

Umbrellas and rainbows – the early development of party systems in new European democracies

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Abstract

Studies on the size of party systems have often kept out recently democratising countries, being exceptional cases without much regularity. When the pattern of party system of development in young democracies is addressed, then two opposing views prevail. The *shakedown* view expects that after initial disorder in the party system (hyper-fractionalisation) the number of parties declines gradually before reaching common levels. The *party dispersion* view suggests that after an initial two-bloc competition the number of parties increases. The most important study on party development after authoritarianism (Reich 2004) however comes to the conclusion that the size of a party system is rather stable. I propose a different model that goes beyond linear hypotheses. My model consists of three phases of party development, distinguishing elections during the initial transition to democracy from later elections. I consider the mode of transition as a main explanatory variable for different types of development. Data from 20 young democracies in Central and Eastern Europe, along with Latin American evidence, suggest that we should refuse any hypothesis of a linear development of party system fractionalisation in young democracies.

** Preliminary version. Empirical observations used in the paper need to be consolidated.*

Introduction

Electoral politics, party systems, and institutions in young post-communist democracies have often been described as fluent, volatile, and unstable. Comparative political research on the party systems in Central and Eastern Europe can only seldom account for the differences and the deviations from common expectations about party development, lacked for a long time about a sufficient number of cases to make systematic analysis. Will more recent elections bring about a "normalisation" of the party systems? In 2007, most of the countries experienced a series of four or five multiparty elections. This gives new perspectives for comparative research.

Still in recent elections, many democracies in Central and Eastern Europe have a heavily fractionalised party system, often with 5 up to 8 effective parties in parliament. Only very rarely one party alone can win a majority of seats in parliament. Instead of single-party majorities, coalition governments are the rule. In my PhD project, I show how electoral systems shape party system fractionalisation in Central and Eastern Europe.

The present paper shall look at the peculiar shape of party systems in an early stage of democratisation. First elections after communist rule were often particular with regards to the electoral system in use, and they produced frequently a different pattern of party competition than in later instances: On the one hand, for the first elections of the parliament, often still single-seat districts with a majoritarian voting system were used, as inherited from the communist period. In theory (Duverger 1951; Rae 1971)

and in the empirical practice of Central and Eastern Europe, this was often related to two-bloc competition. On the other hand, even in some countries that applied proportional representation (commonly related to large party systems) often a two-bloc competition resulted: The communist parties or a successor of it often competed against an umbrella coalition of democratically oriented groups or parties (cf. Dawisha/Deets 2006; Olson 1998). And, to make the puzzle more complicated: Some countries however (Poland, Slovenia, Hungary) provided large multiparty systems already in the first elections.

The patterns of a two-bloc competition and a drastic increase of party system fractionalisation from the first to the second elections are in contrast to the lessons learned from the development of other young party systems. Scholarship about electoral systems and the development of young party systems speaks either of a party dispersion effect, where the number of parties is increasing from election to election, or of a "shakedown" period, in which the number of competing and of elected parties is continuously reduced (cf. Taagepera/Shugart 1989; Cox 1997; Benoit 2001; Reed 2001). In my model, the "shakedown" effect is lagged by one election: The "umbrella coalitions", covering all the colours of the political rainbow, prevailing in the first elections, will brake apart in the second elections into small parties.

The number of parties in the period of transition and consolidation of democracy was seldom studied, the most important contribution being Reich (2004), who studied the development of the number of parties in third wave democracies (countries that got democratised in the latest quarter of the 20th century). Most studies of party formation in countries in transition rather focussed on the type of the actors in transition, the degree of liberalisation that they aim at, and their political stands (Bermeo 1987; Przeworski 1991).

My paper shall compare the creation of party systems across 20 young democracies in Central and Eastern Europe, looking for similar patterns and differences. The study includes all the Central and Eastern European post-communist countries, including the Balkan states and European post-Soviet republics (Russia, the Baltic States, Moldova, Ukraine). Belarus is excluded, as a lack of democratisation.¹ I explain the peculiarity of the first elections with the prevailing conflict line of the "old regime" forces versus "reformers". In the second elections, other cleavages get more important, and the umbrella brakes apart, so that often a strong fractionalisation of the party system results.

The paper is structured as follows: In a first part, I speak about the different theoretical expectations about the development of party system fractionalisation in young democracies, and about previous studies of this topic. Thereafter, I propose my own three-phases model, and I

¹ Montenegro and Kosovo shall be included more systematically later. I need to decide how to treat those cases in the whole frame of the PhD thesis.

compare it with empirical evidence from Central and Eastern European democracies, before concluding.

The development of party systems in the view of previous research

Studies on young party systems have looked at aspects such as the party institutionalisation (Mainwaring 1998), the decrease of volatility and stabilisation (Tavits 2005) or into the electoral systems impact on party system (Birch 2003; Moser 1999). The research interest of this paper is to highlight a very basic question: how does party competition look like in very first multiparty elections, and how does it develop over time. Whereas there a broad number of studies investigates party system fractionalisation in consolidated democracies,² only rare studies have looked at the development of party systems in their very early stage using this variable.

Broad comparative studies have left out young democracies, because the party system needs first to be consolidated (Taagepera/Shugart 1989), or because the results simply do not correspond with common expectations made for more established party systems (Golder 2002).

Party dispersion hypothesis

Literature that looks at political transitions suggests a process of *party dispersion* (Reich 2004; Przeworski 1991 66f.; Howard/Roessler 2006).

The logic of party dispersion relies on what Przeworski calls a dilemma of democratising forces in authoritarian regimes:

“[...] to bring about democracy, anti-authoritarian forces must unite against authoritarianism, but to be victorious under democracy, they must compete with each other. Hence, the struggle for democracy always takes place on two fronts: against the authoritarian regime for democracy, and against one’s allies for the best place under democracy. Thus, even if they sometimes coincide temporally, it is useful to focus separately on the two different aspects of democratisation: extrication from the authoritarian regime and the constitution of a new democratic one.”
(Przeworski 1991: 67)

From this dilemma, Reich (2004: 237f.) derives to a hypothesis about the direction in which party fragmentation develops: After having united in the founding elections, “party fragmentation is likely to increase”.

At its beginning, party competition is reduced on two or few competitors. Democratic reformers need to unify their forces in order to achieve a liberalisation of the regime. With ongoing democratic consolidation, the need of a unity of the reformers vanishes, the reformer bloc can split off, new parties have time to be created, and a multiparty system is created. The direction of the party development is a steady increase, until the level of party fragmentation corresponds to the structure of the society (until the parties reflect the cleavages), or until the electoral system stops

² Cf. Amorim Neto/Cox 1997; Ordeshook/Shvetsova 1994; Norris 1997; Lijphart 1994; Taagepera 2007.

the process of fragmentation. Electoral systems hinder the entry of very small parties into the system, so that there is an institutional limit to party system fractionalisation. The hypothesis is shown in figure 1: the bold black line shows the party dispersion hypothesis.

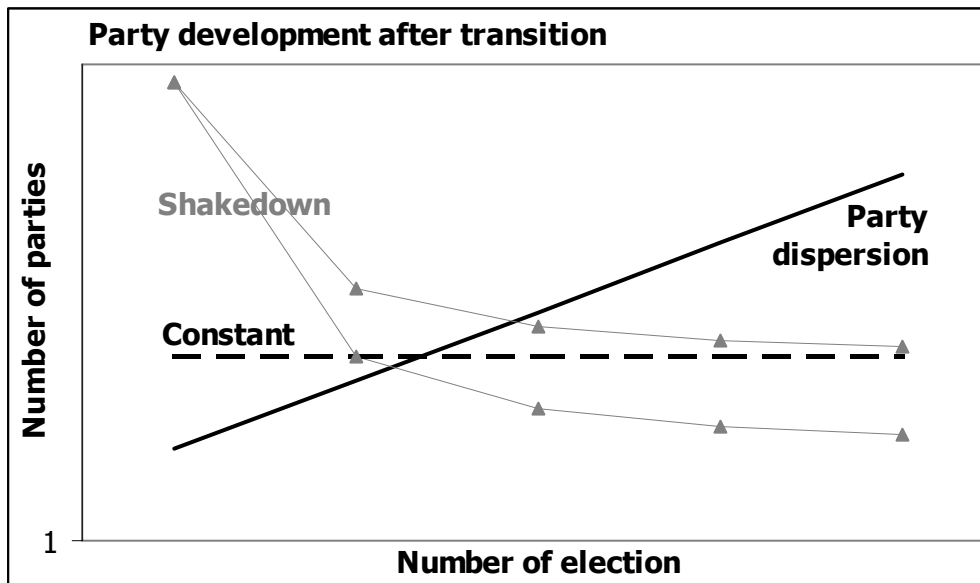


Figure 1: Hypotheses about the party system development after transition to democracy.

Shakedown hypothesis

Whereas scholars of political transition claim a *party dispersion process*, electoral system scholars expect the contrary. The main concept of the electoral system school relies on the mentioned difficulties that electoral systems impose to small parties to entry the political game.

In the first post-authoritarian elections, the number of parties is very high, because as a lack of experience the uncertainty about the outcome of the elections is maximal, so that every possible entrepreneur tries his luck, so that first elections under new institutional regimes constitute "a situation of high entropy contains the potential for many kinds of change" (Turner 1993: 331). But many of them fail; so that they will not compete any more in subsequent elections or gain fewer votes, and might fail to pass the thresholds given through the electoral systems not win any more seats. A *learning effect* of voters and parties leads to the ongoing adaptation of the party system to the electoral system's constraints (Taagepera/Shugart 1989: 147; Cox 1997; Dawisha/Deets 2006). The number of parties starts to decline (O'Donnell/Schmitter 1986: 58). In the shakedown period after the first democratic elections, party systems get more and more concentrated on few main, stable competitors (Reich 2004: 236ff.; Tavits 2005). With regards to plurality electoral systems, Gerring (2005: 90) expects that the longer an institutional system is in act, the less chances for small parties to find a niche to survive. Only the largest parties, the ones that are able to win a respective amount of votes, can survive; the smaller ones fail here and there to cross the electoral thresholds, and will not be elected any more in subsequent elections.

“One of the key challenges in the overall quality of democracy in post-communist states is the consolidation of the party system. This consolidation occurs over time as an emerging process whereby the demand for parties and their supply by political forces reaches equilibrium (Cox 1997). Initially when elections are opened to contestation by opposition forces, both the demand and supply of parties is typically high as previously suppressed groups enter the democratic contest. As successive elections occur, a learning process occurs wherein the constraints on winning office become clear to both parties and voters and market-clearing expectations lead to a restriction of both demand and supply. This reduction in the number of parties will be a function of both the particular electoral rules in the country and the shape of the electorate in defining their desires for representation.” (Benoit 2001: 2)

The shakedown hypothesis is shown by triangles in figure 1 above. Depending on the rigidity of the electoral systems and possible cleavages in the society, the resulting number of parties in later elections after transition might differ; this is why two shakedown lines out of a set of many possible are shown.

Why does Reich's case selection lead to a stable development in time

The party dispersion and the shakedown hypotheses were seldom opposed in a broad empirical comparison. Reich (2004) compares 23 periods of post-WWII democratisation in 22 countries; covering three or four elections for each of the cases included, six of the countries studied are post-communist countries in Central and Eastern Europe (Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovenia). The study came to varying conclusions for different groups of countries. For most of the cases, the study found that the founding elections are setting the line for the long-term development of the party system, and there is neither an up nor a down in the number of parties afterwards (cf. figure 1 above, dotted line) – despite some volatility between the parties. In some cases, particularly the post-communist ones, Reich (2004: 247) finds support for the party dispersion hypothesis: because of the economic crisis, the study argues, “both the democratic opposition and parties supportive of the old regime splintered”. The shakedown hypothesis is mainly negated (ibid.: 248). These results seem to be to some extent influenced by the selection of cases included in the study. Two aspects of the case selection merit our attention. First, the study excludes cases where major reforms of the electoral system occurred. Second, the study considers only elections where “(1) the ruling government acknowledged the right of political parties to form independently of the state, and (2) the resulting election was not affected by government intimidation or sanctions placed on a significant segment of public opinion” (ibid.: 248). These criteria reflect a dilemma that needs to be resolved in empirical studies of transition elections. Researchers might be incited to exclude cases with unstable external variables, in order to eliminate better for exogenous influences on the development that are hard to control for – such as electoral system changes in this case. And, when excluding not entirely free elections, we avoid having flawed results that do not reflect the reality, but that might be manipulated in

different instances. Both selection processes might however lead to a selection of cases that are not any more representative for the empirical reality. More precisely, we need to distinguish cases where first multiparty elections occur already during the period of the initial transition and are part of it, from cases of transition by pact or initiated by the ruling party, where the first multiparty elections take place once the institutional rules are set and elections fulfil democratic standards from the very beginning. The selection criteria applied by Reich are on the one hand focussing his study on the second case – countries with transitions by pact or initiated by the government. There, such as in Hungary, the institutional order and particularly the electoral system was agreed on before the first elections were held among the main actors, so that these countries subsequently did not involve in major changes. In countries, however, where the first multiparty elections succeed already during the initial transition, often the first electoral system is inherited from the authoritarian period, and only when democratic forces come to power or exert pressure, the electoral system will be changed later on (cf. Dawisha/Deets 2006), and since revolutionary elections tend to be followed by electoral system changes, they are dis-selected by Reich's criteria. On the other hand, the selection criteria often lead to the exclusion of the first multiparty elections, because too often there are question marks about the fairness of very first elections – so that study might reflect rather a slightly later development than the development from the very beginning. In brief, The selection criteria move the focus on these countries that underwent already a large part of the transition before the first elections, and where a proto-party system could already form out; focussing on cases of rather stable party systems instead of those of a more fundamental change. When further calculating averages over country groups,³ it should not astonish us if the results look as if the party system fractionalisation is approximately constant.

A three-phase model of party development

My model of post-transitional party development differs from the work presented by earlier authors. Previous studies have relied on a monotonic move, either speaking about an increasing or a decreasing number of parties in post-authoritarian elections. I integrate previous diverging models into one, distinguishing three periods of party system development.

Przeworski (1991: 67; cf. above) spoke of the dilemma of the pro-democracy movement under the need to unify to bring about democracy, and the need to split to offer democratic choice.⁴ My model relies on these countervailing incentives, but transform the contrary logic in a three-phase model:

³ We need to think the fact that not in all the countries of a country group the development is as far at the same point of time. In some countries by the second or third elections, the process of party system transition might be more advanced than in others. As long as the process is a linear increase or decrease of party fractionalisation, the average of the number of parties in a group of countries in a certain election is a useful measure to identify the direction development. If however such a development should be non-linear or even non-monotonic, then the average calculated over a country group might hide the changes that occur – and we might wrongly suppose that there is neither increase nor decrease.

⁴ Przeworski refers to the contrary aspects in the formation of the party systems as *democratisation of the state* and *democratisation of the regime*.

1. For a change towards democracy, the pro-democracy movements need to unify. This is what applies in elections that take place still during the transition period, when the democratic movement tries to liberalise the regime by an electoral victory (Olson 1998). Only under a unified democratic opposition can bring about change (Howard/Roessler 2006), any split of the opposition might make the country stuck in authoritarianism. If first elections take part during the initial transition, the *old regime versus reformer* cleavage (transitional cleavage; apparatus versus forums/fronts, cf. Ekman et al. 2004: 597) prevails, and we would expect a 2-party-system.

2. Once the united democratic opposition reaches the power, the initial step towards democracy is taken, and the democracy movement splits up.

This is why the second multiparty elections often might look completely different from the first ones:

- Once the old government was wiped out in the first multiparty elections, the unity of the democratic bloc is not necessary any more. Once the authoritarian period is over, the conflict between old regime supporters and democrats/reformers loses importance. Instead, competition among democratic forces starts to play, leading to a strong fractionalisation of the party system.
- A new institutional order is implemented by the reform institutions. The first multiparty parliament acts often as a constituent assembly, or in some cases in a first time a constituent assembly is elected. The reformers in power might have different preferences regarding the institutional rules than the old regime, not at least it is plausible that democratic forces prefer a different electoral system than the one that was used for the first multiparty elections.
- In some cases, the old regime party might try to switch into a more democratically oriented party, change its program, name and try to appeal to voters with a reformed image, if it survived the reform process.
- Voters get disappointed: Often, there are higher expectations in the new democratic forces than they might fulfil. Elections after the initial transition are often characterised by a backlash, where voters switch to populists or back to old regime parties, disappointed of the result of the early transition. – First election winners are told to loose the second election, because their government will be hold accountable for the large problems and failures, (Rose/Mackie 1983: 115; Di Palma 1984: 186).

Overall, the different factors lead to high volatility of the party system and voters between the first and the second elections, and to uncertainty about the possible outcome. After the splintering of

the united reform coalition, the number of parties grows heavily, and with many political entrepreneurs entering the game, the number of failing parties is likely to be high.⁵

3. From the third election on, the number of parties is gradually decreasing; or: after a maximum of fractionalisation was reached in the second multiparty elections, the *shakedown effect* becomes dominant. The effect occurs as the organisation among political actors increases, and the uncertainty of the electoral outcome decreases – helping the major parties to concentrate the votes on them.

I hypothesise thus that in the first multiparty elections at the end of the authoritarian period only two united political blocs compete for the elections, followed by an explosion of the number of parties in the subsequent elections (even more with regards to the number of parties that attempt to win seats, elective parties, than the ones that get elected, parliamentary parties). Thereafter, the shakedown period starts, leading to a party concentration and an adaptation of the parties to the electoral system. The number of parliamentary parties and – most of all – the number of elective parties is decreasing after the second election, until it reaches a level of fractionalisation that is in correspondence to the electoral system.

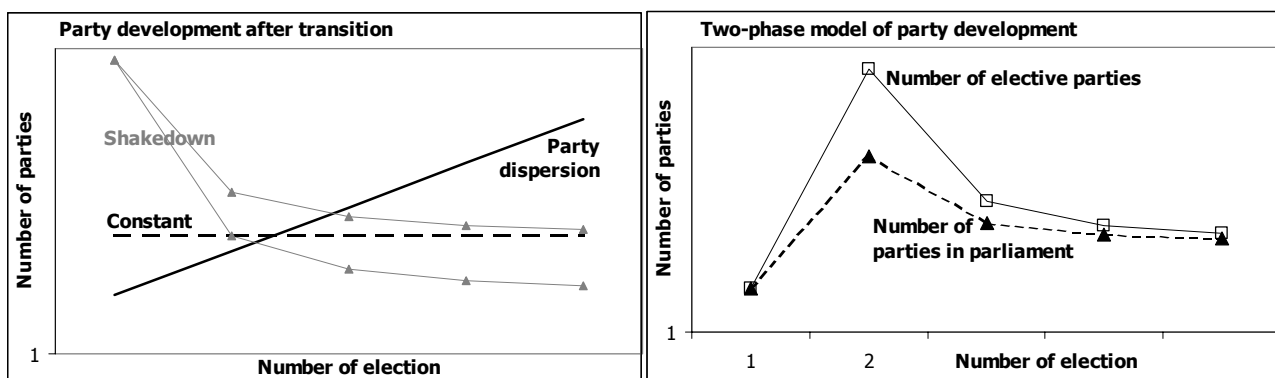


Figure 2: Models of party development after transition; models discussed in previous research (left – identical with figure 1) and my two-phase model (right graph).

Is the two-phases-development a generally expected pattern? Not necessarily. The model relies on the type of *direct and abrupt transition of authoritarianism towards democracy* (although being aware that in their early stages the quality of democracy in practice might often have shortcomings). In those countries we would expect the spread of a broad spectrum of political parties in the second elections. However, previous studies have shown that the nature of the transition might have an important impact on the first elections after transition (Bermeo 1987: 213). Previous research has shown that a rapid democratisation relies on opposition unity (Howard/Roessler 2006), whereas in the case of a split opposition we might have slower steps of

⁵ Changes in the electoral rules that often occur after the democratic forces get the power might even more contribute to this effect. On the one hand, because the electoral systems get more permissive, and on the other hand, because under new rules the actors lack even more predictability of the outcome, so that many parties might compete.

gradual liberalisation, possibly not to revolutionary elections, but rather through alliances of the old regime with some of the reform forces, compromising on slight reform steps (Przeworski 1991: 63ff.). In cases of gradual liberalisation, as in third wave countries it rather occurred in Latin America, we might not expect the same development as in quick transitions from authoritarianism, predominant in Central and Eastern Europe.

The second aspect that might lead to a deviation from the three-phase model is the *timing of the first multiparty elections*. It is important to distinguish the period of confrontation and system change or the period when the initial transition happens and the system is changed from authoritarianism from the period of consolidation of democracy. The expectation of a two-bloc competition in the first elections relies on approaches that deal with the first multiparty elections as part of the initial transition from authoritarianism (Howard/Roessler 2006; Przeworski 1991). In deviating cases, the pattern might be different. Simon (1997: 363) highlighted the importance of the timing of the first elections for the development of party system fractionalisation, arguing that if elections are held "too late", when the civil forces already pluralized.⁶ I relate this case to transition processes that occur by pact between the old regime and the political sphere gets liberalised a considerable amount of time before the first multiparty elections.

The three-phase model, working in Central and Eastern Europe

After having discussed my model, and possible exceptions to it, I shall test it at the reality in Central and Eastern Europe. First, I look at the first phase of my model. I expect that in countries with an abrupt or non-pacted transition, the party system will start from two blocs along the *old regime – reformer* cleavage that split up following the first multiparty elections.

Before however showing empirical evidence for this development, I shall look at the conditions under which such a development might occur. The important variable here is the character of the transition and the timing of the first elections.

Analysis of the countries with a transition by pact

For transitions by pacts, I expected deviating patterns of party system development. There are three cases that are typically discussed as pacted transition in Central and Eastern Europe: Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia. I shall discuss those cases and argue how they need to be situated in my two-phase model.⁷

⁶ Simon (1997: 363) states a second aspect, the case when civil society pluralized too late, and "consequently, the political force originating in the former socialist state will remain strong for a long time; it will be able to hold its position even after elections and either the democratization process of state institutions will be protracted or will stop". However, many cases that occurred according this path might not be included in my study, because in the case that the authoritarian party stays in power, there might be no transition to democracy, and the study covers the development of party systems in young democracies.

⁷ To be better documented in a later version.

First democratic multiparty elections in *Poland* were held in 1991, however, after only partly free elections were held in 1989. I treat the 1989 elections as non-democratic pre-transition elections, because only the upper house, the Senate was elected in competitive elections; whereas only 35% of the seats in the lower house (Sejm) were elected in semi-competitive elections (restrictions on candidates); the rest of the seats rather appointed in elections without choice (Olson 1993). The reformers umbrella movement (Solidarność) won a landslide victory of votes in these pre-transition elections, for those seats that were elected, but this could not result in a majority of seats in parliament, so that the communist party still could control the institutions. The period 1989-1991 however was one of shared government power: the communist party ceded part of the control of the cabinet to the reformers. It was in this period when the new constitution was passed, Lech Wałęsa got elected to the presidential office in the end of 1990, so that the communist party lost one more domain of its power (Grzybowski/Mikuli 2004). In the case of Poland, the transition started early in 1989, and by the first free multiparty elections in 1991, the transition from authoritarianism was history, and the reform movement had consolidated its power. Following their electoral success (in term of votes) in the 1989 elections, Solidarność began to split up; new parties were founded. Poland is thus a case where the first free multiparty elections came much later than the transition from authoritarianism, giving time for the old regime – reformer cleavage to cede importance and for the umbrella movement to split off.

Similarly to the Polish case, the multiparty elections in *Hungary* have been preceded by a transition that was dealt at a roundtable of the old regime and the democratic opposition in June-September 1989. The transition was preceded by a period of liberalisation in the 1980s, where a number of parties started to be formed out. For the roundtable talks, all the relevant opposition parties coordinated in an umbrella organisation, the EKA ("Opposition Roundtable"), and negotiated as a united actor. By the first multiparty elections that were held in 1990, former communists and the democratic opposition had agreed on a new institutional order; the transition of the state was mainly a result of the 1989 negotiations, and thereafter, the democratic parties went their independent way. The communist party broke with Marxism-Leninism, and was transformed into the Hungarian Socialist Party. Overall, similar as in the Polish case, the first multiparty elections in Hungary were held only after the transition of the state has taken place, and the initial transition conflict could be seen history (Tóka 2004).

The case of *Czechoslovakia* has some parallels with the Polish and the Hungarian case on the first sight. After the citizens movements were set up in the Velvet revolution in November 1989, the transition of the state was initiated, and in January 1990 a new, proportional electoral system was adopted. After the adoption of the new institutional rules, and as many as 66 parties were registered before the elections in June 1990. However, despite the liberalisation and initial transition that preceded the first multiparty elections in 1990, it would be misleading to see the

case of Czechoslovakia in the same light as Hungary and Poland. In different to these countries, the time span between the initial liberalisation and transition in Czechoslovakia and the 1990 elections was too short for strong parties to form out (Klima 1998). Whereas in Poland and Hungary already in the 1980s a gradual liberalisation of the civil society allowed the embryonic development of the party system, in Czechoslovakia the liberalisation started not earlier than in November 1989. Both the lack of a previous liberalisation and the short time from the beginning of the transition to the first elections might explain why in Czechoslovakia the first multiparty elections was still highly arranged around the *old regime – reformer* cleavage, despite being held after a transition by pact had started. And this might explain why the opposition umbrella movement did not split up before the elections, nor did the communist party undergo major reforms before the first elections.

Double cleavage in the Yugoslav and Soviet cases

At the end of the communist period in Central and Eastern Europe, the states of the Soviet Union and of former Yugoslavia underwent a double transition of statehood: first, the transition regarded the step from communist authoritarianism towards liberal democracy, second, the changing of the borders. This gives a two-dimensional setting of possible conflict lines, summarised in table 1, for a republic with a separatist movement.

<i>Regime reform cleavage</i>	Old regime party (communists)	Democratic opposition
<i>Nationalist/separatist cleavage</i>		
Keeping unity of previous state	Communist parties	-
Separatist and nationalist	Separatist communists	Popular front movements

Table 1: Regime cleavage and nationalist/separatist cleavage overlapping.

When borders and the regime type are both under discussion, a political party needs to find its position on both cleavages, what would imply that there are four possible positions for political parties. However, this logic would be misleading: we might expect a strong correlation of both cleavages, so that only two or three fields of table 1 are covered. The reformers opposition will campaign on both dimensions – separatism and transition to democracy – in order to get a larger potential of supporters – such that want a change of the system and such that want a change of the borders. Both aspects might often be related to each other, because unhappiness with either the regime type of the territorial division is both accumulated as distrust for the previous regime.

In a separatist entity, the regional sections of the communist party might as well take claim autonomy or independence; any other stand might be too unpopular among the population. However, being related to the old regime, the communist party sections will be more loyal to the central state than the democratic opposition.

There are only hardly any actors that might fit into the position in the upper right cell of the table. It would be difficult for the democratic opposition to take a stands in favour of centralisation.

Whereas in the previously discussed countries with less disputed borders the crucial moment for the democratic transition is the adaptation of a new, liberalised, post-authoritarian order; in the cases of separatist movements, the declaration of independence and building up of a new, independent and democratic statehood are the crucial moments of the transition.

The separatist Republics in the Soviet Union all held their first multiparty elections in 1990, when the Republics were still part of the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union experienced a slight political liberalisation in the 1980s. The electoral competition in the first elections in 1990 might be expected to be still aligned around two blocs, with the united popular fronts are opposed to the communist party, because the elections took place before the states reached their independence and adopted a new democratic order.

In the Republics of former Yugoslavia, the things are slightly different. Particularly Croatia and Slovenia experienced a liberalisation and an embryonic development of political organisations in the 1970s and 1980s. First democratic elections were held in 1990 in all the Republics. At this time, the claims for steps towards were most advanced in Slovenia. The Slovenian parliament had modified the Slovenian constitution already in 1989, asserting its sovereignty and the right to secede from the Yugoslav federation. By the elections in 1990, the Communist party had transformed into a Social Democratic party, stood for democratic reforms, and was drastically weakened. There was no need thus for an initial two-bloc competition; all parties were democratically oriented and in favour of independence, and there was no more dilemma in the sense of Przeworski. Instead, the democratic parties could compete against each other. Slovenia was most advanced in its claims for independence (although it became independent only in 1991) and its democratic reforms when the parliament was elected in 1990, so that the two-bloc cleavage was over (if it ever existed). In no other of the Yugoslav Republics, independence claims were so advanced, so that the separatist and the reform cleavage might still be stronger at the time of the first elections in 1990.

Umbrella movements in Central and Eastern Europe and their break up

After having discussed the cases with a deviating expectation due to their character of the transition, I shall look at the party system development across all the cases studied in the first multiparty – or the “founding” elections.

Throughout the region, the embryonic party system was characterised by a duality between the old regime party versus “umbrella movements”, uniting political groups, actors and citizens with the common goal of bringing about democracy. Often, these movements were extremely

heterogeneous, containing all the colours of the political rainbow, from monarchists, conservatives, and liberals up to ecologic movements.

Table 2 gives an overview over the movements, parties, and organisations that had the character of common opposition organisations in the early stages of the state transition in Central and Eastern Europe.

Country	Umbrella organisation: Name and remarks	First elections: year and number of parties
Albania	Democratic Party. The party was during the initial years of the post-authoritarian transition rather an umbrella organisation of many individual, heterogeneous actors than a political party with a common program (Biberaj 1998: 277).	1991 $N_{2S} = 1.8$
Bosnia and Herzegovina	- There was no unified umbrella organisation in the first democratic elections in 1990. However, the nationalist parties that were opposed to the old regime collaborated in the first elections.	-
Bulgaria	Union of Democratic Forces. Umbrella coalition of 17 opposition parties and interest groups. (Ashley 1990; NRI/NDI 1990)	1990: $N_{2S} = 2.4 / N_{2V} = 2.7$
Croatia	Croat Democratic Union, HDŽ. The HDŽ is not only the anti-communist, but as well the Croat nationalist party. In countries seeking for independence, the old-regime – reformer-cleavage might overlap with the nationalist cleavage.	1990: $N_{2S} = 1.9 / N_{2V} = 3.7$
Czechoslovakia	Czech Republic: Civic Forum (Občanské forum, OF) Slovakia: Public against violence (VPN) Soon after the first elections in June 1990, the Czech and Slovak party systems split off (Elster/Offe/Preuss 1998: 137; Klima 1998)	1990: $N_{2S} = 2.1 / N_{2V} = 3.1$
Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania	First elections Elections in the Baltic States were held still during the Soviet rule. The affiliation of candidates is not transparent from the electoral results. However, in every of the Baltic States there was a strong cleavage between separatist forces standing for an end of Soviet rule, opposed to the Soviet communist party. There were some separatist communists that won seats in every of the three states. Estonia: Eestimaa Rahvarinne (Popular Front) Latvia: Latvian People's Front (Latvijas tautas fronte, LTF). Lithuania: Sajudis. (Taagepera 1990; Krupavicius 1998).	Estonia: 1990 Latvia: 1990 Lithuania: 1990 Party affiliation of candidates unclear. They did not have any or sometimes a multiple party affiliation. However, the systems were all aligned in two blocs. (Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe 1990).
Hungary	Opposition roundtable (EKA).	1990: $N_{2S} = 3.8 / N_{2V} = 6.7$ (PR-tier)
Macedonia	Xxx	1990.
Moldova	Nationalist popular front. (Slider 1990: 297)	1990. Party affiliation of candidates unclear.
Montenegro	Xxx	Xxx
Poland	Solidarność. By the first free multiparty elections in 1991, the movement was dissolved. (Olson 1993)	1991: $N_{2S} = 10.8 / N_{2V} = 13.8$
Romania	National Salvation Front (Frontul Salvării Nationale, FSN). The Romanian version of a popular front promoted a new way of authoritarianism and national unity ideology instead of pluralism (Csergo 2002). ^a	1990: $N_{2S} = 2.2 / N_{2V} = 2.2$

Russia	Democratic Russia. (Slider 1990: 297)	Party affiliation of candidates unclear. Xxx Electoral studies 1991
Serbia	Serbian Democratic opposition (Demokratska opozicija Srbije DOS). In the transitional 2000 election, democratically oriented opposition parties organised in a short-living umbrella alliance. The alliance fell apart soon after (Goati 2004).	2000: $N_{2S} = 1.9 / N_{2V} = 2.2$
Slovenia	No umbrella of the democratic, separatist opposition.	1990: $N_{2S} = 8.2 / N_{2V} = 9.1$
Ukraine	Democratic bloc. Unites Rukh nationalists, Helsinki Union, environmentalist groups, strike committees (Slider 1990: 297).	1990. Party affiliation of candidates unclear. Xxx Electoral studies 1991

Table 2: Umbrella organisations in Central and Eastern Europe – an overview.

N_{2S} = Effective number of parliamentary parties, according their seats won in parliament. N_{2V} = Effective number of elective parties, according their vote shares in parliamentary elections (Laakso/Taagepera 1979).

^a The 1990 elections are described rather as semi-democratic than fully democratic.

The list contains democratic umbrella movements or popular fronts in almost all the countries across Central and Eastern Europe. Exceptions are Poland, Hungary, and Slovenia, where the transition process was more advanced by the first multiparty elections.

If we look at the frequent use of single-seat district electoral systems in the first democratic elections in Central and Eastern Europe, this might be taken as an explanation for the party system size. Often, elections in single-seat districts favour the emergence of two-party systems. However, there are too many exceptions from this rule in the countries under study: Very frequently (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Czechoslovakia Estonia, Romania, Serbia), proportional representation, or in one case (Bulgaria) a mixed system was applied, and nevertheless only two major blocs emerged, so that we might suggest that there are other influence factors, not related to the electoral system, such as the recent transition.

Ethnic minority groups competing in first multiparty elections

Besides the democratic coalition groups, in some cases a second group of parties could be identified already in first democratic elections: Parties of ethnic minorities. Besides the *regime reform* cleavage, ethnicity appears as the only strong cleavage from the very beginning of democratic elections in young democracies in Central and Eastern Europe.

The following list provides some examples for ethnic minority groups successfully competing in first multiparty elections:

- Albania: Omonia, the party of the Greek minority, won 5% of the seats. (Commission on Security and Collaboration in Europe 1991.)
- Bulgaria: Movement for Rights and Freedom (Turkish minority party), 11.5% of the seats (NRI/NDI 1990).

- Czechoslovakia: Different parties for the Czech and the Slovak part of the country. In Slovakia, further a Hungarian minority parties competed, and won 9% of the seats (in the parliament of the Slovak Republic) (Friedman 2005).
- Macedonia: People's Democratic Party (Partia Demokratike Popullore); Party for Democratic Prosperity (Albanian minority party), 19% of the seats (Friedman 2005).
- Romania: Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (Uniunea Democrata a Maghiarilor din Romania), 7% of the seats (Source: Essex elections database).

In Serbia, minority groups were included in the Umbrella coalition. In the Baltic States, many minority voters voted for the communist parties (Taagepera 1990); the *nationalist/separatist cleavage* and the *old regime – reformers cleavage* highly correlated in those cases, however in opposed directions.

The development of party system fractionalisation in Central and Eastern Europe

My three-phases model suggested that after the first democratic elections, the umbrella movements split up in subsequent elections, leading to high fractionalisation of the seats in parliament and even more of the votes. Afterwards, the number of parties decreases again.

The number of parties is measured with the effective number of parties (Laakso/Taagepera 1979), an index that can be calculated both on the basis of the vote distribution on parties (number of elective parties) and on the seat distribution (number of parliamentary parties).

In figure 3 (next page), the development of the number of parties is mapped for all the Central and Eastern European democracies under study. As a lack of precise electoral data, the first elections in post-Soviet republics are missing. A graphical analysis shows that in many cases, the number of parties increases between the first and the second elections (or, in the cases where we lack precise data for the first elections, it is clearly above 2 in the second elections). Some expected and a few unexpected exceptions apply.⁸

⁸ Exceptions are the cases where first elections were held after initial transition (Hungary, Poland, Slovenia), and further – different from expectations – in Bulgaria and Croatia only one of both measures (elective parties and parliamentary parties) is increasing. In Albania and Moldova, the exact number of parties for the first election is missing, however knowing that it is not very different from 2, we can see that there is no clear increase of parties before the second elections.

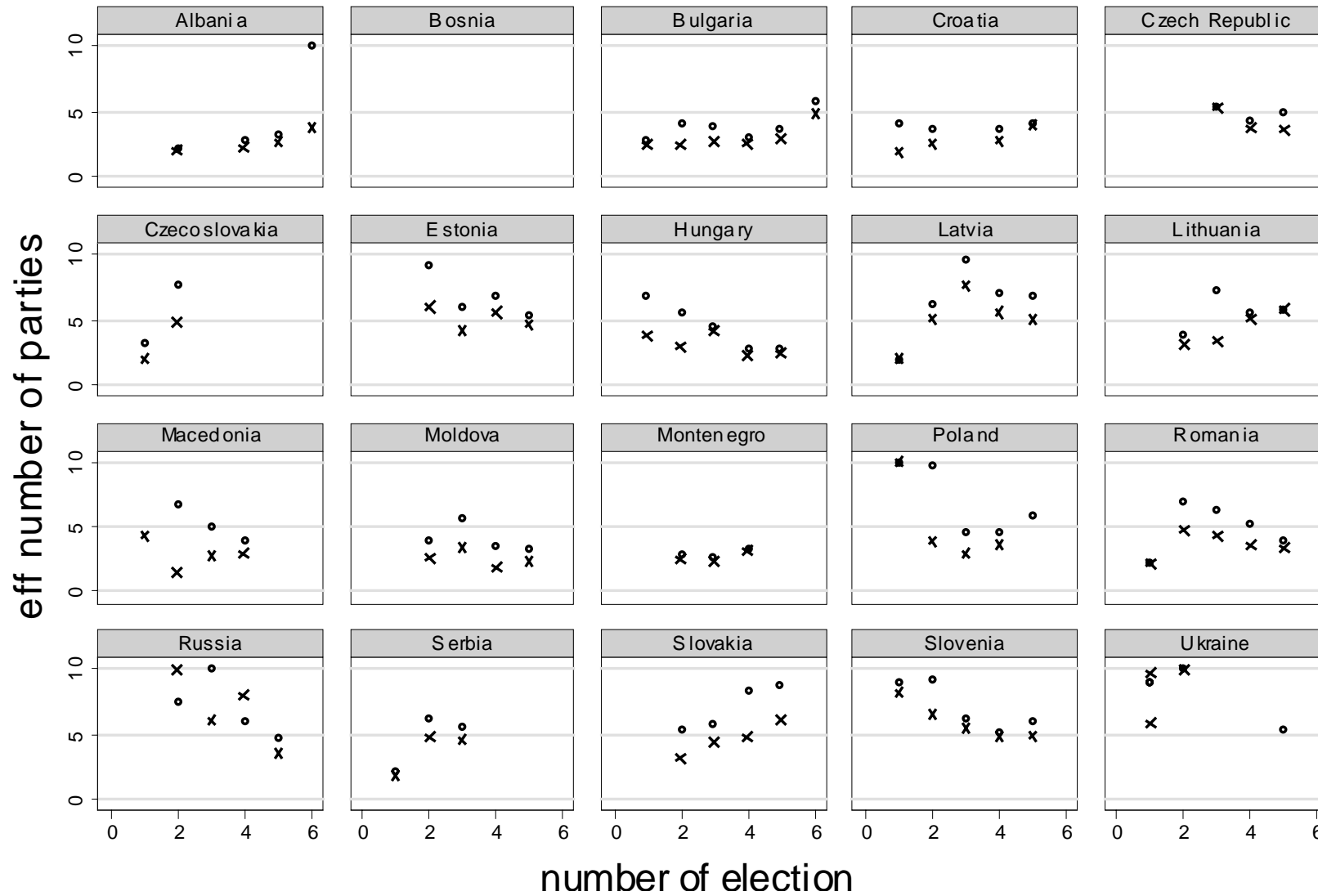


Figure 3: Development of the number of parties in 18 young democracies in Central and Eastern Europe. (Bosnia, Kosovo missing)
 X – Effective number of parliamentary parties (seat distribution); O – Effective number of elective parties (vote distribution).
 Numbers of parties of 10 or above are shown as 10 parties. Sources: Author's database.

Further, the figure maps the development after the second election – the third period of the party system development where we would expect a decrease in the number of elective parties and of parliamentary parties, so that at the end of the development both numbers are similarly high.

In 11 cases, such a shakedown effect is clearly visible (Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Macedonia [for the number of elective parties], Moldova, Poland, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovenia, Ukraine), in the case of Latvia it is visible after the third election. However, there is not a lot of evidence for the party dispersion hypotheses being effective after the second election. Only Albania, Bulgaria, Lithuania, and Slovakia show an increasing number of parties; although in Albania it can be explained through changes in the electoral system, and a peculiarity of the 2005 elections. Only in two cases, no clear trend is visible. In many cases, the number of elective parties and the number of parliamentary parties is closer to each other in later elections (exceptions, such as the outlier of the Albanian 2005 elections and the Czech 2002 elections, apply). If both numbers are close, this suggests that the party competition is mainly concentrated on these parties that win a proportional share of seats. This is one more element of the shakedown hypothesis, stating that over time the incentives of the electoral system will be adopted, and small parties with little electoral success will not compete any more.

We see strong empirical evidence for a shakedown effect working in a majority of cases. However, the test regards only the trend, but no statements were made so far about the level of party system fragmentation that is reached at which stage of the development. Latter is highly related to other factors such as the electoral system in use, or the ethnic composition of a society. In a further development of this paper, multivariate tests shall account for both the shakedown effect and further explanatory variables, such as the electoral system and ethnic fractionalisation.

Conclusion

There are not too many previous studies that looked at the development of party system fragmentation in first elections after a country adopts a democratic system. Certainly, this is not the case because of a lack of interest or importance, but rather, because these elections often constitute outliers. Different schools that addressed the problem expected either an increase or a decrease of the number of parties in the first series of post-authoritarian elections. The most important previous study (Reich 2004) came to the conclusion that there is no clear increase or decrease of the number of parties over the first couple of elections after democratisation.

My model shows for third wave democracies that both the increase and the decrease expectations are right: Each at its time and under specific circumstances. My model brakes with the linear logic supposed in Reich's study and in previous explanatory approaches, and adopts a three-phase model: the first multiparty elections, if they happen during the initial transition of the regime, or if

the political liberalisation is too recent for a new democratic and pluralistic party system to be built up, result in a two-bloc system. An umbrella movement of reformers of all political colours is opposed to the old regime party. Only in subsequent elections, the umbrella splits up, resulting in high fractionalisation. After these second elections, the third, shakedown phase starts, and the number of parties gets reduced. I found empirical evidence for such a three-phase system most of the Central and Eastern European countries and further in some Latin American cases (cf. Appendix).

The reasons for the difference to Reich's model can be related to the case selection and methodological issues: Reich's study includes only cases with no changes in the electoral system, and further only those elections that are entirely free. These criteria risk to put the focus on transitions by pact, and to exclude first multiparty elections. Methodologically, Reich builds country and observes the average development by group, but the averaging might cancel out changes in the party systems.

In order to get a more stable model, we need however to integrate further variables, such as the electoral system or ethnic structure of a country, and we might further want to develop a more solid distinction of different types of transitions.

Party system development in Latin American third wave democracies

Databases on political transitions (Reich 2002; Mainwaring et al. 2000) and elections in Latin America (Golder 2004; Coppedge xxx) allow me to look at the party system development in Latin American countries that were democratised in the third wave of democratisation (democratisations that took place after 1971).

Figure A1 maps, in analogy to figure 3 in the main paper, the development of party system fractionalisation in 11 Latin American countries.

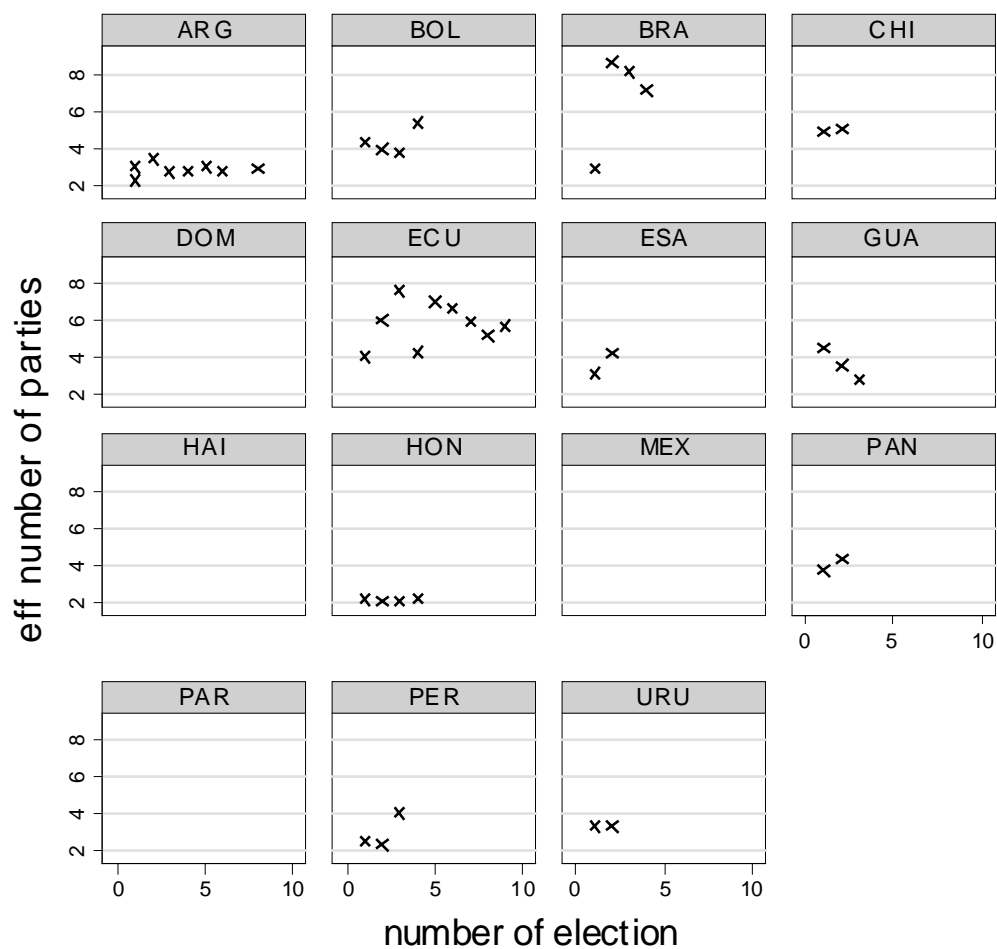


Figure A1: Overview over the party system development in Latin American countries in elections after democratisation (effective number of parliamentary parties).

The typical shape of my three-step model can be identified in the case of Brazil (BRA), that as well starts with a 2-party competition in the first election, followed by an exploding number of parties in the second elections and a subsequent shakedown effect – Ecuador (ECU) shows a partly similar

pattern. The first two elections in El Salvador (ESA) and Panama (PAN) show the same development, however we lack of further data.

Elections in third wave democracies in Latin America show quite different types of party system developments than in Central and Eastern Europe. Besides the mentioned four cases of a three-phase model, other countries rather show a stable development (Argentina, Chile, Honduras, Uruguay) or other, non-hypothesised developments with a first stable development and a sudden increase (Bolivia, Peru⁹).

When comparing the party system development, we need however to account for the types of transition that were experienced in Latin America. Whereas Central and Eastern Europe showed short, and synchronised transitions across the region, transition processes in Latin American countries were more extended in time (Mainwaring et al. 2000). This might imply that the party system develops under gradually increased liberalisation. In Central and Eastern Europe, the two-bloc pattern in the first multiparty elections is often related to a unified opposition, asking for democratisation. The opposition umbrella splits off, as soon democracy is reached. If democratisation is a more gradual process and more often relies on pacts, then a neither the opposition unity nor the abrupt split off after the first, democratising, elections is a compulsory pattern of party development.

⁹ The cases might be related to changes in the electoral system (Bolivia changed to a mixed compensatory system in 1997) and to a regionalisation of party systems (cf. Haro 2007).

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