto the political scene is a function of party weakness, but because they owe no loyalties

to the party that accepts them, they go on to weaken parties even further. Indeed, influence runs in the other direction, because the party needs them much more than they need it.

Governance

Finally, to what extent do parties actually affect policy outcomes in Brazil? The main obstacle to governability in Brazil, as we noted in our introduction, is frequently thought to be the weakness of political parties. Many observers view the parties as mostly unpredictable, self-interested, non-programmatic actors that distort rather than focus the central policy debates of the country. These observers see Brazilian presidents as handicapped by shifting, unreliable bases of support. However, in a series of recent publications, Brazilian political scientists Argelina Figueiredo and Fernando Limongi (1995, 1996, 1999, and 2000) question the idea that presidents cannot govern in this institutional environment. They argue that presidents usually get what they want in Congress. 'Parties matter, and presidents negotiate with parties and not with [individual] legislators and/or supra-party groups' (1996: 29). Behaviour on the legislative floor is 'predictable and consistent' (1995: 516), and 'minority presidents possess the means to obtain legislative support through negotiations with the parties' (1996: 33).

We, along with a number of other observers of Brazilian politics, disagree with Figueiredo and Limongi.¹⁷ The conclusion that 'parties matter' is based primarily on the observation that over 80 per cent of party members typically vote with their parties. Although these party voting rates do not compare with systems traditionally regarded as highly disciplined (where 98 per cent of the members may vote with their parties), they are impressive. But they fail to account for the many proposals that (a) never arrive at the legislature because they would be 'dead on arrival', (b) die in committee, (c) survive substantively disfigured by the president's compromises, or (d) survive because the executive distributed lavish pork-barrel spending and jobs. Even in its own terms, the percentage of members voting with their parties does not tell us *why* party members cooperate. Ideological agreement? Pork-barrel inducements? Threats of sanction from the leadership? The nature, scope, content, and political cost of the legislation may change significantly between presidential proposal and legislative ratification, and final floor votes do not always capture these dynamics.

The strength of parties in the legislature can only be determined in the context of a model that includes all the factors inducing party members to cooperate with or defect from their leaders. Ames (2001) developed a multivariate model predicting the probability that individual deputies cooperate with their parties. In this analysis, a key indicator of party strength is the ability of party leaders

¹⁷ For an excellent review of this debate, see Amorim Neto (2002), who notes that Figueiredo and Limongi's position is increasingly the conventional wisdom within Brazilian political science circles.

to compel their members to follow the leadership's vote recommendations. A second indicator—perhaps more an indicator of party weakness—measures the success of individual deputies in garnering local public works or controlling job nominations. These indicators of party strength are embedded in a model that includes measures of individual electoral security, ideology, seniority, constituency characteristics, and career background. Applied to all the roll-call votes taken since 1991, and giving greater weight to more contested votes, Ames' empirical analysis demonstrates that party recommendations rarely matter much in determining cooperation. Party leaders, even with lavish pork-barrel spending, are unable to persuade deputies to support presidential proposals.¹⁸

Overall appraisal of systemic functionality

As is evident from this discussion, Brazilian political parties do not structure democratic politics in the ways that many theorists either expect or desire. Parties play weak roles in policy formulation and implementation. With the major exception of the PT, parties are minor players in the aggregation and articulation of interests; and (again excepting the PT) they tend not to channel political participation or recruitment or play major parts in political education and communication. Strikingly, the PT and its satellites are the only parties that have made any effort whatsoever to organize or to increase the political skill levels of Brazil's marginalized masses, for the simple reason that the small left-wing parties are the only ones that do not reflect elite interests. The failure of the mainstream parties to assume some or all of these oft-cited functions leaves Brazilian politics in a peculiarly unpredictable, fluid state—a regime in which autonomous and unaccountable elites have a far greater role than the parties they purportedly command.

CONCLUSION

Our approach to understanding Brazil's party system has emphasized the nation's unique electoral rules. Why stress electoral rules? Simply because they bear predominant responsibility for Brazil's system of many parties, weak parties, and individualistic politicians, politicians who typically concentrate on pork-barrel programmes and patronage jobs rather than policy.

¹⁸ Ames (2001) separates votes into contested and uncontested votes according to the positions of the major parties. If party leaders are indeed strong, the coefficients on the variables measuring leaders' recommendations on contested votes ought to be stronger than the coefficients on uncontested votes. With the analysis implemented separately for each of the six biggest parties, leaders are almost never stronger on contested votes. Ames also implements a separate analysis with absentee deputies counted as 'no' votes on supermajority, constitutional amendment votes, but only if the deputy had taken an official leave for illness or a bureaucratic post. The results parallel those with absentees coded as missing.

The importance of party systems to democratic consolidation has been well established (Pridham 1990; Mainwaring and Scully 1995; Kitschelt et al. 1999). More specifically, a high number of partisan actors is usually associated with deadlock. As Tsebelis (2002) has shown, both theoretically and empirically, when the agreement of many partisan political actors is required to reach a majority, the adoption of policies that deviate from the status quo is more difficult. If one likes the status quo, an excess of 'veto players' is positive, but in Brazil, where the vast majority of citizens is dissatisfied with existing policy, the party system contributes to the nation's inability to consolidate its new democracy by coming to grips with poverty, inequality, swollen and inept bureaucracies, and so on.

Although open-list PR inevitably weakens parties and produces individualistic politicians, electoral rules are not the sole determinant of the nature of the party system. Brazil's tradition of federalism, coupled with pork-barrel deals and extensive patronage networks, weakens the efforts of nationally oriented party leaders to construct coherent programmes. At the same time, the large number of deputies per state ('high district magnitude') allows the election of candidates who either represent very narrowly defined groups of voters, their own personal economic interests, or the source of their campaign finance.

Electoral systems typically favour certain kinds of interest, whether these are based on class, ethnicity, or community. Brazil's open-list PR is unique in the sense that it allows any kind of interest to gain representation. But this hyper-democracy comes at a cost: parties are unable to function as interest-aggregators in the legislature. As a result, legislative party leaders are weak, and governments are able to construct majorities only with great difficulty and with concessions on the substance of legislation and in pork-barrel spending and patronage.

How can political parties become stronger at the national level? Both publicly and privately, Brazilian political leaders seem quite aware of the need for stronger parties, but concrete proposals usually reflect short-term political calculations more than long-term considerations. In late 1998, for example, leaders of President Cardoso's congressional coalition proposed a new rule of party fidelity. By this proposal, deputies failing to vote with their parties would face expulsion. The government argued that deputies should vote with their parties because nearly all deputies owed their victories to parties. It claimed, in fact, that only 13 of Brazil's 513 deputies elected themselves without help from parties.¹⁹ Deputies themselves disagreed. Between 70 and 80 per cent of the deputies from the three legislatures elected in the 1990s said that their election owed nothing to parties and everything to their own efforts (Power 2000a: ch. 5). The government's reasoning was logically flawed as well. Imagine, in São Paulo state, five candidates who expect to collect their votes from electorates that are distinct regionally, occupationally, or

¹⁹ The government reasoned that only thirteen deputies had enough votes to reach the electoral quotient without adding votes from any other candidate.

ideologically. The five candidates form an electoral alliance and call the alliance a party. With each deputy getting about 200,000 votes, the alliance as a whole garners 1 million votes. Suppose this aggregate vote elects the top three individual vote-getters. They win because the system privileges alliances, but their victories have nothing to do with party, at least not in the sense of a party presenting a programme voted up or down by an electorate.²⁰

Brazil's deputies elect themselves by their own efforts. During campaigns, leaders contribute almost nothing to candidates. Within the legislature party loyalty is not mandated, but a rule enforcing such loyalty might worsen the government's situation if it lost its majority. Currently, President Lula needs the PT, PMDB, PTB, PL, PSB, and PC do B to gain approval for major legislation. Given complete party loyalty, the government wins, without resorting to bargaining, once a majority of each party supports it. But suppose the PMDB, on a given issue, abandons the coalition and invokes party discipline. Then the government can no longer bargain with PMDB deputies who disagree with the party's dissenting majority. With no PMDB votes, the government always loses.

Part of the weakness of Brazilian parties stems from the absence of linkages between deputies and party leaders. Over the long term, parties need to grow stronger, but greater party authority must be accompanied by greater contributions by leaders to the career success of backbenchers.²¹ Parties with high degrees of discipline, such as those of Argentina and (formerly) Venezuela, need no rules to enforce party loyalty, because deputies know their futures depend on the leadership. If we impose party loyalty in the absence of strong parties, the consequences could be perverse. Some deputies would simply change parties. Others, dissenters unable to find a new party to join, would leave the Congress. Turnover rates would increase, because local voters want deputies who can bring pork back to their bailiwicks. Because voters are unlikely to understand that party loyalty has eliminated pork-barrel bargaining, they will elect someone who promises to do more for the bailiwick. All these consequences have parallel results: Congress will be a less attractive stop in a political career.

What political reforms have a better chance of strengthening parties so as to reduce the number of veto players but still preserve meaningful legislative careers? One small but possibly significant reform would be the elimination of two-round elections, which in Brazil are used for the presidency, for the all-important state governorships, and for the mayoralities of the largest cities. As Jones (1994) shows, two-round elections preserve small parties. Though they finish far behind in the first round, small parties survive by trading second-round

²⁰ We might also imagine a contest with no parties but with no effective limit on the number of candidates. Since, in São Paulo, 1,000 candidates compete for seventy seats, they naturally pulverize the vote. Almost no one will reach the current electoral quotient. The top seventy candidates would be elected, yet this system has no parties.

²¹ Obviously democratic parties can be so strong that they become rigid and unresponsive. Venezuela and Colombia are good examples (Coppedge 1994).

support to one of the two leading candidates. Make the election a one-shot plurality affair and many small parties would be absorbed by their larger brethren.

Public campaign financing can also contribute to reducing party numbers. If candidates can be prevented from spending their own funds, and if national parties begin to allocate public funding to backbenchers' campaigns, the latter will actually owe something to the former. The question is whether candidates can be stopped from tapping private sources of campaign finance. Optimism may be warranted here, because in recent years the Brazilian press has developed a significant investigative capacity. Along with non-governmental organizations, the news media can be counted on to police campaign finance regulations, as they did when corruption allegations surfaced against the PT government in 2005–6. Also, the Supreme Electoral Court (TSE), Brazil's top election authority, has begun to require campaign finance disclosures from candidates and is making them publicly available for the first time.

The reform most often considered involves the adoption of a mixed electoral system combining single-member districts (SMDs) with closed-list proportional representation. The list of recent adopters of such systems is impressive: Russia, Hungary, Japan, Italy, New Zealand, Croatia, Georgia, Lithuania, Ukraine, Bolivia, and Venezuela. As the contributors to Shugart and Wattenberg (2001) show, these mixed systems vary enormously in key features, including the ratio of plurality to PR seats, the linkage mechanism between the two elections, the requirement of party membership, the ability of candidates to run in one or both races, the threshold for party representation, and the average district magnitude.

In the last two legislatures, talk of electoral and party system reform (*reforma política* in Brazilian parlance) has reached fever pitch. Politicians showed that they may be getting serious about a mixed electoral system. In 1999, for example, the main parties of the Cardoso coalition, especially the PSDB, the PMDB, and the PFL, proposed a four-part programme of political reform.²² One element of the reform called for strengthening parties by adopting a mixed electoral system, with half the members elected in single-member districts and half by proportional representation. But in the kind of delicious irony possible only in Brazil, the proportional side would continue to utilize open lists: in 2005, some 61 per cent of federal legislators expressed a preference for this compromise.²³ Since, as we have seen, many current deputies already campaign in *de facto* districts, and since district seats are expected to strengthen not parties but ties with local communities (along with motivations for seeking pork-barrel expenditures), it is hard to see how this modified version of the German system would really strengthen parties at all.

²² The original proposal also established a 5 per cent threshold of votes in the whole country (distributed in nine states), the end of alliances in proportional elections, and a minimum of three years in a party before running for office under that party's label (Seabra 1999).

²³ From a survey conducted by Power with 124 deputies and senators in mid-2005. See also Power (2000b).

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‘Que se Vayan Todos!’

The Struggle for Democratic Party Politics in Contemporary Argentina

Celia Szusterman

THE CONTEXT OF PARTY POLITICS IN ARGENTINA

After the re-establishment of democracy in 1983, political parties in Argentina enjoyed a period of considerable popular support as society recovered from an extended period of military rule which started in 1966, and was briefly interrupted by the chaotic Peronist administrations of 1973–6. Indeed, political development had been volatile since the civil-military coup of 1930 interrupted the first period of democratic politics, which had started in 1916.

Electoral fraud, electoral abstention by parties, poor representation of the expanding working class, and military intervention all characterized politics between 1930 and 1946. The 1946 elections gave Colonel Juan Perón the legitimacy he had sought since taking part in the coup of 1943. However, his military background and posting in Mussolini’s Italy were not the best credentials for establishing liberal democracy in Argentina. He had little patience with parties, and set out instead to create a ‘national and popular movement’, the Peronist Movement, which later became the Partido Justicialista (PJ) (Levitsky 2003; Mora y Araujo 1995). A corollary of the preference for a ‘movement’ rather than a party was the Manichean division of society between the ‘popular’ (i.e. Peronist) camp and the ‘anti-popular’ (non-Peronist) camp (Szusterman 1993). The curtailment of civil liberties, and the apparent fact that Peronism could never be defeated in elections, pushed parties towards collaboration. After Perón was deposed by a civil-military coup in 1955, and until the proscription of Peronism was lifted in 1973, Argentina experienced a period of restricted democracy subject to frequent military intervention in political life (in 1962, 1966–73, and 1976–83). During the twenty-eight years between 1955 and 1983, political parties were allowed to function freely for only eleven (Botana 1988*a*; Fraga 1995). This hobbled form of democracy meant that even the governments of the Unión Cívica Radical (UCR), which were elected between 1958–62 and 1963–6, lacked legitimacy, and the

political representation of Peronism was in the hands of the trade union movement (James 1988).

The horrors of the ‘dirty war’ (1976–83) and the ignominy of defeat in an irresponsible war against the UK in the South Atlantic (1982) help to explain the enthusiasm with which democracy and political parties were celebrated in the October 1983 elections. To enhance the sense of national euphoria, for the first time since its emergence in 1946, Peronism was defeated in demonstrably fair and competitive elections. The UCR, tainted by previous electoral victories on the back of the PJ proscription, saw its democratic credentials vindicated in the 51.75 per cent of the vote it obtained. Its triumph was hailed as a new dawn, the return of politics, the end of decades of authoritarianism, and corporatist control of Argentine affairs (O’Donnell 1993; Mainwaring and Scully 1995). The military, trade unions, protected businesses, and the Catholic Church were largely replaced by parties as true representatives of societal interests. During his presidential election campaign in 1982–3, UCR leader Raúl Alfonsín repeatedly denounced the existence of a ‘military-union pact’ designed to prevent the return of democracy in general, and the triumph of the UCR in particular.

This marked the heyday of parties: recruitment stalls were set up on street corners, and people queued to affiliate. It also saw the PJ and the UCR emerge as the undisputed protagonists of electoral politics, together accounting for 86 per cent of the vote. Argentina between 1983–99 had all the characteristics of a two-party system (see Tables 8.1–8.4) revolving around the contest between these two rivals (Novaro 1998).¹

Exploring the features of political parties in Argentina since 1983, authors have remarked on their inconsistencies (Botana 1988*b*; Serrafiero 1994; De Riz 1998), lack of institutional organization (Levitsky 1997), and clientelistic practices (Auyero 2000). These and other factors are explored in the course of this chapter in order to reach some understanding of the crisis of representation in Argentina. From a peak of support that parties received in 1983–5, there followed a decline into disenchantment: an opinion poll conducted in 1995 revealed that eight out of ten Argentines ‘mistrusted political parties’ (Ferreira Rubio 1997: 154). In recent years, political parties have consistently ranked towards the bottom of people’s estimations of institutions in Argentina, below the military and business, though a little above the trade unions. Disenchantment turned into rejection when the rallying cry in the street demonstrations that forced the resignation of President de la Rúa in December 2001 was *que se vayan todos* (‘get rid of them all’) (Bavastro and Szusterman 2003).

Even so, in the presidential elections of April 2003, as revealed in Table 8.2, the top five candidates, who together received more than 85 per cent of the

¹ Congress is bicameral. A seventy-two-member Senate includes three senators from each of the twenty-three provinces plus the city of Buenos Aires. The Chamber of Deputies (lower house) has 257 members. Deputies are directly elected for a four-year period; elections for one-half of the total number of seats are held every two years. Invalid (‘blank’) ballots are widely regarded as an expression of protest against political elites.

TABLE 8.1. *Presidential elections in Argentina, 1983–99*

Political parties	30 October 1983		14 May 1989		14 May 1995		24 October 1999	
	Votes	% of votes ^a	Votes	% of votes ^a	Votes	% of votes ^a	Votes	% of votes ^a
ACCION POR LA REPUBLICA—AR (Action for the Republic)	—	—	—	—	—	—	1,859,461	9.81
ALIANZA FRENTE PAIS SOLIDARIO—FREPASO	—	—	—	—	5,095,929	29.29	—	—
ALIANZA IZQUIERDA UNIDA (United Left)	—	—	409,751	2.45	—	—	151,208	0.80
ALIANZA PARA EL TRABAJO, LA JUSTICIA Y LA EDUCACION / UCR—FREPASO	—	—	—	—	—	—	9,165,032	48.37
MODIN (Movement for Dignity and Independence)	—	—	—	—	291,306	1.67	—	—
PARTIDO INTRANSIGENTE—PI (Intransigent Party)	347,654	2.33	—	—	—	—	—	—
PARTIDO JUSTICIALISTA—PJ (Peronist Party)	5,995,402	40.16	7,956,628	47.51	8,680,520	49.90	7,330,962	38.69
UNION CIVICA RADICAL—UCR (Radical Party).	7,724,559	51.75	5,433,369	32.45	2,955,997	16.99	—	—
UNION DE CENTRO DEMOCRATICO—UCeDe. / ALIANZA DE CENTRO (Democratic Centre Union)	—	—	1,201,051	7.17	—	—	—	—
Others ^b	859,897	5.76	1,745,494	10.42	371,099	2.15	442,960	2.33
Total affirmative votes	14,927,512	97.25	16,746,257	98.01	17,394,851	95.56	18,949,623	95.33
Blank/null votes	423,662	2.75	337,271	1.98	788,539	4.28	928,395	4.67
Total	15,350,174	100	17,086,704	99.99	18,203,452	99.84	19,878,018	100
Total registered electorate	17,929,951		20,034,252		22,178,154		24,201,563	
Turnout	85.61 %		85.29 %		82.08 %		82.14 %	

^a Percentages of votes are calculated based on the total number of affirmative votes. ^b 'Others' includes parties of almost insignificant electoral relevance, plus smaller parties supporting the main presidential formulae.

Source: Derived from data provided by the National Electoral Office, Ministry of Interior, and Argentine Republic.

TABLE 8.2. *Presidential elections in Argentina, 2003*

Candidate	Party	Votes	% of votes
Carlos Menem	PJ (Front for Loyalty)	4,740,907	24.45
Néstor Kirchner	PJ (Front for Victory)	4,312,517	22.24
Ricardo López Murphy (former UCR)	Recreate Federal Movement	3,173,475	16.37
Adolfo Rodríguez Súa	PJ (Front National and Popular Movement)	2,735,829	14.11
Elisa Carrió (former UCR)	ARI (Argentina for a Republic of Equals)	2,723,574	14.05
Leopoldo Moreau	UCR (Radical Party)	453,360	2.34
Patricia Walsh	United Left	332,863	1.72
Others		915,370	4.72
Electoral register		25,480,440	
Abstentionism		5,550,329	21.88
Null votes		345,642	1.73*
Blank ballots		196,574	0.99*
Positive ballots		19,387,895	97.28*

Note: * Expressed as a percentage of the total votes cast.

Source: Interior Ministry, Argentine Republic.

votes, represented the two dominant parties: the Partido Justicialista and the UCR. The remarkable political and economic crisis unleashed by the events of December 2001, resulting in five presidents being appointed by Congress within two weeks, as well as in the largest sovereign default in history and an asymmetric devaluation, was partly blamed on a self-serving political class (Levitsky and Murillo 2003). The UCR's candidate obtained 2.3 per cent of the vote, while two former Radicals, one on the left (Elisa Carrió), and the other on the right (Ricardo Lopez Murphy), fought the election as the nominees of new parties. The electoral alliance (Alliance for Education, Employment, and Justice, also known as Alianza) that won the 1999 general election, and which brought together Frepaso (Front for a Country in Solidarity), dissident Peronists, and the UCR, dissolved during the two years it was in government (1999–2001). Frepaso, which under the name Frente Grande had contested the 1995 election and had come second to Carlos Menem's PJ, fizzled away after once being heralded as the third party that would break the two-party domination. Most notably, three of the top five candidates in the presidential election of 2003 came from the PJ, gathering 60 per cent of the votes between them. Had the run-off taken place between the top two (former president Carlos Menem and Patagonian Governor Néstor Kirchner), the electorate would have been faced with a choice between two Peronists.²

² The ballotage system introduced in 1994 stipulated a run-off if no candidate achieved at least 45 per cent of the vote, or at least 40 per cent with a ten point advantage over the runner-up. Menem came first in April 2003 with 24 per cent, followed by Nestor Kirchner with 22 per cent, but Menem decided to withdraw from the second round which was due in May of that year, when opinion polls consistently showed that he faced a massive rejection by the electorate. As a result, Kirchner became president with the smallest proportion of votes ever in Argentina's history.

TABLE 8.3. *Legislative elections in Argentina: Chamber of Deputies (1983–2001)*

Political parties ^d	1983		1985		1987		1989		1991		1993		1995		1997		1999		2001	
	Votes (%)	Seats	Votes (%)	Seats	Votes (%)	Seats	Votes (%)	Seats	Votes (%)	Seats	Votes (%)	Seats	Votes (%)	Seats	Votes (%)	Seats	Votes (%)	Seats	Votes (%)	Seats
AR (Alliance for the Republic)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3.87	3	7.53	8	1.2	1
ARI (Argentina for a Republic of Equals)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	7.2	8
FREPASO	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	20.69	20	2.42	3	—	—	—	—
AIU (United Left)	—	—	—	—	—	—	3.49	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	0.66	—	—	—	3.7	1
FREPASO—UCR	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	36.26	47	43.68	63	23.1	35
AUS ^b (Alliance Socialist Union)	—	—	0.70	—	1.52	1	2.56	—	1.55	3	—	—	0.00	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Frente Grande ^c	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3.23	3	0.13	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
FRE.JULI ^d	—	—	16.38	21	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Frente Renovador ^d	—	—	10.11	11	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	0.6	1
MODIN (Movement for Dignity and Independence)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3.48	3	5.78	4	1.69	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
PI (Intransigent Party)	2.78	3	6.07	5	2.04	—	—	—	0.02	—	0.01	—	0.01	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
PJ (Peronist Party)	38.47	111	7.83	15	41.46	60	44.68	66	40.22	61	42.46	64	43.03	68	36.36	50	32.87	51	37.5	66
UCR Radical Party)	47.97	129	43.20	63	37.24	52	28.75	42	29.03	43	30.23	41	21.70	28	6.96	12	—	—	—	—

(cont.)

TABLE 8.3. (Continued)

Political parties ^a	1983		1985		1987		1989		1991		1993		1995		1997		1999		2001	
	Votes (%)	Seats	Votes (%)	Seats	Votes (%)	Seats	Votes (%)	Seats	Votes (%)	Seats	Votes (%)	Seats	Votes (%)	Seats	Votes (%)	Seats	Votes (%)	Seats	Votes (%)	Seats
UceDe (Union of the Democratic Centre)	1.59	2	0.38	—	5.80	5	0.32	—	5.19	4	2.62	1	3.17	3	0.55	—	—	—	3.0	—
Polo Social (Social Pole)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	4.1	4
Others ^c	5.68	22	8.94	13	10.86	17	12.46	9	27.15	32	23.56	29	10.39	20	12.12	12	15.91	8	19.4	1
Blank/null votes	3.51		1.93		2.46		2.88		5.80		5.11		6.64		5.96		6.63		21.6	—
Total	100	267	100	128	100	135	100	118	100	146	100	142	100	139	100	127	100	130	100	117
Turnout	85.61 %		83.77 %		84.59 %		85.29 %		79.93 %		80.33 %		82.08 %		78.22 %		81.93 %		72.1%	
ENEP ^f	2.63		4.14		3.06		3.37		2.82		3.01		3.48		2.77		3.03		4.15	
Electoral volatility	—		35.18		39.14		12.68		16.15		7.57		23.85		43.33		15.39		26.83	

^a Only those parties or alliances which obtained at least 1 seat in one election are reported.

^b Joined Frente Grande in 1993.

^c Joined FREPASO in 1995.

^d The PJ faction in 1985.

^e Includes provincial parties and other minor parties that occasionally gained a seat.

^f Effective number of parties calculation is an estimate, taking 'others' as a single party (thus underestimating the 'true' effective number somewhat).

Notes: The main political parties are indicated in bold. Years in bold indicate a legislative election held concurrently with a presidential election. The percentages of votes are calculated based on the total affirmative votes.

Source: Data from National Electoral Office, Ministry of Interior, and Argentine Republic.

TABLE 8.4. *The fluctuating two-party system, 1983–2003: percentage of the popular vote won by the PJ, UCR, and largest third-party presidential candidates*

Party	1983	1989	1995	1999*	2003**
Partido Justicialista (PJ)	40.2	47.5	49.9	38.7	60.8
Unión Cívica Radical (UCR)	51.7	32.4	17.0	48.3	2.3
PJ + UCR	91.9	79.9	69.9	87.0	63.1
Largest 'third party'	2.3 (Partido Intransigente)	6.9 (Ucedé)	29.3 (Frepaso)	9.8 (Action for the Republic)	16.4 (Recrear)

* Alliance of UCR & Frepaso in 1999.

** There were three separate PJ candidates in 2003 (Menem, Kirchner, and Saa; see Table 8.2). The figure represents the sum of votes obtained by the three.

The 1990s saw impressive economic transformations in terms of growth, modernization of infrastructure and the embracing of pro-market policies, including extensive privatization of public utilities (Llanos 1998; Cavarozzi and Abal Medina 2003). The negative side was the increased visibility of corruption on the one hand, and the undermining of parties and the separation of powers on the other. The first of these developments primarily explains the defeat of the PJ candidate in 1999, and its persistence (as well as economic incompetence and lack of political leadership) explains the downfall of the Alianza in 2001.

In the context of widespread institutional weaknesses, the objective of this chapter is to explore some of the reasons behind the breakdown of trust between citizens and the political parties, illustrated by the seemingly anti-political *cri de cœur*: 'Que se vayan todos!' Peruzzotti (2002) and Torre (2003a) have remarked how this slogan reflected middle-class frustration with the inability of politicians to understand the changes in the political culture that had taken place in Argentina since 1983. At the core of those changes lies the unprecedented mobilization of civil society behind the banners of the human rights movement. The criticism of an extreme version of state arbitrariness—state terrorism—unleashed a more generalized criticism of any form of discretion and unaccountability in the exercise of public authority. Torre (2003a) has remarked on the ways in which this mobilization of 'active minorities' shifted the public agenda from issues of redistribution and social justice to the rule of law and public ethics. Since 2002 the attempt to explain the breakdown of trust between citizens and parties has given rise to a further question: how is it that the widespread repudiation of politicians in 2002 did not result in the collapse of the party system as such, and the emergence of old-style populist leadership via extra-institutional actors, as in Venezuela, Perú, or Ecuador?

Can the questions asked of parties in advanced industrial societies be of relevance in the Argentine case, given the relative infancy of its democracy and

the fragility of its institutions? Probably not. The paradox lies in the fact that democratic consolidation is dependent on those—the Peronists—who have been, since 1946, at the root of the erosion of liberal democracy. What makes the paradox even more poignant is that the crisis that did occur did not affect the two main parties equally, but intriguingly, its consequences were devastating for the UCR and smaller parties, rather than the Peronists. The quality of Argentine democracy, and the role of political parties within it, should be assessed against the background of a wounded polis, reflected in a skewed system of representation, with a dominant PJ and a fragmented opposition incapable of offering an electoral option at the national level.

POPULAR LEGITIMACY OF PARTIES

At the heart of the lack of representativeness of parties in Argentina lies not so much the ideological meanderings of the two main parties, as the cynicism derived from their lack of conviction in pursuing their aims (Catterberg 1991). Both the PJ and the UCR shifted from a decidedly statist approach (1930–76) towards market-oriented policies (1983–2001) and back again to interventionism (after 2002) (Cavarozzi 1984). The core of Argentina's economic modernization of the 1990s, that is, large-scale privatization, trade liberalization, and deregulation, was accompanied by a new tool of macroeconomic policy, the Convertibility Law of April 1991. The objective of pegging the Argentine currency to the US dollar was the restoration of macroeconomic stability, the elimination of inflation and, crucially, the rebuilding of trust. By fixing the exchange rate by law at one peso to the dollar and forbidding the Central Bank from printing pesos beyond the amount of foreign currency reserves, monetary policy was removed from the control of politicians; the state would no longer be able to print money to pay for its endless expansion. The theory was that a slimmer, more efficient and less corrupt state would encourage citizens to be more aware of their duties and more willing to assume their responsibilities. In practice, however, public expenditure was not reduced, and borrowing that swelled the public debt (both domestic and foreign) became the preferred method of financing the fiscal deficit. This political misuse of the convertibility tool led to a crisis of confidence that was at the basis of the economic cataclysm of 2001–2.

In 1996, at the beginning of Menem's second term (1995–9), a poll conducted by MORI for a leading NGO, *Poder Ciudadano* (Citizen Power), found evidence of 'hostile distancing' (distrust, distancing, and irritation) from parties on the part of 52 per cent of voters, and of 'non-hostile distancing' and (indifference and boredom) on the part of a further 19 per cent (Ferreira Rubio and Goretti 1998: 157). According to a Gallup poll (*La Nación*, 20 February 2001) conducted thirteen months after the Alianza Government presided over by the Radical

Fernando de la Rúa came to power, 81 per cent of respondents said they were 'very little or not at all' interested in politics, and only 19 per cent expressed 'a high interest'. By contrast, in 1984, a year after the return to democracy, 43 per cent of the sample had indicated 'a high interest in politics'.

The decline in political interest has continued unabated: from 30 per cent in 1991 to 25 per cent in 1995 and 19 per cent in 2001. Simultaneously, the readings for 'very little or not at all' interested in politics grew from 57 per cent in 1984 to 70 per cent in 1991, 75 per cent in 1995 and 81 per cent in 2001. At the same time, a survey carried out in 1996 found that while 78 per cent of those asked said 'political parties are necessary', only 15 per cent trusted them; by comparison, the press was trusted by 52 per cent, and the Catholic Church by 54 per cent (*La Nación*, 13 January 1996). In 2004, the United Nations Development Programme report on Democracy in Latin America noted that Argentina and Ecuador were the two Latin American countries where 'the lack of prestige of parties reaches an extreme degree' (UNDP 2004: 162). How can this dramatic 'de-politicization' be explained in a country which, according to Jones (1998: 3), 'since 1983 has represented one of Latin America's most vibrant and successful democracies'?

According to the UNDP, the causes of the low level of public esteem revealed in surveys and qualitative interviews are multiple, and include: corrupt practices, lack of transparency (with particular reference to party funding), lack of response to societal demands, lack of internal democracy, the clientelistic use of public funds, excessive personalism, the abandonment or lack of manifesto pledges, and electoral alliances that blur political identities (Ferreira Rubio and Goretti 1998: 154; UNDP 2004: 163). All of these factors have characterized the functioning of the main parties in Argentina since the return of democracy in 1983 (Mora y Araujo 1991a; Molinelli 1991; De Riz 1988). Observers have noted that the state-centred policies implemented since 1930, and especially since the first Perón presidency in 1946, not only had an economic impact in terms of high inflation and constant fiscal deficits, but fundamentally altered the ways of conducting politics (Cavarozzi 1994; Halperín Donghi 1994; Jones 1997a; Romero 2003). The statist (populist) model of politicization (Cavarozzi 1994: 131; Jones 1997b) meant that politics was 'primarily organized around the actions of the state', and particularly around the executive (Mora y Araujo 1993). Interestingly, the shift to the market that started under the UCR administration of Raúl Alfonsín (1983–9), and accelerated in the 1990s under Menem (1989–99), did not alter the pattern of state-centred politics, with the consequent undermining of democratic institutions, ranging from the separation of powers to the functioning of parties (Acuña 1995a, 1995b).

The role of parties has been minimal in providing a forum for the debate on alternative policies; rather, they have become machines for providing political leaders with bargaining power necessary to secure an institutional presence. The paradigmatic case was the secret deal known as the Olivos Pact, signed by then president and PJ leader, Menem, and former president (and UCR leader) Alfonsín

in 1994 to amend the 1853 constitution (Botana and Mustapic 1991). What Menem wanted, and obtained, was the introduction of a re-election clause, something explicitly forbidden in the 1853 document. In exchange, Alfonsín ensured an institutional presence for his ever-weakening party. By extending the number of senators to three by province/electoral district, and establishing that the third senator should go to the first minority, the UCR leader hoped that his party would be guaranteed some presence in the upper chamber. Other amendments, directed at strengthening the independence of the judiciary, were less effective given the executive's lack of political will to implement them. The most immediate effects of the Olivos Pact were the discrediting of the Radicals as a reliable opposition (Olivera 1995; Jones 1997a; McGuire 1997; Calvo and Murillo 2004) and the subsequent emergence of a third party, the Frente Grande (later Frepaso).

The case of the Frente Grande is illustrative of what voters expect from parties. Faced with a PJ that seemed bent on reviving its hegemonic aspirations, what voters wanted was an opposition that could become a credible alternative to the party in government. By agreeing to Olivos, the UCR was seen as relinquishing this role for self-serving and self-preserving ends. The 19.74 per cent of votes cast for the UCR in the Constituent Assembly elections of 1994 was down alarmingly from the 30.23 per cent which the party had gained in the previous year's legislative elections, and can be understood as an expression of the widespread feelings of anger felt about tampering with the constitution for party-political reasons, while apparently disregarding the general interest. The Frente Grande gained 13.20 per cent of votes and went on to come second (as Frepaso) in the 1995 presidential elections behind the PJ, relegating the UCR to third place. These results convinced the UCR leadership that only an alliance with Frepaso could defeat the PJ at the polls and guarantee its survival. The resulting Alianza emerged victorious in the 1999 presidential elections with 48.37 per cent of the votes (see Table 8.5). However, it soon became evident that the Alianza was not based on a shared platform, that it was only an electoral tool, and that it failed even in upholding its main campaign pledge—to fight corruption.

While the series of elections that took place throughout 2003 (presidential, legislative, and provincial) confirmed that far from 'getting rid of them all', the established actors remained or returned, opinion polls and analyses continued to signal the developing crisis of political representation. In a Gallup poll conducted for *La Nación* in June 2002, eight out of ten voters said they did not support any party or political leader, while 87 per cent said they did not feel represented by any party; nevertheless, 80 per cent said they were 'very interested' in who would be the next president. Of those who acknowledged a political identity in the sample, 23 per cent defined themselves as Peronist, 6 per cent as radical, 11 per cent were split among liberals, socialists and others, while 8 per cent did not know. In previous years, Mora y Araujo (1991) found that in 1984, 56 per cent had declared themselves 'Radical', a figure that dropped to 35 per cent in 1987 and 24 per cent in 1989. In contrast, those who declared themselves to be 'Peronist'

had constituted 44 per cent of the sample in 1984, 32 per cent in 1987, and 65 per cent in 1989, at the time of the hyperinflationary crisis and collapse of the Alfonsín administration.

Interestingly, politicians with relatively positive images in June 2002 did not get more than 14 per cent of the vote a year later. This may indicate that, notwithstanding declared preferences regarding the personal attributes of candidates, when the time to cast a vote duly arrives electors are inclined to choose candidates from the PJ, regarded as the only organization likely to guarantee governability. Governability, rather than tackling the institutional weaknesses that explain the history of recurrent crises, has become the concern of the electorate. Since the return to democratic rule in 1983, only Menem has been able to complete both his terms in office (1989–99).

In 1995, in the middle of the recession which had its origins in the Mexican devaluation of December 1994—and despite rising unemployment—President Menem secured his re-election by campaigning on the stability his policies had brought. He thus proved able to ride out the economic storm, while the opposition campaigned against the 'neoliberal model' without offering alternatives. Menem was re-elected because his legitimacy was based on evident success, even if at the time problems were apparent. With hindsight, voters made a rational decision: the memory of the chaos that hyperinflation had brought was fresh in people's minds. Thus party legitimacy in Argentina is likely to be based on evaluations of the competence of the government, even though government policies bear little relation to party manifestos and party leaders have little if any influence over government (Botana 1988*b*; Linz 1990). This is why the PJ is the only party with good survival prospects, deriving from the memory of Perón's first administration, with its successful populist policies, and its subsequent transformation into a powerful patronage-based machine. The inclination of the electorate to vote Peronist was once again evident in the presidential elections of 2003, when three Peronist candidates obtained 60 per cent of the vote. It is also reflected in the shift from a two-party system very much in evidence in 1983, when the UCR and the PJ together obtained 91 per cent of the vote, to a multiparty system in 1995, when votes for those two parties only totalled 67 per cent. However, it must be pointed out that this last figure hides the collapse of the UCR: between 1983 and 1995, in legislative elections the UCR lost 27 per cent of its votes, while the PJ maintained its electoral support at around 40 per cent (Mustapic 2002). Indeed, the PJ won all legislative elections between 1987 and 2003, giving rise to a pattern approaching a dominant party system (Calvo and Escolar 2005).

The legislative elections of October 2001 were an anticipation of the party debacle two months later: the ruling Alianza went from 41.73 per cent of the vote in 1999 to 16.9 per cent two years later. Domingo Cavallo's centre-right party, Republican Action (AR), saw its vote collapse from 7.5 per cent to 1 per cent. Yet support for the PJ in the same period went down from 28.8 per cent to 26.6 per cent.

TABLE 8.5. *Party affiliates in Argentina, 1999*

Political parties	Number of affiliates	% of affiliates
PARTIDO JUSTICIALISTA—PJ (Peronists)	3,888,644	47.78
UNION CIVICA RADICAL—UCR (Radicals)	2,571,096	31.60
FRENTE GRANDE—FG (later FREPASO)	221,087	2.72
UNION DE CENTRO DEMOCRATICO—UceDe	80,370	0.99
ACCION POR LA REPUBLICA—AR	32,758	0.40
MOVIMIENTO POR LA DIGNIDAD Y LA INDEPENDENCIA—MODIN	23,121	0.28
OTHERS ^a	1,320,733	16.23
Total of affiliates	8,137,809	33.63
Total registered electorate	24,201,563	100

^a 'Others' includes provincial parties and various other small parties.

Notes: The main political parties are indicated in bold.

Source: Interior Ministry, Argentine Republic.

Party affiliations

Open primaries, established by law in 2002, in which both members and non-members are allowed to choose candidates, but which no party has yet implemented, will further dilute the distinction between these categories, and consequently, party identity. Party affiliations, that is, the official registrations of party identity (see below), are more a virtual than a real fact. Their fictitious character may help explain the rise from 2,966,472 party affiliations registered by the Interior Ministry in 1983 (Mustapic 2002: 10), at the peak of political enthusiasm, to the astounding figure of 8,137,809 affiliates in 1999, according to the same source (see Table 8.5). Taking into account that in that year there were 24,118,320 registered voters in total, it implies that a third of Argentine citizens were registered as members of a political party.

It may be argued that political parties in Argentina were only truly appreciated and respected in the immediate aftermath of the last military government, when the return to democracy was hailed by a massive process of party affiliation as an expression of democratic commitment by the population. What occurred in 1983 was a veritable 'democratic celebration' after the traumas of the previous decade. Since then, however, there has been a dramatic drop in trust. Figures available from independent research (Molinelli, Palanza, and Sin 1999), as well as from the government agency which oversees affiliations, reveal a counter-intuitive situation. While one would expect to find, on the basis of opinion polls and observation of the daily operation of parties, a significant fall in numbers of party affiliates, figures generally contradict this expectation (with the exception of the UCR).

There are several explanations for this surprising increase. First, while it is very easy to become a member of a party, to disaffiliate entails a cumbersome procedure demanding several visits to the Electoral Tribunal. People seldom

bother to put themselves through this. Registers, which are rarely updated, are totally unreliable. Second, parties are interested in maintaining inflated affiliation figures in order to manipulate internal elections for candidates on the very few occasions that these take place. There is no auditing of these primaries, and fraud is widespread. This is a mechanism widely used to defeat internal dissent: control over the register means one can guarantee the electoral outcome. Third, both the party faction which controls a municipal or provincial district and its opponents agree to 'use the whole register' (*'volcar el padrón'*). This is to avoid the embarrassment of revealing that only a tiny proportion of party affiliates bother to vote in internal elections. The mechanism means that the percentages obtained in the primary, in which few actually bother to vote, are transferred to the whole register of affiliations in order to show a much larger turnout. Thus, if a candidate obtains 20 per cent of the votes cast in a primary, the published results will show that he or she actually gained 20 per cent of the total number of affiliates. Fourth, affiliation is also related to clientelism: people prefer to stay on the register in order to better their chances of obtaining a post, however humble, in the administration; of securing a contract to supply food to schools, of obtaining social security benefits, and so on. And finally, the somewhat obscure and discretionary way in which the state finances parties takes into account the number of party affiliates, as well as the number of votes received by each party at the last election, and the number of representatives in Congress (Pierini and Lorences 1999: 135). This provides an obvious incentive for parties to exaggerate the number of affiliates they have.

PARTY ORGANIZATIONAL STRENGTH

The organization of parties in Argentina is shaped by several variables, including the federal system, rules governing the functioning of parties, electoral laws, internal factions and leadership, and the influence of the state.

The federal system of the country comprises twenty-four electoral districts that coincide with the twenty-three provinces plus the autonomous government of the City of Buenos Aires. The most relevant for our purpose are those rules, equally applied in the PJ and the UCR, that establish the organization of parties along territorial lines, those which provide autonomy to subunits, and those that aim to promote internal democracy. The territorial organization of parties follows the federal system of the country. Thus, organizational divisions occur at national, provincial, and local (municipal) levels, with party councils, committees, boards, etc. existing at these three levels. These subunits enjoy a high degree of autonomy, giving a decentralized power structure. Provincial structures elect their own leadership and determine their internal rules and organization. This autonomy is

reinforced by the law on party financing. Article 46 of Law 23,298 establishes that 80 per cent of the state funds for a party should go to provincial structures, and only 20 per cent to national ones.

Federalism provides every province with its own constitution, and a directly elected governor and legislature. After the president and a few key national government ministers who are appointed by the president (rarely elected politicians), the most powerful political actors in Argentina are the provincial party bosses, usually the governors (Mainwaring 1997). The policy of decentralization pursued in the 1990s enhanced their power and role, giving them control over relatively large budgets (Jones 1997*b*: 262–4; 1998: 2–4). A considerable proportion of the new financial resources transferred for education, health, and social welfare programmes was used to increase the provincial *caudillos*' support bases rather than to improve the economic and social infrastructure in their respective provinces. Each province also renews one half of its deputies every two years. These elections do not have to coincide with national elections, and governors decide on their timing, based on assessments of the relative advantage of (not) coinciding such campaigns with national contests.

The importance of governors is reflected in the fact that parties are increasingly territorially based machines. Governors have key resources at their disposal: they can appoint personnel at the provincial level (in a majority of provinces, and especially in the poorer ones, public employment accounts for 50 per cent, or more, of all jobs); they set the electoral calendar in their districts; and the stability that they enjoy is far higher than that of other political actors.³ Most governors are also party leaders in their district, and as such they decide personally which candidates go on the electoral lists, in what order, and for which posts. They have it in their 'gift' to decide whether a candidate can run for National Congress, for mayor, or town councillor (over whom the governor exerts financial control).

While federalism tends to devolve power on sub-nationally located actors within parties, the electoral laws help generate and sustain factionalism. Three electoral arenas coexist in the country, each with its own electoral system. First, there is balloting for presidential elections and most provincial governorships: candidates must obtain at least 45 per cent of the vote and an advantage of ten points over their nearest rival, to be elected in the first round. Failing this, a second ballot takes place between the top two candidates. This system was incorporated in the 1994 constitutional reform, and favours those districts with the largest concentrations of the population. Second, legislators are chosen by a mixed system. National legislators for the lower Chamber (257 in total), and some provincial deputies, are chosen via closed-list voting, in which seats are distributed proportionally according to population. However, there is a minimum requisite of five deputies per province/district, irrespective of population. The consequence

³ The re-election of the governor since the return of democracy is now allowed in nineteen of the twenty-four provinces, with four provinces having an indefinite re-election clause, including President Kirchner's own, the Patagonian province of Santa Cruz.

is an over-representation of small provinces, and the under-representation of the largest: Buenos Aires, City of Buenos Aires, Santa Fe, Córdoba, and Mendoza, which between them represent 70 per cent of the population of the country. It must also be pointed out that since 1993 there is a 'female quota' that requires at least one woman for every two men on party lists. The electoral formula used is the D'Hondt system of proportional representation, with a legal threshold of 3 per cent of the electoral register of the district, which slightly reduces proportionality in medium and large districts. Finally, senators to the Upper House are chosen by a majoritarian system. Since there are three senators elected per province (two for the first-past-the-post and one for the party that comes second), irrespective of their population, the bias here is in favour of the smaller provinces (Jackisch 1998).

The closed-list system, in which the candidate at the top of the list 'drags' or 'pulls' the other candidates, shifts the focus of competition to the intra-party level, and debates take place at factional rather than party level (Fohrig 2004). The persistence and significance of factions within parties means that politicians spend a considerable amount of time endeavouring to secure their own power base within factions. This is especially so given that internal divisions seldom reflect ideological or programmatic differences (Shugart 1995). Alignments thus follow personal leadership. Moreover, the fact that inter-faction competition is not highly visible to the electorate weakens the capacity of parties to perform their representational function. This has generated increasing calls for reform of the electoral system in recent years. However, while factions might undermine party cohesion and muddy processes of political representation, they are also conduits for party resources in Argentina. When a political actor occupies a key institutional position and at the same time is a relevant actor within his party, access to state resources can help enhance his position within the party. Presidential elections are crucial since the party in government will have access to considerable state resources (Spiller and Tommasi 2001; Jones et al. 2002).

Party funding

Although the 1994 constitution declares that political parties are 'fundamental institutions of the democratic system', their activities, including financing, are not spelt out. A dozen different bills on party funding await consideration by the Constitutional Affairs Committee in the Lower Chamber; none of them has yet been debated and party finances are still regulated by Law 23,298 of 1985. This law is vague about the issue, merely stating that 'political party funds will be constituted by goods and resources authorized by their organic charter and not forbidden by any law'. It does not specify limits to private contributions, although it stipulates that parties may not accept anonymous contributions, either directly or indirectly. At the same time, donors have a right to 'demand that their identity be not divulged'. The effect of this legislation is to leave the financing of electoral campaigns in Argentina shrouded in mystery (Ferreira Rubio 1997).

Nevertheless, it is evident that parties and politicians in Argentina are flush with funding from both legitimate and illicit sources. The 1999 election campaign was the most expensive in Argentine history, with more than US\$90 million spent on advertizing (newspapers, magazines, TV and radio, and street posters) by the three main contenders for the presidency.⁴ In contrast, in the 1997 British electoral campaign the three major parties spent a total of £44 million (Ferguson 2001: 258–9), or approximately \$66 million—this in a country whose GDP was at the time four and a half times the size of Argentina's.⁵ This was the first time that campaign costs were made public, since parties have never published them. The main reason for this secrecy is that private businessmen bare the brunt of electoral costs, and their contributions 'are never free', but are widely regarded as being the source of overly close relationships between business and party elites (*La Nación*, November 1999).

The state is the other major source of party funding. A 'Permanent Party Fund' exists to facilitate the operation of political parties, with power of audit vested in the Electoral Tribunal, which lacks resources to carry out such duties, and the National Electoral Board, which is dependent on the Interior Ministry. The latter, being the 'political ministry', has effective control over political parties. Moreover, the Interior Minister has total discretionary control over 'reserved' (secret) unaccountable funds. These are traditionally used to allocate funds to the provincial branches of the party in government via a mechanism known as 'Advances of the National Treasury' (ATN in its Spanish acronym).

The existing electoral law assigns one peso per vote obtained by a party in the latest election. But leaving aside the issue of whether an increasing identity between political parties and the state is desirable, and even whether it would constitute a genuine remedy for the problem of corruption (Ferguson 2001: 273–6), it should be noted that this system interacts with the endemic factionalism of parties to generate intra-party struggles over the allocation of state funding. All this serves to foster and deepen the perception that public office and access to power are means to satisfy personal and factional interests, and bear little relation to notions of public service or the public good. The lack of transparency in financial affairs has been the focus of media attention and denunciation since the return to democracy and a free press. The 'cost of politics' (estimates vary between 2.6 and 10 per cent of the entire administrative expense of the public sector, Escolar and Pirez 2001) includes not only electoral campaign costs, but national and provincial legislators who, before devaluation, cost an annual average of US\$1,200,000 (*La Nación*, 21 January 2001). Included in this estimate are salaries, representational and travelling expenses, and 'reserved expenditure'

⁴ The PJ spent US \$44 million, the Alianza US\$42 million, and Acción por la República \$5 million, at a time when one peso was equivalent to US\$1.

⁵ The cost of the Argentine campaign was revealed by an external audit carried out by *Poder Ciudadano* (covering the period 1 January–24 October 1999). Note that the figures submitted by the parties only amounted to about half of this NGO's own estimates.

which covers unaccountable, discretionary funds available to legislators to dole out grants, subsidies, and pensions. When one takes into account the existence of 16,578 elected posts in Argentina, or one every 1,455 voters, the scale of the 'cost of politics' becomes apparent.

Parties still rely on private donations, and at the district level this frequently means that the party 'boss' enters into a deal with local businessmen. According to President Menem's former Interior Minister, Gustavo Beliz, who set up a PJ splinter party, *Nueva Dirigencia* (New Leadership) before becoming briefly Kirchner's justice minister in 2003, 'the system means that the politician who succeeds ends up depending on the businessman who funded his campaign'. The existing legislation on financing political parties sets strict terms, banning any type of private contribution and establishing limits to the extent of campaigns and their costs. Aware of their unstable bases, politicians and officials hold their positions for personal and/or party gain, creating jobs and appointing colleagues, friends, and relatives to jobs in an ever-expanding public sector. Nepotism, cronyism, and clientelism are therefore rife in parties and in government (Ferreira Rubio 1997).

Tax evasion and money laundering are perversely linked to unaccountable party funding, hindering any attempts at reform aimed at achieving transparency and accountability in party finances. Some commentators have maintained that one of the main sources of conflict in the Argentine democratic system is the issue of party financing. The huge, unresolved corruption scandals that have occurred since the 1990s are in one way or another linked to the financing of politics.⁶ Moreover, the perception that corruption in parties is endemic in Argentina flows not only from the exploitation of direct state financing by the parties, but also from their access to indirect subsidies in kind (offices, transport, etc.), to kickbacks from state procurement (made more visible by the extensive privatizations of the 1990s), to their media access, to poverty alleviation programmes channelled through party networks, and to the timing of public works to coincide with elections. The depth of Argentina's problem in this respect is revealed by Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index, which ranked the country 102nd in the world in 2004, together with Albania, Zambia, Philippines, Uganda, and Vietnam (www.transparency.org).

THE SYSTEMIC FUNCTIONALITY OF PARTIES

An Argentine political analyst, remarking on the decline of parties and public distancing from them, asks whether this in itself is something to be regretted (Mora y Araujo 1995). He wonders if this reflects a 'loss in the quality of citizenship'.

⁶ Note too that, while the evidence is no more than anecdotal, it is widely believed that 'narco-laundering' has provided some of the funds for individual politicians' campaigns.

The fact that the number of NGOs in Argentina has gone from a mere handful in the 1980s to thousands by the mid 1990s would be an indication that ‘quality of citizenship’ has not, indeed, declined. Mora y Araujo goes on to point out that before 1983, it could hardly be said that there was much ‘quality of citizenship’ in a country characterized by episodes of extreme violence perpetrated by actors who challenged the political system from outside it: the military and urban guerrillas.

It is only appropriate to gauge party performance and functionality since the transition to democracy in 1983. When in October 1983 the UCR inaugurated the transition by winning the elections with 51.75 per cent of the votes, the cause for celebration was at least twofold: first, it meant an end to the darkest period of political violence and state terrorism in 170 years of independence; second, it showed that it was possible to defeat Peronism in elections. The apparent impossibility of defeating Peronism electorally had, since 1955, been the root cause of political instability, with the military regularly intervening to prevent Peronist victories (De Riz and Smulovitz 1991; De Riz 1993).

However, the expectations raised by the UCR triumph in 1983 went beyond what was reasonable. President Alfonsín himself was responsible for repeatedly declaring during his campaign that ‘democracy feeds, heals, and educates’, stressing the ‘redemptive’ aspects of democracy (Szusterman 2000). While he also denounced the corporatist practices that had impeded party political activity in the past, he failed to spell out the policies that his party and the government would pursue. The 1983 election had been won, without anybody apparently realizing the fact, on the basis of the 1946 UCR manifesto which defined the party as a ‘statist’, anti-business party (De Riz 1994; Serrafiero 1994).

Again in 1989, those who voted for Menem had no way of knowing that two years into his government he would embrace the pro-market policies that were considered the antithesis of what the PJ had traditionally stood for: State intervention, nationalization, redistributionist policies via fiscal expenditure, and so on (Wayland 1999; Stallings and Peres 2000; Torre 2003*b*). Both Alfonsín and Menem implemented policies that were nowhere to be found in their respective party’s platforms, albeit more blatantly in the case of the latter. In order to carry out the reforms proposed, Menem made use of a constitutional tool that had hardly been employed until then. This was the Necessity and Urgency Decrees (NUD) that allow the president to bypass Congress in times of emergency (Mustapic 1995; Ferreira Rubio & Goretti 1998, 2000). In fact, the effective tools that a president may draw upon in order to rule are three: the weight of his party in Congress; the veto power that the constitution invests in the president, extending to the partial veto of laws; and the ‘necessity and urgency decrees’. From the perspective of analysing executive–legislature relations, NUDs mean that the president rules over and above Congress and effectively, parties (Mustapic 1995; Ferreira Rubio and Goretti 1998, 2000). The number of NUDs per constitutional president reveals the increasing tendency of the executive to bypass Congress in this way. During the period 1853–1976 only fifteen NUDs were signed, whereas Menem signed thirty-six in the twelve months from July 1989, and Kirchner

signed sixty-six in the year from May 2003 (Ferreira Rubio and Goretti 1998, 2000; Nueva Mayoría, *Newsletter* May 2004).

When comparing Menem's first year in government with de la Rúa's (the latter issuing twenty-seven NUDs in the twelve months from December 1999), two things must be taken into account: first, that Menem's first year was marked by the hyperinflationary crisis inherited from Alfonsín; second, that the Alianza made the denunciation of Menem's tendency to sign NUDs a major point of their electoral campaign. Ignoring the fact that the tendency was reversed during Menem's second administration, the Alianza used the NUDs as a symbol of Menem's 'hegemonic' and 'undemocratic' style of government. It is interesting to note that although the emergency was over by 2003, President Kirchner not only signed sixty-five NUDs in his first year, but in December of that year he managed to persuade Congress to grant a twelve-month extension of his extraordinary powers, renewed at the end of 2004. This meant that the executive could change budgetary allocations and modify the fiscal regime without consulting Congress. In this way, NUDs mask the legislative acts of the Executive, and in the process violate the principle of the separation of powers embedded in the constitution.

The actual functioning of Argentine democracy follows a tortuous path (Torre 2003*a*). Deprived of a working majority in Congress (which can be the result of the activities of party factions that do not respond to the pleas of party leaders), the executive's response has been to rule by decree, thus turning an exceptional measure into an ordinary one. The consequence of such procedure is to instill in the population the belief that rules are irrelevant.

Governance and political recruitment

How far is government 'party' government, in terms of policies and personnel? (Mair 1998) Strongly implicit in the foregoing discussion is the unmistakable conclusion that party government is second to individual, candidate-centred government in Argentina. Jones (1998: 32) attributes relatively high levels of party discipline in Congress to the historical polarization of Peronists and Radicals. However, since 1999 the pattern has been reversing itself: desertions in the ruling coalition led by the UCR were almost monthly occurrences during de la Rúa's interrupted term of office, while the low level of party discipline strained to breaking point relations between the executive and Congress. This trend has continued since President Kirchner took power in May 2003, with Congress playing a largely ineffectual role, and deputies responding to personalized leadership outside the Chamber.

While in opposition, parties seldom devote time or energy to debating policies. Their only activity is to oppose. When they win elections, neither party activists nor those appointed to ministerial positions are aware of the policies to be implemented. Electoral appeals stress fundamentals or personal leadership qualities, and find expression in emotive slogans: Alfonsín and his commitment to the constitution and the rule of law; Menem's *Síganme!* (Follow me!) with

which he run for president in 1989; de la Rúa's promise of transparency and an end to corruption (Weyland 1999). But in any case, the Argentine political parties eschew attempts to attract people via policy appeals. Given the fact that, as in all presidentialist systems, the president will appoint his cabinet with very little input from the party, and that cabinet members will only be disclosed after the formal handing-over of power, voters have few clues as to who will be responsible for policy in the different areas of government (Sartori 1980; Torre 1991). For almost two years (1989–91) Menem undertook several cabinet reshuffles until he embraced the path of convertibility in April. A measure of the degree of instability that characterized de la Rúa's administration was provided by research reported by a private think tank (*Nueva Mayoría*, 20 March 2001). Between the return to democratic rule on 10 December 1983 and 21 March 2001, there was on average a Cabinet reshuffle every 2.2 months. Indeed, after Fernando de la Rúa took office on 10 December 1999, changes in his cabinet occurred on average every 0.6 months up until March 2001.

Since 1983 parties have acted as silent witnesses to presidential decisions and volte-faces. Arguably, the only real party government in the past half-century has been the UCR's in the period from 1963 to 1966 (Torre 1994; Jones 1997*b*). This is another reminder of the excessive personalization of politics that Argentina's presidential system allows (Mainwaring 1990; Mainwaring and Shugart 1994; Vatenzuela 1993). The identity of the government is thus a function of the personality of the president. Even allowing for the ideological ambivalence of Peronism, the high degree of personalization helps to explain the fact that two Peronist administrations, those of Carlos Menem (1989–99) and Néstor Kirchner (2003–7), represent two quite opposed ideological visions: the former pro-market, the latter pro-state. A further consequence of the weight of the executive is the concentration of institutional resources that allow presidents to constitute their own, personal Cabinets independently of the government and, of course, their parties (Torre 2003*b*; Jones et al. 2002; De Riz 1998). The result in all administrations since 1983 has been the lack of 'partyiness' of governments. Practically all decisions, but most notably those that entail drastic macroeconomic shifts, like privatization and deregulation, have emanated from personal presidential decisions, and have been implemented by men and women who were not elected, but personally responsible to the incumbent. The paradigmatic cases were the declaration of the largest sovereign default in history declared by interim president Adolfo Rodríguez Saá in early January 2002, and the decisions to end convertibility and devalue the national currency a few weeks later by President Eduardo Duhalde. These unexpected and never-discussed decisions were thrust upon an unsuspecting citizenry overnight.

In the case of Fernando de la Rúa, the Alianza served its purpose in nominating the presidential candidate. Once elected, de la Rúa was shielded by the constitution while asserting his independence from the party. The message was clear: it was the president who would take the decisions. This reflected the reality that de la Rúa had been chosen as a compromise candidate, and neither his own party, the

UCR, nor its minority ally, Frepaso, were especially enthusiastic about a man they regarded as too conservative for their liking. In contrast with his predecessors, Alfonsín and Menem, who were the undisputed leaders of their respective parties, de la Rúa had to remind his allies that the constitution allowed the president to choose his cabinet at will. Even so, the overall pattern is clear: party impact on government is limited, largely because of constitutional presidentialism, which means that major governmental decisions and philosophies are established by individual leaders rather than parties. Moreover, the mutual autonomy of party and leader has become more pronounced in recent years, as expressed by the weakening cohesion of legislative parties and the growing recourse to rule by presidential decree.

Representation, interest articulation, and aggregation

Earlier, it was suggested that the declining legitimacy of the electoral system constitutes a growing problem of political representation in Argentina. Indeed, for the past decade or more demands for changes in the electoral law have dominated the debate on political reform. Most projects for reform focus on the closed-list system, known in Argentina as 'bed-sheet lists' (*listas sábana*), because of their size. This is regarded by many as central to a crisis of representation in Argentina when, in fact, it only affects the four largest districts: the province of Buenos Aires, which elects thirty-five deputies (half of seventy) every two years, the City of Buenos Aires, which elects twelve or thirteen (half of twenty-five), and the provinces of Córdoba (nine out of eighteen) and Santa Fe (nine or ten out of nineteen). These four of the country's 24 electoral districts choose 132 out of a total of 257 deputies. The other twenty provinces choose between two and five deputies each. The main objections to the closed-list system are twofold. First, since electors rarely know the candidates other than the top two names, this creates a distancing between electors and elected which contributes to unaccountability and disenchantment. Second, and more important, there is a widespread criticism of the undemocratic, clientelistic way in which the lists are devised. This is the prerogative of the party boss in each district. For instance, before the April 2003 elections, then President Duhalde, undisputed leader of the province of Buenos Aires, the largest district, drew up the PJ list of thirty-five candidates, with his wife at number one, his son-in-law further down, and at number thirty-five, the head of household at the presidential residence. In between, each of the political allies whom he had appointed as ministers were listed. This personalized, unaccountable practice is fundamental to the declining legitimacy of parties in Argentina.

The representational capacity of political parties in Argentina has also been challenged by the crisis of the state-centred model and the resulting disarticulation and disorganization of the economic and political pattern that it had established. The resulting crisis of representation has not yet produced alternative forms of identity, but has resulted in a political regression, in so far as the political agenda, policy priorities and new patterns of behaviour are increasingly shaped on the

streets. Popular mobilizations forced the resignation of a president (December 2001), an alteration to the published electoral calendar (August 2002), and the announcement of a new (and rushed) law and order agenda (May 2004), to mention just the most notable events. The void left by parties is being spontaneously filled in the streets.

Referring to Fernando de la Rúa's government, Torre (2003a) has stated that only 'conceptual inertia' could lead observers to refer to it as the 'government of the Alianza', since leadership has been far more individualized. Indeed, the same could be said of Menem's and especially Kirchner's administrations, all of which responded to the paths imposed by the president. Constant references to 'emergency' and 'crisis' have facilitated the concentration of resources in the hands of the executive, in order to overcome its real or perceived weaknesses. But since governments do not express and enact party-shaped programmes, it is difficult to speak of parties performing the aggregation function.

When legislators decide whether to collaborate with a government, they will take into account the president's image in opinion polls, the fiscal needs of the provinces they represent, and internal factionalism and leadership. De la Rúa was able to benefit at first from a Peronist opposition too divided and aimless, as well as from provincial governors too much in need of federal funds to provide confrontational opposition. Yet the same fact of a lack of clear party leadership made the process of negotiation more difficult: it was far from clear to the president who was a suitable interlocutor. The absence of a party manifesto with clear policy statements meant that legislators were unwilling to help a president from their own party if he surprised them with policy decisions they had not expected. Cases in point were Alfonsín's amnesty laws, Menem's privatizations, and de la Rúa's labour market legislation, which not only led to the resignation of his vice-president, but unleashed the most serious scandal of his government.

Political participation

Political participation in Argentina has meant people filling the Plaza de Mayo, the public square opposite government house (Casa Rosada). It was in this same public space that independence from Spain was declared on 25 May 1810. Since Evita Perón and the trade unions mobilized the masses on 17 October 1945 to demand Perón's release from prison (where he had been put by his military colleagues), only Peronism has generally had the ability to 'fill the square'. However, since December 2001 other actors have shown that same capacity, from the spontaneous *cacerolazos* (pots and pans) demonstrations against banking restrictions to the highly organized *piqueteros*—groups that started by erecting picket lines and then turned roadblocks into their peculiar form of public protest. While *cacerolazos* fall within the description of peaceful protest, the *piqueteros* are often violent and always break the law. They represent the socially excluded, the poor, unemployed, and increasingly, unemployable. There are more than thirty *piquetero* organizations, ranging from those close to the government to others

which challenge the system from without, and have pledged not to stop short of revolution. The law and order plan publicized after a massive demonstration demanding protection from rising criminality was the latest instance of societal demands being met as a result of pressure from the street, where the public policy agenda is set. Yet one should keep in mind that, in contrast to neighbouring Chile, Argentina is more of a praetorian country, in which interests and preferences have not been traditionally mediated via parties. The social mobilization post-1983 has increasingly questioned the lack of a 'qualitative' representation through parties; this lies at the core of the demands articulated by NGOs for a 'better' representation, and a 'renewal' of politics.

Since voting is compulsory in Argentina (although penalties for non-voting are rarely imposed), turnout is no measure of political participation. Traditionally, Peronists were considered the only party able to 'mobilize' supporters, busing them to massive rallies and actions either in public spaces or football grounds. This is still the practice, and the press frequently reports instances of people being paid or promised food in order to attend these events in the run-up to an election. Auyero (2000) offers a detailed description of how these Peronist clientelistic networks operate. Other parties simply do not have the resources to organize such networks.

As mentioned, the 2001 crisis witnessed a new type of political mobilization. This involved the urban middle sectors, or 'active minorities' in Peruzzotti's (2002) analysis, spontaneously demonstrating against the confiscation of life savings, and demanding political accountability and the rule of law. By 2005, however, the almost daily occurrence of *piquetero* demonstrations had antagonized the middle sectors, and led to their virtual withdrawal from the streets. Until political mobilization is channelled more effectively by the parties, the crisis of representation will continue to be central to the weak institutionalization of democracy in Argentina. The dominant position of the PJ is a worrying sign for the future of democratic consolidation in the country, as well as for the general role of parties as intermediaries. The unrepresentativeness of parties was illustrated in a *Nueva Mayoría* opinion poll of 1998, in which 41 per cent declared themselves to be 'independent', 20 per cent 'apolitical', 19 per cent Peronist, 9 per cent Radical, and the rest mentioned tiny parties on the left of the political spectrum. In 2005 the trend continued, with 71 per cent of those surveyed refusing to identify with any party, 15 per cent with the PJ, 4 per cent with the Radicals, and the rest with an array of left-of-centre parties (*Perfil*, 2 October 2005).

Political communication and education

Political parties in Argentina have not only failed in their role of transmitting political education and offering a forum for policy debate, but they have relinquished this crucial democratic function to other actors whose representativeness must be questioned.

As we have seen, platforms are generally only vaguely articulated by parties and known by voters. The purpose of party manifestos is to mobilize the energy and generate the enthusiasm of party activists (Manin 1992: 24), but as already noted, politics in Argentina is more about individual leaders than parties. Indeed, the phenomenon of the pull of personalities in elections is widespread in modern democracies, and political analysts have been writing about the 'personalization' or even 'presidentialization' of power (Poguntke and Webb 2005). Style and image often seem to have replaced, to a large extent, party or programme, and party labels do not necessarily determine electoral choice. In particular, in countries in which the head of the executive is directly elected, the presidential contest is the main election and tends to define the political life of the country. The head of government becomes the representative of the people par excellence. In such cases, parties tend to become instruments of a political leader. In this sense, it is doubtful that Argentina is truly a case of 'party democracy'.

In Argentina, political regression has also witnessed an increasingly prominent role for non-party actors in setting the public agenda: the media, NGOs, the Catholic Church have been among the most pivotal. This feature of the representative link has two separate, if converging, sources. On the one hand, there is the ever-growing importance of the mass media. In the case of Argentina, candidates can make themselves known to the electorate without having to depend on the mediation of party or other militant organizations; moreover, resorting to TV and radio has the added advantage of reaching the remotest corners of a country the size of Argentina, with its scattered population. It is the individual, in his or her more peculiar and concrete aspects, that is emphasized in voters' perceptions. On the other hand, the increasing role of personalities rather than programmes provides a solution to the circumstances under which modern leaders rule. A programme cannot include (unless it becomes unfeasibly large) the myriad decisions that a ruler must take. The notion of 'trust', so crucial in the origins of modern representative government, once again becomes central. The media play a vital role in conveying the image of the politician. But even more importantly, after years of censorship (and self-censorship), the media in Argentina have become a veritable 'voice of the people'. There are several instances in which the political agenda has been set by the media, especially in cases involving corruption of officials, and in cases of law and order and the lack of personal security. With opinion polls showing the percentage of the population who trust politicians and judges in single figures, the media is the only sector in public life retaining a degree of credibility among the public.

That said, in 2001, the last year of the Alianza government, the Catholic Church also acquired a new and remarkable pre-eminence in the political arena. As the political crisis unfolded, and after several failures of de la Rúa to forge a 'government of national unity', an 'Argentine Dialogue' was set up, led by members of the Catholic hierarchy and a UN negotiator. For months the Dialogue met with representatives of all sections of society. When it published its conclusions at the

beginning of 2002, it reflected deep dissatisfaction with politicians, stressing the need for political reform, strengthened institutions, and probity in public affairs, that had crystallized in the rallying cry *que se vayan todos*. The need for political reform was at the core of the Dialogue's recommendations.

The legitimacy of institutions is guaranteed not so much by the virtue of all its members, which is difficult to achieve, but by the control of regulatory bodies able to apply sanctions. Without this, impunity rules. The logic of 'resignation plus enquiry' which follows most political scandals in the UK is unknown in Argentina. Nobody ever resigns, no enquiry is ever conducted, no conclusions are ever reached, and no lessons are ever learnt. 'Letting the courts decide', in a country in which the independence of the judiciary remains a desideratum and the protraction of its decisions a regrettable habit, is an almost explicit admission that no clear outcome is desired. The lack of resolution, political or juridical, of the bribery crisis which unfolded in September 2000 in the Senate, means that the climate of suspicion and cynicism, of secrets and lies, is allowed to drag on, resulting in further cynicism and demoralization. In summary, the shortcomings of parties as sources of political education and communication leave the way clear for other actors to play the role in Argentina: individual leaders, the media, the church, NGOs, and social movements. This reflects and in some ways further exacerbates the crisis of political legitimacy in the country.

CONCLUSIONS

Politicians in Argentina, according to Natalio Botana (*La Nación*, 1 June 2000), carry a 'collective sense of guilt' stemming from three sources. First, an Argentine (and Latin American) political tradition that has witnessed the coexistence of populism and party weakness, and which is a serious challenge to democratic legitimacy. Second, the new activism of NGOs, especially those defending human rights and demanding transparency in all government acts. Finally, the insatiable exploitation of public funds by parties and politicians to sustain what has become a feature of democratic governments since 1983: almost 'princely courts' of cronies paid from the public purse. These factors help us understand the disrepute into which political parties have fallen in the country .

When seeking the roots of the decadence and regression of politics in Argentina, one should remember that throughout the 1970s both urban guerrillas and the military, who engaged in state terrorism to defeat the former, shared an outlook: the rejection of liberal democracy and pluralistic party politics. With the return to democratic rule in 1983, there was the novelty of a culture shift, with the middle sectors taking to the streets demanding civil rights and expressing their frustration at the low quality of democracy. This reappraisal by and of the middle

classes meant a re-emphasizing of the principles of liberal democracy which had been neglected for almost fifty years. Yet the old parties, the PJ and the UCR, saw democracy as the antidote to authoritarianism, rather than as a system of government in which the principles of the rule of law and accountability of rulers should prevail. The redemptive features obscured the need for an understanding of the pragmatic qualities of democracy. In 1983, the promise of the restoration of fundamentals such as democratic pluralism and the rule of law made a debate on specific policies seem unnecessary.

The bitter infighting that was unleashed in 2002 to secure the PJ nomination, added to the practical certainty that the next president of Argentina would be a Peronist, confirmed that the PJ remained the largest single electoral force capable of guaranteeing governability, and that it was unbeatable, unless the divided and multifarious opposition united against it. What the PJ has also shown is that it is ready to break the rules in order to benefit whomsoever should happen to be in control of the party machine. This is what happened in 2003 when acting president Duhalde violated the rules he had previously backed on primary elections to select candidates, fearing that the outcome would go against his wishes. Again in 2005, President Kirchner not only made no effort to institutionalize the PJ but decided to create a spurious party, the Front for Victory, in those electoral districts in which Duhalde maintained control over the PJ machine. With the opposition divided among myriad parties (592 parties registered for the October 2005 legislative elections), the risk of the PJ turning into a version of Mexico's PRI, which ruled unopposed for 70 years, cannot be discarded. In favour of the PRI one should remark that at least it had a strict non-reelection rule: presidents could only be elected once, and for six years only, and they chose the candidate who, representing the hegemonic PRI, was sure to be elected. With the rules for selecting the presidential candidate among competing Peronists being either violated or ignored, elections in Argentina will continue to be the arena in which Peronist internal rivalries are fought out.

After 2001 the country underwent such a profound crisis that it became one of those key moments in the unfolding of the democratic process when it is crucial that political reflexes and instincts respond not just to societal demands, but also defend the rule of law and the need for strengthening the institutions of democracy. The type of institutional crisis confronting Argentina at the dawn of the twenty-first century is unprecedented. What gives cause for concern for the future of party rule in what was considered the 'success story' of 1990s Latin America, is the inability of existing parties to offer solutions to the crisis. Political parties are essential to a healthy democracy: their demise can only result in the triumph of corporations, the threat of populism, or a return to anti-political practices that had seemed buried in the past. The risk is that on the ruins of the political system of the past twenty years, the new political cycle will not only fail to overcome the moral bankruptcy of the current regime, but may deepen long-standing problems stemming from existing institutions.

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Strong Parties in a Struggling Party System

Mexico in the Democratic Era

Joy Langston

INTRODUCTION

Despite the authoritarian nature of Mexico's post-revolutionary era, political parties played crucial roles in Mexico's drawn-out transition. Equally as important, parties are central actors in the nation's new democracy. Despite all the problems that will be described below, Mexico has a stable three-party system that orders voters' preferences along a shifting left-right ideological spectrum, and whose three major parties win over 90 per cent of the vote in federal elections and 95 per cent of the legislative seats. The parties are well funded, control (at different levels of the party structure) most candidate nominations, and are largely able to dictate the legislative behaviour of their partisans in Congress. Mexican voters use partisan cues to make electoral decisions and independent candidates are constitutionally prohibited.

For most of the twentieth century, Mexico was an electoral-authoritarian regime presided over by the Party of the Institutional Revolution (PRI), which Sartori (1976) termed a hegemonic, pragmatic ruling party; it allowed other parties to form and compete in elections, but refused to relinquish power in fair, transparent elections. All major posts in both the executive and legislative branches, including mayors, governors, senators, and of course the presidency, were held by members of the PRI until this stranglehold over governmental office began to loosen in the late 1980s and into the 1990s. The PRI, for the first time in its history, lost its majority in the Chamber of Deputies in 1997 and ceded the presidency in 2000. In 2006, it lost its majority in the Senate.

Three major parties now exist in Mexico: the PAN, PRD, and PRI. The centre-right National Action Party (PAN) was formed in 1939 and survived several decades outside political power with little chance of winning any significant number of posts.¹ Until the electoral reforms of 1977 that introduced a more

¹ For example, the PAN won only 5 majority districts out of 178 in the 1961 midterm elections (Sartori 1976: 233).

proportional form of representation in the Lower House of Congress, the party's first goal was to educate the Mexican masses, rather than win elections (Von Sauer 1974).² The National Action Party began to win gubernatorial elections and congressional seats in greater numbers in the 1990s, and currently holds the presidency after a stunning defeat of the PRI in 2000, the first time the hegemonic party had lost the presidency since the formation of its forerunner, the Party of the National Revolution, in 1929. In the controversial election of 2006, PAN retained the presidency as its candidate Felipe Calderón narrowly defeated the PRD's Andrés Manuel López Obrador.

The centre-left Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) was formed in 1989 from the jetsam of several small, fractious left parties, urban social movements, and former PRI members who had formed a coalition to run against the PRI's presidential candidate in the 1988 executive contest. The party struggled for several years with whether it would challenge the PRI via participation in patently unfair elections or through street demonstrations and post-election bargaining, and gained a reputation for internal factionalism. In the late 1990s, the PRD changed its strategy and concentrated on winning elections and strengthening its organization. Until 2006, the PRD was the weakest of the three major parties, holding only five governorships (and two others in coalition), and ninety-eight Lower House seats. It was, however, extremely strong in the Federal Capital and in certain states in which it had won the governorship. In 2006, quite apart from its strong showing in the presidential contest, it also gained more than sixty seats in the Lower House, and nineteen seats in the Senate. Thus it surged past the PRI to become the second largest party in Mexico.

Support for the former opposition parties is strongly regionalized (Klesner 2004: 105): the northern and centre-west regions are strong bastions for the PAN, whereas the PRD is weak in the north, but stronger in the south. The PRI remains strong everywhere, except the Capital. Socially, the PRI supporters tend to be less well-educated and more rural compared to their PAN and PRD counterparts. *Panistas* are more urban, better educated and more middle-class than either PRI or PRD voters (Klesner 2004: 107). Those who vote for the PRD tend to be male, older, and poorer. Moreno (2003: 66) remarks that ideological profile is a highly significant factor in explaining partisan orientations: of the major parties, the PRI supporters are furthest right, while PAN supporters are centrist or centre-right, and PRD identifiers further to the left. Although the PRI has always sold itself as a centrist party in terms of economic policy, it is seen as right wing by most voters because of its anti-democratic stance.

² The electoral reform of 1963 allowed opposition parties some representation, but did not change the SMD system. The reform gave parties that won at least 2 per cent of the vote 'party deputies', even if they did not win a single district. The cap on these party deputies was first twenty and then twenty-five, which left the second place PAN severely under-represented. The 1977 reform transformed the SMD system into a mixed majoritarian-PR system by allowing 100 deputies to be elected on closed lists in addition to the 200 elected in uninominal districts.

This ideological positioning may well be changing after the loss of the presidency, and now that the traditional anti/pro-hegemonic system cleavage has in effect died a democratic death.³ The PRI moved decisively to the centre-left on many economic issues, at least during the administration of Vicente Fox (2000–6), by refusing to approve the structural reforms proposed by the *panistas* in Congress and supporting state monopolies in energy generation. That said, the PRI strategy may have been more pragmatic than real, as its leader, Roberto Madrazo, forced a change in the party's statutes to allow its members to vote for structural reforms in both energy and fiscal policy in Congress. This sent an important message to private industry, indicating that under a PRI presidency, the former hegemonic party would be willing to pass important structural reform bills. Thus, the PRI under Madrazo positioned itself as a pragmatic, centrist party, capable of playing and winning electoral victories under democratic conditions.

Several smaller parties survive thanks to generous public financing and open coalition rules. From 1990 to 2005, between six and eleven parties held official registration and received public financing at any given time (Poire 2005). These parties are not considered representative of a particular group of voters, be it based on class, region, or ethnicity. Rather, they sell their legislative votes to larger parties and manage to survive by forming electoral (and at times, legislative) coalitions with their larger counterparts.

Since 1997, no single party has held a legislative majority in the Chamber of Deputies, largely due to the mixed majoritarian-proportional representation electoral system. Mexico now exhibits similar electoral and constitutional structures to other nations in Latin America that could constitute a difficult combination: a presidential system with a fragmented Congress (Mainwaring and Scully 1995). Yet Mexico's divided government did not constitute a difficult combination until the second legislative term (2003–6) of the Fox *sexenio* (2000–6). As we see, more legislation was passed after the PRI lost its majority in the Lower House than when it dominated both Houses of Congress and the presidency. However, during the second Fox Congress (2003–6), the PRI leadership refused to negotiate with the president's party in Congress because it did not wish to deliver political victories, anticipating the 2006 presidential elections. The incentive structure for legislative bargaining is becoming zero-sum: any

³ Molinar (1991) first identified the relevant cleavages in the Mexican electorate, calling one the ideological or traditional left-right state intervention in the economy problem. The other relevant cleavage in Mexico until at least 2000 was the strategic division: whether a voter was for or against the PRI hegemonic regime. Moreno (1999) found that most Mexicans perceived the PRI as further to the right than the PAN because of its questionable democratic credentials. Finally, Dominguez and McCann (1996) developed a two-step regression model to capture these two cleavages as they affected voters. First, the voter decided whether he was for or against the PRI regime. Assuming he approved of the PRI, his decision calculus was finished and he voted for the party. If he were against the PRI, then he used the economic cleavage to decide between the PRD and the PAN. See Klesner (2004) for more on this issue.

victory for the president's party is necessarily a defeat for the other legislative contingents.

In Mexico, the parties have stronger organizational capacity than do most other parties in Latin America. All three parties have well-funded national headquarters (called the CEN for 'National Executive Committee'); the national party bureaucracies receive enormous quantities of public party financing; and more often than not, control legislative bargaining. Parties control the resources that are necessary to the future success of politicians in a political system without consecutive re-election. Partisan organizations by and large determine who will win access to the valuable party label; by law there are no independent candidates (all candidates must be nominated by a registered party), and distribute campaign funds. Candidates, especially for legislative posts, are selected either by party leaders or activists and most have pursued careers within the party organization prior to winning a candidacy. Finally, all elected politicians must seek out new posts when their terms end, and national party leaders, other important political actors, or state party factions share the responsibility of finding them new positions, which also strengthens the organization against the individual politician.

While the issue of Mexico's transition to democracy is present in any discussion of Mexican parties, it is not the central focus of this chapter and has been discussed in many other works (Middlebrook 2001 and 2004; Eisenstadt 2003; Crespo 2004; Dominguez and Lawson 2004; Klesner 2004, among others). Rather, this chapter examines how the parties function in Mexico's new democracy and will start by considering the institutional setting and its consequences for party politics.

THE INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT OF PARTY POLITICS IN MEXICO

Mexico is a presidential regime; the executive is chosen in a plurality vote in a single national district in one round of voting. There is no second round to achieve a pre-set minimum; in a three-party system such as Mexico's, a party could conceivably win the presidency with between 34 and 36 per cent of the vote. This fact keeps the presidential hopes alive for all three major parties: with a charismatic presidential candidate, any of these parties could win the executive. The nation's chief executive serves a six-year term and can never run for this office again. The national legislature is made up of the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate, which are composed of representatives from both plurality districts and proportional representation (PR) lists. All 128 senators are voted into office concurrently with the president and serve six-year terms as well. Sixty per cent of the 500-person Lower House consists of seats elected from single-member-districts (SMDs) and 40 per cent of the representatives are chosen from five

regional closed lists (called circumscriptions) that are superimposed over the SMDs. These five regional closed lists send 40 persons each to the Chamber of Deputies. All federal deputies serve three-year terms and are not eligible for immediate re-election. There is a single ballot for each voter with which he chooses his SMD candidate; the votes from all the uninominal districts are added up to the national level and the parties are awarded PR seats based on the percentage of votes won nationally using the LR Hare quotient (Molinar and Weldon 2001: 225). For much of the second half of the twentieth century, the issue of congruence between national voting support and seat percentage was a serious problem for the opposition parties (Sartori 1976; Molinar 1991). This problem was largely resolved in an important 1996 electoral reform⁴ that established that no party can be over-represented by more than 8 per cent, or win more than 300 seats in the Lower House (60 per cent of the total). So, to win a legislative majority of 251 seats, a party must gain a minimum of 42.2 per cent of the national vote and enough SMDs to reach the 50 per cent plus one seat total.

From Table 9.1 we see the fall from 1985 to 2000 of the PRI's electoral popularity. In 1985, the PRI won 64.8 per cent of the national legislative midterm vote, compared to the 28 per cent it captured in 2006 (in alliance with the Green Party). This mixed system of electoral representation has created three strong parties in the national arena, which together have won over 90 per cent of the vote and more than 95 per cent of Chamber seats over the years. Even if a party has difficulty winning SMD seats, it can place representatives through the upper tier PR lists. And because even the smallest of the three major parties has a chance at winning the presidency, or at least fielding a good candidate for the highest office in the land, it can build up its congressional seats when it forwards stronger executive candidates. The effective number of parties in the Lower House has hovered around three since 1988.

In the competitive era, which began in 1997, small parties have 'counted' in Sartorian terms in only one period in the Chamber of Deputies. At present, the legal threshold for representation is 2 per cent of the national vote. In the 1997–2000 legislature, the seats won by the PAN and the PRD together or the PRI by itself did not reach the 251 needed for a majority and the smaller parties' representatives were crucial to blocking PRI legislation. Small parties often form electoral coalitions with their more powerful counterparts to win the minimum percentage necessary to maintain their registration and financing (which they lose if they do not win at least 2 per cent of the national vote). Scandals have erupted as minor parties spring up, win financing, and then disappear (often with their leader/owner a personally much wealthier man) when they do not win the

⁴ Molinar and Weldon (2001: 225) write that the 1996 electoral reform effected four major changes; first, it moved Mexico towards a more proportional electoral formula; second, it removed the federal government from the electoral agency and made it autonomous from the PRI; it gave all parties access to mass media outlets during electoral periods; and finally, it regulated election financing more seriously with greater sanctions.

TABLE 9.1. Lower House representation of the major parties in Mexico, 1988–2006

Party	1988		1991		1994		1997		2000		2003		2006	
	Vote (%)	Seat (%)	Vote (%)	Seat (%)	Vote (%)	Seat (%)	Vote (%)	Seat (%)	Vote (%)	Seat (%)	Vote (%)	Seat (%)	Vote (%)	Seat (%)
PRI	51	52.6	61.4	64	50.3	60	39.1	47.6	39.2	42	35.9 ^c	44.8	28.2 ^f	24.2
PAN	18	20.2	17.7	17.8	25.8	23.8	26.6	23.6	37.8 ^c	41.4	31.8	29.6	33.4	41.2
PRD	NA	3.8	8.3	8.2	16.7	14.2	25.7	25	19.1 ^d	10.4	18.2	19.4	29.0 ^g	32.0
Others	26.8	23.4	12.6	10	7.2	2	8.6	3.8	1.9	6.2	14.1	6.2	9.4 ^h	2.6
Turnout (% of registered voters)	47.4		60.3		76.0		57.7		63.7		41.4		58.5	
Volatility ^a	20.9		17.15		16.45		11.2		12.3		11.2		10.8	
Effective number of parties ^b	3.17	3.00	2.38	2.21	2.87	2.29	3.44	2.89	3.00	2.76	3.53	3.03	3.52	3.02

^a Pedersen net volatility index; ^b Laakso-Taagepera index of effective number of parties; ^c PAN in coalition with the Green Party called the Alliance for Change; ^d PRD in coalition with PT, CD, PAS, PSN called the Alliance for Mexico; ^e PRI in coalition with PVEM called Alianza para Todos; ^f PRI in coalition with Green Party called Alianza for Mexico; ^g PRD in coalition with PT and Convergencia called the Alliance for the Good of All; ^h Others include PNE (New Alliance Party) and PASC (Social Democratic and Peasant Alternative Party).

2 per cent minimum of the national vote in the next federal elections. As of today, the Green Party (PVEM), the Convergence Party (PC), and the Workers' Party (PT) are the surviving small parties.

The Senate's 128 seats are filled through a somewhat more complicated system of representation. In each of the nation's thirty-two states, the parties present a closed two-person ticket. The party with the highest vote in the statewide district returns both its candidates from the binomial list to the Senate. The party that comes in second place can send only the first candidate from its two-person ballot to the Upper House. These are called the first minority seats. This adds up to ninety-six senators; thirty-two additional legislators win seats in the Senate via a closed-list PR apportionment from a national district, and thus, do not represent any state, but they do ensure that all the major parties are represented in the Upper House, even if they are unable to win a state or come in second. These proportional senators are usually national party leaders who will become the party's caucus leaders in the legislature, while the senators who win plurality seats are more likely to be ambitious state politicians (Langston 2006). Again, the small parties find it difficult to win either plurality or proportional seats to the Senate. The Green Party (PVEM) negotiated an electoral alliance with the PAN in the 2000 presidential election, which allowed them to place five Green candidates in the highest reaches of the PAN's closed PR list. However, when the PVEM broke its alliance with the PAN in 2001, the Greens then turned to the PRI as an alliance partner, and so the five Green senators, together with the sixty PRI senators formed a sixty-five-seat majority in the Upper House. By 2006, this majority was eroded, however.

Mexico is a federal system with thirty-one states and a Federal District⁵ that shares many legal and political attributes of a state. The state's governors are directly elected in a statewide district on a staggered electoral calendar. The PRI did not lose a gubernatorial election until 1989 when the PAN wrested the northern state of Baja California from its grasp. By 2005, the PAN held eleven state houses, the PRI seventeen, and the PRD four and one in coalition with the PAN and other small parties.⁶ As yet, no governorship has been won by a member of one of the small parties, although they are active in electoral alliances.

⁵ The Federal District is controlled by, and is the seat of, Federal government. Mexico City lies within the Federal District.

⁶ By 2004, the PAN held 435 municipal presidencies out of about 2,500, 12 of which were state capitals, and 2 delegations (or city boroughs) in the DF, along with 46 senators, 151 federal deputies, 297 local deputies, and over 3,000 city councilmen. The party was able to repeat 47.6 per cent of the times in municipal government, and overall, they have won 21.4 per cent of the municipalities at the state level on average in the past few years. The PAN governed 22 per cent of the nation's entire population (as measured by the state governments), the PRD 15.7 per cent and the PRI 57.4 per cent. In terms of municipal population, the PAN governed 32.3 per cent of the population, the PRI 40.1 per cent, the PRD 18 per cent, other parties 8.25 per cent and *usos and costumbres* 1.3 per cent. These figures were taken from the website of *Secretaría de Acción de Gobierno, PAN*, www.pan.org.mx.

All Mexican states have unicameral assemblies. The state constitutions allow for some variation in electoral representation but generally follow the broad outlines of the federal legislation: there are local uninominal legislative districts and PR lists as well (Huerta 2005). Since the early 1980s, city councils have also had a proportional component, allowing minority party politicians a chance to participate in local government. Lujambio (2001: 87) found that from the 1930s to 1989, Mexico never had a divided government in the states; from 1989 to 1994, there were four cases, and between 1994 and 1999, almost half of the states (fourteen out of thirty-two) had a local assembly under the control of a party that was different from the governor's.

Mexico is clearly a three-party system at the national level, with the PAN, PRI, and PRD dominating the Chamber of Deputies, and all three parties capable of competing for the presidency.⁷ In the states, however, a different picture emerges. In most federal entities, in no matter which region (save the Federal District), the PRI competes with either the PAN or the PRD, but not both (Klesner 2004). The fact that the PRI continues to run well in all regions of the nation except the capital helps explain why it survived its fall from power in 2000 and was widely considered a serious contender to win the 2006 presidential election. In the event, however, its candidate Roberto Madrazo slipped back to third place, behind Felipe Calderon of PAN and Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador of PRD.

POPULAR LEGITIMACY OF PARTIES

Because Mexico is a new democracy, one must ask how strong citizen support for democratic institutions has been during and immediately after the transition. Moreno (2003: 228) reports that between 1995 and 2001, support for democracy grew from 49 per cent of Mexicans to 61 per cent (i.e. those stating that democracy is a better alternative than other forms of government). Fifteen per cent of Mexicans in 1995 stated that authoritarianism is better than democracy under some circumstances, compared to only 9 per cent by 2001. The strangest result, however, is that in 1995 one-third of Mexicans did not know which alternative they preferred, and this figure dropped to only 29 per cent by the year 2001. While these figures speak to a growing support for democracy within Mexico's population, this support is not overwhelming.

In terms of their views on the importance of political parties, Mexicans hold divergent opinions, depending on the question asked. In a CSES⁸ 2003

⁷ Opinion polls consistently showed the PRD's presidential candidate Andrés Manuel López Obrador to be the most popular contender with the PRI's and PAN's candidates more or less tied for second. Felipe Calderón went on to win the election.

⁸ Centre for Studies on Electoral System (CSES) post-electoral opinion survey, carried out in 1997, 2000, and 2003 is currently available at CIDE, Mexico City.

TABLE 9.2. *Confidence in public institutions in Mexico*

Institution	Much or some confidence	Little or no confidence	Don't Know/ no Answer
Army	62	35	3
Federal government	51	47	2
State government	48	49	3
Local government	42	55	3
Local police	32	65	3
Court system	30	63	7
Chamber of Deputies	29	65	6

Source: Figures taken from the 2003 CSES Opinion Survey.

post-electoral poll, almost half (49 per cent) responded that no party represented their points of view, while 47 per cent stated that they did not believe that federal deputies were concerned with the needs of the Mexican people (24 per cent believed the deputies were very concerned and another 24 per cent thought they were moderately concerned). However, in the same opinion survey, 74 per cent of all respondents think political parties are either highly or moderately necessary for a democracy to work. These conflicting findings probably reflect the fact that parties and their leaders are central actors in Mexico's fledgling democracy, but voters do not believe they are doing a very good job. Table 9.2 shows the low regard in which the Chamber of Deputies is held versus other public institutions in Mexico.

Part of the problem for the Chamber's representatives is that they are hampered by the no consecutive re-election clause of the constitution that severs the connection between the politician's personal ambitions for a successful political career with his performance in office. Because the politician's future posts depend on party leaders, he has few incentives to maintain close contact with his voters and little ability to direct pork spending to his district.

Partisan identification of the Mexican voter

The identification that voters hold with different party organizations can be understood as the electorate's connection with these parties over time. This identification is an affinity that an individual holds for a party that is created in childhood, normally by the family's influence, and lasts throughout a person's lifetime despite short-term effects, such as candidate appeal, campaign messages, or economic performance of the government (Campbell et al. 1960). The trends in partisan identification are important in a democratic polity because they can tell us how well voters are linked to a party. If there are many voters who do not hold a party identification, then candidates and campaigns become far more important in explaining electoral outcomes (Wattenberg 1991).

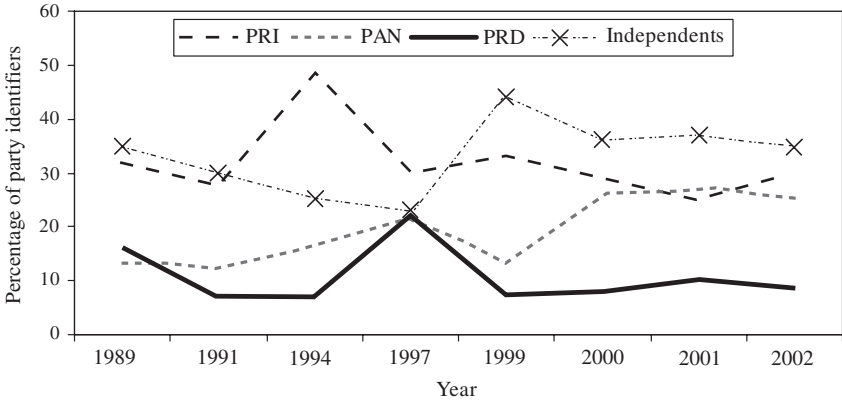


FIGURE 9.1. Party identification in Mexico, 1989–2002

Source: Moreno (2003: 33).

What is surprising in Mexico is not that partisan identification has changed during the transition years, but rather, that it has not changed more radically, as seen in Figure 9.1.

The PRI was once a hegemonic inclusive catch-all party that maintained a clientelistic relationship with many of its voters by delivering selective goods to citizens in return for their votes (Handelman 1997). Many assumed that once the party lost its overwhelming ability to buy or coerce votes, it would decline dramatically in electoral popularity, fragment, and disappear. Yet this did not happen. At least part of the explanation lies in the voters' close and surviving identification with the once-hegemonic organization. If one takes an average and ignores the election year dips and jumps, the PRI between 1989 and 2002 has averaged around 30 per cent of the electorate [15 per cent of strong identifiers together with about 16 per cent representing weaker identifiers (Moreno 2003)]. Moreno writes (2003: 34) that even with the PAN winning presidential office, '(T)here is no clear evidence of a political realignment in Mexico at the national level.'⁹

The PAN's base has grown from just over 10 per cent in the late 1980s to just below 30 per cent, where it has remained since Fox's 2000 victory. This is an important rise in the number of voters who identify with the centre-right party, and is probably related to the victory in the presidential elections. To determine whether this is a true base line of support, we shall have to wait until after the party loses control of the executive in order to see if its identification with the voters is sustained at this level. The centre-left PRD has not been able to root itself in the Mexican electorate, despite its stupendous showing in the 1988 elections; only

⁹ Klesner (1997) agrees with this assessment.

10 per cent of the electorate consistently identifies with the party after more than fifteen years of existence.

Note too the stable proportion of independents (apart from an unsustained upsurge in their number in 1999), who by definition hold no close identification with any electoral option. Currently, there are more independents in the Mexican electorate than identifiers with any single party. At over 30 per cent, voters with no fixed partisan affinity help decide electoral victories, especially in national elections, such as the presidency. This fact makes candidates and campaigns, especially in executive races, fundamental in determining election outcomes. However, independents have not grown in number since 1988, so there has not been a move away from the three main political organizations despite the somewhat troubled Fox presidency.

To sum up, parties are not particularly popular with Mexicans, but are seen as legitimate vehicles for running campaigns, recruiting candidates, and managing the work of the legislature. This is not to argue that all citizens' preferences over public policies are aggregated through parties; every week, large-scale street marches rumble through Mexico City in an effort to reorient the planning or spending decisions of public officials (both elected and appointed). However, independent candidates are not permitted under Mexican law, and voters normally do not favour candidates from minor parties, factors that strengthen parties and make them more legitimate actors in politics.

PARTY ORGANIZATIONAL STRENGTH

Party organizations in Mexico can be considered stronger than most others in Latin America because they control resources that matter to ambitious politicians. In this section, we examine these resources more carefully. Party membership is highly variable for the three major political organizations, and the rights and duties of party members are also different for each party. For example, party members in the three major parties hold differing levels of control over candidate selection. Publicly funded party financing is another basis for the strength of the Mexican political organizations: millions of pesos from the Federal Electoral Institute (IFE) are funnelled to the national party headquarters, which retain most of the money they receive, and disperse these funds discretionally among their candidates for public office and among their state affiliates. Each of these indicators of party organizational strength will be discussed below.

Candidate selection and party membership

Candidate selection matters because if parties and their members control access to their electoral ticket, it could be easier for party leaders at different levels of the

organization to determine the behaviour of party representatives in the legislature. At the same time, the lack of consecutive re-election makes ballot access crucial. Because there are no long-term legislative careers, politicians must cycle in and out of elected and appointed posts, and because the party controls most of these future opportunities, politicians have strong incentives to obey and support the dictates of their leaders. In Mexico candidates must represent a registered party and parties control access to the valuable party label, except in presidential nominations, which in all three major parties, now take the form of primaries. Those politicians who win the right to represent their party in electoral contests normally have worked within the party, are selected by party leaders or members, and continue their political careers depending on the good will of the party. There is little of the self-starting candidate that one sees in the American case; and although primaries are becoming more popular, the PRI's national leaders can still decide when to use this open nomination method and for which races. However, while all three parties control ballot access, there are important differences in the role of party activists in this process.

Between the late 1990s and shortly after winning the presidency, the PAN reformed its candidate selection rules, and now the gubernatorial and senatorial nominations can either take the form of closed party primaries or the traditional constituent-level party conventions. This is not an enormous difference: instead of obligating party activists to preregister as delegates to the convention and travel to a central location (often in the state's capital) to participate, voting centres are placed in all districts and municipalities throughout the state, and party militants are not required to preregister. They arrive at the voting booth with their party card in hand and choose their preferred candidate for governor or senator. Despite this opening (which was instituted after the party's victory in 2000), the party strictly controls who becomes a militant and therefore, who has the right to participate in candidate selection.¹⁰ The PAN changed its presidential nomination rules before the 2000 election to a closed party primary that allows both party activists (militants) and supporters (adherents) to participate.

Compared to the nation's population and other parties in Mexico, the PAN has few militants, yet gives them greater opportunity to participate in candidate selection. Therefore, barriers to entry are high for the PAN, but once a member, the *panista* can be assured he can make important candidate decisions. In fact, the party rules dictate that in order for a party member to maintain his candidate selection rights, he must participate in campaigns and other party duties.

From the end of the 1980s to the period directly after the PAN presidential victory the number of members with full voting rights was relatively stable, climbing from less than 100,000 to just over 150,000 through 2000, although the party incorporated a new category of members, called 'adherents', who hold

¹⁰ The national party has the right to vet all external candidates and can review the primary proceedings of any nomination if it believes there were serious irregularities in the process.

voting rights only in certain nomination processes. After one PAN administration, however, the PAN's membership numbers had grown to an impressive number. The adherents now constitute approximately 350,000, bringing the total number of party members from just under 600,000 just after the 2000 victory (Shirk 2001: 113) to just over one million in 2005.¹¹ The official PAN membership figures during its presidential primary state that 221,952 militants hold full membership and 877,730 sympathizers have now joined the party. However, in the presidential primary of 2005, only about one-third of the party's members participated in the process, indicating that the PAN's membership is not as high or as active as its own numbers would lead one to believe.

Compared to the other two parties, the PAN is smaller; yet, because of the party's liberal political views, this is not seen as a liability, but rather an advantage. The party has historically rejected the sectoral nature of the PRI's membership base, arguing that these kinds of party members are in fact co-opted into the organization, and participate only because of clientelist benefits. For decades, the PAN preferred to keep its membership far smaller and win voters based on its performance in office, not on the promise of a bag of cement.

The PRI's candidate selection rules remain a moving target; the party has been searching for several years for the statutory selection method(s) that will keep disgruntled party members from leaving the party when they lose out in selection battles, while choosing candidates that are popular with voters in more competitive elections. The rules themselves become a source of conflict within the party because they are so easily manipulated. Party members have traditionally not been able to participate in selecting candidates, and the PRI has been torn because of the conflicts over who has the right to participate in nominations.

In democratic Mexico, because of the federalist division of powers and the mixed majoritarian-PR electoral system, we see a new set of power centres within the PRI: the national party leaders control the PR lists for the Chamber and the Senate and can place favoured allies in the Congress to support their bills, while the governors often have great influence over the local and federal deputies in the respective states. The PRI militants on the other hand have few voting privileges, although they have fought since the 1960s for a greater share in candidate decisions. During the hegemonic era, many PRI members belonged to one of the three peak-level associations (the workers', peasant, and popular sectors) largely because they were obligated by their collective contract to do so. This was especially true for unionized labour and federal and state workers. Because this membership was obligatory and automatic, one could question its efficacy in linking voters to the party or in representing voters' interests. The sectoral leadership inflated reported-membership figures in order to win more candidacies (especially in the Chamber of Deputies). Certain types of party activists were

¹¹ See the PAN's website for details.

obligated by their leadership to participate in campaign duties, and of course were encouraged to vote for the PRI on election day. However, rank-and-file PRI members won very few benefits from their participation in politics. Rather, sectoral leaders won most of the advantages in terms of money, licences, and political access. This fact would drive many members away from the PRI and make it difficult for the party to organize new types of social groups, especially those in the cities.

If one compares the estimated figures for the PRI from the early 1990s with current estimates, membership has fallen dramatically, from roughly 8.3 million in 1990 (less than 10 percent of the population)¹² to an estimated 3 million today. In the November 1999 PRI presidential primary, the party reported over ten million Mexicans had participated in nominating the presidential candidate. However, in the 2002 internal election to choose the new leader of the CEN, only three million people voted, which is a good indication of how many Mexicans consider themselves members of the organization after the PRI's fall from power.

The fact that the PRD was born of a rejection of the extremely vertical decision-making structure of the PRI would lead to a search for democratic rule-making procedures, which allowed for a great deal of internal democracy on one hand, and a difficult party to lead on the other. Bruhn writes, '(t)he PRD's attempts to develop internal democracy, while they brought many benefits to the party, also lay at the heart of some of its most serious weaknesses, including its inability to cope with internal divisions and its difficulty in institutionalizing or legitimating party rules' (1997: 169). During the early stages of party development in the 1990s, candidates could be nominated either through the direct vote of the militants at the level of election, or a convention of democratically elected delegates. While primaries are a more 'democratic' decision-making tool, they caused problems within the new party because primaries tended to cause serious splits in the organization because it was difficult to assure compliance with internal procedures that regulated the primaries and so candidate hopefuls had strong incentives to subvert these internal elections. However, conventions of elected delegates were also divisive, especially in a party characterized by such strong group identification (Bruhn 1997).

Many of the members of the PRD are mobilized into the party through factional leadership. Activists are expected to work in campaigns, and perhaps more importantly, show up for large-scale street rallies for or against different policies or politicians. This is one of the greatest strength of the PRD in the Federal Capital, for example: if the governor of the Capital calls for a show of support, the PRD can bring hundreds of thousands of its supporters to the central plaza, giving the centre-left party enormous power in this area.

¹² *La Jornada*, 18 September 1990, p. 4.

Party finance

After party politicians win a nomination, those who are elected in a SMD must win an electoral race. Thus, for plurality candidates, campaign finance is an important resource with which they further a successful career. Not only do registered parties in Mexico enjoy generous funding for their activities thanks to recent reforms to the electoral laws, the national party headquarters control the distribution of public funds to their state subsidiaries and candidates, giving them much greater power over their local political actors than other parties in Latin America, especially compared to those in other federalist regimes. The national parties are responsible for monitoring and controlling the total amount spent by all their disparate parts and so work hard to ensure that neither the candidates nor state affiliates overspend.

Party financing in general and campaign finance in particular was the subject of much contention during the transition years of the 1980s and 1990s. State subsidies for parties were not available until the 1970s, when the 1977 electoral reform mandated that parties were legal entities enshrined in the Mexican Constitution.¹³ While the PAN refused public money for its party activities until the late 1980s, the hegemonic PRI enjoyed an enormous advantage over the opposition parties because of its control over government resources.

The new spending rules stemming from the 1996 electoral reforms had three objectives. The first was to guarantee the equity of electoral competition: the PRI could no longer spend huge sums of money to buy votes, and all parties were guaranteed public resources to compete with the PRI in campaigns. The second aim was to insulate parties from private interest group pressures, both legal and illegal, by making large sums of public money available, and finally, the reforms aimed to obligate the parties to keep their spending practices legal by instituting accounting rules that would make campaign outlays transparent and public.

To reach these goals of equality and transparency, several new procedures and rules were put into place. First, by law, public money spent on party activities must be greater than private donations, even if by a single peso.¹⁴ Second, spending limits would be mandated and sanctions were put into place for those parties that ignored them. Third, all registered parties would receive public financing in the following proportion: 30 per cent would be assigned equally to all parties with representation in Congress, and 70 per cent assigned according to percentage of votes won by each party in the last Lower House election (Becerra, Salazar, and

¹³ For more on the important 1977 electoral reform that also added the PR element to the already existing majority representation, see Middlebrook (1985).

¹⁴ There are three different kinds of public spending categories; those for ordinary party activities, such as rent and payroll for party workers that is given every year; money given for campaigns, which is equal to the amount received for public financing for normal activities, and finally, civic education (Becerra, Salazar, and Woldenberg 1997: 110). The *Consejo General* can authorize returning up to 75 per cent of the money spent annually on educational activities by the party.

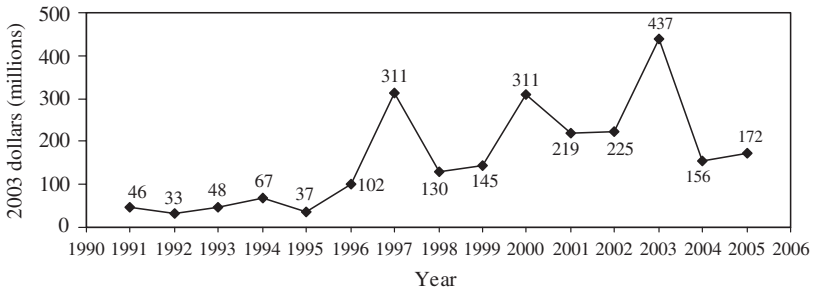


FIGURE 9.2. Total public party financing, 1991–2005

Note: Figures in constant 2003 US dollars taken from Poiré (2005).

Woldenberg 1997). Credible spending limits were imposed as well as measures to ensure that parties did not overstep these limits.

If we look at the constant 2003-dollar figure (Figure 9.2), it becomes clear how great increases in public financing of parties have become. From about US\$46 million in the 1991 midterm legislative contest to US\$437 million in the 2003 midterm races, we see an increase of almost 10 times from the early 1990s to the early decade of the new millennium. The result of these new spending rules and public financing of a wide range of party activities is that parties generally are well funded, can afford to use modern campaigning technologies, especially television, and must abide by electoral laws that are upheld by an autonomous federal agency that can sanction cheaters.

In addition to the large amounts of public resources spent on creating the conditions for credible elections, all parties have benefited from the structure and flow of public financing as well as the amount. The IFE sends the money to the national party headquarters, whose treasurer administers the money and is legally responsible for how the funds are spent (Poire 2005). Two factors work against private fund-raising, at least on the part of legislative candidates: the first is the lack of consecutive re-election making legislative careers impossible, and the second is that representatives are unable to bring home the bacon to their districts. The consequence of this discretionary money flow from the centre to the localities is to weaken the legislative candidates against the national party; making candidate-centred campaigning more difficult.

However, it is important to note that the state governors (especially those from the PRI) have resources they spend on all types of elections held within their states, both executive and legislative, as well as local and federal races. Governors can aid their federal candidates by striking deals with important groups within the business community, by gently suggesting to the party's mayors in the specific district that it would be good for the party if they sponsored rallies in their towns for the candidates, by hiring televised advertising that supports the candidates' efforts, and in part, by simply being a popular governor. This fact mutes the

overwhelming financial power of the national parties by tying the federal deputies to the state executives almost as much as they are obligated to the national leadership. As was shown above, the governors also control much of the candidate selection in their states, or they are central actors in the negotiations among state factions. These two factors, increasing influence over nominations and growing campaign finance support, together give the governors greater authority over their state's politicians, both those who are in local and federal elected positions.

SYSTEMIC FUNCTIONALITY OF PARTIES

Articulation and aggregation of interests

The cleavages that Dominguez and McGann identified at the end of the hegemonic era (1999) were an ideological-economic division over development strategies and the role of the state in the market, as well as a pro- and anti-system division that centred on whether one was in favour of the PRI's continued dominance or more pro-democratic. This second cleavage has largely disappeared during the first PAN administration in the history of Mexico (2000–6). Much of the national debate between the executive and legislative branches, and within the two houses of Congress revolves around the structural reforms to fiscal policy, the labour law, and energy sectors.¹⁵ The PRD has crusaded against new or higher taxes on basic consumption—such as a value added tax on food and medicines (that are currently exempt) or allowing expanded foreign investment in oil refining or energy generation in the electricity sector. The centre-left party is almost diametrically opposed to the pro-market PAN. The centrist PRI jumps between the two poles, depending on the political circumstances of the moment.

In terms of aggregating the interests of citizens who hold different preferences over economic development and then representing these particular groups in government, the three parties exhibit different strategies. The PRD, as we have seen, is strong in Mexico City, and in the South as well as in poorer states such as Zacatecas, Michoacán, and Guerrero. The PRD has used many of the tactics originated by the PRI during the height of the hegemonic era to mobilize groups that will support its governments: encapsulating different economic interests in subgroups, and then tying economic and governmental benefits to electoral support. In the Capital, for example, the PRD controls groups of public teachers, recipients of monthly government handouts, such as single mothers and

¹⁵ In the early years of the Fox administration, there was some movement towards a reform of the state—that is, a wide spectrum of changes to the constitution including a second round of voting in the presidential elections, another electoral reform, moving towards a more mixed presidential-parliamentary system. This set of reforms never aroused much interest, or advanced far in the public debate.

the elderly, as well as those who sell goods, both legal and illegal, in the streets (called *ambulantes*). When the PRD government of the Federal District requires large-scale demonstrations of citizen support, its political operators are able to put hundreds of thousands of people in the Capital's *Zocalo* (central plaza). This sort of group-based political mobilization also exists to a lesser degree in the states in which the PRD holds the state house.

Meanwhile, the PRI has lost some, but not all of its ability to mobilize the masses via its control over selective benefits and clientelist exchange. During the hegemonic era, the PRI used its corporatist organizations for a variety of political ends, including campaign support, voter mobilization, and large-scale demonstrations of public support for government policies. Organizations were created for all types of economic and social groups at all levels of political activity, from the neighbourhood to the municipality to the state to federal arenas. However, with the economic crises of the 1980s and 1990s, together with neoliberal economic policies that cut government expenditures, large-scale national policies of clientelist exchange became more difficult to sustain (the last example of a great clientelist programme would be Solidaridad or Pronasol under the Salinas administration (1988–94). Furthermore, as electoral fraud became more difficult to perpetrate, political control mechanisms began to break down, and citizens found they could accept bribes, such as bags of cement and food articles from the PRI and still express their true preferences inside the voting booth (Cornelius 2004). The great social groupings that the forefathers of the PRI created and the PRI manipulated relentlessly for sixty years are now far less important actors, both politically and economically, except in certain select sectors, such as electricity and petroleum. The PRI, as a result, has learned to rely far less on sectoral support both to win elections and to govern. It is, however, important to recognize that in certain states in which the PRI has remained extremely strong, the governors are still able to mobilize large numbers of party members for political and electoral ends.

Finally, the PAN was born in opposition to the collectivist, corporatist, clientelist nature of the PRI. The centre-right party explicitly rejected the exchange of selective benefits, such as public lighting, water, and sewage services in return for votes that was the hallmark of the PRI's local governing style. Instead, PAN mayors in the 1980s and later governors purposefully offered need-based universal services to their voting populations. The PAN was also known as the party that delivered these services more efficiently than the corrupt PRI. As a consequence, the PAN has been very slow to create or mobilize social or economic groups to support either its candidates or its governors (Loaeza 1999; Mizrahi 2004).

In all democratic polities, voters choose their representatives based on short- and long-term factors: the latter consists in large part of partisan identification between the voter and party, and the former centres around influences such as candidate image, campaign tactics, and economic conditions. Moreno (1999) points out that voters with strong partisan identification will vote for their party's

candidates under almost any circumstances, while those who have a weaker affective link with an electoral option will be more heavily influenced by candidates, campaigns, and the state of the economy. As we have seen, approximately 65 percent of Mexican voters hold either a strong or moderate link with a party, while slightly more than 30 percent do not. Because these independents can determine electoral outcomes under many situations, campaigns and candidates (especially for executive races) matter a great deal in determining election victories.

Political parties in Mexico continue to be central actors in aggregating and articulating interests, although independent social groups have developed over the past several years that are becoming important, especially in demanding new public policies. For the PRI, a major part of its modernization has meant developing modern campaign techniques and offering better performance in office to win elections, rather than depending on manipulating mass groups. The PAN, on the other hand, has begun to realize it must forge stronger and more permanent links with certain groups within the population to strengthen its electoral appeal (Mizrahi 2004). Finally, the PRD appears to be in a process of transition due to its present combination of a strong presidential candidate (Andrés Manuel López Obrador) and a weak party organization in several regions of the nation. In order to win a presidential election, the PRD must begin to develop a far stronger and more modern campaign strategy that is based on mass media and not one that depends so heavily on social groups linked to the party.

Political recruitment

Political recruitment and career paths have changed in Mexico during the past ten years, in large part because of how the pressures of electoral competition are filtered through a more vibrant federalist system. Despite these changes in political career paths, parties continue to recruit ambitious politicians and guide their career trajectories, mainly through control over candidate selection and campaign finance.

Under hegemonic conditions, ambitious politicians not only had to be members of the hegemonic PRI to aspire to a successful, long-term career, they also had to manoeuvre their way onto the national playing field. Aside from the State of Mexico, which was able to maintain its state political groups while competing in the national game, most PRI politicians went to Mexico City to further their careers by joining national party factions and winning federal posts (Camp 1980; Smith 1979). Even many state governors were national politicians who were rewarded for their long service to their party with a return ticket to their state of origin in the form of a gubernatorial nomination (Díaz-Langston and Cayeros 2003).

Yet this national bias has been transformed radically over the past ten years as electoral competition has begun to endanger easy state and local electoral

TABLE 9.3. *Prior posts of gubernatorial candidates, 1989–2005*

Prior post	PAN-PRD Hegemonic (%)	PRI Hegemonic (%)	PAN-PRD Democratic (%)	PRI Democratic (%)
National posts				
CEN	31	43	14.4	38
Federal government	6	54	7	32
Senators	5	52	24	47
State/local posts				
State government	23	34	19	53
State party	28	26	24	55
Local deputies	3	34	14	38
Mayors	23	34	27	49
Non-political posts				
Business people	46	8	40	11
Social leaders	20	NA	11.5	NA
Former PRI members	31	NA	24	NA
	N = 35	N = 26	N = 105	N = 53

Note: Table derived from information taken from newspapers and *Diccionario biográfico del gobierno mexicano*.

victories in a federalist system. State voters respond better to politicians who have either elective or business experience within the state, rather than national politicians who are sent down from Mexico City every six years to govern the state. Table 9.3 shows the prior posts of candidates for governors for the three major parties in two periods: the hegemonic (from 1989 to 1994) and the competitive (from 1995 to 2004). The columns do not add up to 100 per cent because more than one post was held prior to winning the gubernatorial candidacy. I have combined the candidates of the PAN and the PRD to compare them with those of the PRI.

The first interesting fact is that PRI gubernatorial candidates are professional politicians whose prior posts are mainly political, and therefore, controlled by the party. To become a candidate for the PRI means having worked one's way up through the ranks of elected and appointed posts in government. This is not so much the case for the PAN and PRD candidates, even in the democratic era, as shown by the background in business (40 per cent in the democratic era) and social leadership posts (11.5 per cent in the same period). However, both numbers have fallen from the hegemonic period, which could indicate that as competition grows, both the PAN and the PRD will increasingly nominate professional party politicians for governor.

In the 1989–1994 period, which comprises the end of the hegemonic PRI era, we see that PRI gubernatorial candidates had more experience in every type of prior post, a natural consequence of the overwhelming PRI domination of both elected and government posts. The PRI figures show that it was very likely that the hegemonic gubernatorial candidates would come from national posts: 52 per cent

had been senators¹⁶ before winning the state candidacy and 43 per cent had been members of the national party bureaucracy. Over half had held posts in the federal government. Only a third had experience in state level posts, such as state government or mayors.

Many of the PAN and PRD candidates had been federal deputies before winning the gubernatorial nomination in the hegemonic period, but *panistas* were more likely than their PRD counterparts to have been a mayor first (28 vs. 12 per cent, a figure not shown in the table), which demonstrates the different strategies of the two parties. The *panistas* hoped to unseat the PRI through a federalist strategy that meant winning first large cities, then governorships and finally competing strongly for the presidency (Lujambio 2001; Mizrahi 2003). The 46 per cent of gubernatorial candidates for the opposition were almost all from the PAN, while the social leaders were almost all from the PRD, again illustrating the different social bases of the two parties. Almost a third of the two opposition parties' candidates for governor came from the ranks of the PRI in the late hegemonic period.

When we turn to the gubernatorial candidates from the competitive period, 1995–2005, the parties all exhibit important differences with the hegemonic time frame. Both PAN and PRD candidates have more experience as senators (proportional representation elements were introduced in two phases in the 1990s), as mayors, and as local deputies, which are all local elected positions. So, as electoral competition rose for lower-level posts, these politicians were able to parley their prior experience in office into gubernatorial candidacies. Interestingly, as local elected posts rose, prior experience as federal deputies fell, as did holding a prior post in the CEN. Businessmen are still an important source of gubernatorial candidates for the PAN.

The PRI gubernatorial candidates show some remarkable differences with their hegemonic party brethren. Roughly the same percentage had been deputies and senators, but now fully half of all PRI candidates for the state house were mayors before being nominated, up from 34 per cent. State government and state party experience also rose. This leads us to a possible conclusion: that PRI gubernatorial candidates are no longer mostly federal politicians tied to national party factions who were designated by the president. From 1995 onwards, when the PRI began to lose gubernatorial elections with regularity, the party responded by nominating far more state-based party politicians—those who were better known to local voters because of their previous experience in state political posts. Electoral competition has revived the federalist nature of political recruitment in Mexico.

As competition grew during the 1990s, many PRI politicians who were denied the party nomination began to leave the party and run for an opposition

¹⁶ The Senate until the 1990s was a national-type post because it did not represent state interests and because it was populated by national politicians. This changed by the late 1990s as opposition parties won representation to the Upper House, and state-level politicians began to win candidacies.

option, an exit strategy that had not existed up until the end of the 1980s. While the PRI still controls nominations to gubernatorial candidacies, ambitious politicians have used the exit option to attempt to continue their careers. However, as the PAN and the PRD develop stronger pools of political talent, we may begin to see a fall-off in the number of former PRI candidates simply because of the conflict that this will create between 'true' partisan politicians in the PAN and the PRD and the PRI exiles who wish to take their candidacies.

Political communication and education

This section describes, in general terms, how modern presidential and congressional campaigns are run in democratic Mexico. Modern trends in electioneering have had an enormous impact on the presidential race. What was once a six-month set of visits to different states to deliver stump speeches has been transformed into a mass media event, a process that began with the 1994 election of PRI President Ernesto Zedillo (1994–2000), but developed more fully in the 2000 contest. Competitive campaigns have forced all three parties to modernize their presidential election strategies, although the PRI and the PAN have gone further than the PRD in this regard. The central strategy is the television campaign, designed to sell the candidate, his policy message, and the party's image to the voting public. Advertising firms are contracted to test different messages on focus groups, campaign promises are designed for segmented voting markets, and campaign managers respond to their opponents' attacks during the course of the campaign. Opinion surveys complement the media assault, and a new industry has been generated over the past fifteen years as firms spring up to provide voter information to parties. Information retrieval, database management, and mass mailings have also begun to invade the repertoire of modern presidential campaigns in Mexico.

Presidential candidates still travel to all corners of the nation to deliver speeches (later broadcast on the nightly news programmes) and 'fill the plaza'. Large-scale rallies generate interest and momentum in Mexican campaigns and cannot be neglected. A lively debate within the PRI developed during the 2000 elections over which method of campaigning was superior—the modern media appeals, which benefited the more technocratic element close to the candidate, or the old-fashioned party-based campaigns that centre around mobilizing the party's territorial and sectoral organizations (largely through massive outlays of money). The traditional campaign strategy benefits a different type of party leader: one who is based in local politics and has close contact with the party organization, and is more distant from the tight circle of advisers who design the candidate's media strategy.

Until the 1990s, a single media conglomerate, Televisa, largely controlled all electronic media. The government provided monopolistic conditions to Televisa

(owned privately) in return for favourable coverage in the nightly news programmes (Lawson 2002). This monopoly has now been broken and several different outlets provide news that both criticize and praise the government. Most Mexicans get their political news and information from television and not from newspapers (which cater to the elite). The fact that many political viewpoints are expressed on television and that opposition parties can now advertise on television has changed the way voters acquire information about parties and candidates in elections. Television has always been an important way to channel political information to the mass of Mexican citizens; the difference is that there is now far more diversity in this information than there was under hegemonic conditions.

The federal congressional campaigns are more clearly divided into the national media campaign, organized and paid for by the national party headquarters to sell the party's image, and the campaign run at the district level by the candidate himself. In concurrent presidential congressional elections (1994, 2000, 2006), the party's image is crucial to selling both the presidential candidate and all congressional candidates, including the federal deputies and the senators. In the intermediate congressional elections in which only federal deputies are elected (1997 and 2003, e.g.), the national media campaign is designed to either criticize or praise the seated president's performance in office (depending on the party) and sell the policy packages that each party offers.

However, because Mexico's electoral system is a two-tiered majoritarian-PR system, SMD deputies also run localized and more personalistic campaigns in their districts. In addition to convincing district voters to incline towards their candidacies based on programmatic promises, such as employment and public safety, SMD candidates also trumpet their prior political experience in local office, canvass neighbourhoods to establish contact with the voters, and often make highly local appeals to improve services that in fact are provided by municipal governments, not the federal Congress (Langston 2005).

Governance

Parties are fundamental to the process of bargaining between executive and legislature. Party leaders within the Chamber of Deputies determine, together with the national party leadership, the range of policy programmes that will be discussed in the forthcoming session. The executive, when attempting to clear the road for a favoured piece of legislation, negotiates beforehand with party and caucus leaders, very rarely with individual legislators. Caucus leaders are more often than not placed by the national leadership and are trusted agents of the national headquarters. There is very little jumping between parties by legislators, and legislative cohesion is very high: individual legislators almost always vote with their legislative fraction. There is no strong evidence, as we shall

see below, that legislative cohesion has fallen dramatically since the transition to democracy.

For decades, the legislative branch of government in Mexico was the poor stepsister of the executive. The president and select ministers within the federal government (the treasury, budget, and commerce) made economic policy, and simply sent bills to Congress for their almost automatic approval. The PRI controlled large majorities until the late 1980s, and did not need the votes of minority representatives to pass bills or even reform the constitution, which requires a qualified two-thirds majority. Because of such low levels of electoral competition, the rule against consecutive legislative re-election, and party control over ballot access, the president, as *de facto* leader of his party, had few difficulties in determining the votes of his majority legislators, and as a result the two branches of Congress functioned as a well-paid rubber stamp (with certain notable exceptions) for executive-produced legislation (Nacif 2002; Weldon 1997).

This began to change slowly in the 1990s as minority representation grew in both chambers and culminated in the 1997 loss of the PRI's majority in the Lower House for the first time since the creation of the PRI's predecessor party in 1929. This historic advent of divided government (the presidency and Senate were held by the PRI from 1994–2000) in Mexico did produce some immediate changes in how many bills were passed and who produced them, but did not cause policy gridlock (defined as maintaining the status quo despite the interests of various actors).

At first glance, we see from Table 9.4 that the number of bills presented during the first legislative term of the PRI President Zedillo (1994–2000), when the PRI still held majorities in both Houses of Congress, was far smaller than the number of bills presented in Fox's first legislative term, from 2000–3 (251 vs. 1,207). Under democratic conditions, the executive has taken fewer legislative initiatives; both in absolute terms, from eighty-four to sixty-one, and as a percentage of the total of all bills presented.

TABLE 9.4. *Sources of legislative bills presented in the Mexican Chamber of Deputies, 1994–7 and 2000–3*

Source of bill	1994–7	%	2000–3	%
Executive	84	33.4	61	5
PRI	19	7.5	306	25
PAN	79	31.4	265	22
PRD	45	18	294	24
State legislatures	2	0.07	86	7
Others	22	8.7	153	12.6
Joint bills	0	0	42	3.4
Total	251	100	1207	100

Source: Figures taken from Nacif (2004: 19).

TABLE 9.5. Sources of the bills approved in the chamber, 1994–7 and 2000–3

Source of bill	1994–7	%	2000–3	%
Executive	83 (84)	99	50 (61)	82
PRI	7 (19)	36.8	54 (306)	17.6
PAN	8 (79)	10	65 (265)	24.5
PRD	3 (45)	6.7	45 (294)	15.3
State legislatures	1 (2)	50	15 (86)	17.4
Others	6 (22)	27.2	21 (153)	7.6
Joint bills	0		25 (42)	59
Total	108		275	

Note: The numbers in parentheses are the number of bills presented by each source taken from Table 9.4.

Source: Figures taken from Nacif (2004: 23).

The end of the party's hegemony, ironically enough, liberated the PRI's legislative caucus. The percentage of bills presented by members of the former hegemonic party jumped from 7.5 per cent under Zedillo to 25 per cent under Fox. The three main parties now share legislative responsibilities almost equally, while the state legislators have awoken from their non-competitive slumber (sending less than 1 per cent of the bills under Zedillo, a figure that grew to an active 7 per cent in the 2000–3 period). Bills presented jointly by more than one party do well with a success rate of 59 per cent. Even when the PAN won the presidency in 2000, the PRI and PRD continued to forge agreements on important bills.

We see from Table 9.5 that under democratic conditions, the Chamber of Deputies has increased markedly its production of legislative bills, and that the promise of gridlock under divided government did not apparently come to pass. Unfortunately, these numbers do not tell us how important these initiatives were. Under the Presidency of Zedillo, the executive presented only 33.4 per cent of the total number of bills, but was by far the most successful, ushering eighty-three of its eighty-four initiatives through Congress. The presidency continued to be successful under democratic conditions, seeing 82 per cent of its bills passed by Congress. Among the three parties, the president's own party was the most successful in progressing its bills, at almost 25 per cent. Under these very divided conditions from 2000–3, the president's party was able to pass budgets by forming temporary alliances with both the PRD and PRI contingents.¹⁷ Of the forty-two bills that were produced jointly, almost 60 per cent of them were approved by the full House. Unfortunately, in the president's second legislative term (2003–6), gridlock became the standard, at least on important structural reform bills that Fox had promised as part of his 'change' campaign in 2000. This problem is discussed more fully below.

¹⁷ Only the Chamber of Deputies participates in passing the spending bill, while both Chambers together with the executive negotiate the tax part of the annual budget.

Legislative cohesion can generally be understood as the proportion of times a legislator votes with a plurality of his party. The combination of non-consecutive re-election and party control over ballot access keeps the federal legislators' incentives properly aligned with those of its leadership. The data on legislative cohesion presented by Weldon (2005) show that at the end of the last PRI presidency (1998–2000), all three parties were extremely disciplined in the Chamber of Deputies, with the PRI holding the highest figure at 99.3 per cent, and PAN and PRD matched at 88 per cent. In the early years of the Fox government, the PRI's score fell slightly to 89.9 per cent of all votes, but dropped to only 76 on major party votes, defined as those in which at least one party voted against the bill. The PAN and the PRD now show higher rates of internal cohesion than does the PRI, with 96 per cent and 92.2 per cent respectively on all House votes, and similar scores on major party votes (Weldon 2005: 11). Even with the end of the PRI's hegemonic control over all branches of government, the parties' representatives continue to obey the dictates of their party and caucus leaders.

Weldon finds that nomination control and internal tools of sanction and reward at the disposal of legislative caucus leaders explain the continuing high levels of cohesion in the Mexican Congress, more so than other possible factors, such as the specific structure of electoral rules (2005: 22). There do not appear to be any major differences in how list deputies and majority deputies vote.

Along with nomination control, party leaders in Congress enjoy a number of resources that they can distribute discretionally to members of their party's caucus, and these resources are used as tools with which to control legislative behaviour (Rivera 2004). Caucus leaders decide which of their party representatives will serve on the different committees. Because of the no-consecutive re-election clause, federal deputies cannot generate a seniority system to distribute congressional committees. The leader of the party's legislative fraction decides who will preside over each committee and its other members. Furthermore, the party's congressional coordinator can remove committee presidents and other officers. The presidents of committees normally consult with the fraction's leaders to decide legislative priorities and strategies; they cannot act autonomously on important issues because they owe their posts to the party's congressional leadership (Rivera 2004: 294–5). Finally, the parties' legislative coordinators control the flow of money that is designated to each deputy in Congress. If a legislator chooses to leave a party's caucus, he does not take a share of operating funds with him; either he is left without resources, or he moves to another party, which will then furnish him with office space, phones, and secretaries.

Such high policymaking cohesion has serious consequences: first, party leaders, both within and outside the legislature, bargain with each other and can credibly deliver their legislative fraction's votes. Very little lobbying takes place

with the individual representatives. However, if for electoral or other reasons, party leaders have incentives not to bargain over important pieces of legislation, it becomes difficult for the president's party in Congress to 'steal' or entice a subgroup of another party's caucus to split from their party and vote in favour of an executive supported bill.

Serious problems of credit-taking versus blame-assigning plagued the Mexican Congress in the second congressional term of the Fox presidency, and it is not clear these problems can be solved in the foreseeable future, as the electoral system holds out little possibility of generating a majority in the Lower House. Two reasons can help explain why Fox's government failed to deliver the reforms that his voters had elected him to promote: first, by handing the president legislative victories in his second Congress, the opposition parties, especially the PRI that is closer to the PAN ideologically, reduced their chances in the 2006 presidential elections. The PRD, on the other hand, is ideologically opposed to structural reforms of fiscal policy or the energy sector. Given that the opposition parties in the president's second legislative term were unwilling to negotiate as a block, the PAN could have broken off a group of individual legislators from the centrist PRI to form a Lower House majority. But as we have seen, legislative cohesion is high in Mexico, and it is rare for a legislative fraction to split.

Overall, the parties play a crucial role in executive-legislative relations and have become more important actors since the onset of the democratic era in that the Chamber of Deputies is now an important arena of decision-making, and the parties continue to control their legislative fractions in the Chamber. Unlike some other Latin American democracies, despite the presidential system, one does not find candidate-centred government. Electoral rules that strengthen the party over the individual candidate or politician allow the parties to direct voting behaviour in the legislature. In Mexico, the parties' control over nominations and the constitutional prohibition against consecutive re-election allow parties to play an increasingly strong role in policymaking because the Chamber itself has become a locus of power.

CONCLUSIONS

In less than fifteen years, Mexico's party system changed from a hegemonic to a fully-fledged plural system, in which three main parties compete under broadly fair conditions. The PAN, PRD, and PRI are well represented in Congress, so much so that no party has held a majority since the PRI first lost its majority in 1997. These three parties win over 90 per cent of both the national legislative vote and seats in Congress. All three parties can field presidential candidates that could

conceivably win the presidency. The three parties are all strong organizations that enjoy large amounts of public funds for regular and campaign activities, resources that their party leaders can dole out to state affiliates and candidates in a discretionary fashion. Parties also control candidate selection for most posts (except the presidency), although all major parties continue to experiment with changes to their selection rules. The parties seem to rely more on party conventions for legislative selection: the PAN has the most institutionalized selection methods, while the PRD and PRI seem unable to commit to any single nomination format, because this would lessen the informal prerogatives of their national leadership.

The Mexican Constitution states that parties are the vehicles through which citizens may exercise their right to vote and be voted into office (a linguistically tortured way of stating that candidates must be registered by the parties to run for office). But despite their strength in Mexico, parties and the Congress are not trusted institutions. Perhaps because parties are not held in high esteem, and because almost half of all voters believe they do not represent their interests, over 30 per cent of the Mexican electorate describes itself as independent, with no special tie to any party. This high percentage of independents has become a decisive force in elections, and parties and candidates must make a special effort to win their votes.

In terms of executive–legislative relations, a serious problem of governance cropped up during the first non-PRI administration of President Fox (2000–6). The lack of legislative majorities made policy change a necessarily bipartisan effort. The parties, however, still seemed to see important legislative policy as a zero-sum game. The PRI has traditionally protected certain sectors of the Mexican economy, and so at least some groups within the party and legislative fraction are either ideologically opposed or stand to lose decades-long privileges if structural reforms are passed, making their approval of economic reforms close to unthinkable. However, a more pragmatic group within the PRI also found that there were few incentives to help the president's party in Congress, as this would only raise PAN's popularity. Because the electorate punished PAN in the 2003 legislative midterm elections, the PRI's legislative strategy did not change during the last three years of the president's single six-year term. It is not yet clear whether this blocking strategy of the centrist PRI will continue after the 2006 presidential election.

The Mexican party system, as a result, seems to be fomenting problems in the short term for Mexico's fledgling democracy, even though in terms of fragmentation and ideological distance, it shows signs of great health and stability. The feudal bastions of power enjoyed by certain unions have been preserved, while important structural reforms that are required for Mexico to compete in a global economy have been stymied in the Congress. This has helped create an atmosphere of public distrust towards parties and Congress, which could reap a bitter crop in the near future.

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The Durability of the Party System in Chile

Alan Angell

Chilean political parties have played a central role in the political development of the country since the mid-nineteenth century. Unlike most party systems in Latin America, in Chile parties were (with some periodic but short-lived exceptions) national, class, or sector based, and programmatic. The system broke down in 1973, as increasing ideological conflict grew too bitter to be contained within the constitutional system. The result was a military coup and an authoritarian regime headed by General Pinochet (1973–90). Few dictatorships have persecuted parties with more ruthlessness than that of Pinochet. Yet with the return to democracy in 1990, parties re-emerged, some new, but some old—often with the same leaders—though now with different policies, and a very different attitude to inter-party cooperation. What factors explain the survival of the party system beyond dictatorship?

INTRODUCTION: PARTY SURVIVAL BEYOND DICTATORSHIP

Chilean parties have demonstrated impressive ability to adapt and survive. Since the return to democracy in 1990 there have been important changes in the party system compared with that of the previous period of democracy before 1973. These changes have been analysed in familiar terms of the decline of parties. However, it could plausibly be argued that what is striking in Chile—in comparison with most other Latin American countries—is not the decline of the parties but rather their persistence and their continuing strength.¹ Indeed in some ways parties are stronger than in the pre-1973 period since internal factionalism, which previously spilt over into formal splits and the formation of new parties, is contained, albeit with difficulty, inside the existing party framework. Nevertheless, this begs a central question—whether this coalition coherence is the temporary

¹ Which reinforces Peter Mair's point that 'it is the sheer staying power of traditional patterns which still remains the most striking feature of contemporary party alignments' (Mair 1997: viii).

TABLE 10.1. *Percentage of vote for parties of the right, centre, and left in the Lower House elections, 1937–2005*

Year	Right	Centre	Left	Other
1937	42.0	28.1	15.4	14.5
1941	31.2	32.1	33.9	2.8
1945	43.7	27.9	23.1	5.3
1949	42.0	46.7	9.4	1.9
1953	25.3	43.0	14.2	17.5
1957	33.0	44.3	10.7	12.0
1961	30.4	43.7	22.1	3.8
1965	12.5	55.6	22.7	9.2
1969	20.0	42.8	28.1	9.1
1973	21.3	32.8	34.9	11.0
1937–73 (mean)	30.1	39.7	21.5	8.7
1989	34.1	33.1	24.3	8.5
1993	33.5	30.9	31.6	4.1
1997	36.3	26.1	34.1	3.6
2001	44.3	25.2	29.1	1.6
2005	38.7	24.4	30.6	6.3

Sources: Siavelis (1999); 2001 and 2005 figures from the Ministry of the Interior.

product of a particular electoral system and the continuing fear of regression to authoritarianism, or whether it marks a new departure in the Chilean party system.

The persistence of the division of the electorate into relatively stable blocs of support for parties of the right, centre, and left is shown in Table 10.1. This continuity of electoral support at the national level is also reflected by the pattern of support at the level of the municipality or commune. Examining voter behaviour at the local level, Valenzuela and Scully conclude that ‘over sixteen years of dictatorship did not change the political profile of the nation’s communes’ (Valenzuela and Scully 1997: 521).

This electoral continuity is remarkable in view of the turbulent history of the parties over the past decades. A party system that operated on generally agreed rules of compromise and consensus broke down in the late 1960s and early 1970s as doctrinaire ideologies came to dominate parties of the left, centre, and right. Bitter party hostility—in a system described by Sartori as one of extreme polarization—led directly to the coup of 1973.² From 1973 to 1988 parties were formally banned and the leaders and in many cases followers of parties of the left were murdered, imprisoned, or exiled. Even the centrist Christian Democratic Party (PDC) was banned and repressed. The parties of the right dissolved themselves arguing that with the coup, their role was over. For seventeen years the population was subjected to unremitting anti-party hostility from the dictatorship.

² See Sartori (1976: 160). Sartori exaggerates the weakness of the system—after all it did survive from 1932 to 1973.

Even though the parties did manage to regroup during the latter years of the dictatorship, almost equally momentous events then affected them. For a country in which Marxism and anti-Marxism were influential ideologies, the collapse of international communism was hugely important. Equally important was the new economic model. Parties which were used to operating in a state-centred economy, performing the role of linking social groups to the state, now had to operate in a totally different free market economy. From an economy in which the state played a role not far short of those of the Communist countries, Chile became one of the most radical experiments in neoliberal economics. All parties had to come to terms with the market rather than the state, and parties of the left also had to come to terms with the collapse of Marxism.

Yet despite these momentous changes, parties survived and adapted—even though the electorate almost doubled between the elections of 1972 and 1989, and most voters were voting for the first time. How did they manage to survive?

Parties in Chile have deep historical and social roots. Since the mid-nineteenth century, political conflict has been structured around party competition. The major issues that divided society—notably religious and class cleavages—were reflected in the party system, and in turn reinforced by it (Scully 1992). On the other hand, cleavages that disrupt national party organization, such as regional or ethnic ones, were not important in Chile. Chile has a much longer party history than many Western European countries. When Valenzuela and Scully write that the ‘political tendencies persist because they are partly the product of collective memories of past political divisions that shaped and reshaped the party system’, the point they are underlining is that those memories were widespread and central to the political identities of many Chileans (Valenzuela and Scully 1997: 524). It is true that party volatility before 1973 was high and some writers, in contrast to the general view, have stressed the weaknesses of the party system. According to Montes, Ortega, and Mainwaring, ‘Party penetration in the electorate has not been powerful. Parties have appeared and disappeared with frequency and parties have been relatively weak organizationally’ (Montes et al. 2000).

However, if party blocs or ideological tendencies are examined, then the system looks less volatile. Peter Mair in his work on Western Europe stresses the importance of political blocs as the unit for analysis. ‘The greater part of the increase (in electoral volatility) has in fact been contained *within* each class-cleavage bloc, and the degree of electoral volatility *between* the major blocs has actually tended to decline over time . . . partisan flux has coexisted with a more generalized aggregate electoral persistence. The families have remained stable while their individual members have proved volatile’ (Mair 1997: 28–9).³ This

³ He also writes that the continuity of party systems needs to be measured not just in terms of a simple choice between certain parties, but also by ‘generalized *ideological* predispositions on the one hand, and to generalized *political* alignments on the other. One is expressed in the somewhat more abstract identification with ‘right’ or ‘left’ while the other relates to the sense of belonging, at least in behavioural terms, to an often fragmented political family’ (1997: 20). To which Montes

notion of political families seems appropriate for analysing the Chilean party system.

Parties in Latin America are frequently seen as clientelistic patronage-base parties, seduced by populist leaders and with little consistent programmatic or social base. That does not describe the ideological, class-based Chilean party system. Chile had the strongest Marxist movement in Latin America, organized in a union-based Communist Party, and a more broadly based (though even more radical) Socialist Party (or parties for there was rarely one party). It also had one of the major Christian Democratic parties in Latin America. Most unusually there were also powerful parties of the right. The right in Latin America frequently works through corporatist structures or through alliances with the military. There were elements of that behaviour in Chile, but broadly the right has a long and continuous electoral history capturing the support of a third of the electorate combining business votes with those of conservative rural areas and traditional Catholic voters.

Parties in Chile represented virtually all social groups of any importance, and came to dominate the activities of associations of civil society such as trade unions, professional associations, student movements, and community-based movements. Such a solid social basis was able to withstand even the long years of the Pinochet dictatorship, and to re-emerge with the return to democracy in 1990 not completely but largely intact.

Parties became the expression of popular opposition to the Pinochet dictatorship, and the bearers of democracy in a society that was accustomed to democratic practices. Parties gained legitimacy through their participation in the anti-Pinochet struggle, culminating in their successful campaign to defeat him by 55 per cent to 43 per cent in a plebiscite held in October 1988 to decide if he would remain as president for a further eight years. The fact, however, that Pinochet remained a formidable presence as commander-in-chief of the army in a sense benefited the parties (though not the consolidation of democracy) as his presence reinforced the democracy or dictatorship cleavage that had dominated Chile during his long period of rule.

One important factor in the survival of the Chilean party system is the extent of international linkages. During the Pinochet years Chilean parties operated abroad and were funded by external sources (Angell and Carstairs 1987; Angell 1996). Generous support for the socialists came from the French, Italian, and Spanish socialist parties. The PDC as an important member of the Christian Democratic International received funding from German and Italian sources. East Germany was particularly helpful to the Communist Party and the more radical Socialist groups. Many countries, not least the USA, provided funds to keep alive the many research institutes in Chile that were often linked to specific parties. Massive

et al. would presumably reply that 'blocs or tendencies are not institutions. They normally do not have labels or organizations and they do not present candidates' (2000: 801). My own argument favours the interpretation of Mair.

foreign funding came to assist the opposition in the plebiscite to oppose Pinochet in 1988.

External support was important simply to keep the parties alive. But exile also helped to produce a profound transformation in the attitudes of the parties, especially in the major Socialist Party, which abandoned its doctrinaire extremism to adopt a moderate social-democratic ideology. Similarly the PDC abandoned its sectarian opposition to collaboration with parties of the left. What most parties—except the Communists—came to appreciate was that democracy was an end in itself and not simply a stepping stone to some future utopia; that the market had a legitimate and central role in economic policy; and that individual parties had to make compromises and bargains to ensure the survival of the overall party system. These changed attitudes stood the parties in good stead as they confronted the challenges of the return to democracy in 1990.

Parties after the transition to democracy

Chilean parties since the return of democracy clearly bear a strong resemblance to the pre-1973 parties, and Table 10.2 shows that the party system remains a multiparty one.

One of the major changes in the party system has been the decline of the Communist Party (PC) and its exclusion from coalition politics. The PC formed in the early twentieth century and based on mining and urban unions, suffered from the collapse of international communism and the move of the socialist parties to the centre, thus severing the alliance of the left which was the axis of the Popular Unity government. The PC revived somewhat in the late 1990s, winning control of public sector unions, especially the schoolteachers, but it is seen largely as a protest vote. Its highest vote was 5 per cent in the congressional elections of 2001, and a much broader coalition of diverse left-wing parties including the PC gained 7.38 per cent in the congressional elections of 2005 (though it elected no representatives).

TABLE 10.2. *Party representation in the Lower House: selected elections, 1932–2005*

	1932	1941	1953	1961	1969	1989	1993	1997	2001	2005
Parties with representatives in Chamber (N)	17	12	18	7	5	10	7	8	6	7
Parties of 'simple relevance' (N) ^a	6	5	7	7	5	4	5	5	5	5
Vote received by parties of 'simple relevance' (%) ^a	72.5	85.5	68.7	99.5	94.9	75.4	82.5	77.9	80.6	82.7
Effective number of parliamentary parties	9.3	6.5	11.9	6.4	4.9	7.8	6.3	7.3	6.7	6.8

^a Those parties with at least one representative in the Lower House, and at least 5% of the national vote. In addition, there are independent non-party deputies sitting in the Lower House.

Sources: Siavelis (1999); www.elecciones.gov.cl

Two parties, the Socialist Party of Chile and the Party for Democracy, dominate the left. The Socialist Party (PS) is the survivor of the party formed in the 1930s. The Socialist movement in Chile has a chequered history of splits, and adoption and discarding of different ideologies. It became a doctrinaire Marxist Party in the late 1960s, but the effect of exile and the collapse of Marxism produced a dramatic change in ideology and programme to that of modernizing social democracy. Like all parties in Chile it exaggerates the number of members—of a claimed 76,000 less than half are active.⁴ It has worked well with the Christian Democrats in government—though there have been periods of tension. The internal differences in the party have been remarkably well contained, possibly because the once important debate over ideology has been replaced by a general agreement over the need to accept the neoliberal model. There is a powerful subculture of socialism in Chile, which has provided a stable base of support for the PS.

The Party for Democracy (PPD) has a curious history. It was formed in 1988 to act as an 'instrumental' party to contest the 1988 plebiscite—to act as a front for the socialists and to bring in a wide spectrum of the electorate to oppose Pinochet. It proved to be highly successful and has survived. It works with the PS, though not always harmoniously, both in Congress and in dividing the constituencies between the two parties at election time. At one stage it was possible for a voter to be a member of both parties. That is no longer so except for the leading figure in Chilean socialism, Ricardo Lagos, elected president in 2000. It appeals to those who, for whatever reason, reject the historical baggage that is seen to attach to the PS, and it aims to attract non-aligned voters. The PPD addresses its message to a multi-class electorate, mainly through issues that have to do more with the modernization of society than with socialism. A more complex class structure, and the emergence of a new value-system based on individualism and self-achievement instead of cooperation and solidarity, created electoral space for the PPD to develop. It was the first party to elect its leaders by direct universal vote. It claims to have 100,000 members but only about one-quarter vote in internal elections.

The dominant party of the centre, and indeed of the governing coalition for the first decade of democracy after 1990, has been the Christian Democratic Party (PDC). Its origins lie in a socially committed wing of the Conservative Party but as a separate party it was insignificant in electoral terms until the 1950s. Thereafter its vote increased dramatically as its radical policies offered a non-Marxist programme of change, and as the vote for the right collapsed in the 1960s. Choosing to ally with the right in the confrontational period of the Popular Unity government, it found it difficult to form part of the anti-Pinochet government immediately after the coup. However, with the passing of time and the dropping of the more sectarian parts of its programme, and with prodding from its European

⁴ Figures of party membership of this and other parties come from the excellent chapter by Enrique Cañas (1998: 53, 90).

sister parties in the Christian Democratic International, it moved into alliance with the moderate left and led the coalition of parties against Pinochet in the plebiscite in 1988 and in the elections in 1989. Although it elected the first two democratic presidents, its vote has declined, its internal differences have become more acute, and it has adapted less well to the modernizing ethos of neoliberalism than, paradoxically, the once much more extreme socialist movement. Indeed, Huneus argues that the party is the victim of its excessive level of institutionalization, leading it to be rigid in adapting to its declining electoral support and in devising new strategies to revitalize the party. He argues that this has led to an 'inability to offer attractive policy proposals, especially to young people; limited renewal of the party's congressional elite due to the iron resistance of incumbents to this process; a failure of the party leadership to take action that might improve the situation; and the sharp decline in internal party activity' (Huneus 2003: 179).

It faces difficulty in claiming to be the party of the centre, as most parties in Chile seek that position. The party is marked by fierce internal splits and well-organized clans, and this has damaged its standing. The party has suffered the erosion of its rural vote, as the once-powerful rural unions hardly exist in the new capitalist agricultural sector; and its traditional support in the shanty towns has been partly lost to the right-wing parties. The party looks rather old-fashioned to the younger, and increasingly secular, voters, and has suffered the attrition that affects any party when it has been the dominant party in government for a decade. It claims to have 108,000 members, but only a half of that number vote in internal elections. Following its electoral decline from a high of 27.1 per cent of the congressional vote in 1993 to 20.8 per cent in 2005, the intensity of internal disputes has increased as different factions accuse each other of mistaken tactics and poor policies.

Two parties dominate the right—as they have traditionally in Chilean politics. *Renovación Nacional* (RN) is an uneasy coalition of members of the old nationalist right and modernizing politicians. Although it was initially more popular than its counterpart party of the right, the *Unión Demócrata Independiente* (UDI), its internal differences and its uneasy relationship with the business world have damaged its image, standing, and support. It has been marked by continuous internal squabbling and dissent—an agreement of the party to support the government's proposal to abolish the designated senators failed when several senators of the party voted against the proposal in congress. The party claims 91,000 members of whom about half are active. The modernizing democratic wing of the party suffered a severe loss when its dynamic president, Andres Allamand, lost to the UDI candidate in the 1997 senatorial contest.⁵ Although one of its leaders, former Senator Sebastian Piñera, was second in the presidential elections of 2005–6, this was a solo effort and brought no benefit to the party in the simultaneous congressional elections.

⁵ For a fascinating account of the politics of the right see Allamand (1999).

In contrast, the UDI, a curious combination of traditional Catholicism and neoliberal economics, has grown in cohesion and strength. Receiving lavish support from the business community, it practises a grass-roots politics unusual in contemporary Chile. Many of the local mayors nominated by Pinochet were from the UDI, and the party used its local presence to establish a variety of grass-roots organizations providing health care, help with education and with housing. The dilemma it faces is in extending its vote beyond the core support of unconditional defenders of the Pinochet era to secure majority support necessary to capture the presidency. It claims to have 72,000 members (and to have doubled in size in the last decade) but only about 30 per cent are active in the party. It is a young party with most of its voters in the below 50 age group. It grew steadily at first and then spectacularly in the 1999 and 2001 elections, helped by the above-party appeal of its presidential candidate Joaquín Lavín with his ability to portray himself and his party as a modernizing yet pro-poor force for technocratic administration rather than the discredited 'politics' of the centre and left. Although Lavín lost to the other right-wing candidate in the presidential election of 2005, the UDI congressional vote remained high and it was the single most popular party in Chile.

The other parties in Chile are relatively insignificant. The once dominant Radical Party is a shadow of its former self, but has some leverage as a potential supporter of either the centre or left. The only personalist party of any note was the *Unión del Centro-Centro* (UCC), the personal vehicle of a maverick businessman and senator, who capitalized on the anti-party sentiment of a sector of the electorate, but the various scandals that developed around the leader of the party led to its collapse.

If many of the parties are the same, what has changed is the electoral system, which since 1989 has forced parties into coalitions to maximize the chances of winning seats. The distribution of support for the parties and the coalitions they form is shown in Table 10.3. The figures given for support for the parties is not totally representative of their national support since not all parties present candidates in every constituency—another effect of a coalition-producing electoral system. There was also considerable confusion over coalition formation for the first election in 1989, but thereafter the figures give an accurate representation of the support for each coalition and a reasonably accurate one for the support for each party.

The electoral system

Traditionally Chile used a PR electoral system with open lists and relatively large constituencies. The Pinochet government, failing to eliminate parties, sought to create a two-party system with dominance for the right. Originally, the government thought of adopting the British first-past-the-post system to force the nation into a two-party system. But that idea was discarded when it became clear with economic recession in 1982–3 and the development of mass protest movements,

TABLE 10.3. *Election results and seat distribution in the Lower House by party and coalition, 1989–2005 (N = 120)*

Pact	Party	1989 ^a			1993			1997			2001			2005		
		Votes (%)	Seats (N)	Seats (%)	Votes (%)	Seats (N)	Seats (%)	Votes (%)	Seats (N)	Seats (%)	Votes (%)	Seats (N)	Seats (%)	Votes (%)	Seats (N)	Seats (%)
<i>Concertacion</i>		51.5	66	55.0	47.9	70	58.3	60.0	62	51.6	55.4	70	58.3	51.8	65	54.2
	PDC	26.0	39	32.5	18.9	39	32.5	32.5	23	19.1	27.1	37	30.8	20.8	20	16.7
	PS	— ^b	18	15.0	10.0	11	9.2	15.0	10	8.3	12.0	15	12.5	10.0	15	12.5
	PPD	11.5	7	5.8	12.7	16	13.3	5.8	20	16.6	11.8	15	12.5	15.4	21	17.5
	Other	14.0	2	1.7	2.2	4	3.3	6.7	3	1.8	4.5	3	2.5	5.5 ^d	9	7.5
<i>Alianza Por Chile^c</i>		34.2	48	40.0	44.8	47	39.2	40.0	57	47.5	36.7	50	41.7	38.7	54	45.0
	RN	18.3	32	26.7	13.8	23	19.2	26.7	18	15.0	16.3	29	24.2	14.1	19	15.8
	UDI	9.8	14	11.7	25.2	17	14.2	11.7	31	25.8	12.1	15	12.5	22.3	33	27.5
	Other	6.1	2	1.7	5.3	7	5.8	1.7	8	6.6	8.3	6	5.0	2.2	2	1.7
Independents and others not in major coalitions		14.3	0	0	7.8	3	2.5	0.0	1	0.8	7.8	0	0	9.5	1	0.8
Total net volatility		—			25.4			30.0			17.0			16.5		
Block volatility		—			10.4			12.4			7.9			3.7		

^a Party identification after the 1989 election was fluid given the limitations on party registration imposed by the Pinochet government, and problems with individual candidate registration. The breakdown of party identification listed here represents the eventual party membership, not the labels candidates used for the election.

^b PS candidates ran under the PPD label in 1989 because of party registration problems. Similarly, on the right, most independents later joined a party. The percentage of votes reflects actual results; party composition of seats reflects the eventual outcome.

^c This pact was known in previous elections as *Democracia y Progreso*, *Union por el Progreso*, and *Union por Chile*.

^d Includes PRSD (3.5% of vote, seven seats) and other smaller parties.

Source: Siavelis (1999); Ministry of the Interior/Tribunal Calificador de Elecciones for 2001 and 2005 results.

that the right would not command majority support. The system finally adopted allowed voters only one vote but increased the number of members returned per constituency to two. The idea was that the right, now recognized to be a minority, would secure representation in congress above its share of the poll.⁶

The electoral system for the presidency is straightforward. If no candidate receives more than 50 per cent in a national poll then there has to be a run-off ballot. In both elections for the presidency in 1989 and 1993, the candidate of the alliance of the parties of the centre and left, known as the *Concertación*, comfortably exceeded 50 per cent of the vote, but the contest went to a second round in both 2000 and 2006. The electoral system for congress is less straightforward.

In the Senate of forty-seven members there were nine designated senators (they were abolished for the 2005 elections), nominated by various institutions (the army, the Supreme Court, and the president) and for the first eight years they were the nominees of the outgoing Pinochet government. Another bias in the system is that electing two senators from the various regions in the country over-represents the conservative rural areas in the more powerful of the two chambers of the legislature. In the Lower House there are 120 members (whose constituency boundaries were carefully drawn up by the Pinochet government to favour the right). Each constituency, whether for Senate or Chamber, returns two members, though each voter has only one vote. Parties are allowed to form alliances to present lists of two candidates per constituency. If a party alliance gains more than twice the votes of the next most voted list, it takes both seats. If it takes less than that, it returns one member and the next most voted list takes one. Thus if there are only two lists contesting a constituency, a list with two-thirds of the votes plus one would return two members. If it had one vote less than two-thirds, then it would only return one member, and the minority list with one-third of the votes plus one would return one member.

An example of the unfairness of the system occurred in one of the two Santiago contests for the Senate in 1989. The *Concertación* candidates Andrés Zaldívar of the PDC, and Ricardo Lagos of the PPD won 29.8 and 29.2 per cent of the poll. For the right, Jaime Guzmán of the UDI won 16.4 per cent, and Miguel Otero of RN 14.6 per cent. (A minority right list took another 5.3 per cent.) So with 58.9 per cent of the poll, the *Concertación* alliance elected only one member, while with only 30.9 per cent the right elected another. In the 1989 elections in nine seats in the senatorial contest, the *Concertación* candidates came first and second, but returned only one senator; for the right this happened in only two cases. In the contest for the chamber this happened to the *Concertación* on

⁶ See Rabkin (1996). Her argument is that the electoral system benefits both major coalitions and not just the right. 'In the 1993 elections the *Concertación* with 55.5 per cent of the total vote elected 58.3 per cent of the Lower House, whereas the center-right alliance with 36.6 per cent of the vote elected 41 per cent' (p. 342). That is true but it is also necessary to take into account the way that the constituency boundaries were gerrymandered to favour the right, and the way that the Senate was composed.

thirteen occasions, but not at all for the right (Angell and Pollack 1990, 1995, 2000; Munck 1994).

If the effect of the electoral system is to over-represent the right, it has also worked, though to a lesser extent, in favour of the governing *Concertación* alliance, as the system is biased against independent parties. In addition, the system forces competition—and it is often very fierce—inside each coalition as the two candidates for the same list struggle to come first.⁷ The system tends to encourage candidate identification rather than party identification. Campaigns are fought (and largely financed) by candidates seeking to establish their individual identity. Party identification remains important to bring out the core party vote, but successful candidates go beyond that to establish a personal following as well.

In view of the tendency of the electoral system to encourage intra-coalition competition both between parties and between candidates, it may seem surprising that the coalitions have held together for so long. It has not been easy—especially on the right where the relations between the two parties are frequently tense and even hostile. But the system does benefit large coalitions so there is a strong incentive to remain united.

PARTY LEGITIMACY

Parties in Latin America frequently suffer from low legitimacy. In the first place, the political systems of all Latin American countries—including Chile—are strongly presidential. Government often rests on a dual legitimacy—one for the president separate from that of Congress and the parties. A recent development in Latin America has been the rise of populist anti-party presidents whose support is based precisely on their opposition to parties. This phenomenon is often exacerbated by non-simultaneous elections for president and Congress.⁸

Parties in Latin America are perceived as weak for a variety of reasons. They are badly affected by widespread corruption—even the Brazilian Workers' Party has seen its record tarnished by scandals that broke in 2005. Second, in Latin America it is relatively rare to find an electorally popular right-wing party, and this weakens the party system overall as the right seeks to exercise influence by corporatist practices (Gibson 1996: 23). And, finally, at the other end of the spectrum, the social movements that have emerged to channel popular demands see the parties and politicians as manipulative and exploitative, and indifferent to the long-term

⁷ Except that when it is clear that an alliance is likely to elect only one candidate and when it is also clear that one party or candidate has overwhelming support, the other alliance partner may put up only a token campaign in order to ensure that the votes for the dominant partner are maximized.

⁸ The importance of the presidential system is well-documented in Mainwaring and Shugart (1997), and Shugart and Carey (1992).

interests of civil society. As a result once strong party systems, such as that in Venezuela, have almost disappeared.

How has the Chilean party system fared compared with other party systems in Latin America? Chilean presidents have normally been leading and loyal members of their parties. There were exceptions, such as Ibáñez in 1952 and Jorge Alessandri in 1958, but since then every elected president has had close links with a party. There has been, since 1990, little support for anti-party candidates. Presidents since 1990 have seen themselves as closely linked with the parties, and parties were consulted on most issues—not least those of appointment to ministerial and other public sector offices. Admittedly the 1980 constitution gives great power to the president, but in the politics of consensus that has dominated political behaviour since 1990, presidents work closely with their congresses. Peter Siavelis argues that the good working relationship between President Aylwin (1990–4) and his congress ‘was due to a great extent to the contextual features of the democratic transition itself, which tempered the drives associated with extreme presidentialism that can lead to problems of governability and executive-assembly deadlock’ (Siavelis 1997: 324). As the needs of the transition fade, the possibility is that the consensual features of the system will also fade and be replaced by conflict, especially if, for example, there is an economic crisis. Yet the consensual approach was maintained during the presidencies of Eduardo Frei (1994–2000), and of President Lagos (2000–6) even though there were some difficult crises. The governing alliance even survived primary elections, which chose a Socialist and not a Christian Democrat as presidential candidate for 1999. The arrangements forged at the time of the transition in 1989 may be more durable than is often argued.

Although parties have continued to fall in public esteem, on the crucial test of participation rates, there is little doubt about the central role of party voting.⁹ Electoral participation has been declining in Chile since 1988 (see Table 10.4). In that year, of the potential electorate of just over eight million voters, an extremely high proportion—92.2 per cent—was registered, reflecting intense polarization over the issue of whether General Pinochet would serve as president for another eight years. By 2005 registered voters were 78.71 per cent of the potential electorate. Yet as Marta Lagos points out, this is still considerably higher than the 69.08 per cent registered to vote in the most competitive election of the turbulent years of the Popular Unity government—the congressional election of 1973.¹⁰ Of the potential electorate in 2005–6, 69.15 per cent participated. This figure is still relatively high in comparison with other countries, and hardly gives grounds for grave doubts about the stability of Chilean democracy. If there was a decline in voting, there was little increase in voting for anti-party movements or new parties.

⁹ The vote is compulsory in Chile, but registering to vote is voluntary. So it is unlikely that high participation rates are explained by the obligation to vote.

¹⁰ See Lagos (2005). This excellent work is the most rigorous and informative study of the subject.

TABLE 10.4. *Percentage participation rates in elections, 1989–2005*

	1989	1992	1993	1996	1997	1999	2001	2005
Valid votes as % adult population	81.38	70.19	73.68	61.44	53.38	68.22	62.45	66.46
Abstention and non-registered	13.58	20.84	17.57	27.57	28.86	28.81	23.9	30.99
Blank and null votes	5.04	8.97	8.75	10.99	17.76	2.97	13.65	2.55
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Note: The elections of 1989 and 1993 are combined presidential and congressional elections; those of 1992 and 1996 are municipal elections; those of 1997 and 2001 are congressional elections only; 1999 and 2005 are the first round of the presidential elections.

Source: Riquelme (1999); Ministry of the Interior.

Indeed, given the electoral system in Chile, what is surprising is not the decline in voting but the fact that it has held up so well. If it is obvious that each constituency will, with very few exceptions, return one member for the government and one for the opposition, the incentive to vote is clearly lessened. This is worsened by the fact that there are still in effect designated senators, if now designated by the parties. In the elections of 2001, for example, in seven of the nine senatorial districts, there was in effect only one real candidate of the right. In the 2005 elections in one of the senatorial districts in the 10th region there was only 1 candidate for each coalition. What incentive is there to vote if in practice the senators have already been elected? There is relatively little chance that two candidates from the same coalition will win more than two-thirds of the vote and so secure both seats. In the 2005 elections the *Concertación* managed this in six contests for the Lower House and in one for the Senate, while the opposition elected both its candidates in only one Lower House constituency. Independents or parties outside the major coalitions have little chance of being elected. In the five congressional elections since 1989 only ten candidates have been elected as independent deputy or senator, or on a list other than the main two.

Unlike the right in most Latin American countries, the Chilean right is organized and mobilizes through parties. The two parties of the right cover the full spectrum of rightist supporters. Business groups work through normal political channels. Indeed given the economic record of Chile since the mid-1980s and the huge profits that business has made, there is no reason why it should want to do anything else. Similarly, although the military did threaten political stability on the issue of human rights, in general it is supportive of the political system, and markedly so after Pinochet retired from active command in 1997. After all, the constitution is one of military design, and the successful free market economic model was adopted during military rule. And if there is any reason for the military to make its voice heard, it can do so through the numerous right-wing politicians with links to the military.¹¹

¹¹ The question of the influence of the military on the parties of the right is a complicated one. Allamand (1998: 29), who as a former leader of RN should know, expresses concern about the continuing influence of the military. 'How else can one explain that retired officers of the Armed

Corruption does not play such a central role as in many Latin American countries in explaining public hostility to the parties. An audit and scrutiny institution—the *Contraloría*—effectively limits the opportunities that governments at all levels have for exercising corrupt practices. Of course there are episodes of corruption in Chile—not least at the municipal level—but it is a far less serious problem than in many other countries of Latin America.¹² At the national level, the most common form of corruption seems to be that of state enterprises being used to finance party activity. There were a series of such episodes in 2004 and 2005 but they were denounced in the press and judicial action was undertaken. Such episodes damage politicians and parties, though Chile does seem to be relatively free of the lower-level corruption—involving bribes to the police or minor civil servants—that is widespread in many other Latin American countries.

There is another important reason for the centrality of the party system. The major cleavage in the Chilean party system continues to be, albeit in weaker form, that of class.¹³ But on this is superimposed another cleavage, that of support for or opposition to the Pinochet regime (Aguero et al. 1998). Authoritarianism cast a long shadow in Chile as elements of the Pinochet system—the constitution for example—persisted long into democracy. One explanation of high levels of participation in elections is the belief that support for the governing *Concertación* coalition is an affirmation of support for democracy. On the other hand, voting for the right, especially for the UDI, is seen by a not insubstantial number of voters as expressing support for the legacy of authoritarianism, though this was played down in the very skilful political marketing of the UDI in the presidential campaign of 1999–2000 and again in 2005–6.

Yet there is evidence that the once strong legitimacy of the parties is weakening. The trend is towards decreasing lack of support for the parties, linked to increasing disillusionment with the benefits of democracy. Although electoral participation remains relatively high there is concern about the apathy of the young shown in the high levels of non-registration among the 18–24 year old age group. While there were 300,000 voters aged 18–19 in 1989, there were only 85,000 in 1997 (Riquelme 1999).¹⁴

Forces are being recruited as candidates to Parliament and the Municipalities? And is it not an open secret that the armed forces vote en bloc in favour of certain candidates in the elections?’

¹² In a poll of businessmen, produced by Transparency International in 1999 on how corrupt the business environment was, Chile was ranked 19th of 54 countries with a positive score of 6.8 of 10 (the UK was 12th with a score of 8.44).

¹³ Mair comments on the persistence of the left-right division even at times of social change: ‘... for all the changes experienced in recent years, it is clear that left and right not only remain the major organizing principles in modern West European politics, but also help to create a uniform foundation for contemporary patterns of policy competition’ (1997: 27).

¹⁴ Riquelme also estimates that about 10 per cent of non-registration is due to the bureaucratic difficulties of the process.

There is also evidence from the opinion polls. Asked in 2004 if they thought that democracy was preferable to any other form of government, 57 per cent of Chileans agreed that it was—up from the 50 per cent in 2002 but down from the 61 per cent in 1997. The 2004 figure was just above the Latin American average of 53 per cent (and way below the 77 per cent of Costa Rica or the 78 per cent of Uruguay).¹⁵ Preference for an authoritarian government in some circumstances was the choice of 19 per cent of respondents and the same number thought that it made no difference if the government was democratic or authoritarian. Asked more specifically if they were very, or more or less, satisfied with the way that democracy worked in Chile, only 40 per cent agreed—though this was a sharp increase from the 23 per cent of 2001 (when the country was only just recovering from recession) and was the highest figure since 1996. There is also strong perception that the real winners in the Chilean economic miracle have been the business sectors, and that government and the parties are too close to those sectors and too far removed from the concerns of the poor.

Confidence in the institutions of government was also low. In 2003 only 19 per cent of Chileans expressed confidence in the judiciary, 18 per cent in the Senate, and 15 per cent in the Chamber of Deputies, and parties in 2003 had only 6 per cent expressing confidence in them—compared with 15 per cent in 2001. The executive is more highly regarded and in 2004 as many as 64 per cent of Chileans approved of President Lagos, making him the third most highly rated president in Latin America. The church and the military are also better evaluated than the elected institutions of government. The number of respondents refusing to express sympathy with either right, left, or centre has grown from 32 per cent in 1990 to 47 per cent by mid-1997 (Siavelis 1997). On the other hand, the electorate still classifies the parties very differently on the left-right scale. Asked to rank parties on a 1 (left) to 10 (right) scale, the UDI was rated on average 8.88, the PDC 5.33, the PPD 3.89, and the PS 2.74. So at least in terms of party differences the electorate still has a sharp sense of the relevance of the terms left and right.¹⁶

How can we explain this growing dissatisfaction? The former politics of ideological commitment and mobilization has been replaced by a technocratic neoliberalism, common to all the major parties in which administration supposedly has replaced politics, and consensus has become the new ideology. Hence important themes are marginal to the political debate. The macroeconomic model is not questioned—even though paradoxically the opposition to Pinochet based its opposition squarely on what they saw then as the defects of the economic model. There are other issues that do not fit easily into the existing political model—environmental concerns, income inequality, the power and role of the trade unions, and ways of increasing political participation. The result is a restricted political

¹⁵ The data in this section is all taken from the invaluable annual reports of the *Latinobarómetro* at <http://www.latinobarometro.org>

¹⁶ From the CERC survey of July 1999.

agenda. The passionate debate on fundamental issues that the parties encouraged and organized before 1973 has been replaced by a strong desire to limit and control the public agenda. This is understandable given the need for caution and incremental change in order to sustain a fragile democracy. But it does not encourage strong voter identification with the parties.

There has been a parallel process of a growing personalization of politics above ideas and ideology—another trend that reduces public enthusiasm for parties. Candidates for office do not always identify themselves through their party affiliation but prefer that of the overall coalition. Fewer and fewer candidates register their party affiliation on their electoral propaganda, and tend to campaign on their personal abilities and identification with the government or the opposition. Presidential candidates also steer clear of identifying themselves with a party in their campaigns. Part of the reason for this is also that as electoral campaigns became more and more expensive in Chile—and there was no state funding before 2004 nor limits on campaign expenditures—candidates of all parties had to rely on business sectors for funding.

The once firm control of the major parties over social movements has weakened. For example, the CP in 1998 won a majority on the executive of the teachers' union the *Colegio de Profesores*, elected the president of the major trade union confederation the CUT, and dominated student unions even in the Catholic University. This is less the positive appeal of Marxism and more a protest against the dominant parties and party system. The indigenous Mapuche movement has not normally been a threat to the political order and was incorporated into one or another of the parties. But since the mid-1990s the protests of the Mapuches, defending their ancestral lands against the economic groups that wanted to develop them, have intensified and escaped the ability of the government and the parties to control them.

These protests are directed against what is increasingly seen as a centralized, non-participatory party system. There is undoubtedly some truth in these accusations. The way that the parties have dealt—or rather failed to deal—with the demands of women's organizations for greater involvement in party leadership and in decision taking is a case in point. Women's representation in the Lower House of congress rose from only 5.8 per cent of the total to 8 per cent in 1994 and 10 per cent in 1998. In the two left-wing parties, the PPD and PS, women make up 19 per cent and 18 per cent of their congressional representation, but only 5 per cent of the PDC. On the right, RN has 16 per cent. The story is similar in the party structures. There is positive discrimination with quotas in the PS and PPD, and women form 33 per cent of the political commission of the PS and 27 per cent of the PPD (but only 17 per cent of the PDC). The danger is that quotas become ceilings, and at these existing levels are insufficient to develop a critical mass inside the parties (Waylen 2000: 820). The choice of a woman president in 2006 may indicate a positive change but the number of women candidates for congressional office remains very low—in the senatorial contest

of the 39 candidates only 4 were women, and in the Chamber of Deputies of the 226 candidates only 32 were women.

What does seem clear is that if the Chilean party system is to reassert itself more positively in the perceptions of the electorate then there is a real need for a change in an electoral system that depresses voter interest, unfairly rewards the opposition coalition, excludes minority sectors, exacerbates excessively centralized control in the parties, and encourages intra-party infighting rather than contest with the opposition.

A variety of factors seem to conspire to limit the interest of the parties to popular participation only in elections. There is a historic fear of return to the kind of mass politics that led to the coup in 1973; there was for at least a decade after 1990 a fear of an authoritarian regression and a perceived need to control expressions of public opinion; there has been an increasingly technocratic style in policymaking which tends to ignore the opinions of the subjects of policies; and there is concern that the macroeconomic stability depends on consensus and that too much participation may damage confidence in the ability of the government to manage the economy. If there is relatively little demand for political participation outside elections in Chile, it may be not only that the state is relatively efficient and that the economy is progressing well, but because civil society is well aware of the difficulties of having any influence on policymakers in the government or in the parties.

PARTY ORGANIZATIONAL STRENGTH

Parties in Chile before the coup made great efforts to secure mass membership and employed mobilization of that membership—in street demonstrations for example—as a sign of strength. In most areas of the country the major parties of the right, centre, and left had local offices and local organizations. But parties that mobilize are not necessarily democratic, and one feature that has remained constant is the highly centralized nature of the parties, in which real decision-making is limited to a small elite. Historically the parties of the left and centre had been ideological, sectarian, and despite—or perhaps because of—attempts to assert firm central control were subject to internal faction fighting and even splits.

Party leadership is composed of Santiago-based elites, and of professional politicians. Decisions of any importance are made at the centre. Candidates for election are chosen by the centre with little reference to regional or local preferences (though local parties were so weak following the coup that it is questionable if they could have chosen good candidates for congressional elections). Local parties have always been subordinate to the centre, not least because the very limited functions of local government gave them little opportunity to exercise

any real power. Even with the trend towards decentralization since the 1980s, the function of local government is largely to administer centrally designed and financed government programmes, and to create effective links with the centre. But centralized decision-making does not mean that the centre itself is united. Indeed, the sharp divisions inside the parties, and the existence of semi-organized factions means that candidate selection itself reflects horse-trading between the various factions. This further tends to separate the centre from the local parties and to make the parties less responsive to local needs.

Before the coup, party strength was measured less in terms of individual membership and more in terms of the number of associations of civil society that were controlled by the parties. The trade union movement, for example, was a veritable battleground for competing allegiances of Communists, Socialists, Radicals, and Christian Democrats. But right-wing parties too colonized similar organizations—from small- and medium-sized business associations, to associations of lawyers, and other professions. A relatively small group of Santiago-based politicians and larger group of regional leaders controlled—even manipulated—associations of civil society. In these circumstances, individual party membership was less important as an indication of social support than the number of associations under the effective control of the party.

But the parties also attracted loyal and dedicated members. The major reason for individuals to join parties was a combination of ideological conviction and family or community tradition. Each party had its own distinctive ideological position and historical tradition. Party membership or support for a party was identification with that ideology and tradition. It is possible to speak of powerful subcultures of party identification in certain areas or sectors—in the coal mining areas of the south, the Communist Party was the dominant social as well as political organization; in some industrial areas of the major towns, the same would be true of the Socialists; in the Catholic University, the PDC and later the UDI created a strong base. Membership of a party was an expression of faith for some. For others it was an essential link in a chain of clientelism. The combination of both factors made the party system particularly strong and inclusive.

What has changed since 1990 and the return to democracy? Profound ideological commitment is now far less common than in the past. The differences between the parties over policies are relatively minor. Moreover the bitter hostility between the parties that led to the breakdown of the party system in 1973 is also in the past. Within the governing alliance, formerly sworn enemies have been cooperating for well over a decade; and between the two coalitions although there is competition, it is not comparable to the doctrinaire intransigence of the past. Memories and traditions of ideological commitment have created patterns of behaviour that persist even if the original ideology is much diluted. What does remain a very real ideological factor is the commitment to democracy expressed by support for the parties of the centre and left in the face of the memory of the authoritarian alternative.

Parties are now much more professional organizations. There are fewer individual members and the meaning of membership has changed as parties have shed much of their ideological fervour and moved to modern methods of campaigning. The mass meetings that characterized the parties in the past have been replaced by the focus group.¹⁷ The parties have also lost some of the organizational support that they received from affiliated associations. Party representatives in Congress no longer can broker favours from the executive. In the first place, the neoliberal economic framework limits the scope of government action, and second, the power of congress in the constitution is sharply reduced, so that it can no longer 'perform . . . its traditional functions of interest representation and satisfaction' (Siavelis 1997: 37).¹⁸ On the other hand, some of the major associations that supported the parties are also much weaker. Trade unions, for example, are a shadow of their former influence, and although almost all union leaders are openly members of one or another party, the support they command from the rank and file is both far less numerous and far less committed.

One reason that parties feel less need to recruit members is that most funding comes from private donations—state funding of parties came into effect only in 2004 and does not replace private funding, though there is now more regulation of private funding. Parties claim that they cover up to 60 per cent of their expenditures by income from their assets and seek the rest from donations and fees from prominent supporters (rank-and-file dues are negligible). Most funding does not go to the central party but to the individual candidates for elections that are becoming increasingly costly. Even the PS and the PPD are financed largely at the candidate level through business support. Most businesses that make political donations usually do so to a variety of parties as an insurance against an uncertain electoral outcome.

How much do elections cost? A parliamentary report in 1994 estimated that in the 1993 congressional elections some candidates spent over US\$2 million in the wealthier districts and in the poorer ones US\$500,000. A well-informed report in *El Mercurio* in 1996 estimated individual campaign costs of US\$2,500–50,000 for local government; US\$75,000–US\$150,000 for deputies (and up to US\$750,000 for the three wealthiest districts in Santiago); US\$375,000–US\$1,000,000 for Senate; and US\$10 million for a presidential campaign. A think tank report in 1997 gave even higher figures of between US\$4 million and US\$8 million for Senate. Comparatively this is very high—proportionately not far short of Japanese

¹⁷ The author remembers going to the port of Valparaíso to see the announced last mass meeting of the *Concertación* before the presidential election of 1993 only to find out that it had officially been cancelled 'because of lack of interest of the public'. The fact not only that it had been cancelled but that this was given as the official reason is an indication of how far the parties have changed since the return to democracy—and of how certain the *Concertación* was of winning the election.

¹⁸ As Siavelis points out, this means the end of personalism, clientelism, and pork-barrel politics, but by limiting the power of congress it also limits the legitimacy of the party system.

levels and above those of most European countries.¹⁹ A consequence of this high level of cost is the difficulties it creates for new parties trying to enter the electoral arena.

At election time activity is much greater at the individual candidate headquarters than at the central party offices. Candidates have their own headquarters, their own think tanks, and their own focus groups. Even the posters that line the main streets at election time are put up by hired help and not by party activists. This candidate-based competition makes sense if the real election in many cases is not between the government and the opposition but inside each coalition list. In these circumstances, the concept of party militancy loses a great deal of meaning. Individual members have very little influence on party policy and are called on to perform very few tasks, and unless they have a great deal of money contribute relatively little to the party. Party militancy makes a great deal of sense for those who want a political career or the chance to influence local or national decisions, but apart from the remaining and still strong historical loyalties, Chile seems to be following the pattern of many countries in seeing a decline of mass party membership.

Chile does not have a mass media that reflects the political divisions in the country. There is no newspaper of any real significance that is identified with the parties of the centre and right. Effectively two newspapers, *El Mercurio* and *La Tercera*, dominate the press. They are associated with the neoliberal right and have no real challengers to its domination. Parties have limited free airtime at elections, and most channels put on debates between the parties. But such programmes are not popular, and do not seem to have any influence on voters' behaviour. The fact that most political information seems to be conveyed in the family surroundings may also help to explain why ideological loyalties have lasted longer than the ideologies themselves.²⁰

The absence of any pro-government press or media places a great limitation on the parties of government to communicate with the electorate, though it gives an unfair advantage to the coalition of the right to get its message across. Moreover, in a presidential system attention is focused on the president not on the parties, and triumphs and failures are seen more as attributes of the person rather than of the parties. Sharply reduced individual membership also limits the ability of the parties to reach a wider public. Perhaps most damaging to the individual parties is the fact that the prevailing electoral system encourages campaigning at two levels—at the level of the overall coalition and at the level of the individual candidate, but not

¹⁹ The data and information on party funding has been taken from Garreton (2002). As he writes, 'The power of money is hidden under a shadow of hypocrisy. . . . Those opposed to the public financing of politics are generally those with money to finance their own campaigns' (2002: 1). See also Huneus (1998).

²⁰ This is the argument of Aguero et al. (1998: 174): 'Voters maintain and transmit loyalties far less through parties and other organizations and far more through personal connections'.

at the level of the party. Chilean electoral campaigning has adopted the modern formulas of the sound bite, the avoidance of detailed discussion of policy, and the emphasis on the personal attributes of the candidate (and often of his or her family). Given that in practice the gap between the parties is more a function of historical memories including towards the Pinochet dictatorship than it is of real policy differences, it is hardly surprising that the communication role that the parties play is very limited. Of course that could all change in a reformed electoral competition based on competition principally between the parties and not between coalitions.

PARTIES AND THE POLITICAL SYSTEM

The major political issue in Chile in 1990 was how well democracy could survive the multiple tests to which it was subjected with the ending of authoritarian government. Many institutions of the past survived into the democratic period—not least the constitution and an electoral system, which the democratic coalition rejected. One of the primary functions of the parties was to contribute to the consolidation of democracy. As time passed, attention focused less on the question of the survival of democracy, for that now looked secure, and more on the quality of democracy. So if the first question is how far the parties contributed to a successful transition, the second is more concerned with the contribution of the parties to the quality of democracy.

The problem in answering these questions is that in key ways the political system in Chile is an artificial one, more the product of the authoritarian regime rather than the design of democratic policymakers. Governments since 1990 have tried to abolish the designated senators, secure greater control over the military, increase the powers of congress—and only in 2004 was there a major constitutional reform securing those reforms. However, there was no success in changing the electoral system, apart from reducing the status of that reform from a constitutional amendment to an organic law (which still requires substantially more than a simple majority to be enacted).

Parties have had to shape their behaviour to an institutional framework outside their control. The question is how far behaviour imposed from outside has created a pattern which might survive even if the external framework, the electoral system for example, were to change. John Carey asks the question—‘are the two major coalitions merely marriages of convenience made necessary by the method of aggregating votes imposed by the outgoing dictatorship, but otherwise not important in structuring legislative behaviour?’ His answer is that there is good reason for thinking that they are more than a mere marriage of convenience—apart from the sheer longevity of the coalitions, his research finds that the institutions that

direct the Chamber of Deputies are organized on a coalition basis, and that more importantly coalition membership is a better predictor of legislative voting than party membership (Carey 1998).

The coalition formed to contest the plebiscite in 1988 and the elections of 1989 was an instrumental one, forced by sheer electoral necessity to collaborate, and united by opposition to authoritarianism. But this pact has lasted since 1990, shows no sign of terminal decline, has successfully fought and gained over 50 per cent (or very close) of the vote in a plebiscite, four presidential, five congressional, and four municipal elections, has witnessed an unprecedented successful period of economic growth, and dealt with complex political issues such as justice for human rights abuses. Is it still an instrumental pact between largely distinct parties, or is it a long-term project for continuing coalition government? This question is impossible to answer until a change in the electoral system allows for the possibility of choice, but there are many members of the governing alliance parties who see very good reasons for continuing with the coalition.

Governance

The question of what contribution Chilean parties make to governance is not simply about policy efficiency or greater representation. It is clearly about those issues, but it was, at least for the initial years of the transition, also about the contribution towards creating a viable democratic system resistant to collapse and authoritarian interventions.

Initially the role of the parties was to organize the movement for democracy and to reassure society and international opinion that they would not repeat the errors that led to the coup of 1973. They had to develop a convincing programme for government, and to demonstrate by their behaviour that they could cooperate and make concessions in order to secure stable government. They had to show that they valued democracy as an end in itself and not as a means to some doctrinaire utopia. They had to demonstrate that they could create a viable party system.

With these initial challenges of governance the parties succeeded very well. The *Concertación* coalition offered in 1989 a coherent and united programme of government for Chile. It did not reject the achievements of the past in the area of the macroeconomy, but it sought to combine that with social justice and democracy. The parties worked hard to persuade the right and the business sector that there would be no threat to property rights, that any changes to important areas, such as tax reform or labour reforms, would be the product of dialogue and consensus. The coalition projected an image of competence and of democratic procedures. The difference between Chile and other countries in Latin America is that this process was more institutional and less personal. It was not seen as the programme of an individual competing for the presidency with only weak attachment to the party system, but as the united programme of a range of parties covering a majority of the population of the country. Guillermo O'Donnell has

described the trend in a number of countries towards excessive concentration of power in the presidency as 'delegative democracy' (O'Donnell 1999). Chile has escaped this trend for three reasons—first the presidents since 1990 have been loyal party members who accepted the need to work with and through the parties; second, institutions of audit and scrutiny of executive action effectively regulate those actions and control abuses; and third because of the institutionalization of the party system.

If the clearly dominant figure in the political system is the president, it is nonetheless the case in Chile that executive–legislative relations have been close and cooperative. Presidents consult and legislate with congress, and the mechanism that links the two is the parties. Even the opposition parties have cooperated with the executive on those policies that it accepted—such as the tax reform of 1990 that secured a major one-off tax increase to be used for social expenditures. Moreover given the rivalry between the two opposition parties, the president has on occasion been able to secure the agreement of one party of the right, sufficient to gain a legislative majority. The presence of a critical but constructive congressional opposition is not common in Latin America.

The president and Congress were initially elected in simultaneous elections in 1989 and 1993. However, a reduction first in the term of office of president to six years from eight has meant that in 1997 and 2001 elections were only for Congress and in 1999 only for the president. Elections for both branches coincided in 2005 and a second change to the length of term of the presidency to four years with no immediate re-election means that elections will coincide in future.

On broader fronts, the parties played an important role in controlling the social movements that developed at the end of the period of military rule. In practice these movements are relatively weak compared with their past in Chile or in comparison with a number of other Latin American countries. It was important for the new democracy that the trade unions, for example, had their grievances addressed, but not in a way that would threaten business confidence. Parties had to act as brokers between these groups and the government. The complaint—and one that is growing in intensity—is that the parties subordinate the interests of these diverse associations of civil society to their own ends, and are more concerned to control them in the interests of overall stability than they are to deal with their demands in the interests of social justice.²¹

Nonetheless, it was important that the parties initially showed that they could control social demands, as the major task facing the government in the economic sphere was to demonstrate that parties that had previously functioned in a state-centred economy could now function in a market-centred one. This was most difficult for the Socialist Party given its Marxist past. But any lack of confidence that the business sector might have had in the government dissolved in the face

²¹ One observer argues that 'the very design of the political transition included as a pre-requisite the de-activation of the anti-dictatorial social movements' (de la Maza 1999).

of the evidence. On virtually every indicator the Chilean economy has performed better overall since 1990 than any other economy in Latin America. Inflation of 21.4 per cent in 1989 fell to 3 per cent in 2005. The economy grew by 5.6 per cent a year under the *Concertación*, whereas under Pinochet it was only 2.9 per cent a year. Exports grew, international debt fell, and important bilateral trade deals with the USA, South Korea, Mexico, the EU, and with China in 2005 benefited trade relations, and also improved the international political standing of the country. Under President Lagos, GDP per capita rose from US\$4,860 in 2000 to US\$5,903 in 2004. Unemployment fell from 9.7 to 8.1 per cent, the minimum salary went up by 29 per cent, exports more than doubled, minimum pensions went up by 15 per cent, the number of students in higher education rose from 411,000 to 600,000, and there was a huge development of infrastructure, including a more than doubling of the metro lines, many of which went to poor areas, dramatically reducing travelling times.²² Overall poverty fell from 45.1 per cent of the population in 1987 to 18.8 per cent in 2003, and extreme poverty from 17.4 to 4.7 per cent. If poverty reduction has been on a major scale, however, the same cannot be said for income distribution, which is one of the most unequal in Latin America—not least because of the enormous increase in earnings of the top 1 per cent of the population.

This performance is important beyond the realm of the economic. Past governments lost legitimacy in Latin America by notably dismal performance especially during the 1980s. It is vital for legitimacy that macroeconomic stability is secured, and parties played an important role in this process in Chile. The key ministers were not non-party technocrats (as, for example, in Argentina), but prominent members of the major parties. The parties supported the government's economic policies and did not insist on the kinds of exemptions or special privileges—not to speak of downright corruption—that makes economic management so difficult in Brazil, for example.

The major political issue at the time of the transition was truth and justice on human rights issues. This was a key issue in defining the nature of the post-authoritarian government. The government had to satisfy the demands of those who wanted truth and justice, without provoking the right and the military into actions that would destabilize the fragile political system. The parties had to restrain those who wanted absolute solutions both on the left and the right. The government pursued truth by establishing an independent commission; and the government endorsed the report that condemned the military for its violation of human rights and the judiciary for doing nothing to uphold those rights. But the government and the parties navigated this most difficult of issues in a way that produced a working compromise. The arrest of Pinochet in London in 1998 threatened to open old wounds, but what was remarkable was how little it affected inter-party relations, and how little it impeded the movement towards increasing

²² The figures cited here are drawn from 'El País del Sucesor', *La Tercera*, 11 December 2005.

civilian control over the military (Angell 2003). It also accelerated the process of bringing the more prominent abusers of human rights under the military to justice.

Political recruitment

Parties dominate the process of recruitment elective or appointed office. In effect there is a quota system in operation for appointment to ministerial posts. Parties in the governing coalition are allocated cabinet posts in accordance with their showing at the polls—initially as the largest party and as the party of the president until 2000 the Christian Democrats took the major share of cabinet positions, including the key Finance Ministry, and usually the Ministries of Interior and of Defence. Since that date, as the PDC declined in the polls and with a Socialist president, the parties of the left have been more prominent. Within each ministry it is the norm for there to be a balancing of partisan affiliations—if the minister is from one party, then the vice-minister (*Sub-Secretario*) is from another, and so on, down the hierarchy.

The parties effectively control recruitment to elective office. Given the electoral system independents or parties outside the major coalitions have little chance of being elected. Inclusion in a coalition list is a decision made by the central party, with little consultation with the local party—especially for the key post of senator. Even at the level of municipal government, the parties determine who will be the candidate for mayor in the major cities and bargain over the distribution of the major municipalities between the parties.

This control over political recruitment by the parties may have been necessary in the early period in the return to democracy when there was need to control entry after years of no political activity. The parties of the centre and the left did not want to be associated with individuals who had collaborated with the previous authoritarian regime. But with the passing of time, the defects of the system are starting to outweigh the benefits—it is too centralized, too inflexible, it creates too many barriers to new entrants, and it is insufficiently responsive to the demands of new groups. It tends to perpetuate in power the same group of politicians over a very long period.

Parties and interest groups: articulation and aggregation

Parties in Chile have long performed the role of major interest group articulation and aggregation. The division of the parties into class-based national organizations made it natural for the parties of the right to act as spokesmen for business groups, and for the parties of the left and centre for trade unions and popular associations. Given the centralization of the country, and of the parties, there were few significant regional interests that were not incorporated into this centralizing system. Even the church was closely associated with the party system through its overlap with the PDC and the UDI in terms of beliefs and values. Almost the

only national institution that was outside this party-dominated structure was the military.

The capacity of the parties to control and channel the demands of interest groups has weakened in the 1990s for two major reasons. First, the huge reduction in the size of the state means that many decisions in the economy and society made in the political arena—where parties are central in Chile—are now made in the market arena—where parties are marginal. For example, pension provision before the reform of 1981 was a highly politicized process. Different groups had different state pension provision, and fought to maintain differentials and to keep ahead of inflation. And they did this through sympathetic congressional representatives enacting legislation in favour of particular groups. Since 1981 Chile has moved away from state pension provision to one of individual saving schemes. Hence the once fertile territory, in which congressional representatives secured pension privileges in return for political support from certain groups, has been abolished.

Second, there has been a growth of social movements not linked to the fortunes of the parties, nor participants in the agreements made between the parties and interest groups to ensure a smooth transition to democracy. Parties before 1973 saw conflict as the normal way of doing politics, and were prepared to be strident defenders of those interest groups with which the party sympathized. Since 1990, the emphasis has changed to the promotion of consensus. Interest groups left outside these pacts have increasingly taken direct action in opposition to the mainstream parties. Public sector unions, for example, have seen a marked increase in support going to the PC union leaders, who are prepared to take vigorous strike action in defence of their members' interests. The human rights lobby, always in an uneasy relation with the parties, was reinvigorated with the arrest of Pinochet and rejects the parties' cautious attitudes to solving the moral issues created by demands for justice. The most striking case has been that of the Mapuche indigenous community which has been successful in combining its own protests about encroachments on traditional lands, with the environmental lobby (including the international environmental lobby) and regional hostility to the overly centralized Chilean state.

The present state of party-interest group relations is uncertain. At the onset of the transition in 1990 it looked as if the traditional domination of the parties would continue. Interest groups were gravely weakened by the years of repression under military rule. There was a strong incentive to support the democratic government as a way of avoiding a relapse into authoritarianism. But that factor has lessened in intensity, and the interest groups have become stronger and more vocal.

The interests that have consistently received favourable treatment both under authoritarianism and under democracy are those of the business sectors. To start with, there are more of them since the privatization of large sectors of the economy has created a private ownership of basic public utilities. Moreover many of them are large investors in other countries, so have sources of international strength

relatively new in the world of Chilean business. They enjoy a privileged position because the government regards the private sector as key to development, because the private sector enjoys good relations with both parties of the right if it needs to oppose the government.

CONCLUSIONS

In comparative terms, the Chilean party system remains among the strongest and most institutionalized in Latin America. But it is difficult to assess the long-term prospects for this continuing because the parties are constrained to operate within an electoral system imposed by an outgoing dictatorship, and one which the parties of the left and centre, and even some members of right-wing parties would like to change. While such basic political arrangements do not reflect the preferences of the democratic majority, it is not possible to say that the party system—well established as it seems—would not undergo major changes with the introduction of some kind of proportional representational system.

There are, in addition, other factors of a temporary nature that have strongly influenced the party system. The demands of the transition for consensus, the coalition-producing effects of the electoral system, and the fear of an authoritarian regression, have produced a cautious party system prepared to limit the scope of debate and to suppress conflict in the interests of governability. One change of a permanent rather than a temporary nature means that parties used to playing the brokerage and clientelistic roles characteristic of parties in state-centred economies have had to adapt to a totally different market-based economy in which their role as broker or intermediary is greatly reduced.

How far have Chilean parties made the transition from mass parties of ideology to modern parties of effective government? The transition is not an easy one to make, and arguably the parties in Chile have made it more successfully than in a number of other Latin American countries. Indeed, the political and economic success of the transitional governments owes a great deal to the role and function of the parties. Democracy in Chile in a way not typical of Latin America is party democracy. Peter Mair's analysis of the changing role of parties in Western Europe may be applied to Chile:

On the ground, and in terms of their representative role, parties appear to be less relevant and to be losing some of their key functions. In public office, on the other hand, and in terms of their linkage to the state, they appear to be more privileged than ever. In terms of the classic functions of party, then it might be concluded that while some of these functions have been undermined (such as the articulation of interests and the aggregation of demands, and perhaps also the formulation of public policy) other functions have acquired an increased importance and visibility (such as the recruitment of political leaders and, above all, the organization of government) (Mair 1997: 153).

In a sense, the party system in Chile is a victim of its own success. Parties played a key role in the politics and economics of the transition, and in a process of economic development without parallel in recent Chilean history. Parties have contributed to managing some of the thorny issues of the transition—not least that of the human rights issue. Parties have contributed to the institutionalization of a generally well-functioning political system. But the challenges have changed and it is less clear that the party system is capable of dealing with these newer challenges, or of stemming the process of erosion of support for parties and the party system. In order to respond to decreasing commitment to parties and elections, the parties need to become more participatory, more inclusive and to accept the positive role of political conflict as well as that of political consensus.

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Political Parties in Costa Rica

Democratic Stability and Party System Change in a Latin American Context

John A. Booth

Costa Rica is Latin America's oldest and most stable democracy, but its party system began to change significantly in the 1990s. The Costa Rican democratic regime, founded in 1949, is about the same age as those of Germany, Ireland, Israel, and Sweden, and older than those of France, Greece, Portugal, and Spain. While evidence of Costa Rica's democratic consolidation and stability abounds, a sense of 'malaise'¹ has nevertheless invaded the national political scene as institutional roles and political possibilities have evolved. Some of this malaise is rooted in the political parties, and in particular in the 'feeling of divorce between the dynamics of the parties and the daily concerns of the citizens' (Rojas Bolaños and Sojo 1995: 8).

Parties play a central but evolving role in Costa Rican politics. The party system has changed significantly since the late 1940s yet until the early 2000s was less volatile than most others in Latin America (Roberts and Wibbels 1999: 577). Occasional opposition victories kept elections competitive in Costa Rica despite decades of predominance by the social-democratic National Liberation Party (Partido de Liberación Nacional, PLN). Electoral competition increased with the birth in 1983 and subsequent development of a strong Christian Democratic alternative, the Social Christian Unity Party (Partido Unidad Social Cristiana, PUSC). Global forces in the 1990s appeared to propel the PUSC towards pre-eminence in the party system.² Growing difficulties for Costa Rica's social democrats and the rise of this centre-right competitor paralleled a pattern seen elsewhere in Latin America (Steichen 1992; Chalmers, Martin, and Piester 1997; Filgueira and Papadópulos 1997; Hershberg 1997; Roberts 1997).

¹ In Spanish the term is *malestar* (author's translation) from Rojas Bolaños and Sojo 1995: 8. Dobles (1998: 28) writes of *desencanto*, literally 'disenchantment' or 'unhappiness'. This and all other translations from the Spanish are by the author.

² On the global forces affecting Central America, see Chase-Dunn (1989, 1998), Robinson (1996, 1998), Booth (2000), and Booth and Walker (1999), and Booth, Wade, and Walker (2006).

Costa Rica's party system by the 1990s appeared to have developed a duopoly of strong centrist parties, despite a steady rise in the overall number of parties. Other important changes, driven by forces both global and domestic, include the ideological convergence of the major parties, declining small party influence, and the rise of open presidential primaries and media-driven 'wholesale' politics that have weakened the major parties' membership bases. Concerns arose about the system's overall stability when citizens in the 1990s began to report low trust in parties and declining confidence in national institutions. These concerns intensified when traditionally high voter turnout declined sharply in 1998, and further still in 2002. The PLN suffered a schism and turned in its worst election performance ever in 2002 (Furlong 2000; Seligson 2000; Seligson, Booth, and Gómez 2003), leading observers to question Liberación's very future. With the candidacy of former PLN President Oscar Arias in 2006, however, the party reversed its slide to recapture the presidency. In an equally dramatic change of fortune, the corruption-plagued PUSC virtually collapsed in 2006.

THE COSTA RICAN POLITICAL SYSTEM

Foundation of the democratic regime³

A small territory distant from colonial centres during Spanish rule and with relatively few indigenous people, Costa Rica after independence developed a strong yeoman peasantry and a civilian rather than military-dominated political elite. Coffee cultivation and exporting in the nineteenth century entrenched a coffee-growing (*cafetalero*) upper class, created a rural wage-labouring class, and exposed Costa Rica to global market forces. Railroads built in the 1870s and 1880s to export coffee also helped facilitate banana cultivation and exporting in the 1890s. From these industries' workers arose the Costa Rican labour movement. The *cafetaleros*, divided among various ideologically liberal factions, faced growing working-class challenges and internal divisions during the 1920s and 1930s as society and production diversified and the world economy declined, pulling Costa Rica down with it. Although indirect elections had occurred earlier, free elections with adult male suffrage began in 1919.

The contemporary Costa Rican political system arose from the settlement of a 1948 civil war that resolved a decade of conflict among the traditionally dominant coffee-grower bourgeoisie, the working class represented by communist-led

³ Material in this section drawn mainly from Bell (1971), Schifter Sikora (1979), Ameringer (1982), Peeler (1984), Yashar (1997), and Booth (1998).

unions, and sundry other middle-class actors. During the 1940s a charismatic social-Christian paediatrician, Rafael Angel Calderón Guardia (and his successor Teodoro Picado Michalski), forged and maintained a coalition with the Catholic Church and communist-led unions. They enacted social security and labour law reforms that benefited depression-impooverished workers. This alienated Calderón Guardia's erstwhile cafetalero allies in his Republican Party, other upper-class politicians and parties, and emerging middle-class forces led by social democrat José Figueres Ferrer.

Escalating political tensions came to a head during 1948 when Calderón Guardia stood for a second term against Otilio Ulate Blanco of the National Union Party (Partido Unión Nacional—PUN), who was backed by other cafetalero interests and middle-sector groups. Fraud perpetrated by the opposition gave the victory to Ulate, which prompted the Congress (dominated by newly elected Calderón Guardia's supporters) to overturn the presidential election. This provided the pretext for José Figueres Ferrer and his National Liberation Movement (Movimiento de Liberación Nacional) to rebel against the regime. In a short but bloody civil war the Liberacionistas defeated the government's armed forces and labour union troops. The resulting National Liberation *junta* ruled for eighteen months, nationalized key economic sectors, decreed taxes on wealth, retained the Calderonista labour and social security laws to placate the working class, and called a Constituent Assembly election.

Liberacionista candidates fared badly in the 1949 Constituent Assembly election. Ulate's victorious delegates engineered a moderate, liberal constitution rather than the more radical document sought by Liberación. The 1949 constitution, however, abolished the armed forces and thus rid Costa Rica of an institution often disruptive of democracy elsewhere in Latin America. It also provided for female and black suffrage and established an independent electoral agency, the Supreme Electoral Tribunal (Tribunal Supremo de Elecciones—TSE), that would effectively eliminate election fraud. The junta turned over power to Ulate in 1949, the year of the foundation of the democratic regime.

In 1951 the Liberación movement leaders founded the social-democratic PLN. The party nominated Figueres Ferrer for president in 1953 and captured both the presidency and control of the Legislative Assembly. From 1949 to the 1950s, the new lines of Costa Rican democracy took shape. The new constitution provided democratic rules of the political game while Figueres and Liberación forged an elite settlement with upper-class forces (represented in several political parties) that established the current regime (Peeler 1985). Social-democratic policies, their precursors in Calderón Guardia's social security and labour legislation and in the junta's nationalization of key economic sectors, established a new welfare-oriented, regulatory state with a major role in the promotion of economic development. With women in the electorate after 1949, turnout rates rose above

TABLE 11.1. *Evolution of the Costa Rican electorate and turnout, selected presidential elections, 1919–2006*

Year	National population	Registered	Per cent regist.	Votes cast	Turnout % reg.	Turnout % pop.
1919	453,127	84,987	18.8	48,167	56.7	10.6
1928	484,370	116,933	24.1	71,786	61.4	17.8
1936	570,023	n.d. ^a	n.d. ^a	89,325	n.d. ^a	15.7
1944	685,302	n.d. ^a	n.d. ^a	136,806	n.d. ^a	20.0
1953	868,741	293,678	33.8	197,489	67.2	22.7
1962	1,224,687	483,980	39.5	391,406	80.9	30.2
1970	1,606,476	675,285	39.8	562,766	83.3	33.2
1978	2,098,531	1,058,455	50.4	860,206	84.2	41.0
1986	2,666,000	1,486,474	55.1	1,216,600	81.8	45.6
1990	2,922,000	1,692,050	57.9	1,384,326	81.8	47.4
1994	3,347,000	1,881,348	56.2	1,525,979	81.1	45.6
1998	3,672,000	2,045,980	55.7	1,431,913	69.9	39.7
2002	3,913,000					
1st Round		2,279,036	58.2	1,529,845	68.8	39.1
Run-off		2,279,851	58.3	1,339,480	60.2	34.2
2006	4,027,846	2,550,613	60.9	1,623,992	65.2	40.3

^a No data available.

Sources: Nohlen (1993: 188), Booth (1998: 46), TSE (1999*b*, 2002*a*, 2002*c*, 2006*a*, 2006*c*); population estimates for 2002 and 2006 calculated from CIA (2003, 2006).

30 per cent of the population by the 1960s (Table 11.1). A provision for mandatory voting passed in the late 1960s further elevated voter turnout above 40 per cent of the population. Voter turnout peaked at 47.4 per cent in 1990, from which it has since declined.

Elections and the party system in the Costa Rican democratic regime

Costa Rican elections, administered impeccably by the Supreme Electoral Tribunal, have been consistently fair and transparent since 1953.⁴ The National Liberation Party virtually dominated the new regime for almost four decades, alternating in power with a coalition of parties. Until the early 1980s the PLN's main opposition consisted of several conservative parties that sometimes coalesced to oppose the PLN with a unified presidential and legislative slate. This coalition usually ran under the 'Unity' or 'Unification' label (hereafter 'Unity'), and eventually became the Christian Democratic PUSC in 1983.

Tables 11.2 and 11.3, respectively, present the results of Legislative Assembly and presidential elections, and show that the numbers of parties and presidential candidates have increased steadily over time despite the consolidation of Unity's several parties into the PUSC. The sources of multiple parties are varied. First, regional parties (not shown in Table 11.2) proliferated in the 1980s and 1990s,

⁴ The president and Legislative Assembly share simultaneous four-year terms.

TABLE 11.2. *Costa Rican legislative assembly elections and representation, 1953–2006*

Year	No. of parties contesting	No. of parties elected	No. of seats to PLN	No. of seats Unity/PUSC ^a	No. and % of seats to other parties	Effective number of parties ^b
1953 ^c	4	4	30	—	15 (33%)	1.80
1958 ^c	8	5	20	11	14 (31%)	2.82
1962 ^d	8	4	29	28	1 (2%)	2.00
1966	5	3	29	26	2 (4%)	2.14
1970	9	4	32	22	3 (5%)	2.14
1974	12	8	27	16	14 (25%)	2.75
1978	15	5	25	27	4 (7%)	2.37
1982	16	5	33	18	6 (11%)	2.24
1986	13	5	29	25 ^e	3 (5%)	2.20
1990	14	5	25	29 ^e	3 (5%)	2.20
1994	13	6	28	25 ^e	4 (7%)	2.28
1998	23	6	23	27 ^e	7 (12%)	2.48
2002	18	6	17	19 ^e	21 (37%)	2.98
2006	27	8	25	5 ^e	27 (47%)	3.32

^a Unity (Unidad or Unificación) coalition; did not always fully coalesce.

^b Effective parties is calculated as $1/\sum(\% \text{ of legislative seats}_i^2)$, where i is the PLN, Unity/PUSC, and all other parties' seats combined. This is a variant of the formula for effective parties employed by Laakso and Taagepera (1979) as discussed in Lijphart (1994: 68). See also Lijphart (1999: 77). The mean effective number of parties for 1953–8 is 2.28.

^c The Legislative Assembly had forty-five seats until the 1962 election, when the number rose to fifty-seven.

^d Assembly has fifty-seven seats from 1962 on.

^e Social Christian Unity Party (Partido Unidad Social Cristiano—PUSC).

Sources: Nohlen (1993: 192–98), Rovira Mas (1994: 56), Mora, E. (1998), Booth (1998, Table 4.1), Lijphart (1994:165–7), TSE (1999a, 2002b, 2006b), and Asamblea Legislativa (2003).

but only one or two normally captured Assembly seats.⁵ Second, several small Marxist parties achieved success as the Pueblo Unido (United People) coalition, which won as many as four of fifty-seven seats in the Assembly during the 1970s and early 1980s. Left party fragmentation, an erosion of organized labour, and public unease about the revolutionary movements elsewhere in Central America rapidly undermined the left's electoral success in the late 1980s.⁶ Third, other ideological parties have appeared. For example, in 1998 the Libertarian Party (Partido Libertario) captured a surprising 3.1 per cent of the legislative vote

⁵ The most successful regional party was the Cartago-based Carthaginian Agricultural Union (Unión Agrícola Cartaginesa) which has usually captured one Assembly seat in every election since 1974. No regional party has ever won more than one seat at a time. No regional or agrarian party won an Assembly seat in 2002 or 2006.

⁶ Leftist vote share in percentage and total number of left party seats in the Legislative Assembly (within parentheses), by election: 1953, 0% (0); 1958, 0% (0); 1962, 1.8% (1); 1966, 0% (0); 1970, 3.5% (2); 1974, 3.5% (2); 1978, 7.1% (4); 1982, 7.0% (4); 1986, 3.5% (2); 1990, 1.8% (1); 1994, 1% (0); 1998, 1% (0) (Nohlen 1993: 197–8; Rovira Mas 1994: 64; Wilson 1998: 48; TSE 1999b; Zovato 2005). No leftist party won an Assembly seat in 2002 or 2006.

TABLE 11.3. *Costa Rican presidential elections, 1953–2006*

Year	No. of presid. candidates	Victorious (candidate)	Vote (%) for PLN	Vote (%) for Unity/PUSC	Combined PLN/PUSC vote percent	Party-system fragmentation ^a	Party volatility index ^b
1953	2	José Figueres F.	64.7	35.3 ^c	100.0	0.0	—
1958	3	Mario Echandi J.	42.8	46.4	89.2	10.8	22.4
1962	4	Francisco J. Orlich	50.3	35.3	85.6	14.4	10.7
1966	2	José J. Trejos F.	49.5	50.5	100.0	0.0	14.8
1970	6	José Figueres F.	54.8	41.2	96.0	4.0	8.2
1974	8	Daniel Oduber Q.	43.5	30.4	73.9	26.1	15.6
1978	8	Rodrigo Carazo O.	43.8	50.5	94.3	5.7	14.3
1982	6	Luis A. Monge A.	58.8	33.6	92.4	7.6	16.5
1986	6	Oscar Arias S.	52.3	45.8	98.1	1.9	10.9
1990	7	Rafael A. Calderón F.	47.2	51.4	98.6	1.4	5.4
1994	7	José M. Figueres O.	49.6	47.7	97.3	2.7	3.7
1998	12	Miguel A. Rodríguez E.	44.6	46.9	91.3	8.7	3.6
2002 ^d	13	Abel Pacheco D.	31.1	38.6	69.6	30.4	26.6
2006	14	Óscar Arias S.	40.9	3.6	44.5	55.5	35.0

^a Fragmentation index = 100 minus the top two parties' combined presidential vote percentage (Roberts and Wibbels 1999).

^b The volatility index is one half the sum of the absolute change in the percentage of each party's vote from prior election to the current one for the top four parties, plus the combined vote for all remaining parties (Roberts and Wibbels 1999).

^c The Unity coalition did not form in 1953; the second place party in this election was the Partido Demócrata (Nohlen 1993: 195).

^d The 2002 results are for the general election first round of 3 February 2002.

Sources: Nohlen (1993: 201–4), Rovira Mas (1994: 51), Booth (1998: Table 4.1), and TSE (1999b, 1999c, 2002a, 2002c, 2006a).

and sent two deputies to the Assembly (Movimiento Libertario 1999). In 2006 the Libertarians (as Movimiento Libertario) won 9.2 per cent of the vote and six Assembly seats. Fourth, other new parties were personalistic and transitory, formed to advance the presidential ambitions of certain individuals. For example, Rodrigo Carazo bolted the PLN in 1978 and won the presidency by leading his own party into the Unity coalition. Ottón Solís in 2002 led defected Liberationistas into the Partido de Acción Ciudadana (Citizen Action Party—PAC); PAC won eight legislative seats, but without a coalition finished a distant third in the presidential race. Four years later, however, PAC took seventeen seats and with 39 per cent of the popular vote Solís came within a hair's breadth of winning the presidency.

Costa Ricans elected three times more small party deputies to the 2002–6 Legislative Assembly than usual, the number rising to twenty-one of fifty-seven. The trend continued in 2006, with twenty-seven minor party deputies elected (Table 11.2). Regional parties had vanished from the legislature, while reformist, independent, and ideological tendencies had grown. Given that the small parties control no state resources with which to benefit followers and must therefore ally with the dominant party in the Legislative Assembly to obtain public largesse, they 'do not constitute real ideological or programmatic options for most of the Costa Rican electorate, except as a form of protest against the deficiencies, practices, and organizational schemes of the two great parties' (Rojas Bolaños 1995: 18).

Despite the proliferation of parties, the PLN and Unity/PUSC jointly controlled the political system for decades (Rojas Bolaños 1995:15–16). The PLN and the PUSC, between 1978 and 2001, never won less than a combined 87 per cent of the Legislative Assembly seats (Table 11.2). Jointly they captured over 90 per cent of the presidential vote in most elections between 1953 and 1998, and won over 97 per cent in 1986, 1990, and 1994. The effective number of parties (Table 11.2), calculated using the distribution of legislative seats according to a variant of the Laakso–Taagepera method (Lijphart 1994: 68), confirms this effective long-term duopoly. The effective number of legislative parties ranged from 1.80 to 2.82 and averaged 2.3 over 12 elections between 1953 and 1998. The effective number of parties in the Assembly in 2002 increased by a half point to 2.98, then jumped again to 3.32 in 2006 (Table 11.2), driven mainly by the rise of the PAC and the Partido Libertario.⁷

Tables 11.2 and 11.3 further reveal the extent of the PLN's long-term success in the first four decades after the civil war: Liberación won seven out of twelve presidential elections between 1953 and 1998. Five PLN presidents enjoyed a majority in the Assembly. The Unity coalition captured the presidency only three

⁷ Note that the effective number of parties in the electorate is somewhat higher for legislative elections. e.g., in the legislative elections of 2002, the effective number of electoral parties stood at 4.53 (compared to 2.98 in the Assembly itself), remaining virtually unchanged at 4.58 in 2006 (compared to 3.32 in the Assembly).

times between 1953 and 1986 (Table 11.3). None of these Unity presidents enjoyed a majority in the Assembly, and Unity's President Jose J. Trejos (1966–70) actually faced a PLN legislative majority. Thus even though control of the presidency and Legislative Assembly alternated before 1990, the PLN developed and easily defended its social-democratic national programmes for almost four decades. Despite the PUSC's presidential election success in the 1990s and early 2000s, the party never enjoyed a majority in the Assembly. In 2002 the PUSC saw its Assembly seat share decline, and then in 2006 PUSC representation fell precipitously.

Fragmentation of the Costa Rica party system,⁸ calculated from presidential election results, tended to remain low (Table 11.3) until 2002. It ranged from zero (1953, 1966) to a high of 26.1 per cent (1974), but averaged only 5.3 per cent for the entire period from 1953 to 1998. In the 2002 election, fragmentation jumped to 30.4 per cent, the highest ever, only to shoot up to 55.5 per cent in 2006. Electoral volatility⁹ declined from a plateau of around fifteen index points during the 1970s and early 1980s (Table 11.3).¹⁰ The mean volatility score for 1953–98 was 11.4, but in 2002 the index jumped to 26.6, and reached 35.0 in 2006. The sharp increases in party system fragmentation and electoral volatility since 2002, and the simultaneous decline in joint PLN/PUSC influence, indicate new instability in the party system. A main cause was the splitting off of the Citizen Action Party (PAC) from the PLN behind a defected Liberación leader and PAC presidential candidate Ottón Solís. The PAC deeply cut into PLN votes and legislative seats. However, other small parties also won more seats than usual in 2002 and 2006, and the PUSC lost legislative seats as well.

With respect to the underlying long-term pattern of party support, certain trends may be inferred by comparing election results from two periods as shown in Table 11.4. In four elections between 1962 and 1974 (i.e. in the Unity coalition era before the PUSC formed), the PLN averaged 50.4 per cent of the vote (averaging presidential and legislative results) while Unity coalitions averaged 39.9 per cent. In contrast, for the four elections between 1986 and 2002, the PLN's mean presidential and legislative vote fell to 41.7 per cent while the PUSC's rose to 44.7 per cent.¹¹ The parties thus entered the twenty-first century with the PUSC apparently fully competitive with the PLN.

The data reveal Liberación's emerging weakness. In the 1998 legislative contest the PLN won only 34.8 per cent of the valid vote, a result considerably worse

⁸ Party system fragmentation is measured as the vote percentage of the third-place to the *n*th-place party in presidential elections.

⁹ Electoral volatility is measured as one half of the summed absolute value of the change in the percentage of each party's presidential vote between two elections for the first-to the fourth-place parties.

¹⁰ Formulae for fragmentation and volatility based on ideas in Roberts and Wibbels (1999).

¹¹ Data drawn from TSE (1999*a*, 1999*b*, 1999*c*), Booth (1998: Tables 4.1 and 4.2); Lijphart (1994: Appendix C); and Pérez Brignoli (1998).

TABLE 11.4. *Evolution of party support in legislative and presidential elections, Costa Rica*

Mean (%) voting for ^a	1962–74	1986–2002	Change
National Liberation (PLN)	50.4%	41.7%	–8.7%
Unity/Social Christian Unity (PUSC)	39.9%	44.7%	+4.8%

^a Value is the mean of the presidential vote share and the legislative vote share for all elections in each period.

Sources: See Tables 11.2 and 11.3.

than its presidential vote of 44.6 per cent and 10 per cent less than its normal legislative vote share (TSE 1999*a*, 1999*b*). With the defection of PAC voters, the PLN's 2002 performance was even poorer: 27.1 per cent of the legislative vote and 31.1 per cent of the first-round presidential vote. The PUSC trounced the PLN in the presidential run-off (Costa Rica's first ever) by 58 to 42 per cent (TSE 2002*a*, 2002*b*). Survey evidence underscores these trends. CID-Gallup tracking polls taken at intervals since the early 1980s, as reported by Furlong (2000: Figure 1), suggest that roughly 41 per cent of Costa Ricans identified with the PLN between 1980 and 1988, while the then-emerging PUSC averaged around 30 per cent support. Some 27 per cent of respondents identified with another party or with none. Between 1992 and 2000, however, PLN identification became more volatile; it slipped to a low of 27 per cent during the Figueres Olsen administration in 1996 before recovering to above 35 per cent by 2000. In a 2002 national survey, identification with the PLN was again at only 28 per cent.¹² The CID-Gallup and 2002 national survey trends showed PUSC's support to be less volatile than the PLN's during the 1990s and early 2000s. In late 2002, 43 per cent of voting-age respondents identified themselves as PUSC sympathizers. Identification with other parties or with no party (combined) averaged around 30 per cent across polls from 1992 to 2002.

These public opinion data suggested that by the 2002 election the Social Christian Party had gained the upper hand over National Liberation. That said, the elections of 2006 produced a dramatic reversal in the fortunes of these two parties, with the PLN candidate (Arias) regaining the presidency and his party emerging as the largest in parliament, while PUSC was reduced to fourth place in both contests. These findings demonstrate the potential power of the three in ten Costa Ricans who are independent of the PLN and PUSC and thus constitute a critical swing vote in every election. Above all, the surprising reversal of roles of the PLN and PUSC in 2006 suggests not the restoration of PLN domination, but

¹² The 2002 national sample survey of approximately 1,000 voting-age citizens was designed and conducted in October 2002 under the direction of Miguel Gómez B., Mitchell A. Seligson, and the author. Funding came from the University of Pittsburgh, the University of North Texas, the University of Costa Rica, and Miguel Gómez B.

the end of the PLN/PUSC duopoly in Costa Rican politics and the emergence of a more volatile party system.

The National Liberation Party

The PLN's social base is diverse, but the majority of its support comes from middle-class and some working-class elements. The party's original ideology embraced social-democratic principles and guided the state's social-democratic economic development project. Under *Liberación* governments the state redistributed income towards the middle class and the poor, expanded social services, invested in many enterprises, and regulated the economy (Villasuso 1992). After the mid-1980s the PLN (at least when acting as the party-in-power) adjusted its national development strategy towards reduced state participation in the economy. *Liberación* governments, in office for twelve of the sixteen economically difficult years between 1980 and 1996, negotiated with international agencies that forced Costa Rica gradually to reduce the state's economic role. This accommodation to global neoliberal reformist pressures effectively shifted the PLN's ideology from its original social-democratic (centre-left) orientation towards the ideological centre. By the late 1980s the PLN, when acting as the party-in-power, had adopted a much stronger neoliberal, free-market orientation. This position resembled that of its major opponent the PUSC. This change, hotly debated internally, reflected the rise of certain globally oriented financial sector interests within the party's leadership, to supersede the protectionist industrial sector interests once dominant among PLN leaders (McDonald and Ruhl 1989: ch.11; Stiechen 1992; Rovira Mas 1994; Rojas Bolaños 1995: 19–22; Alvarez 1997; Booth 1998: 67–8, Wilson 1998).

By 2002 the PLN seemed sorely diminished and in crisis. It had for the first time suffered successive presidential losses and lost its dominance of the Legislative Assembly. Recent party primary elections had been marred by fraud. Internal leadership conflicts were intense and elements of the party's elite had defected to the insurgent PAC. Data from the 2002 national survey cited above showed PLN voters to be less system-supportive and engaged than PUSC voters, and also revealed that the PLN lost many of its 1998 voters to the PAC, PUSC, or to abstention in the 2002 election (Seligson, Booth, and Gómez 2003). Moreover, PAC voters had higher mean standards of living, more education, and on average were 5 years younger than PLN voters (see Table 11.6). By 2006¹³ (Table 11.6), PLN voters' interest in politics had declined below its 2002 level, but was higher than for other parties' voters. Some more auspicious signs emerged for the PLN in 2006: its voters had the highest confidence in parties. PLN voters' were on

¹³ The 2006 survey was a multiply stratified national sample of approximately 1,500 voting-age citizens, conducted under the auspices of the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) of Vanderbilt University. The author thanks LAPOP and its director Mitchell A. Seligson for these data. Funding was provided by the U.S. Agency for International Development.

average 3 years older than in 2002, but their standard of living and education remained the same. A third of 2002's PUSC voters reported having switched to vote for the PLN's Oscar Arias in 2006.

The Social Christian Unity Party

As the twenty-first century began, the PUSC appeared to have bested Liberación. The party was formed in 1983 under the leadership of Rafael Angel Calderón Fournier, son of former President Calderón Guardia (McDonald and Ruhl 1989: ch. 11). The parties that coalesced into the PUSC were moved less by a shared ideology than by the reality that 'to have remained divided would have strengthened the dominant position of [Liberación] and accentuated their own weakness', so they combined around the 'common denominator of frontal opposition the PLN' (Rojas Bolaños 1995: 20). The PUSC quickly eroded the PLN's electoral prowess and its policy accomplishments. Although they lost the 1986 election to the PLN, in 1990 the Social Christians won the presidency for Calderón Fournier and captured a Legislative Assembly majority. The PLN recaptured the presidency in 1994, but the PUSC denied it an Assembly majority. In 1998 PUSC candidate Rodríguez Echeverría won the presidency, but the party fell two seats short of a legislative majority. In 2002 the PUSC's Abel Pacheco won the presidency in an unprecedented run-off election, but the party lost eight of the twenty-seven seats it had held in the previous Legislative Assembly (Tables 11.2 and 11.3). These facts suggested that the Social Christians had risen to virtual electoral parity with the PLN by 1998 and by 2002 had prospects of replacing National Liberation as the dominant party. As we have already noted, however, such hopes were dashed in the elections of 2006, primarily because of corruption scandals involving PUSC Presidents Calderón and Rodríguez (Booth, Wade, and Walker 2006: 65–7).

The PUSC's social base included supporters and activists from various classes, but its leadership came from both traditional and modern agro-export groups and the commercial and financial bourgeoisie. With Rafael Angel Calderón Fournier as its dominant personality and its presidential nominee in 1986 and 1990, the PUSC drew working-class support like that once won to the Republican Party by the nominee's father and former president, the populist Calderón Guardia. The PUSC continued to draw votes from citizens with less education and lower standards of living in 2002 and 2006 (see Table 11.6). The PUSC had social-Christian roots in the Catholic Union Party of 1889–93, the Partido Reformista of the 1920s, and Calderón Guardia's coalition the 1940s. Although this tradition shaped the party's rhetoric, its effective ideology was *neoliberalism*, albeit moderated by Costa Rica's typical political centrism (Aguilar B. 1992; Stiechen 1992; Thibaut 1993; Rojas Bolaños 1995: 10–22; Booth 1998: 68). In its disastrous 2006 performance, PUSC presidential voters were on average 11 years older (at 49.14) than in 2002 and thus the oldest supporters of any party. PUSC voters reported a

very low level of interest in politics—similar to those who voted for tiny parties or did not vote at all (Table 11.6).

PARTY LEGITIMACY

The bulk of the structural evidence concerning the legitimacy of Costa Rican political parties suggests declining stability. Costa Ricans seem increasingly inclined to create new parties to seek office, make an ideological point, or express anger at an established party (Tables 11.2 and 11.3). The PLN/PUSC combined share of the presidential vote remained well above 90 per cent from 1978 through 1998 but fell below 70 per cent in 2002, and plunged below 50 per cent in 2006. In addition, many Costa Ricans did not vote in 1998 and 2002 (Table 11.1), although turnout recovered 5 points to 65.2 per cent in 2006. In sum, as the twenty-first century began, electoral turnout had diminished from the traditional more than 80 per cent range of the 1960s through the early 1990s, while the fortunes of the major two traditional parties had become volatile.

Turning to individual level survey data, the PLN in 2002 experienced a significant erosion of its voting base through defection to the insurgent Citizen Action Party. More than a sixth of 1998 PLN voters switched to the PAC in the first round of the 2002 election. This was nearly twice the PUSC's loss rate to PAC. Adding insult, 41 per cent of 1998 PLN voters abandoned the PLN to abstain or to vote for the PUSC in the 2002 first round. In the run-off, the PLN won back only one in four of the PAC first-round voters, doing worse than either the choice to vote PUSC or abstain (Seligson, Gómez, and Booth 2003). In 2006 the PLN did markedly better, as Oscar Arias picked up 27 per cent of the PUSC's 2002 voters and 7 per cent of the PAC's, while retaining 83 per cent of the PLN's own 2002 voters. The Citizen Action Party in 2006 retained 69 per cent of its 2002 voters and benefited most from the PUSC meltdown by picking up 43 per cent of 2002 PUSC voters (by contrast, the PLN's picked up only 33 per cent).

Surveys of Costa Ricans from 1995,¹⁴ 2002, and 2006 provide evidence on the social and political bases of the main parties. Table 11.5 reveals shifting explanations by citizens for their presidential vote choice. Voters for the two main parties in 1994 reported a relatively even mix between choosing based on the party, the candidate's attributes, or the programmes offered. By 2002, however, party identification dropped dramatically in importance for both main parties, while voting because of 'programmes and proposals' rose above the 50 per cent

¹⁴ The 1995 survey data were collected from a stratified urban-area survey of 701 voting-age citizens directed by the author and Mitchell A. Seligson, and field supervised by Cynthia Chalker, with funding from the University of North Texas.

TABLE 11.5. *Candidate choice factor, and trust in parties, Costa Rican presidential elections, 1994, 2002, and 2006*

	Voting behaviour (1994 presidential election)				
	PLN	PUSC	Fuerza Democrática	Other/did not vote	
What was the most important factor in your vote choice in 1994? (%)					
The party	43.8	31.2	18.8	—	
The candidate	29.6	47.6	43.8	—	
What was promised?	26.6	21.2	37.5	—	
How much confidence (trust) do you have in the parties? (mean, 1 = none . . . 7 = much)	3.55	3.55	2.27	3.67	
(N)	(284)	(239)	(15)	(160)	
	Voting behaviour (2002 presidential election) ^a				
	PLN	PUSC	PAC	Other/did not vote	
What was the most important factor in your vote choice? (%)					
The party	12.8	7.4	1.6	—	
The candidate	35.0	40.8	31.5	—	
The programmes and proposals	52.1	51.8	66.9	—	
How much confidence (trust) do you have in the parties? (mean, 1 = none . . . 7 = much)	3.42	3.52	3.08	3.08	
(N)	(236)	(390)	(126)	(213)	
	Voting behaviour (2006 presidential election)				
	PLN	PUSC	PAC	Mov. Libert.	Other/did not vote
What was the most important factor in your vote choice? (%)					
The party	15.8	65.5	5.5	6.3	—
The candidate	43.7	3.4	25.1	15.6	—
The programmes and proposals	31.6	24.1	53.3	51.6	—
How much confidence (trust) do you have in the parties? (mean, 1 = none, . . . 7 = much)	3.54	3.48	3.08	3.23	2.84
(N)	(29)	(455)	(366)	(64)	(75)

^a Reported 2002 first-round presidential election behaviour.

Sources: 1995 Urban Survey (N = 701); 2002 National Survey; 2006 National Survey.

mark. In 2006, with Arias as the nominee, PLN voters specified the candidate's attributes as their main motive for vote choice, with party identification lagging at 15.8 per cent. In contrast, two-thirds of 2006 PUSC voters—a tenth of their former ranks—indicated party loyalty as their reason.¹⁵ Meanwhile, voters for the smaller and insurgent Citizen Action and Libertarian parties reported deciding

¹⁵ These few PUSC voters were probably a corps of diehard PUSC loyalists, an interpretation bolstered by their advanced age (Table 11.6).

how to vote primarily on the basis of programmes and proposals in 2002 and 2006. Tracking reasons for vote choice from 1994 to 2006 brackets four presidential elections and suggests several important things about the parties. First, Costa Ricans on balance by 2006 manifested low and unstable party loyalty, and a propensity to switch votes based on transitory appeals of candidate attributes or issues. Second, loyalty to the PLN as a party, rather than to its candidate Oscar Arias, was low despite its 2006 victory. This bespoke potential future trouble for the PLN in the form of an eroded base of loyalists. Third, the PUSC's tiny 2006 presidential electorate, motivated so heavily by party loyalty alone and reliant on much older-than-average voters, probably indicated a party too wounded ever to recover as a viable electoral force. Finally, Costa Ricans who had deserted the PLN and PUSC for the insurgent Citizen Action and Libertarian parties were attracted mainly to their programmes and proposals. Together the PAC and ML in 2006 captured about half the presidential vote, another harbinger of a coming change.

Turning to a direct measure of party legitimacy, when asked their level of trust in the nation's political parties (Table 11.5), 1994 PLN and PUSC voters reported identical mean scores of 3.55 points on a 7-point index (1 indicating little confidence and 7 much confidence). Fuerza Democrática voters registered much lower confidence in parties at 2.27 index points, but non-voters surprisingly reported the highest level of confidence in the parties at 3.67. PLN voters in 2002 reported diminished confidence in parties, but in 2006 their mean score returned to 1995 levels (3.54). PUSC voters, a group that shrank over 90 per cent in 2006, expressed fairly stable confidence in parties across all three surveys. PAC voters in both 2002 and 2006 reported the same low level of support for political parties (3.08), an evaluation of parties that likely accounted for voting for an insurgent party instead of the wobbly PLN or discredited PUSC.¹⁶

What about the legitimacy of the party system overall (among all citizens)? In 1995 urban Costa Ricans averaged 3.55 on the party trust index—below the 4.0 scale mid-point—suggesting some mistrust of parties. In 2002, the whole national sample's trust in parties averaged 3.34, and by 2006 the sample mean was 3.16. However, given the serious national economic difficulties that afflicted PLN and PUSC administrations since the 1980s, the woes of the PLN in the late 1990s and early 2000s, and the corruption scandals afflicting PUSC administrations, one might plausibly interpret such party trust scores as reasonably robust, despite dismal performance. On the other hand, in 1995, 21 per cent of those interviewed registered an emphatic '*nada*' ('nothing', a score of 1) when asked about trust in the parties, and another 12.7 per cent chose the next lowest index number of 2. Thus in 1995 a third of urban Costa Ricans registered very low trust in parties,

¹⁶ The non-comparability of the 1995 (urban only) and 2003 and 2006 (national) surveys requires caution in the interpretation of these data.

TABLE 11.6. *Costa Ricans' attitudes towards politics, 2002 and 2006 (national) samples*

	Voting behaviour in 2002 presidential election				
	PLN	PUSC	PAC	Other/did not vote	
How discontented are you with politics? (%)					
Very discontented	15.1	13.4	17.3	23.6	
Somewhat discontented	75.4	72.2	74.0	64.4	
Not at all discontented	6.5	13.9	6.3	10.6	
How interested are you in politics? (1 = not at all ... 4 = very much)	2.27	2.36	2.21	2.03	
Standard of living index ^b (mean score)	5.41	4.91	6.40	4.64	
Total years of education	8.98	8.11	10.48	7.51	
Age (N)	39.12 (236)	38.18 (388)	34.75 (128)	31.84 (212)	
	Voting behaviour in 2006 presidential election				
	PLN	PUSC	PAC	Mov. Libert.	Other/did not vote
Confidence in political parties (1 = low ... 10 = high)	3.54	3.48	3.08	3.23	2.78
How interested are you in politics? (1 = not at all ... 4 = very much)	2.20	1.76	2.10	1.98	1.74
Standard of living index ^b	5.79	5.14	6.27	6.11	5.65
Total years of education	8.47	6.72	10.36	8.98	9.65
Age (N)	42.36 (456)	49.14 (29)	41.15 (367)	34.11 (64)	40.55 (78)

^a Reported first-round presidential election behaviour.

^b Index of living standard is based upon presence of luxury artefacts (television, microwave oven, and automobile) reported to be present in respondent's home.

Sources: 2002 and 2006 National Surveys.

contrasting to only 13.6 per cent choosing the most two trusting responses (6 or 7). By 2006 even more citizens (39.0 per cent) in the national sample were on the low end of the party trust scale, and fewer still had high trust (9.7 per cent). What one might call the 'party system disappointment ratio' (between Costa Ricans very disenchanting with the parties over those placing great trust in parties) was about 2.5 to 1 in 1994, but had risen to 4.0 to 1 by 2006.¹⁷ The growing reservoir of discontent with the parties detected in these surveys may have contributed to the turnout decline of 1998 and 2002.

Further evidence is shown in Table 11.6, where one sees that Costa Ricans' levels of expressed interest in/discontent with politics vary by party. PUSC voters

¹⁷ See also Rodríguez, Castro, and Espinosa (1998: 304–5).

in 2002 reported the highest levels of interest in politics and lowest levels of discontent with politics, while abstainers displayed the polar opposite pattern (lowest interest and highest discontent). PLN voters and PAC voters were in an intermediate position on interest in politics and unhappiness with politics, each more interested and less dissatisfied than those who did not vote. By 2006, mean scores for all respondents and by presidential vote choice had declined below 2002 levels.

Overall, the range of indicators reviewed suggests that, like many advanced industrial democracies, Costa Rica presents evidence of eroding party legitimacy, reduced turnout, increased volatility and party system fragmentation, the breakdown of a major party, weakening trust in parties, and low interest in politics (Webb 2002: ch. 15).

PARTY ORGANIZATIONAL STRENGTH

A long-standing system of public financing of elections has generally strengthened the major parties in electoral terms and placed small parties at a continual disadvantage. With the development of the Social Christian Unity Party and its rise to parity with National Liberation in the 1990s, both major Costa Rican political parties enjoyed a structural advantage that freed them from dependency on membership contributions.

Finance

The government subsidizes much of the parties' election costs in an amount up to 2 per cent of one year's national budget (calculated for each election based on the mean budget for the three previous years). This formula generated US\$ 38 million for party campaign coffers in 1998 (Wilson 1998: 49). The public campaign finance system, however, does not benefit all parties equally. Parties winning more than 5 per cent of the vote in a given election may receive public funds (*la deuda política*), proportionate to their share of the vote.¹⁸ Thus the largest parties receive most of the public subsidies—the PLN's share of the overall subsidy was 50 per cent between 1970 and 1994, the Unity/PUSC's 43 per cent (Wilson 1998: 50). The PLN and PUSC thus avoided the disadvantage of smaller parties until 2006—that of having to borrow funds in anticipation of reimbursement (hoping to reach the 5 per cent threshold), or having to raise all their funds from dues or private donations. In 2002 the PLN's public subsidy share was 31 per cent and the PUSC's 36 per cent. In 2002 the insurgent PAC received a greater public funding

¹⁸ Before 1991 the larger parties even received this subsidy before the campaign (based on their prior election vote share). In most elections only the PLN and Unity/PUSC benefited.

share (25 per cent) than any previous third party (TSE 2002*d*). For 2006 the total subsidy to parties was US\$ 27 million. Reflecting the dramatic shift in electoral results in 2006, the PLN's public election subsidy rose to 38 per cent of the total, followed by PAC (33 per cent), the Libertarian Movement (9 per cent), and PUSC (6 per cent) (TSE 2006*d*).

Other than public funding there exist no effective limits on 'private campaign donations and no ceilings on a party's total campaign spending' (McDonald and Ruhl 1989: 178). All spending on 'pre-campaign candidacies' (seeking a party's presidential nomination) must be privately financed. For the general election campaign, the PLN and PUSC's backing by wealthy economic interests gives great advantage over smaller parties. Not surprisingly, efforts to reform the system by reducing the larger parties' public funding advantage have failed in a Legislative Assembly consistently dominated by the PLN/PUSC duopoly.

Staff and organization

The PLN has long had the most elaborate organization and staff of Costa Rica's political parties.¹⁹ Its national directorate consists of the party's president, secretary-general, and treasurer (together the National Executive Committee), the leader of the PLN Legislative Assembly delegation, and various party secretaries responsible for subject area portfolios (e.g. political education, training, printing, and the party's library). There is a headquarters staff, and a national grass-roots network organized by *cantón* (county) that nominates municipal (cantonal) government candidates and chooses party provincial convention (*asamblea*) delegates. Provincial convention delegates nominate Legislative Assembly candidates and choose national convention delegates. The PLN national convention ratifies the PLN national legislative slate and presidential nominee (the latter chosen in a primary election open to all citizens).

Despite the PLN's extensive organization, certain factors weaken it. The national constitution's prohibition of re-election of president and of self-succession by legislative deputies and other elected officials undermines party discipline and reduces the legislative bench's cooperation with its incumbent president. A law banning public officials from holding party offices sharply separates the incumbent 'party-in-office' from the electoral party (the presidential campaign and the PLN staff), the latter a repository of aspirants for future office. These legal restraints²⁰ foment divisions in the PLN superficially related to ideological debates on economic policy but more fundamentally driven by competition for the presidential nomination (Rojas Bolaños 1995, Wilson 1998).

¹⁹ This section drawn from McDonald and Ruhl (1989: 175), Prieto J. (1992), Carballo Q. (1992), Rovira (1994), Rojas Bolaños (1995), Alvarez (1997), and Wilson (1998).

²⁰ These legal provisions also apply to and similarly affect the PUSC.

Prieto (1992) and Carballo (1992: 319–21) also attribute deterioration in the PLN's organization to the adoption of a direct, open presidential primary, and other reforms designed to democratize the party. These eroded the influence of once dominant insider-activists and the party's links to social organizations such as labour unions and cooperatives. '(P)arty structures are weakening and deteriorating... intermediate organs disintegrate, local nuclei die from lack of activity, the permanent structure weakens. All this coincides with the declining prestige—justified or not—of the "political class," of the "traditional" political leaders...' (Prieto 1992: 281–2).

Modernized competition for the presidency relying on the mass media has allowed presidential campaign organizations to supersede the party apparatus, which has lost importance in vote mobilization. Rojas Bolaños (1995: 33–4) contends that in the 1990 and 1994 elections the PLN presidential campaign organization almost entirely took over the party, whose apparatus 'practically disappeared', and only revived after the election. In 1994 the PLN victory was followed by a quick distancing of the new party-in-office from the formal party organization. This separation effectively blocked the party apparatus from shaping the Figueres Olsen government's public policy.

In sum, the PLN's organization by 2000 had lost some of its internal cohesion, especially between the party-in-office and the party apparatus, and between the legislative party and the presidency. The longer-term impact of the 2002 defection of many PLN leaders to the PAC remains to be determined. The presidential candidacy of former President and Nobel laureate Oscar Arias in 2006 revived the PLN at the ballot box, but many observers reserved judgement as to whether this represented the revival of the party or merely a transitory, candidate-driven recovery. In the vote for the PLN's Arias in 2006, only 6.5 per cent reported having voted for the PAC in 2002, so few of Liberation's 2002 defectors returned to the party's fold. In contrast, 27.4 per cent of Arias's voters reported having voted for the PUSC in 2002. Although Liberation thus garnered former PUSC voters, the PAC did even better among that group, picking up 44.6 per cent of its 2006 vote from former Social Christian Unity voters. Moreover, the PAC retained 69.2 per cent of its 2002 voters in 2006. Finally, Ottón Solís and the PAC defeated the PLN in the central and most rapidly growing provinces of San José, Alajuela, and Heredia. The PLN vote was strongest in two small and peripheral provinces, Guanacaste and Limón, and from this narrow margin came the PLN's national victory. Examined from the perspective of this meagre base and looking forward from 2006, the electoral prospects of the National Liberation Party appear full of challenges. The PUSC's constituent parties at first retained vestigial organizations, but these declined and the new party consolidated itself. The PUSC's general organization and staff structure resembled those of the PLN, with a National Executive Committee and other administrative offices. The same national provisions and laws (no self-succession in office, a ban on legislators holding party office) that affected the PLN also reduced the cohesion of the PUSC. Observers (Carballo

1992; Prieto 1992; Rojas Bolaños 1995; Wilson 1998) attributed to the PUSC some problems with party discipline and the rise of technocrats. Competition for the presidential nomination and economic policy debates provided an early focus of internal dissonance within the new party (Tovar Faja 1986: 96; Aguilar 1992: 299). Later, Calderón Fournier, president of PUSC, became its 1990 presidential nominee and took almost the entire party executive committee with him, first into the campaign and then into government. Thus ‘the formal leadership of the party passed into other hands and there arose a struggle over power within the party that undermined its influence within the government’ (Rojas Bolaños 1995: 34). The long-term impact of the 2006 election debacle on the PUSC remains to be seen at the time of writing, but the auguries appear bleak. Other Christian Democratic parties in Latin America (Venezuela, Guatemala, and El Salvador) have virtually vanished after disastrous election performances or corruption scandals. Costa Rica’s PUSC seems likely to share this fate.

Consultants

Both PLN and PUSC have employed consultants for polling and campaign advice. The PLN originated as a grass-roots party reliant on ‘retail politics’—local organizations, personal contacting, and face-to-face electioneering. The party adapted to the television era with modern ‘wholesale’ campaign advertising tactics. The PUSC, born in the age of television campaigning, has also employed modern, impersonal campaign methods. Thus, both parties’ would-be and actual presidential nominees have relied heavily on professional polling, advertising, and campaign advisers. Both have employed top advertising and campaign consultants from the USA, other Latin American countries, and their international party affiliates.

Membership

The critique of the PLN and PUSC as ‘sophisticated vote-mobilizing machines’ (Rojas Bolaños and Sojo 1995: 8) dominated by expensive, mass media-based campaign techniques evokes an earlier era when their precursors were associations of like-minded members who worked face-to-face with voters to capture power and thus promote shared ideological objectives (Camacho 1991: 581–2; Aguilar 1992: 299; Carballo 1992: 319–21; Prieto 1992). Recent critics describe PLN local organizations as ineffective or moribund, its mid-level leadership and activist cadres as weakened, and its links to broader civil society eroded. Television campaigning and public campaign finance have abetted such changes, but another culprit has been the adoption of open presidential primaries by the PLN and PUSC. As Prieto notes, speaking specifically of his own PLN and then more generally of all parties:

The parties are beginning to lose... their memberships. The very notion of 'member' of the Party begins to enter a crisis. [With the PLN's open presidential primary] the most important electoral decision made by the Party is no longer in the hands of its members, but in those of a promiscuous mix of *Liberacionistas* and *non-Liberacionistas*. The sovereignty of the Party ceases to be based in its membership.... The parties are thus losing their character as political organizations of citizens who share the same political position and who take part... in their activities and organization with a clear sense of belonging and affiliation. (Prieto 1992: 282)

Loosening membership bonds have rendered turnout in recent PLN primaries unstable. The PLN's primary turnout thus jumped 73 per cent from 1989 to 1993, then collapsed by two-thirds in 1997 (Alvarez 1997: 59–60). Despite various contingencies that might have depressed turnout in 1997 compared to previous PLN primaries (bad weather, an unpopular incumbent president, a lacklustre PLN primary campaign, and a Costa Rica–Canada soccer match on primary election day), citizen involvement in PLN candidate selection had generally become unpredictable by the 1990s.

The implications of this membership-loosening phenomenon are only partly clear. As noted above, the PLN lost ground (and probably committed adherents) after the 1970s. The PUSC, ascendant in the 1980s, nearly became dominant in the late 1990s and early 2000s. That both major parties have become 'mere electoral shells that can be stuffed with any filling' (Prieto 1992: 282), whose primary voters may come and go, indicates instability of memberships. Costa Ricans' growing penchant for switching parties in successive elections, combined with the eroding bases of loyalists, make both the PLN and PUSC vulnerable to desertion by the voters. In comparison to its heyday in the 1970s, by the early 2000s *Liberación* in particular had suffered in its organization and from the defection of both elites and voters. But it was the Social Christians, rather than *Liberación*, who fell victim to the voters' intense displeasure in 2006.

To compensate for the decline of the party apparatus as an instrument of policy implementation, PLN presidents beginning with Daniel Oduber Quirós (1974–8) have employed 'presidential delegates' (*delegados presidenciales*). Originally intended to serve as a local link in cantons with no deputies in the Legislative Assembly, the role soon became generalized to serve all cantons (and was also adopted by the PUSC). Presidential delegates 'identify problems, listen to demands, and mediate with government agencies and try to coordinate their local actions. Their manifest function is to make institutional actions locally effective, but their latent functions are different: the distribution of favours and the establishment of clientele networks' (Rojas Bolaños 1995: 52). Presidential delegates develop interests and agendas of their own, including advancing their own political careers. Others have acted corruptly for personal benefit or to divert government programme outputs to supporters of their party (Rojas Bolaños 1995: 51–4). Presidential delegates further weaken party organization by shifting

interest articulation and patronage functions to the presidency and away from the party apparatus and other elected officials.

Media

Several daily newspapers and television stations have partisan leanings. *La Nación*, the country's major newspaper, tends to favour the more conservative Unity/PUSC policies and governments and to look askance at those of the PLN. José Figueres Ferrer, frustrated by this bias, once established a pro-PLN major daily, *Excelsior*, to compete with *La Nación*, but it survived only a few weeks. Both the PUSC and PLN have utilized the major media of mass communications (newspapers, television, and radio) to campaign. Each party dedicates much of its campaign budget to advertising.

Parties across the ideological spectrum publish materials with ease. The PLN has enjoyed a long-time affiliation with the social-democratic Centro de Estudios Democráticos de América Latina (Latin American Centre for Democratic Studies—CEDAL), funded primarily by the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung of Germany. CEDAL holds conferences and symposia at its centre in Heredia. It underwrites and publishes studies that provide a social-democratic perspective on national problems. Central America's Christian Democrats, partially underwritten by Germany's Conrad Adenauer Foundation through a Guatemalan affiliate (Instituto Centroamericano de Estudios Políticos, INCEP), have widely disseminated materials on their movement, public policy, and party issues throughout the region, from which Costa Rica's PUSC regularly benefited.

SYSTEMIC FUNCTIONALITY

The evidence reviewed so far suggests a mixed picture for the health and functionality of Costa Rican parties. On the positive side, until the 2006 election the PLN and PUSC jointly dominated a competitive polity and have alternated in power. Costa Rica thus for decades met two important criteria of consolidated liberal democracy—an open and competitive electoral system dominated by two centrist parties. On the negative side, the internal cohesion and ties to membership of the two major parties have weakened owing to the prohibition of office-holder self-succession, open presidential primaries and 'wholesale' (mass media-based) campaigning. Citizens' trust in parties, tendency to vote based on party, and voter turnout have declined. Internal disaffection and schism have afflicted the National Liberation Party. And despite party proliferation, the effective ideological array of public policies considered in Costa Rica has diminished along with the electoral decline of left parties and the convergence of the PLN's economic model with the PUSC's neoliberal prescriptions. Finally, of course, the PUSC's disastrous

performance in 2006 left in question Costa Rica's effective two-party system. It remained to be seen whether the insurgent PAC, which came a very close second in the 2006 presidential race and won 30 per cent of the legislative seats, could win the presidency, become a stable centrist party, and re-establish a two-party system. The PAC appears to be the strongest candidate to replace the PUSC as the second major party in the system.

Governance

There appear few alternatives to party domination of the polity in Costa Rica, although at the time of writing, the stability of the party system has been deeply compromised. Two principal challenges to the extant system have arisen in recent decades: the possibility of democratic breakdown (insurrection and unconstitutional rule) in the 1980s, and personalistic domination of the parties and emergent populism in the 1990s. Both problems, however, subsided without dethroning the parties. A new challenge which has emerged in the 2000s is the possible realignment of the existing party system. The extent to which Costa Rica will experience continued high electoral volatility and a proliferation of short-lived parties, increasingly common across Latin America, remains to be seen.

Democratic breakdown

During the 1980s, the Marxist-led revolution in adjacent Nicaragua deepened many Costa Ricans' pronounced anti-communism (Booth 1998:131–2) and brought a flood of anti-Sandinista Nicaraguan exiles to Costa Rica. Nicaraguan counter-revolutionary groups and Costa Rican paramilitaries and rightists organized and agitated against the Sandinistas. Terrorists of the right and left carried out violent actions in Costa Rica. Groups favouring neutrality towards Nicaragua demonstrated and protested. Certain hard-line rightist elites appeared to threaten to overthrow President Luis Alberto Monge (1982–6) for his self-styled 'neutrality' towards Nicaragua. The era's severe recession also sparked urban and rural protests, some violent. Many feared that the turbulence would overwhelm the democratic political system. However, Costa Rica's lack of a standing military forced public officials to resolve the crises without resort to force. Adroit domestic and foreign policy manoeuvres by Presidents Monge and Oscar Arias Sánchez (1986–90) managed conflicting forces without institutional breakdown. The regional crisis eventually subsided after the Central American Peace Accord and 1990 demise of Nicaragua's revolution. Its external stressors removed, the Costa Rican constitutional system and the parties' role within it escaped this threat largely unscathed.²¹

²¹ On this period and these problems, see Mora A. (1992), Vargas C. (1992), Honey (1994), and Booth (1998: chs. 6 and 9).

Personalism

Some observers have noted the return of personalism or even *neocaudillismo* to the party system (Prieto 1992; Sojo 1995). Both the PUSC and PLN have roots in charismatic political figures. The PUSC's populist social-Christian antecedents arose from the Republican Party-Communist-Catholic Church alliance of the 1940s forged by one of Costa Rica's two great twentieth-century *caudillos*, the charismatic President Calderón Guardia. Although institutionally distinct from the Republican Party and embracing neoliberal economic policies, the PUSC appropriated Calderón Guardia's reformist and redistributive image through the person of his son, the new party's founder Rafael Angel Calderón Fournier. 'Junior' Calderón capitalized heavily on his father's fame as an advocate of social justice. The power of the name drew to the new party working-class voters who hoped the new Calderón would redress the deteriorated conditions of the working classes (Aguilar 1992; Prieto 1992). Calderón Fournier won the presidency on his second attempt in 1990, but the PUSC lost the next election. The charismatic leader of insurgent forces of the 1948 civil war and founder of the PLN, José Figueres Ferrer, Costa Rica's other great twentieth-century caudillo, served two terms as president (1953–8, 1970–4).²² At his death 'Don Pepe' was widely hailed—perhaps wistfully—as the country's 'last caudillo'. Responding to the challenge of the PUSC's Calderón Fournier and his powerful family name appeal, PLN primary voters nominated Figueres Ferrer's son José Maria Figueres Olsen for president in 1994. The strategy succeeded in the short run and helped the PLN to win the election by invoking the older Figueres' social-democratic policy record and name (Prieto 1992: 278–9).²³

As it turned out, however, the 'last caudillo' observation proved prescient. Neither of these sons of famous men recapitulated his father's striking success because neither inherited his precursor's great personal appeal. Moreover, both governed during a period of structural adjustment and severe fiscal austerity forced on the country by international lenders. Lacking charisma and beset by fiscal constraints, neither of these scions could meld personality with deliverable policy benefits to forge a new populist alliance. Saddled with implementing the country's third structural adjustment agreement and with a corruption scandal in his administration, Figueres Olsen became profoundly unpopular. Calderón Fournier was later deeply implicated in a corruption scandal involving his presidency in 2004 (Booth, Wade, and Walker 2006: 65–6).

²² Figueres Ferrer was able to serve as president twice because the 1949 constitution originally allowed presidents to be re-elected after sitting out one term. The constitution was later amended to provide for a maximum of one presidential term only. Desiring another term, at least one former president, Daniel Oduber, unsuccessfully lobbied the Assembly to drop the single-term-only provision for presidents and to permit additional presidential terms. A Constitutional Court ruling in 2003 in favour of Oscar Arias eventually allowed a second presidential term (Zovato 2005).

²³ See also Carballo (1992: 318–21).

Personalism nevertheless continued as the new century began: Abel Pacheco, a popular television personality, captured the PUSC nomination and the presidency in 2002. In 2003 former President Oscar Arias, a critic of recent PLN leadership and at least indirectly linked to the breakaway PAC, pursued and won a Constitutional Court ruling that the ban on former presidents holding office a second time was unconstitutional (Zovatto 2005: 152). Arias captured the PLN nomination and narrowly won the presidency in 2006. In time of anger over previous presidents' corruption and declining popular support for government, Arias' public stature and honest reputation undoubtedly contributed to his victory. Perhaps calling into question his personal magnetism, however, Arias managed to convert a comfortable lead into a razor-thin win of only a few thousand votes by taking unpopular stands on certain economic issues late in the campaign.²⁴

Two further factors may probably impede personalism or populism from supplanting party governance: First, Costa Ricans' strongly prefer the alternation of parties in power, even to the point of sometimes voting against their own party to assure it (Baker 2000; Carvajal Herrera 1978; Sojo 1995: 78). Second, notwithstanding the 2003 court ruling allowing former presidents to run for office again, the constitution still bars immediate presidential self-succession. So even should some hypothetical charismatic candidate successfully bypass the parties to win power and also simultaneously wield the policy resources with which to cement a popular base, it nevertheless seems improbable that the Legislative Assembly would either revise the constitution to allow immediate presidential re-election, or that enough Costa Ricans would vote to immediately re-elect even a popular president.

Parties and policy differences

Because of the national economic development model's enormous importance, I concentrate only on that issue here. For decades after the civil war, the National Liberation Party dominated the public policy arena and transformed the economy. The Liberación junta retained Calderonista labour and social security legislation, nationalized banking and insurance, and incorporated extensive social guarantees into the 1949 constitution. After winning its first election in 1953 the National Liberation Party continued elaborating the social-democratic development model for nearly four decades: An activist state redistributed income towards the middle class, delivered extensive social services and educational opportunity, regulated the economy, and aggressively promoted economic growth by means of import substitution industrialization and regional integration (Bulmer-Thomas 1987;

²⁴ Manuel Rojas Bolaños, lecture on Costa Rica, at the symposium 'América Latina 2006: Balance de un año de elecciones', Instituto Interuniversitario de Iberoamérica of the University of Salamanca, the Fundación Carolina, and the Centro de Estudios Políticos y Constitucionales, Madrid, Spain, 2006 May 30.

Rovira Mas 1989, 1992: 242–5; Villasuso 1992: 426–7; Booth 1998: 154–75; Wilson 1998: 81–111).

The PLN implemented this development model during a protracted favourable period of world economic growth. Real gross domestic product (GDP) quintupled between 1950 and 1975, and GDP per capita more than doubled. Agriculture's economic share shrank, industrialization grew, and the public sector ballooned. Costa Ricans' welfare improved dramatically for several decades: unemployment and consumer prices remained low, income inequality and infant mortality declined, and real wages, literacy, educational achievement, and life expectancy all rose. The radical left eschewed revolutionary demands against an elected government that consistently improved workers' living standards. For decades Liberación's conservative foes lacked the institutional power required to challenge the development model.

Liberación's policy honeymoon with the Costa Rican economy eventually ended in crisis. The oil price shock that began in 1973 devastated Costa Rica and its oil-importing Central American Common Market (CACM) partners. Rapid inflation drove down demand and real wages, which further cut consumer demand. Rather than limit public services or raise taxes, Costa Rica's governments (both PLN and opposition) attempted to protect the economy by borrowing their way through the crisis. This mitigated the recession, but quickly built up a massive public debt. Foreign debt as a share of GDP ballooned from 12 per cent in 1970 to 147 per cent in 1982. Foreign interest payments devoured a third of export earnings, further weakening the public and private sectors. Similar calamities in neighbouring countries combined with escalating civil wars to collapse Costa Rica's regional markets and to drive away tourists and foreign capital. In 1981 the administration of Rodrigo Carazo Odio defaulted on Costa Rica's foreign debt, pushing the currency (the *colón*) into a ten-year slide that eroded 90 per cent of its value.

Taking office in 1982, PLN President Monge sought international assistance and found two kinds—each with a high cost. At first, a US desire for a southern base for its efforts to unseat the Sandinista revolution led to pressure on Monge to collaborate with the Nicaraguan counter-revolutionaries and their American helpers. In exchange, the USA provided Costa Rica with over US\$ 1.1 billion in aid during the mid-1980s, much of it in outright grants. (This ended when President Arias advanced the Central American Peace Accord, which the Reagan administration strongly opposed.) By 1985 a second source of international aid had to be invoked.

The USA and other international lenders with a shared neoliberal agenda for economic reform forced Costa Rica into three structural adjustment agreements (SAAs) in 1985, 1989, and 1995, under the Monge, Arias, and Figueres Olsen administrations, respectively. In exchange for the credit to restructure the foreign debt and keep the economy alive, the USA, International Monetary Fund, Paris

Club, and Inter-American Development Bank forced Costa Rica to enact neoliberal economic policies that revolutionized the development model. Supported by conservative domestic economic interests and by the neoliberal PUSC (which fortuitously avoided having to sign or implement any of the SAAs), Costa Rica trimmed its public sector payroll, social service programmes (education, health), and infrastructure investment, privatized most of the nation's many publicly owned enterprises and banking, and cut subsidies to agricultural commodities, public utility consumers, and housing. The government began energetically to promote non-traditional exports, reduce trade barriers, and substantially integrate Costa Rica into the global economy (Clark 1995; Booth 1998: ch. 8; Wilson 1998: 113–50).

Scholars (Steichen 1992; Robinson 1996; Filgueira and Papadópulos 1997; Hershberg 1997; Roberts 1997; Vilas 1997) have observed two effects of economic globalization and neoliberalism on political parties: (a) At the macro level, the structural constraints imposed by globalization and neoliberalism would alter the political playing field by (i) undermining ruling social-democratic parties' statist programmes; (ii) undercutting redistributive and protectionist measures and thus alienating working- and middle-class supporters; (iii) boosting parties more amenable to neoliberal reforms; and (iv) narrowing the effective ideological range of the party system and programmes put before voters.²⁵ (b) At the micro level, (i) ideological disputes would increase within social-democratic parties between the party-in-government and the party's future candidates; (ii) social-democratic parties' campaigns would lose programmatic focus as they became unable to campaign on either their traditional programmes or unpopular new reformist options; and (iii) campaigns would turn to personalistic or populist electoral appeals to distract voters' attention from unpalatable economic policies. These observed trends also apply to Costa Rica and its parties.

Neoliberalism brought great risks for Costa Rica's social-democratic National Liberation Party, especially because it had to implement structural adjustment. As already noted above, neoliberalism divided *Liberación* between traditionalist social democrats and advocates of neoliberal policies (Stiechen 1992: 270; Wilson 1998:125–37). Second, while radical left parties had won Assembly seats and influenced organized labour, *Liberación* had felt constrained to co-opt the working class through redistributive policies. The left's decline in the 1980s, however, reduced the PLN's perception of need for such policies. Popular sector interests within the PLN thus declined as neoliberal reformers gained ground. Finally, successive PLN administrations had to manage the complex technical

²⁵ Effective ideological range is the ideological distance in left-right terms between the dominant parties' programmes and policies. Effective range may be distinguished from the overall ideological range of programmes proposed by all parties, including minor ones.

constraints of governing while implementing SAAs, which accentuated the ascendancy of neoliberal technocrats within the PLN-in-government (Prieto 1992: 281; Sojo 1995: 84–6). In contrast, Liberacionistas contemplating future candidacies (especially presidential pre-candidates) remained more faithful to traditional PLN ideology because of its potentially broader public appeal.

Another neoliberal liability for the PLN was the erosion of public support, including some of its base. As already noted, turnout in PLN presidential primaries plunged between 1993 and 1997 due to ‘the negative weight of an unpopular Liberación administration, . . . [and] a very fragmented party’ (Alvarez 1997: 60). Liberación lost control of the Legislative Assembly in 1990 and failed to recapture a majority in four subsequent elections. Oscar Arias won the PLN’s last absolute presidential vote majority with 52.3 per cent in 1986. The party’s weakened subsequent presidential election performance is clearly underscored by Arias’ narrow victory in 2006 (see Tables 11.2 and 11.3).

As already noted, the global conjuncture favoured the formation and growth of the neoliberal Social Christian Party. The party also enjoyed the good fortune that no PUSC government had to sign a structural adjustment agreement. Calderón Fournier’s administration (1990–4) embraced structural adjustment, which had seriously lowered the short-term economic well-being of most Costa Ricans. However, to compensate for the widespread decline of living standards in the 1980s and early 1990s and retain its voting base, the PUSC diverted public infrastructure investment and health and education spending into palliative social programmes of housing and temporary welfare assistance (Rojas Bolaños 1995: 36–50; Booth 1998: ch. 8). ‘Even Rodríguez, with his long record of support for neoliberal economic measures, shied away from neoliberal policies that were likely to be very unpopular with his party’s supporters’ (Wilson 1998: 161). The recent decline in presidential votes and legislative seats for the PUSC between 1994 and 2002) suggested increasing voter wariness towards the party. Voters punished the PUSC soundly in 2006 following two corruption scandals involving recent PUSC presidents (Tables 11.2 and 11.3).

Does party government remain legitimate in Costa Rica? The main indicators of a problem for party government are four: Third party votes in 1998 roughly doubled their level of the previous three elections, trebled in 2002, and then doubled again in 2006, reaching 55.5 per cent of the total vote (Tables 11.2 and 11.3). Voter turnout declined in the 1998 and 2002 elections. Trust in parties flagged (Table 11.5). First, the PLN suffered its multiple woes (low presidential primary turnouts, PAC schism, and poor electoral performance) before recovering with Arias’s election in 2006. Then, even more dramatically, the PUSC’s presidential vote declined from an average of 48 per cent from 1986 through 1998 to 38.6 per cent in the first round in 2002 to the disastrous 3.6 per cent in 2006. PUSC’s legislative delegation averaged twenty-five of the Assembly’s fifty-seven seats from 1986 to 2002, but crashed to only five in the 2006 election.

While these phenomena may suggest a significant realignment in the party system and a crisis for the PUSC, they do not suggest a general legitimacy crisis for the party system. Former President Arias attributed the 1998 drop in election turnout to ‘terrible candidates’ rather than to some deeper problem.²⁶ (It will be interesting to see whether Arias’s presidency can resuscitate Liberación.) Furlong (2000: 12–15) described the 1998 election as ‘lacklustre’ due to new restrictions on campaign displays and the divisions within the PLN.²⁷ At almost 70 per cent of registered voters, the first-round presidential election turnouts in 1998 and 2002 were low for Costa Rica, but still robust compared to other consolidated democracies. Voter anger at the PLN and PUSC in 1998, 2002, and 2006 (justifiable after two decades of economic difficulty, curtailed services, and reduced infrastructure investment) manifested itself not only in abstention but in votes for third parties—not in itself a repudiation of parties. Finally, despite modest erosion over the 1980s and 1990s, Costa Ricans’ support for national institutions and democratic norms has nevertheless remained high overall (Seligson 2000, 2002).

Political recruitment

A professional political class dominates Costa Rican politics. Militancy within the PLN or Unity/PUSC parties has long been the normal path to membership in the political class and to public office. The president fills most of the upper echelons of the bureaucracy with the president’s partisans. Lower-level bureaucratic employees are also often recruited into agency positions via partisan activism.²⁸ The professionalism of the political class persists despite apparently countervailing pressures from party alternation in power and the constitutional ban on self-succession in office. ‘Officials, often educated as lawyers, maintain a permanent rotation between legislative posts and executive branch positions’ (Sojo 1995: 78).

Relatively few office-holders from either PUSC or PLN come from the business community (Sojo 1995: 78) despite both parties’ ties to the national bourgeoisie. For example, only six of twenty cabinet positions in the Calderón Fournier administration (30 per cent) were filled by business leaders, while only five of twenty-seven cabinet posts in the Figueres Olsen government (19 per cent) directly represented economic groups or interests (Sojo 1995: 78–81). Sojo contends that powerful economic actors play modest direct roles in governance under either major party, yet they contribute heavily to both ‘because neither party leaves business interests unprotected’ (1995: 80).

²⁶ Oscar Arias Sánchez, conversation with the author, Denton, Texas, March, 1999.

²⁷ Furlong (2000:13–15) attributes these internal divisions to apparent fraud in the PLN primary on behalf of the winning candidate José Miguel Corrales, and to his attacks on former Liberación Presidents Monge, Arias, and Figueres Olsen, failure to cooperate with interest groups, and revelations of his evasion of property taxes.

²⁸ Once appointed to their posts, however, national civil service provisions may allow partisans to retain such lower bureaucratic positions even after a new party takes office.

In a typical Costa Rican recruitment pattern, a young person joins a party youth organization and ‘militates’ (i.e. becomes active in the organization’s grass roots) in partisan university politics and national election campaigns to establish links to party leaders. Such connections may lead to a middle-rank government agency job. Family ties to party leaders (especially a presidential nominee or sitting president) can help considerably in winning a government position.²⁹ From such a post, a party-connected bureaucrat who demonstrates political and administrative talent and continued party militancy might later be tapped by party leaders for a higher-level bureaucratic appointment or a legislative seat. Once elected³⁰ to the Legislative Assembly, a *diputado* effective within the party’s Assembly bench and with the mass media can build the résumé and ties necessary for a later ministerial-level appointment, vice-presidency, or party leadership job.³¹ Such posts are launching pads for presidential candidacies.

For several decades after the civil war, members of the 1948–9 Liberación junta dominated party leadership and monopolized presidential nominations. Luis Alberto Monge (1982–6) was the last Liberación president with civil war leadership credentials. He was followed in the position by Oscar Arias Sánchez, who had been groomed as a PLN militant with a Costa Rican economics degree and a political science doctorate from Essex. A political science professor and student of Costa Rican politics (Arias Sánchez 1971, 1976), Arias became Planning Minister under José Figueres Ferrer. In 1978 he moved to a seat in the Legislative Assembly, and in 1981 became PLN secretary-general before winning the presidential nomination and presidency of Costa Rica in 1986 (Arias Foundation 2000). With a favourable Constitutional Court ruling allowing a second non-successive term he won the PLN’s nomination and a second presidential term in 2006. Direct presidential primaries and weak party discipline, as noted above, have undermined the PLN’s traditional insider-activists, once a main recruitment pool for bureaucratic appointees and party leadership. This has

²⁹ Sojo (1995:61–2) reports various examples of nepotism in appointments to the diplomatic service, central ministerial positions, and autonomous agencies, and in election to the Legislative Assembly benches under both Calderón Fournier (1990–4) and Figueres Ferrer (1994–8). Minor parties also follow the practice when able.

³⁰ In Costa Rica’s proportional representation system, rank in the party’s slate is the critical variable for electoral success because the top-ranked nominees win the scarce seats available. Party executive committees determine slate position, and thus heavily control a candidate’s chances of victory.

³¹ Good examples of traditional PLN leadership recruitment patterns are those of executive committee members Rolando Araya Monge and Rolando González Ulloa, in 1998 president and secretary-general of the party, respectively. Araya (member of two important PLN-connected families) trained as a chemical engineer, served as a party youth leader, then legislative deputy, Minister of Public Works, representative to various Socialist International organs, and party’s secretary-general. González, a school teacher, served as president of the national Secondary Teachers Association, National Employment Director, member of various national advisory boards. His PLN militancy was a second career: he became a legislative deputy in 1994 and headed the Liberación bench. He has also served in the Latin American Parliament (PLN 1999).

abetted the domination of presidential campaign organizations over the traditional party apparatus, increased personalism in candidate selection and government formation, and thus increased the number of non-partisans and technocrats in top government posts. 'One begins to hear of "meritocracy" in opposition to the traditional political class. Top public positions are given . . . to technocrats with no prior party activism, or to persons of some social prestige but completely outside the party's life' (Prieto 1992: 281–2).³²

Rojas Bolaños studied the administrations of PLN President Arias Sánchez 1986–90 and PUSC President Calderón Fournier (1990–4) and confirmed the appointment of non-partisans to high government positions. Overall, the share of non-partisan appointees by Calderón Fournier was 42.7 per cent to Arias' 29.4 per cent (Rojas Bolaños 1995: 31–2). In both PLN and PUSC, 'at the moment of truth, the appointments are made by the winning candidate and his immediate group of collaborators, possibly fewer than a half dozen persons. The formal structures of the party . . . play no role. They propose no names, nor are they consulted officially' (Rojas Bolaños 1995: 33). Some informal consultation with party leaders occurs, and interest groups within the party also informally promote candidates. Thus for both the PLN and PUSC, the party apparatus *per se* progressively exercises eroding influence over recruitment to high government positions. According to Rojas Bolaños (1995: 32–3), the PUSC probably drew on more non-partisans than the PLN because of the former's short life as a party, giving it less time to build a reservoir of adherents with prior party experience.

Factionalism among the PLN's top leaders has been intense throughout the party's history. Though made in 1989, this observation remains essentially accurate today:

Factionalism has troubled the National Liberation party since its inception, and the party is . . . divided along both personalist and ideological lines. Personal enmities exist among many of the PLN's traditional leaders; and each of the former presidents . . . has a private following. Other less-prominent party figures who aspire to high office also have their own loyal networks. (McDonald and Ruhl 1989: 175)

One impact of neoliberalism on the PLN was to intensify interpersonal conflict and divisions between the party-in-power and the electoral party. Rather than curry favour from incumbent Liberación presidents as in the past, aspiring presidential and legislative candidates began to denounce them for implementing neoliberal structural adjustment programmes and abandoning traditional

³² An example of a PLN technocratic career pattern is that of Moisés Fachler Grunspan, executive committee member and treasurer of the party in 1999. His education was in law, from which he moved to the foreign service, served on the board of CODESA (the national development corporation), was an intervenor of the National Sewer and Water Service, Director of the Banco Anglo and Banco Internacional, intervenor of the Banco Anglo, and interim director of the board of the Banco Nacional. His post as PLN treasurer is the only party job listed on his résumé (PLN 1999).

social-democratic policies. Such conflict gave the PLN's internal politics a nastier tone than ever (Rojas Bolaños and Sojo 1995; Wilson 1998; Furlong 2000).

Interest articulation

Costa Rica's parties play distinct and evolving roles in interest articulation. The communist Popular Vanguard Party (Partido Vanguardia Popular—PVP) and its precursor under other names dominated much of the organized labour movement from the 1930s until the 1980s. The apogee of labour's political influence came in its alliance with Calderón Guardia during the 1940s. The civil war ended this direct policy influence as subsequent governments divided, regulated, and weakened organized labour. The PVP drew on labour strength in San José and the banana-producing region of Golfito to elect up to four of fifty-seven Legislative Assembly deputies during the 1970s and early 1980s. Labour's voice in national politics and policy declined sharply in the 1980s for several reasons: a disastrous banana-worker strike that caused United Fruit to abandon Costa Rica, splits in the PVP and the leftist labour confederations; rising competition from private sector worker 'solidarity' organizations³³ and voters' fears of regional revolutionary movements.

Declining PVP influence on unions and legislative representation and the weakening of organized labour in turn reduced the National Liberation Party's attention to working-class concerns (Rojas 1992; Stiechen 1992: 268; Rojas Bolaños 1995). From the 1950s into the 1980s, the PLN articulated the interests of diverse groups, including middle-class and blue-collar workers represented by independent unions (especially those of public sector employees), cooperatives, and the tariff-protected industrial sector. During this era the PLN encouraged competing, independent unions and incorporated their leaders into party and government roles and passed legislation beneficial to workers.

Until the early 1980s the National Liberation Party, with limitations, was the only mass electoral party capable of fully incorporating diverse social interests, including those of middle- and lower-income urban and rural workers and the various sectors of the peasantry; [but] subsequently the Party has transformed itself into a sort of coalition of groups, where the interests of those sectors have little possibility of representation, and are only seen as possible clients. (Rojas 1992: 185)

Stiechen concurs: 'National Liberation was the party that largely represented the interests of the popular sectors, but now they find themselves progressively less represented. The same may be argued with respect to the middle classes...'
(Stiechen 1992: 268). Bourgeois influence within the PLN also changed in the

³³ The workers' solidarity (*solidaridad*) association—a profit-sharing and mutual credit arrangement between a firm's patron and workers—was promoted by the PLN and business owners to weaken the appeal of unions. The solidarity movement spread rapidly and displaced labour unions, weakening the organized labour movement (Mora A. 1992: 155–6).

1980s. Industrialists' influence in the party waned with economic reform while the influence of financial and service sector capital rose (Sojo 1995: 86).

During the 1980s new rural and urban organizations emerged and demanded redress of economic grievances. Thus as working- and middle-class interests within the PLN declined, it and other parties competed aggressively for influence over these new movements. These organizations, especially those seeking government housing assistance 'created a new political arena in the country and were the active social base of deputies, ministers, and even presidents' (Vargas 1992: 177). In contrast to urban groups, agrarian organizations of small landholders kept their 'political autonomy with respect to the state, political parties, and labour confederations' (Mora 1992: 154) as they sought to shape government agrarian policy and support programmes. Almost 6 in 10 of 142 rural labour unions extant in 1990 were independent; the remainder had links to existing (but rapidly weakening) labour unions (Mora 1992: 155–6).

On balance, the parties' roles in interest articulation changed in the 1980s and 1990s. Pressed by neoliberal forces and the imperatives of national economic survival, neither the PLN nor PUSC remained true to its ideology or original bases, so that party 'programs appear[ed] to be window dressings with essentially electoral ends' (Stiechen 1992: 270). Particular bourgeois interests—especially financial and service sector capital amenable to neoliberalism—gained or consolidated influence in both the major parties. Indeed, so notable was the increase in these interests and the decline of agro-export capital in party politics that Sojo (1995: 86) contended that 'the era of coffee democracy (*la democracia cafetalera*) has ended'. Middle-class influence with the PLN declined. The division and erosion of organized labour combined and the crisis of the left undermined working-class influence within the PLN. Regional parties articulated the concerns of rural areas increasingly marginalized by urbanization. Both the PUSC and PLN competed to co-opt and manipulate emergent civil society among the urban poor.

Political participation

Scholars have widely observed that partisan activism encourages other kinds of political participation, a pattern confirmed by available data from a 1995 survey of urban Costa Ricans. Table 11.7 presents the mean levels of various indices of political participation, broken down by levels of campaign-related activity. Campaign activism, of course, is not identical to membership in a political party, but its components (working for a party or candidate and seeking to influence someone else's vote) represent activities closely related to partisanship. The data in Table 11.7 reveal that mean levels of contacting public officials, communal activism, formal group activism, and overall participation rise significantly with higher campaign activity levels. Bivariate correlation analysis, not presented here

TABLE 11.7. *Costa Rican campaign activists' patterns of political participation*

Variable ^b	Respondents' campaign activism levels ^a					
	0 (none)	1	2	3 (high)	Mean	Signif.
Contacting public officials	0.44	0.54	0.69	1.06	0.55	0.000
Group activism	0.41	0.43	0.56	0.81	0.47	0.007
Communal activism	2.23	2.52	3.16	3.66	2.58	0.000
Voting behaviour	1.90	1.89	1.94	1.97	1.91	NS
Overall participation	5.01	6.45	8.24	10.61	6.40	0.000
Democratic norms	6.70	6.86	6.83	6.50	6.76	NS
Sex (1 = male, 2 = female)	1.58	1.54	1.53	1.44	1.55	NS
Socio-economic status	0.42	0.43	0.41	0.43	0.42	NS
(N)	(302)	(234)	(121)	(44)	(701)	

^a This measure of campaign activism is constructed from responses to queries as to whether a person has (1) tried to persuade another how to vote or (2) worked for a political candidate. Respondents in category (3) report themselves to have done both. There is no straightforward measure of partisanship, but it is assumed that campaign activists are partisans.

^b Each of the variables listed in the first column (except sex) is an index value composed of scores on items related to the variable name. Thus, 'contacting public officials' incorporates reported contacts with various types of public officials; 'communal activism' incorporates community self-help activism; 'voting behaviour' incorporates measures of reported voting and being registered to vote; and 'overall participation' sums all types of political activism. See Booth (1998: ch. 6 and 7) for details of index construction.

Notes: The final column reports whether there is a significant relationship between each of the activism indices listed in the first column and the campaign activism categories (1) to (3).

Source: 1995 Urban Survey (N = 701).

to conserve space, confirms this pattern. So does analysis of the 2003 data-set cited above.³⁴ Thus, it would seem that in general terms, parties serve as stimulants for wider political participation.

That said, we must not overlook previously mentioned points that carry less positive implications for parties and participation. The PLN and PUSC's use of open presidential primaries sharply reduced the influence and benefit of party membership per se. Given the public funding mechanism for elections, the major parties do not depend on members' dues for their survival. The combined effect of these factors in recent decades has been to shrink the role of party members and insider-activists in party life and decisions and to loosen the parties' internal ideological bonds and organization. Parties in Costa Rica may be evolving into more transitory entities that arise and fall around personalities or narrowly based organized interest sectors.

³⁴ Are party members and campaign activists different from other citizens in ways other than somewhat greater levels of political participation? Table 11.7 shows that they have few significant differences from other Costa Ricans, in terms of sex, socio-economic status, exposure to news media, or allegiance to democratic norms.

CONCLUSIONS

Political parties helped found Costa Rican democracy in 1949, and the institutions then established to guarantee free and fair electoral competition have given the system decades of stability. Accelerating growth in the number of parties markedly elevated electoral volatility, party fragmentation, and the effective number of parties from the early 2000s. Despite their numerical proliferation, minor parties long remained weak because the National Liberation Party usually won either the presidency, control of the Legislative Assembly, or both to persistently dominate the policy arena. Several smaller, conservative parties linked to the agro-export and commercial bourgeoisies from time to time united as the Unity coalition to defeat the PLN at the ballot box. Unity in 1983 formally coalesced into the Social Christian Unity Party, which soon grew as strong as the PLN. The PLN/PUSC duopoly appeared to consolidate in the 1990s, yet soon broke down as first the PLN experienced internal crisis, schism, and loss of confidence; however, in 2006, Liberation recovered somewhat while the electorate abandoned the scandal-plagued PUSC.

Certain institutional and legal aspects of the polity combined with Costa Rica's modernization to gradually alter the PLN and PUSC: The constitutional prohibition of immediate self-succession in office, the public financing of elections, the rise of modern media campaigns that heavily rely on television, and open presidential primaries tended to weaken the major parties' internal cohesion, organizational structures, roles of insider-activists, links to individual members, and party reliance on membership dues for campaigns. They intensified ideological disputes, especially within the PLN, and allowed presidential candidates and their campaign organizations to dominate the parties to an unprecedented degree.

Global pressures on Central America—in particular the economic crisis of the mid-1970s through to the early 1990s—forced Costa Rica to reform its fiscally profligate state and social-democratic development model and altered the parties and party system. Within the social-democratic PLN, once-influential representatives of the industrial bourgeoisie and working- and middle-class civil society declined in importance, while economic technocrats and financial and service sector interests gained ground. The duelling imperatives of implementing harsh neoliberal reforms while ruling versus presenting policies potentially palatable to a broad electorate harmed by those very reforms generated internal divisions in the PLN. The neoliberal context and praxis undermined the social democrats' electoral appeal, led to an unsuccessful personalistic adventure with Figueres Olsen, split the party in 2002, and reduced both its vote share in national elections and citizens' identification with the party. Despite its narrow victory in 2006, one must question the PLN's longer-term prospects as long as it cannot reconstitute a strong base in labour unions and civil society.

In contrast to the beleaguered social democrats, the political-economic context of persistent economic crisis helped the unstable Unity coalition forge the new PUSC. The new party enjoyed the advantages of its social-Christian legacy (given new promise by its founder Calderón Fournier), supportive neoliberal international climate, and the afflictions of the PLN. The PUSC's social-Christian electoral appeal to poorer Costa Ricans clashed with its neoliberal policy orientations, but in power the party muted this with palliative spending. The combination of neoliberal policy and populist appeal consolidated the PUSC into a competitor that eventually outstripped the PLN in citizen identification and votes. This promise, however, foundered on the scandals afflicting successive PUSC administrations, and the Social Christian Unity vote fell about 90 per cent in 2006, a debacle from which the party appears unlikely to recover.

Overall, the Costa Rican political system during the 1980s and 1990s lost some of its democratic depth because its government lost control over key economic policies to powerful international actors and technocrats. Moreover, working- and middle-class influence on public policy declined, neoliberalism narrowed the ranges of public policy options and major party ideologies, and member and insider-activist influence over the parties diminished.³⁵ On balance, these changes in Costa Rica's parties and party system were significant, yet they did not undermine the democratic regime. Nevertheless, these changes and the forces that drove them clearly distressed Costa Ricans. Surveys across two decades revealed declining satisfaction with the parties and a waning interest in politics. Abstention rose. Costa Ricans' political malaise, owing to the major parties' conversion into 'empty electoral shells' and to the shortcomings of their programmes, candidates and governance, had not by this writing developed into broader and more worrisome disaffection with the constitutional regime or democracy itself. At the turn of the twenty-first century it therefore remained an open question whether the party system would restabilize, perhaps with a new duopoly of centrist parties including the PLN and a new second party, the PAC. Alternatively, the PLN could decline again and falter, as did the PUSC, and thus leave the PAC as the sole leader in a much more fluid multiparty system. One seeking indicators of increasing instability in the party system and auguries of the longer-term prospects for Costa Rican democracy should monitor several issues in the near- and middle-term: Can the PLN rebuild its base of support beyond its revival under Oscar Ariasit and regroup organizationally? Will the PAC prove capable of winning a presidential election or a legislative majority? Can the PAC establish a base of citizen loyalty, civil society support, and interest articulation that will allow it to become a stable player in the evolving Costa Rican party system? More broadly, will neoliberalism improve economic performance and distributive justice sufficiently to mollify a restive and rapidly evolving civil society? The more negative answers there are to these queries, the greater will be the likelihood that Costa Rica will experience

³⁵ See, e.g. Camacho (1991) and Booth (1998).

increased party fragmentation and electoral volatility, and perhaps even more serious challenges to its overall democratic stability.

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Political Parties in New Democracies

Trajectories of Development and Implications for Democracy

Paul Webb and Stephen White

We have now reviewed in detail the condition and operation of political parties in a number of important new democracies in Eastern Europe and Latin America. It is time, therefore, to stand back from the contextual detail of each of the national cases covered in the book in order to establish a sense of the overall comparative picture. In the introductory chapter, we pointed out that the array of cases selected here was chosen with a number of considerations in mind. First, we aimed to offer a reasonably representative survey of the contemporary experience of political parties in the democratizing world, albeit in only two particular geopolitical regions. We recognize that developments might not be identical in other regions where democracy is emergent, such as Africa or parts of Asia, but the two regions covered here nevertheless incorporate substantial portions of the global population and are highly significant in their own right. Second, we aimed to provide scope for a number of interesting comparative strategies: Eastern Europe versus Latin America; ‘Peripheral’ Eastern European democracies (Russia and Ukraine) versus major Latin American democracies (Brazil and Argentina); recently transitional versus established democracies (involving comparison between the cases in this book and its sister volume, *Political Parties in Advanced Industrial Democracies*); established democracies versus ‘core’ East European democracies (Hungary, Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Poland); and Costa Rica versus the rest of Latin America. Since Costa Rica is a relatively well-established and functioning democracy by Latin American standards, this latter comparison is designed to help us understand whether parties develop according to the logic of life cycle, generational or period effects. If life cycle effects dictate trajectories of party development, then all parties would develop in essentially the same way according to the stage of democratic development of a polity, irrespective of the region or era in which this occurs. If generational factors count for more, then we would expect quite distinctive patterns of party development between established and recently transitional democracies. If period

effects preponderate, then we would expect a pattern of convergence to occur across all cases, irrespective of the stage of democratization they had achieved or the wave of democratization in which they began operating; that is, recently transitional democracies would skip stages of the life cycle experienced by parties in the established democracies.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Party legitimacy

We noted in the book's introduction that there are two important questions about the popular legitimacy of parties in new democracies: How stable and deep are links between party and society? And to what extent are parties generally held in esteem by citizens? In an ideal-type successful transitional democracy, in which parties are well-institutionalized, we would be looking for steady and high electoral turnout, falling or generally low electoral volatility, a low to moderate effective number of parties, rising or stable levels of partisan identification and party membership among voters, and limited evidence of anti-party sentiment; some criticism of parties can be accepted as virtually inevitable in any democratic system, but it is important that the major part of the citizenry regard them as necessary to the functioning of democracy. We remind the readers that this range of indicators takes in measures of both parties per se (such as rates of party identification and membership) and party systems (electoral volatility and the effective number of parties). This is because in our view the stabilization and institutionalization of party politics in democratizing polities entails developments at both levels of analysis; stable systemic interactions are logically predicated *inter alia* on the development and autonomy of individual party organizations.

Tables 12.1 and 12.2 summarize the evidence regarding indicators of party legitimacy in Latin America and Eastern Europe. The first thing to observe is that nowhere does the ideal-type of a fully institutionalized democratic party system seem to exist, in the terms we have set out above. Then again, it might reasonably be pointed out that this would be equally true of the established democracies, so this is hardly a damning finding in itself. Among the Latin American cases, the most encouraging evidence relates to electoral volatility, which appears to have declined in three cases (Brazil, Mexico, and Chile). On all other indicators, the signs are on the whole somewhat negative for parties: the effective number of parties is generally high in all cases, and has recently increased in three of them; turnout has fallen in four cases and remained stable only in Brazil, where it is compulsory to vote; partisan identification varies considerably, but is declining or low in the majority of cases; party membership has shown signs of growth only in

TABLE 12.1. *Indicators of the popular legitimacy of parties in Latin America*

Country	TNV	ENP	Turnout	Partisan identification	Party membership	Anti-party sentiment
Brazil	Relatively high, but has fallen since 1990 (24.1% average since first democratic elections).	Very high since democratization (9.26 in 2002).	Parliamentary turnout fluctuating and high (82.3% in 2002); presidential turnout slightly down from a very high level. Voting is mandatory.	Consistently low (46%, 1989–2002).	Little hard data, but this reflects fact that—except for PT—membership has generally been thought to be low.	Consistently high. Many do not see parties as necessary to democracy, and scepticism about democracy is widespread anyway.
Argentina	Fell 1983–93, but rose again and fluctuated thereafter (24.9% average).	Fluctuating, but overall has risen since 1983 (4.15 in 2001).	Down in legislative elections since 1989, and especially in 2001 (72.1%). Turnout dropped in presidential election of 2003.	Limited data suggest sharp drop 1999–2005 (to 29%).	Registered ‘affiliates’ have increased in number, for clientelist reasons.	Has grown considerably since 1983. Support for democracy widespread, but one-third do not see parties as central to democracy, and one-third would support return to dictatorship under certain circumstances.
Mexico	Declined since 1988 (22.7% average).	Fluctuating, but has risen again since 1994 (3.03 in 2003).	Climbed 1988–94, but then plummeted by 2003 (to 41.4%).	Has remained broadly stable since 1988 (65% in 2002).	Decreased significantly in number, with erosion of clientelist linkages.	Has grown considerably since 1988. Half see parties as central to democracy, but one-third do not rate democracy as best form of government.
Chile	Fluctuated, but gradually declined since 1993 (16.7% average).	Has remained stable and high since 1989 (6.72 in 2001).	Has dropped dramatically since first democratic elections of 1989 (62.5% in 2001).	Declined since democratization to low level (21%).	Declined since democratization.	Widespread. 40% do not see parties as central to democracy, and 17% do not see democracy as best form of government.
Costa Rica	Fell after 1986, until a large rise again in 2002 (12.8% average).	Some fluctuation, but rose after 1970 (4.58 in 2006).	Steadily rose until 1990s, (though note low rate of registration). Big drop since 1994 (68.8% in 2002).	No direct evidence, but most still claim a partisan identity, despite rise of candidate & issue voting (more than 70% in 2002).	Declined	Has grown since 1994, but most see parties as central to democracy and few would countenance authoritarian government, so this is mainly ‘soft’ anti-party sentiment.
<i>Summary</i>	<i>3 down, 2 down then up again</i>	<i>2 high/stable, 3 high/increasing</i>	<i>4 down, 1 stable (but compulsory)</i>	<i>2 down, 1 low/stable, 1 high/stable, 1 high/unclear</i>	<i>3 down, 1 up, 1 stable/ low</i>	<i>3 up, 2 high/widespread</i>

Note: ‘Stable’ and ‘fluctuating’ both imply a time series which lacks a clear trend, but the former implies less volatility over time than the latter. ‘TNV’ refers to ‘total net volatility’; ‘ENP’ refers to effective number of electoral parties.

TABLE 12.2. *Indicators of the popular legitimacy of parties in Eastern Europe*

Country	TNV	ENP	Turnout	Partisan identification	Party membership	Anti-party sentiment
Russia	Appears to have declined to relatively moderate level since 1995, but when one takes account of the many independent candidates, volatility is actually high (50.0% average since first democratic elections).	Declined from high level since 1995 (5.35 in 2003).	Fairly stable, though declined to 56% for Duma elections of 2003.	Very low since democratization (circa 25%)—among lowest in democratic world.	Low since democratization (less than 1% of adult population).	Very widespread and persistent. Context of relatively few citizens who regard democracy as best form of government, so likely that there is much 'hard' anti-party sentiment.
Ukraine	High turnover of parties implies it must be very high (60.0% average). Bloc volatility also relatively high compared to established democracies. Caused largely by instability of elites rather than of voter preferences.	Declined since 1998, but still comparatively high (9.8). High number of independent politicians.	Declined after compulsory voting ended with democratization, to less than 70% for parliamentary elections (77% for Presidential elections).	Modest rise since mid-1990s, but remains at very low level (circa 25%).	Rising from a low level (circa 1–2% of population), especially among centre parties.	Very widespread and persistent. Context of relatively few citizens who regard democracy as best form of government, so likely that there is much 'hard' anti-party sentiment.
Poland	Has remained high since 1989 (47.0% on average). High for bloc volatility as well.	Dropped significantly in 1993 and has remained stable since (4.8 in 2005).	Sharp drop in parliamentary elections since 1989 (41% in 2005). Has held up slightly better in presidential elections (51% in 2005).	No sign that level of this is rising—rather the opposite—but stands at around 50%.	Fairly low (estimated at 1.5% of population)—few signs of growth.	Widespread, but hostility to parties is mainly derived from a preference for personal leadership rather than antipathy to democracy per se.

Czech Republic	Fluctuating at a fairly high level (26.0% on average) though bloc volatility is much lower.	Declined since 1992 to a relatively low level for Eastern Europe (3.86 in 2006).	Definite decline since 1990 (only 64.4% in 2006)	Generally low, though among the highest in Eastern Europe (at around 50%).	Initially relatively high, but dependent on former CP; has declined sharply since 1990, though at 3.94% in 1999 relatively high for Eastern Europe.	Exists, but not as great as in other parts of Eastern Europe (e.g. Russia or Ukraine).
Slovakia	Has increased to fairly high level (27.8% in 2006), although bloc volatility is much lower.	Generally stable at around 5, but rose to 6.04 in 2006.	Declined since 1990 (to 54.7% in 2006)	Generally low, though among the highest in Eastern Europe.	Initially relatively high, but dependent on former CP; has grown since 1994 to 4.11% in 2000.	Exists, but not as great as in other parts of Eastern Europe (e.g. Russia or Ukraine).
Hungary	Fluctuating at high levels (25% on average) in 1990s, but dropped to 8.2% by 2006.	Has consistently declined (2.6 in 2006)	Steady and very significant increase from 45% (1994) to 67.5% (2006).	Increased after 1998 to a little over 50%.	Stable at around 2–3% of electorate.	Exists, but not as great as in other parts of Eastern Europe (e.g. Russia or Ukraine).
Summary	<i>Remains generally high in all cases though has fallen sharply since 2002 in Hungary</i>	<i>5 down, but 1 remains high, 1 stable and high</i>	<i>5 down (though not always to very low levels), 1 up</i>	<i>Low in all cases, but rising modestly in 2</i>	<i>2 up (from low levels), 1 down stable</i>	<i>2 cases of widespread 'hard' APS, 1 of widespread 'soft' APS, 3 more limited cases</i>

Argentina, driven by clientelistic linkages; and anti-party sentiment is prevalent in all cases, and on the increase in most of them.

In Eastern Europe, electoral volatility remains generally high, although party system fragmentation has diminished in most cases, as measured by the reduced effective number of parties. However, electoral turnout has dropped in five out of six cases, and sometimes to particularly low levels in absolute terms; Poland experienced record low turnouts in both the parliamentary (40.6 per cent) and presidential (first round = 49.7 per cent, second round = 51 per cent) elections of 2005. Partisan identification has remained low in all cases, though there have been signs of modest growth in Hungary and Ukraine; party membership rates are generally not high, except perhaps in Slovakia and the Czech Republic; again, there is modest growth from a low baseline in Ukraine. Anti-party sentiment is significant in all cases, and particularly prevalent in Russia, Ukraine, and Poland.

If we consider these developments in a little more detail, indicator by indicator, we find no immediate indications that there are great differences between Latin America and Eastern Europe in terms of electoral volatility; in approximately half the cases in each continent total net volatility has fallen, although on average it remains higher in the latter region. Using data reported by Mainwaring and Torcal (2006: 208), we can calculate an average level of electoral volatility since democratization of 44.0 across 11 East European countries (or 41.3 for the 6 cases covered in this book), and 31.0 across 8 Latin American cases (22.1 for the 5 cases covered in this book). In both regions, volatility far exceeds that generally found in the established democracies; for the cases covered by *Political Parties in Advanced Industrial Democracies*, we find an average net volatility level of just 12.5 since the 1970s. This clearly suggests that party institutionalization is not as well established yet in the newer democracies, especially those of Eastern Europe. It also provides an initial suggestion that the development of party politics in new democracies does not follow a simple convergence logic driven by factors shared in common with established democracies.

With regard to the effective number of parties, there appears to be a clearer distinction between Latin America and Eastern Europe in terms of the direction of change; most cases in the latter region have experienced a reduction in the number of parties, while this is not true in the former region. However, when one compares the absolute levels of this indicator, differences are less apparent: the average effective number of parties in our East European cases is 5.45, compared to 5.55 in Latin America. Overall, these two recently transitional regions still maintain a higher effective number of parties than the established democracies, for which the average is 4.66.¹ However the difference is not enormous.

¹ Calculations in this paragraph are based on the effective number of electoral parties at the most recent reported parliamentary elections for each country in this volume. For the established democracies, the same procedure is used for the sixteen countries included in *Political Parties in Advanced Industrial Democracies*.

Electoral turnout may vary over time for contingent reasons related to short-term developments in the pattern of party competition, and a drop does not necessarily reflect a general loss of party legitimacy. However, in the established democracies the near universality of significant turnout decline since 1990 raises general concern that 'there is less of a market for the parties' product' (Wattenberg 2000: 76). By the same logic, in new democracies, stable and high turnout can be regarded as demonstrating a growing 'market for party politics', which is to say, an indication of its institutionalization. From this perspective, the direction of change is not encouraging in either Latin America or Eastern Europe, for turnout has generally emulated the established democracies by declining in most cases in recent years. Only in Hungary and Brazil has it more or less held up—and voting is compulsory in the latter case.² Comparison of average turnout levels shows that the newer democracies remain behind the longer established democracies, moreover: for our Latin American cases, it averages 65.4 per cent in the most recent parliamentary elections, which is still a little higher than Eastern Europe's 61.8 per cent, but some way behind the established democracies' average of 75.9 per cent.³

On the face of it, party identification is perhaps the most direct measure of party attachment. Once again, however, there is little evidence of encouragement here for any ideal-typical notion of party institutionalization. If anything, rates of partisan identification have been more likely to go down—or stabilize at low levels—than to increase across the populations of Latin America and Eastern Europe, although there is modest cause for optimism in the latter region, in that two countries have experienced slight increases from low baseline levels (Ukraine and Hungary). Overall, the average rate of partisan identification in the East European cases in this book is 41 per cent (39 per cent if one includes four other East European countries reported by Enyedi and Tóka in Table 6.4 of this volume), while it is 46 per cent for the five Latin American cases. By contrast, the rate of partisan identification in the established democracies still stands a little higher overall, at 49 per cent.⁴

² It might further be noted that turnout declined somewhat (from 73 per cent to 68 per cent) in the most recent Hungarian parliamentary elections of March 2006. Nonetheless, this still represents a considerable advance on a turnout of just 45 per cent recorded at the first democratic elections.

³ Turnout averages are based on the same parliamentary elections for which the effective number of parties averages were calculated (see note 1). All calculations include those countries where voting is legally compulsory. If these countries are excluded (Brazil, Australia, and Belgium), the Latin American average changes to 61.2 per cent (almost identical to the East European average), while the established democracy average falls to 73.2 per cent.

⁴ These average rates of partisanship are based on figures reported in this volume by Enyedi and Tóka in Table 6.4 or by chapter authors here and in Webb, Farrell, and Holliday 2002. The East European average does not take account of Slovakia, for which no figures are reported. The Latin American figure is heavily influenced by the high Costa Rican rate of 70 per cent; this is somewhat atypical, and if excluded, the Latin American average falls to 40 per cent.

Neither is there much evidence that party membership is taking off in the newer democracies. Despite the widely attested collapse of party membership in the established democracies, it remains significantly higher there: on average 5.5 per cent of registered electors in these countries still join political parties as individual members, compared to just 2.3 per cent of voters in the new democracies of Eastern Europe.⁵ Apart from some communist-successor organizations, few parties have achieved substantial levels of membership. Only Slovakia has experienced anything approaching impressive growth in the 1990s, but this has begun to reverse since then, while Ukraine has enjoyed more modest growth. The other East European cases have either remained stagnant at low levels or—in the case of the Czech Republic—have declined from an initially promising level in the immediate aftermath of transition. While a dearth of hard data makes the Latin American picture less clear-cut, it is evident from the detailed discussion of the various cases that only Argentina has enjoyed membership growth in recent years, fuelled by clientelist linkages. Elsewhere on the continent, membership is reported to have declined or stabilized at low levels.

The final indicator of party legitimacy of which our authors sought evidence was the popular expression of anti-party sentiment. It is important to be cautious with this, since one can virtually guarantee finding evidence that some people are disaffected with parties in any country. It is therefore necessary to consider how widespread expressions of anti-party sentiment are, and their nature. This too is difficult, however, given the very wide variety of survey instruments that researchers draw on to gauge anti-party sentiment; such inconsistency makes direct comparative quantification virtually impossible. We are inevitably left with rather impressionistic comparisons, therefore. In conceptual terms, it may be helpful to think a distinction between ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ anti-party sentiment; the latter would be disparaging of parties in various ways, but would nevertheless accept that they remain central and necessary elements of any system of open, plural, and democratic politics. By contrast, hard anti-party sentiment would consist of genuine antipathy, based on the notion that parties are pathological to the body politic in some way. One can further conceive of at least two variants of this: the first might be consistent with a broad preference for competitive democratic politics, but would favour a highly personalistic system of presidential rule; central to this conception of democracy would be belief in the need for charismatic leaders who are capable of being ‘above politics’ and expressing the will of the nation. Parties would be regarded as embodiments of partial group interests, and sources of national disunity. De Gaulle’s form of ‘rassemblement’ politics provides a classic example of such a phenomenon (Graham 1993). The second variant of hard anti-party sentiment would go further still, inasmuch as

⁵ These membership/electorate ratios are calculated from data reported in Mair and van Biezen (2001) and by chapter authors in this volume.

it would represent one element of a fundamental hostility towards democracy per se.

In these terms, we can see that soft anti-party sentiment is evident everywhere in our sample of recently transitional democracies (and indeed, in most established democracies too). The most recent wave of World Values Survey data (gathered since 1999 across more than seventy countries) reveals that on average some 16.8 per cent of Latin American respondents have 'quite a lot' or 'a great deal' of confidence in political parties, compared to 18.8 per cent of East Europeans and 21.9 per cent of those from the established democracies. While these differences may be just about significant, it is equally apparent that in all cases, overall levels of confidence are low.⁶ However, this indicator does not tell us much about the nature of the anti-party sentiment involved in each case. In this regard, there is interesting material on Latin America from the *Latinobarometro*. This survey of respondents in eighteen Latin American countries in 2005 found that an average of 54 per cent (58 per cent if restricted to the five countries examined in detail in this book) conceded that 'democracy cannot exist without political parties' (*Latinobarometro* 2005: 48). This covers considerable variation across the continent: while 71 per cent of Costa Ricans think democracy impossible without parties, only 64 per cent of Argentinians, 61 per cent of Chileans, 53 per cent of Mexicans, and 42 per cent of Brazilians do. We may surmise further about the types of hard anti-party sentiment prevalent in these countries, moreover, for the *Latinobarometro* (op.cit: 45) reveals that only 26 per cent regard 'open and fair elections' as the most important characteristic of democracy, while just 4 per cent think that 'a competitive party system' is. This begs important questions about how Latin Americans conceive of democracy (for instance, many seem to judge it primarily as an economic system), but from our perspective it points clearly to the fact that hard anti-party sentiment is almost certainly quite widespread: for one reason or another, many do not see competitive party politics as crucial to democracy. That large numbers—85 per cent of Argentinians, 77 per cent of Chileans, and 65 per cent of Mexicans, for instance—nevertheless think democracy is 'the best form of government', and given the continent's well-known predilection for presidential politics, suggests that much of this hard anti-party sentiment may be of the personalist, but not anti-democratic, variant. Indeed, it is probably no

⁶ The Latin American countries in the sample are Argentina (1999), Chile (2000), Mexico (2000), Peru (2001), and Puerto Rico (2001). The East European countries in the sample are Albania (2002), Bosnia (2001), Moldova (2002), Macedonia (2001), Serbia (2001), and Montenegro (2001). The established countries are Canada (2000), USA (1999), Japan (2000), and Spain (2000). Source: www.worldvalues.com. While the East European cases in this sample do not overlap with those on which we focus in this volume, similar findings are reported by Rose (2002: 46) for other countries in the region. He finds that on average some 11 per cent of respondents there express trust in parties (defined as self-location between 4 and 7 on a scale running from 1 to 7). The individual country scores are as follows (all figures percentages): Bulgaria 25, Czech Republic 22, Hungary 14, Slovakia 9, Romania 9, Poland 8, Slovenia 8, Estonia 8, Lithuania 8, Latvia 7, and Russia 7.

exaggeration to claim that in places such as Argentina, ‘the system’s legitimacy rests on the presidency’ rather than on party (Latinobarometro 2005: 10). Even so, some anti-party sentiment is almost certainly more fundamentally hostile to democracy: across the continent as a whole, 38 per cent of citizens would not rule out support for a military government ‘if the situation got very bad’; while only 6 per cent of Costa Ricans felt this way, around one-third of Argentinians, Chileans, and Mexicans did, and nearly half of Brazilians (Latinobarometro 2005: 51).

Unfortunately, the data that are available on Eastern Europe are not always precisely comparable, so it is difficult to be sure how much anti-party sentiment is hard or soft there. However, given the particularly low levels of confidence in parties expressed in Russia, Ukraine, and Poland, and the prevalence of personalist presidential politics,⁷ it is reasonable to infer that the citizens of these countries are especially likely to harbour more profound antipathy towards political parties. Moreover, following the logic of our analysis of Latin America, the countries characterized by relatively low levels of confidence in democracy per se are those where anti-party sentiment is most likely to be anti-democratic in nature; these would include Russia (where only 47 per cent see democracy as the best form of government, compared to the East European average of 74 per cent), Ukraine (64 per cent), and Belarus (66 per cent) according to the World Values Survey data.⁸ Conversely, countries such as the Czech Republic and Hungary are less prone to such pathological forms of anti-party sentiment. Poland occupies a position in between: while parties are deeply distrusted, democracy is widely preferred (with 77 per cent of Poles regarding it as the best form of government). It seems unlikely, therefore, that a high proportion of Poles display hard anti-party sentiment which is grounded in a fundamental antipathy to democracy.

To sum up the picture regarding the popular party legitimacy of political parties, then, we can say the following. New democracies remain more electorally volatile and fragmented than established democracies, while electoral turnout, partisan identification, and party membership rates are lower. Anti-party sentiment is universal in democratic society, though this is often about ‘soft’ lack of trust in parties rather than a deep-rooted hostility. Where antipathy towards parties is harder, it is not always associated with a preference for authoritarianism, but rather, for a personalistic form of democratic leadership. The popular belief that democracy is the best form of government predominates within all types

⁷ Note that Rose and Haerpfer (1998: 59–62) reported significantly lower levels of public trust across Eastern Europe as a whole in parties (13 per cent) or parliaments (22 per cent) than in presidents (44 per cent).

⁸ A few years earlier, Rose and Haerpfer (1998: 64) reported that a quarter of citizens in the new democracies of Eastern Europe expressed approval for the idea of ‘closing down parliament and abolishing parties’, with the highest rates of support for this hard variant of anti-party sentiment coming in Ukraine (45 per cent) and in a case not focused upon in this volume, the Former Republic of Yugoslavia (32 per cent).

of existing democratic regime, though hostility towards democracy per se, and therefore towards competitive forms of party politics, is more prevalent in the recently transitional cases.

In terms of the various countries reviewed, democratic party politics seems most institutionalized in Hungary among the East European cases: electoral volatility and party system fragmentation have fallen there recently, while electoral turnout and partisan identification have increased. As Enyedi and Tóka also point out in this volume (p. 151), 'at least a few issue domains divide the major party alternatives predictably, consistently, and emphatically'. Unusually for the new democracies of Eastern Europe, moreover, the ruling party was re-elected to power in 2006, which may be taken as further evidence of consolidation.⁹ Russia and Ukraine fall at the opposite end of the spectrum in most of these respects, with very high levels of volatility and party system fragmentation, limited turnout, low rates of party identification and membership, and high levels of anti-party, and indeed anti-democratic, sentiment. While Poland shares some of these characteristics—high turnout and fragmentation, low turnout in legislative elections, and widespread anti-party sentiment—they are set in a somewhat different overall context of greater partisan identification (at 53 per cent, twice that found in Russia or Ukraine) and a significantly lower level of antipathy towards democracy per se. The Czech Republic and Slovakia do not rate as positively as Hungary on indicators of party legitimacy, but they are less electorally volatile and have higher rates of party membership than Poland.

Overall, some of our indicators suggest that the Latin American parties are a little more consolidated than the East European ones, which may derive from the greater passage of time since transition. It may also reflect the fact that a number of major parties on the continent have substantial historical roots, despite the numerous incursions of dictatorship. This is true of Peronism, which has been a dominant political force in Argentina since the 1940s; the PRI, which has been the supreme political actor in Mexico since the 1920s; and Chile's Socialists and Christian Democrats, whose roots lie in the 1930s. Thus, parties have often been able to re-emerge from periods of dictatorship at least partially intact, this affording them some continuity of support. Hence, perhaps, the lower overall level of electoral volatility and higher rate of partisan identification in Latin America; one might also point, albeit with slightly less conviction, to the higher levels of electoral turnout and lower party system fragmentation to be found there. Costa Rica stands out from the other Latin American cases examined in this book: it displays far lower party system fragmentation, higher partisan identification, greater belief in the centrality of political parties to democratic rule, and much

⁹ It should be noted that the political crisis that erupted when a tape of Prime Minister Ferenc Gyurcsány apparently admitting having 'lied' about the economy in the run-up to the previous April's elections seemed to pose some threat to this impression of stability. However, Gyurcsány's government survived the immediate crisis.

lower support for military intervention in politics than its continental neighbours. Rather, its recent experience of increasing volatility and anti-party discontent, and decline in turnout, membership, and party identification emulates trends (at approximately the same average levels) that have been typical of the established democracies in general. This suggests that, notwithstanding the broad geopolitical location of the country, the age of a democracy might in some way impact on party development. We will return to this issue in greater detail below.

Brazil stands at the opposite end of the legitimacy continuum in Latin America. Electoral volatility is high there, though it has fallen somewhat since 1990, while party system fragmentation and instability are very high, and partisan identification and membership low. Hard anti-party sentiment is widespread and reflects both the very personalistic nature of politics in the country, and a relatively high level of disregard for democracy per se. Argentina, Chile and Mexico lie between Brazil and Cost Rica in terms of party legitimacy, broadly speaking. Crucially, public confidence in both political parties and democratic government is significantly higher in these countries than in Brazil, though it is not at Costa Rican levels.

PARTY ORGANIZATIONAL STRENGTH

It is harder to summarize the information on party organization development, given the patchy or imprecise nature of much of the data which our contributors have been able to unearth. However, a number of points are fairly clear, as Tables 12.3 and 12.4 reveal. First, the major parties are reasonably well funded in all of the countries and both of the continents we have examined in detail in the book. Second, state funding of parties is virtually universal in these countries now, although in cases such as Chile it has come in only recently. Third, clientelism is a very significant factor in some cases, especially Brazil and Argentina, and candidate-centred or personalistic relationships are widely present in these and other countries in Latin America. Fourth, the professionalization of staffing—that is, the centrality to party organizations of those with specialist skills in marketing, public relations, or opinion research—is increasingly common, especially in Eastern Europe. In the latter region also, the former Communist parties have inherited and sustained relatively strong organizations, at least in terms of member-based resources. Finally, Russia and Ukraine are somewhat distinct from the other countries we have examined in Eastern Europe, in having parties that are more dependent on members and donors for income, and in sustaining state media organizations that are biased towards parties favoured by the presidential executives.

In the absence of comparable hard quantitative data, it is hard to be sure whether there are significant differences in the overall strength and reach of parties in Eastern Europe, Latin America, and the established democracies. However, it

TABLE 12.3. *Party organizational resources in Latin America*

Country	Summary of key points in case-study chapters
Brazil	Quite strong and growing for PT, but little information on other parties. Personalism and localism mean that the benefits of clientelism accrue to individual politicians and are lost to the party as a whole. The incentives for clientelism in the democratic era have been so powerful that the traditionally fragile parties have been weakened even further.
Argentina	Strong and growing, but profoundly corrupt, depending on clientelistic exploitation of state, and links with business. It is evident that parties and politicians in Argentina are flush with funding from both legitimate and illicit sources. Resources are to some extent devolved on sub-national actors and factions within parties.
Mexico	Strong, growing, and dependent on state rather than on members. Registered parties enjoy generous funding, much of it directed to party headquarters, though state governors also have power within party organizations.
Chile	Probably growing, but largely candidate-centred. State funding only introduced in 2004, but most resources come from private donations to individual candidates. Parties are now much more professional organizations, with fewer members and modern methods of communication and campaigning. Resources and campaign organization focused on individual candidate headquarters rather than in the central party offices.
Costa Rica	Few hard data, but probably growing, albeit in a candidate-centred way. State funding benefits the two major parties. In general, modernized professional candidate-centred organization has undermined cohesion of old mass party model (especially for PLN), while memberships have declined.
<i>Summary</i>	<i>Resources generally increasing in all countries, with state funding in most cases now, though clientelism is a factor in two cases, and candidate-centred or personalistic relationships are widely present.</i>

is interesting to observe that the broad direction and nature of organizational developments are similar across all of these cases in certain key respects, such as the shift towards state-dependency and professionalization. Except in very candidate-centred cases, moreover, the centralization of organizations is a common development across new and old democracies. In essence, although there are inevitably certain regional peculiarities—the strong communist-successor mass party heritages in Eastern Europe, clientelism in Latin America—the differences between these regions and the established democracies are not so pronounced as they are with regard to the party legitimacy dimension of our analytical framework.

However, developments in party organizations do reveal something very significant about the relationship between party and state in the recently transitional democracies. Political elites in new democracies are generally in a strong position to rebuild the institutions of the state and therefore to influence the rules of the political game. This context may even facilitate ‘rent-seeking’ exploitation of state resources by these actors, typically through forms of patronage and clientelism. Recent research on the new democracies of Eastern Europe led by

TABLE 12.4. *Party organizational resources in Eastern Europe*

Country	Summary of key points in case-study chapters
Russia	Income largely from members, and to a lesser extent from state and donors, but not very transparent. Biggest parties (especially CP) are able to sustain central offices and run fairly expensive televisual campaigns. Media biased towards party favoured by executive. Some parties have own presses.
Ukraine	Income largely from members (on left), or corporate donors (on right). Biggest parties do not appear to run expensive campaigns. Many parties have links with press and government parties are strongly supported by state TV. Left well supplied with activists.
Poland	Former Communists are better resourced than most other parties, but state funding has enabled all main parties to run operations and campaigns. Growth of professional consultants' roles. Weak party presses.
Czech Republic	Rapid growth in state funding has ensured that main parties are in strong position in terms of resources. Extra-parliamentary parties have become stronger and parliamentary parties more cohesive. Organizations have become more centralized.
Slovakia	Significant growth of state funding has helped development of party organizations. Several parties have developed significant local organizations.
Hungary	Parties have generally become well-resourced and centralized. State subsidies have increased in real terms, but expenditure far exceeds income. Professionalization of staffs.
<i>Summary</i>	<i>Main parties are well resourced in most cases. In all but one case, state support is significant. Former Communists are relatively strong, and professionalization of staff is significant in several cases. Parties in Russia and Ukraine are more dependent on members and donors and state media bias (in case of major parties).</i>

Petr Kopecký confirms that state funding and the regulation of parties and rent-seeking behaviour by parties are all prevalent there. Moreover, he points to an interesting pattern to these developments:

The empirical evidence ... suggests a division between countries in which the state-party relationships are based on a nearly universal and relatively inclusive system of state party financing and regulations, and countries in which the state resources are primarily accrued through means of rent-seeking within the state institutions, and in which therefore only those in positions of power command the resources necessary to sustain and expand their political organizations. (Kopecký 2006: 270)

The distinction falls broadly between Central European and Baltic countries, which chiefly populate the former category, and the post-Soviet Republics and some Balkan countries that dominate the latter category. This is fascinating, since it coincides quite neatly with something that we have observed in this book; Russia and Ukraine generally show less institutionalized party politics, lower party legitimacy, more personalistic mobilization, and less cohesive legislative party behaviour. In effect, there is less genuine political equality under such circumstances; only those who win elections and control the state are in a

position to extract resources from it, and they distribute such resources in a highly clientelistic and even corrupt way. In fact, the parties as such are not really the key players in this process: 'Instead, it is the political and administrative elites, using the sizeable resources of the state, that invent parties, often only for a temporary period, in order to boost electoral and legislative support for the presidential administration, or to offset the challenge of other competitors' (Kopecký 2006: 263). In essence, political personalities make use of parties for their own ends, rather than act as the leaders of collective organizations of political action. Note that this phenomenon is not restricted to post-communist Eastern Europe, moreover; much the same description could apply to Brazil and Argentina.

This state of affairs surely tells us something significant about the nature and degree of democratic consolidation in such countries. Democracy rests on a commitment to political equality, for it entails an acceptance of pluralism, an understanding that different voices deserve to be heard and must therefore be in a position to speak and campaign. Where such a commitment exists, the rules of the political game must be drafted so as to facilitate and support a pluralism of voices—for instance, by sharing out access to state resources among diverse parties. Where democratic commitment is less well-founded, however, it can be readily understood that electoral winners will seek to retain a jealous grasp on the spoils of victory. It is perhaps no coincidence, then, that these countries happen to be precisely the places where anti-democratic expressions and 'hard anti-party sentiment' are most likely to be apparent.

The developmental trajectories of parties in new democracies

What does the evidence reviewed so far imply for the question of life cycle, generational or period effects on party development? In addressing this issue, we seek to draw together discussion of changes at the level of the party *system* (i.e. the indicators of popular legitimacy) with developments in party organizations. The system-level measures logically relate to models of party. For instance, the presence of mass parties (Duverger 1954) in a system may be taken to imply 'electorates of belonging' (Panbianco 1988), and these in turn entail high levels of party membership, partisan identification and the mobilization of stable support bases—hence, high turnout and low electoral volatility. Volatility is also positively correlated with party system fragmentation (Bartolini and Mair 1990: 135–8), so we could expect that the mass party phase of development would be associated with a declining effective number of parties as well.

On the face of it, however, the absolute differences in some of the indicators of party legitimacy which we have encountered seem to suggest that there has as yet been little real convergence across old and new democratic systems. The average differences between established and recently transitional democracies in respect of electoral volatility, turnout and—albeit to a slightly lesser extent—party system fragmentation, partisan identification and party membership rates

are certainly quite defined. Although it is harder to quantify precisely, it also seems likely that this is true of the extent to which hard anti-party sentiment is prevalent in the established and new democracies. This continuing sense of difference would initially seem to imply that period effects matter little for party development in the new democracies: it is more likely that they either follow the logic of a general life cycle, or a particular 'third-wave generation'. For the latter to be true, we would expect to find broad similarities emerging between Latin America and Eastern Europe, and differences between both of them and the first-wave established democracies; for the former to be true, we would additionally expect to find that major parties are moving from their genetic models towards something approaching mass organizations, as major parties often did in the first wave of democracies. Yet the country chapters in this book have not pointed systematically towards the development of mass parties. Moreover, levels of electoral volatility and party system fragmentation have not followed the patterns displayed at comparable stages of the life cycle in established democracies.¹⁰ That being so—and notwithstanding a few limited indications from Costa Rica and Spain (referring back to Webb, Farrell, and Holliday 2002) that stage of life cycle may play some role in affecting party legitimacy and organizational development—it is tempting to conclude that a kind of generational factor is shaping the development of parties in recently transitional democracies. That is, something about the time during which third wave countries have made the transition to democracy—broadly speaking, since the 1970s—has inhibited the development of mass parties in these countries. As a result, their party systems have been characterized by relatively high rates of electoral volatility, and low party membership and partisan identification.

What might have caused these generational differences in the development of political parties? It seems to us that there are a number of possible explanations. The first is the changing structure of mass communication. Since the early 1960s, the growing role of the electronic media (van Deth 1995: 59) has fundamentally altered the nature of mass communications in modern democracies. Among other

¹⁰ The average lapse of time between the first and most recent democratic elections in the cases covered in this book is fourteen years. The average rate of total net volatility in these countries at the end of this period is 21.8 (20.2 in Latin America excluding Costa Rica, and 23.0 in Eastern Europe), representing an overall decline of 2.5 (or 10.5 per cent). By comparison, 13 established democracies in Western Europe experienced an average volatility level of 7.8 on the Pedersen index, representing a drop of 1.1 (or 12.3 per cent) some fourteen years after the first democratic elections held there. In respect of the fragmentation of support, on average there were 6.72 effective parties in the new democracies' first elections, compared to 5.48 some fourteen years later, a proportionate reduction of 18.5 per cent. By contrast, the established democracies were rarely as fragmented as the newer democracies have been, averaging an effective number of only 3.46 at their first democratic elections, this figure remaining virtually unchanged fourteen years later. (The historical data for the established democracies are taken from Bartolini and Mair 1990. Note that Bartolini and Mair cite Rae's Index of Fractionalization [F] rather than the effective number of parties [N], but following Lijphart [1999: 68], F can be converted into the effective number of parties using the formula $N = 1 / [1 - F]$.)

things, this has reduced the agenda-setting and issue-framing capacity of parties and the party-associated press, increased the access to non-partisan (and indeed, often generally critical) sources of political information, increased the focus on personalities, and compelled parties to adopt modern 'professionalized' means of political communication and campaigning (Farrell and Webb 2000). Such changes have reduced the need for mass membership organizations, with their hordes of amateur volunteers. While the former mass parties of the first-wave democracies have gradually adapted to this major change in their environment, the parties of the newer democracies have been born directly into such a context. For this reason, then, they have not faced the same need to develop mass organizations that their first-wave counterparts did at a similar stage of their life cycles. Instead, they have shifted directly to the leader-centred professionalized model of parties of electoral contestation.

The second major explanation of the different generational pattern of parties in recently transitional democracies is the very different social cleavage context in which they operate, compared to that faced by their counterparts in the older democracies in their formative years. In the post-communist world, for instance, cleavage structures are particularly fluid, as a result of the unprecedented 'triple transition' (Offe 1991) through which they have proceeded over the past decade and a half. Patterns of ownership have changed almost completely as a result of various forms of privatization. Social structures have changed just as much—some occupations (state planners and Politburo members) have disappeared entirely, others (like stockbrokers) are entirely new, while others still have gained or lost in terms of income and social status. Religious practice, suppressed during the communist period, has reasserted itself, but not everywhere and not always to the same extent. Social structural variables, as a result, have been very poor predictors of political behaviour, as compared, for instance, with political attitudes (White, Rose, With respect to the latter, some East European countries have been impacted on by the process of EU enlargement. Though a force for democratization, the prospect or reality of EU membership can also generate fault-lines in domestic politics.

Until the 'end of ideology' debates of the early 1960s, and the associated interpretations of party transformation in the West (Bell 1960; Lipset 1964; Kirchheimer 1966), the older established democracies were founded on the classic cleavages of class, religion, and ethnicity which were seminally defined by Lipset and Rokkan (1967). It was precisely on such structural foundations that the mass party phenomenon was constructed (Duverger 1954). Since the 1960s, however, observers of parties in the established democracies have increasingly contended that traditional links between the old mass parties and their bases of social group support have eroded. This has found some confirmation in the work of electoral sociologists (Franklin, Mackie, and Valen 1992). Such changes have spawned further consequences, including partisan dealignment, membership loss, growing

electoral volatility, party system fragmentation, and the development of modern parties of electoral contestation, which have come to rely on the state for their resources (Katz and Mair 1995). Parties in the more recently established democracies have been born in an era in which it has become the norm for electorates to be relatively dealigned, and in which the mass party is essentially an anachronism. Logically, there is no need for them to go through the same developmental life cycle, therefore.

The third factor which may have impacted on party development in many of the newer democracies is the institutional context. While the older established democracies of Western Europe were overwhelmingly parliamentary, a far higher proportion of third-wave democracies are presidential. This clearly encourages candidate-centred forms of political competition, rather than partified forms. Throughout this book we have encountered evidence that personalism characterizes politics in a number of the recently transitional democracies we have focused on: to some extent or other, it features significantly in Russia, Ukraine, Poland, and all of the Latin American countries. There is probably a reciprocal relationship between political cultures and institutional framework in these countries. That is, a predisposition in favour of presidential forms of leadership may well have existed at the onset of democracy, but the institutional systems which have emerged have likely served to strengthen such mindsets. It is interesting to observe that even Costa Rica, one of the cases that ostensibly offers some counterpoint to this theme, has become less partified and more personalist in recent years, with the advent of primary elections.

So we can conclude in broad terms that parties in recently transitional democracies are generally not subject to the same life cycle as their counterparts in the longer established democracies. In one sense they are constrained by period effects, in that the era in which they have formed and sought to institutionalize is not conducive to the mass party phase of development, but on the contrary is driving parties in established democracies ineluctably away from such a model. To the extent that parties in the newer democracies are bypassing this phase and moving directly to a model of state-dependent, low membership, professionalized organizations of electoral contestation, we might say that there is a degree of convergence which we would associate with the period effect model. However, we have noted that there are still often considerable differences in absolute terms between parties in the old and new democracies, which surely reflects the fact that the latter are starting the process of institutionalization from far lower baselines, but in a context which is unlikely to permit the historical levels achieved by the former. Regarded in these terms, the overall outcome is a generational difference between the two sets of cases, which may be attenuated by a period effect. Whether the remaining differences between parties in old and new democracies will eventually erode to the point of insignificance as the former converge upon the latter is an open empirical question. Ingrid van Biezen (2005: 219) suggests that such a process might be occurring:

Although parties in old and new democracies may be seen to converge and together can be seen to represent a mode of party organization which is clearly different from early post-democratizing Western Europe, it might be the parties in the West European polities that are developing towards the standard currently set by the new democracies, rather than the other way around. In this sense, therefore, this perspective not only reveals what is different about party organizational development in new democracies, but also highlights what has been distinctive about the trajectories in Western Europe itself. That is, it underlines the uniqueness of the emergence of parties as strong movements of society, as opposed to agents of the state, a path which is unlikely to be repeated in a different institutional context of party formation and a different period.

This argument lends primary emphasis to period effects. Any remaining differences between new and old democracies may be attributed to a generational effect inasmuch as elements of the genetic structures of parties in the older democracies stubbornly persist despite pressures to adapt. While we remain open to the possibility of further convergence between parties in old and new democracies, we are not yet fully convinced that the evidence from the array of countries examined in this book (a broader array than van Biezen is able to consider in her study) confirms it, given the remaining differences. If they should persist, one might argue that the interpretive emphasis should be on generational rather than period effects. In any case, it is clear that life-cycle effects count for relatively little (notwithstanding some modest evidence in their favour from Costa Rica and Spain), while period effects are impacting on, but not (yet) obliterating generational differences.

SYSTEMIC FUNCTIONALITY

Recruitment and governance

These analytically distinct, but closely related functions show a clear pattern. Russia and Ukraine are plainly different to the other East European cases examined in this book, inasmuch as they are far less partified. Political recruitment often depends on links to individual leaders rather than party per se. A large proportion of parliamentarians are independents, although this is now beginning to change in both countries as a result of constitutional changes.¹¹ Overall, these presidential systems operate strongly personalist forms of democracy, in which parties are generally marginal to recruitment and governance. On the other hand, the remaining East European cases in the book are strongly partified with regard to these

¹¹ In Russia at least half of the seats in the national legislature are now reserved for party candidates. Ukraine has recently moved even further, since the elections of March 2006 were fought on a party list basis, so that all candidates were party-affiliated. The same arrangements will apply in Russia from the December 2007 elections.

political functions. This is true even of Poland, where parties are not generally popular and where an elected presidency pertains: as Krzysztof Jasiewicz says, although personalism is significant at all levels of government in the country, sooner or later non-party or anti-party candidates recognize the need to court their appeal in well-established party organizations, or risk falling by the political wayside.

The picture in Latin America is more mixed. In general, Brazil and Argentina are systems characterized by personalized forms of presidential rule in which leaders enjoy considerable autonomy from their parties. It is more appropriate to speak of presidential government than party government in these cases, which makes it unsurprising that their parliamentary parties display low levels of cohesion; the survival of the directly elected executive does not depend on the legislative majority in presidential systems, which encourages the mutual autonomy of the two. Thus, although candidates for public office usually carry party labels in both countries, party loyalties are low in the legislature and party-hopping is commonplace. Moreover, presidents often appoint non-party actors to government.

Chile and Mexico present much more solidly partified patterns of recruitment and governance. Neither country is so dominated by personal leadership, despite the fact that they are both formally presidential systems. Parties predominate in the recruitment process (indeed, a party label is a legal requirement of candidature for elective office in Mexico), and parliamentary party cohesion is increasing and high in both countries. To this extent, it seems that we have a classic pattern of party institutionalization developing in these countries, even though the evidence for such a process is much more limited in respect of popular legitimacy and organization. Costa Rica offers a different trajectory of development: having long been an established democracy with strong party government, the country has shifted somewhat in a direction typical of many other established democracies in recent times, inasmuch as it has become more candidate-centred and 'presidentialized' (Poguntke This is most obviously the case in respect of political recruitment, where traditional party dominance has been undermined by the introduction of direct primary elections to select presidential candidates; however, the party government model has also been eroded by the decline of cohesive behaviour by legislative parties and the growing tendency of presidents to appoint non-party actors and technocrats to senior governmental posts.

In summary, while the majority of our cases have followed a classic pattern of institutionalization as parties have become increasingly central to recruitment and governance since democratic transition, this has not happened in the more personalized and clientelist regimes of Russia, Ukraine, Brazil, and Argentina, while Costa Rica resembles most longer established democracies in that it no longer dominates these functions to the extent it once did.

Articulation and aggregation of interests

In general, our country experts offer us a somewhat more negative and tentative set of views concerning political parties and the twin representative functions of articulation and aggregation. Yet there is one striking overlap with the picture of recruitment and governance: the most negative interpretations are again associated with Russia, Ukraine, Brazil, and Argentina. This is hardly surprising: if large number of legislators are not party members—or are so only notionally, because of their propensity to ‘hop’ from one parliamentary group to another—then it is virtually impossible for the party to act as the main conduit of representational linkage. Individual politicians may fulfil the articulation function to some extent, often on a clientelistic basis, or it may be provided by loose and impermanent cross-party groupings of legislators, as in Brazil. Moreover, extra-parliamentary actors such as NGOs and social movements are likely to challenge parties as articulators of interests, especially in Latin America, while individual leaders rather than parties fulfil the aggregative function in these highly personalized presidential systems.

Elsewhere, the picture is less clear. Our country experts are relatively positive about the role played by parties in providing representational linkage in Mexico, Chile, Costa Rica, and Hungary, although they all speak of the various challenges which parties there face from actors in civil society. To this extent, their position is not dissimilar to that which parties face in the longer established democracies. In parts of Eastern Europe, the legacy from the Communist era of a relatively underdeveloped autonomous civil society somewhat reduces the nature of the challenge from pressure groups and social movements, but as we have seen, it does not necessarily mean that it will be left to parties to articulate and aggregate demands: candidate-centred politics is an alternative. In places such as Chile, there is another problem which typifies the established democracies: when the major parties seek to play a broadly aggregative role by building wide coalitions of support, it tends to leave specific social constituencies feeling frustrated and unrepresented, which in turn leaves scope for interest-articulation by pressure groups and social movements. While this pattern is shared with the longer established democracies, a further factor which can seriously undermine the representative capacity of parties in newer democracies is the sheer instability of elite behaviour. In parts of Eastern Europe in particular—Poland, for instance—the public can easily become confused by the sheer proliferation of parties and the lack of well-defined links between issue positions and group interests.

Overall, then, it is not easy for parties in new democracies to develop as agents of representative linkage. It would not be accurate to suggest that they are entirely marginal to the articulation and aggregation of interests, but we should not be surprised that they are challenged, for this is true of parties in the established democracies as well (Webb 2002: 447–8), and there they do not often face the

additional obstacles of high rates of organizational turnover and personalistic and clientelistic linkage.

Communication and education

Almost all of the countries examined in this book have experienced the professionalization of political communication to some extent, entailing the use of external marketing, opinion research, and advertizing expertise. This implies that political elites are operating in a broadly pluralistic context in which they are obliged to share control of the agenda with other actors—rival parties, the mass media, and pressure groups. This obviously contrasts sharply with the situation that would have prevailed prior to democratic transition; in effect, the propaganda model of communication associated with dictatorship has been replaced by a more pluralistic context in which elites compete over the political agenda and the framing of political information. That said, in some cases old habits appear to die hard: in the more candidate-centred presidential systems of Russia, Ukraine, and Brazil, the state broadcasting networks demonstrate a bias towards those parties favoured by the executive. Less obviously, perhaps, this appears to be the case to some extent in the Czech Republic and Slovakia as well.

A number of observations stand out about all this. First, even where political elites do play a significant role in communicating political information to citizens in new democracies, it is not always primarily in the hands of parties but, once again, often in the hands of individual candidates and their coteries of communication specialists. Second, as has frequently been observed, parties in recently transitional democracies appear to have moved directly to modern professionalized approaches to communications and campaigning, thus leapfrogging earlier eras of party development in older democracies. As we have said, this strongly suggests that the period in which parties have emerged in the new democracies has affected their pattern of development: they have not simply emulated the life cycle of parties in the established democracies. Third, the overall differences between the new and established democracies are not great in respect of the roles that parties play in facilitating political communication; as the newer democracies consolidate they are bound to engage with a significant degree of pluralism and competition, which inevitably challenges the position of parties. Inasmuch as there is a remaining capacity for political bias in the way that the media networks operate, it should be borne in mind that this is hardly unknown in the established democracies either. Patterns of media ownership are often skewed there, and there can be few more blatant examples of the political exploitation of such a situation than that provided by Silvio Berlusconi's Italy in recent times.

For all that, it is worthwhile noting the importance of an observation made in respect of the Hungarian case by Enyedi and Tóka: parties there were in many ways at the forefront of educating and socializing citizens about democracy and capitalism after 1989. While they are inevitably constrained as purveyors of

political information by other actors—which is certainly a healthy thing from a democratic perspective—they are nevertheless important.

Mobilizing participation

The story emerging from the various chapters in this volume is quite straightforward in this respect: almost everywhere, parties are regarded as playing only a very limited role in fostering mass political participation. In effect, parties in these countries seem to have moved to operate in a low-participation phase of democracy without ever passing through the mass party stage of development. This is entirely logical: it is hard to see any reason why parties should become central to participation in these countries in the way that mass parties once did in the older democracies. As we have already noted, the environment in which parties operate is surely not conducive to the development of mass parties, when one thinks of the extent of the non-partisan mass media systems and the relative lack of cleavage structuration of electorates, compared to the times during which mass parties emerged in the older democracies.

Much of the material relevant to this point has in effect already been covered in the earlier discussion of party membership and electoral turnout. We know that turnout is struggling to reach high levels in many of the new democracies, as is party membership, except in a few instances of communist-successor organizations. To some extent parties are challenged by the alternative forms of mobilization offered by pressure groups and social movements. In these respects, these countries largely resemble the older democracies. However, one area of difference might be apparent in those East European countries where the underdevelopment of civil society implies that neither parties nor their usual rivals are strongly present.

IMPLICATIONS FOR DEMOCRATIC PERFORMANCE

What implications does this assessment of the functional performance of parties in recently transitional democracies carry for democracy more generally? First, we must recognize that parties are simply not central to mobilizing political participation any more, in either established or new democracies. The world has now left behind the era of the mass party, which in itself is hardly a very novel observation. However, it is worth emphasizing that just because this is so, it does not mean that parties or democracy are somehow ‘failing’. Rather, a particular historical phase of democratic development peculiar to the twentieth century entailed highly mobilized socio-political cleavages, which found expression in high levels of partisan membership, identification, and electoral turnout. The near-universal slump in each of these indicators should not be taken as evidence of democratic

crisis, but as the consequence of transition to a different era of democratic politics. By and large, the world's younger democracies have simply bypassed the mass party phase and its attendant expressions of partisan commitment.

Second, it should be regarded as entirely natural that parties will be severely challenged as sources of political information in the context of modern mass communications and pluralistic democracy. This may be regarded as essentially healthy from a democratic perspective, rather than as a sign of weakness, although there is a risk that certain sections of the media may become self-absorbed with their own importance and use this to cast the terrain of political conflict and action in an overwhelmingly negative light (Barnett 2002; Lloyd 2004). By contrast, where parties or candidates are able to retain excessive political control over the media (as in Russia and Ukraine), this can hardly be presented as a positive development for democracy. Thus the incessant contest between parties and the media over the dissemination and interpretation of political information, and the consequent 'professionalization' of the relevant sections of party organizations, is seemingly an inevitable component of modern democracy. The more open and plural new democracies have quickly adapted to this reality, and there is no particular reason to regard any of this as intrinsically pathological for democracy.

Parties are at their most feeble in those recently transitional democracies characterized by personalistic, candidate-centred forms of presidential politics. These countries, as we have seen, are associated with weakly institutionalized party organizations, low levels of legislative cohesion, and undue executive encroachment on the media. Clientelistic linkages may persist, and elite partisan affiliations rapidly turn over. Parties generally fail to play central roles in the articulation and aggregation of interests, and the party government model does not apply: to the extent that a democratic system of accountable government holds it operates in a candidate-centred way. This is not necessarily dangerous for democracy, but there are risks. Politics without stable structures of partisan conflict can be more susceptible to the dangers of populist demagoguery, and in the absence of popular or charismatic leaders, the resultant power vacuum can be sufficiently destabilizing to encourage support for 'non-political' forms of government. The World Values Survey data confirm as much. As we have noted, moreover, the prevalence of the self-interested exploitation of state resources is commonplace in these countries, a phenomenon which reflects an uncertain commitment to political equality, and thereby significantly undermines the consolidation of democracy.

Elsewhere in the recently transitional democracies parties are showing signs of stability and institutionalization—especially, but not exclusively, in the parliamentary systems. Even if it would not be entirely accurate to describe all of these countries as matching up to an ideal-type of party government (Katz 1986), nonetheless in every case parties make important contributions to the governance, recruitment, articulation, and aggregation functions, albeit not without challenges and constraints. To this extent, at least, we may conclude that, as in the established

democracies, parties in some of the newer democracies can help facilitate a meaningful degree of popular choice and control (Webb 2002: 453–4). While these criteria will not fully satisfy those ambitious for radical participatory or communitarian forms of democracy, the evidence of this book reminds us that they nevertheless remain substantial achievements in normative terms. Democracy is most appreciated and best consolidated in those places where party politics is most institutionalized. Wherever party politics is more weakly institutionalized, political inequality tends to be greater, commitment to pluralism less certain, clientelism and corruption more pronounced, and populist demagoguery a greater temptation. In essence, without party, democracy's hold is more tenuous.

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