Explaining electoral volatility in Central and Eastern Europe : a party organizational approach

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Cover design: Palko Botond

Printed by: Wöhrmann Print Service

ISBN: 978-90-8570-979-4

EXPLAINING ELECTORAL VOLATILITY IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE:
A Party Organizational Approach

Proefschrift

ter verkgrijging van
de graad van Doctor aan de Universiteit Leiden,
op gezag van Rector Magnificus Prof. Mr. P.F. van der Heijden,
volgens besluit van het College voor Promoties
te verdedigen op donderdag 8 maart 2012
klokke 15.00 uur

door
Sergiu Marian Gherghina
Geboren te Targu-Carbunesti (Roemenië)
in 1982

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Acknowledgments

For those students who decide to pursue an academic career, the PhD thesis is the first milestone. As the product of an extended period of research, it is meant to indicate the intellectual competences and analytic abilities of the candidate to be promoted to *doctor*. This thesis could have hardly been completed without the help of a large number of scholars and institutions. As my doctoral supervisors, Ruud Koole and Petr Kopecky closely followed the writing of this dissertation from its very beginning. Their systematic feedback, enthusiasm, critical remarks, detailed comments, thoughtful advice, and permanent encouragement were invaluable for its completion. The timely finishing of this project is partially their merit. I can hardly express how much I have learned from them throughout the three years of permanent interaction.

I cannot possibly do justice to the numerous people who have provided valuable comments on portions of my thesis. I can begin by expressing my gratitude to all those who acted as discussants of my papers or commented from the audience at various international workshops and conferences: Ingrid van Biezen, Bill Cross, Sarah de Lange, Daniela Giannetti, Piero Ignazzi, John Ishiyama, Richard Katz, Herbert Kitschelt, Hans-Dieter Klingemann, Paul Lewis, Peter Mair, Cas Mudde, Kenneth Newton, Thomas Poguntke, Eric Uslaner, and Sonja Zmerli. I am also grateful for data sharing, language and coding assistance, and assistance in contacting the party headquarters to Mihail Chiru, Blagovesta Cholova, and Stoycho Stoychev.

I am indebted to all my colleagues – too numerous to list in full – from the Institute of Political Science at Leiden University for stimulating discussions and insights. It was a privilege and pleasure to work next to and with them for three years, in a constructive academic environment. I am particularly grateful to Robin Best, Tom Louwerse, David Lowery, Michael Meffert, Simon Otjes, Benjamin Pohl, Hila Federer-Shtayer, Marc Uriot, and Cynthia van Vonno for their valuable input and the numerous possibilities of exchanging ideas. Jessica Kroezen deserves a special acknowledgment for her excellent work in copyediting my manuscript. I am also indebted to Hans Vollaard for the translation of the thesis summary into Dutch.

None of this would have been possible without the love, patience, and constant support of my wife Loredana. I express my deep gratitude to her as she often resisted temptations to ask me to limit research trips, reduce the long days and nights of work (including the week-ends), and dedicate more time to our family. It would have made it so much easier for her to have a different state of things.

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List of Acronyms for the Political Parties Included in the Analysis

Country	Acronym	Original name	English name
Bulgaria	BSP	Bulgarska Sotsialisticheska Partiya	Bulgarian Socialist Party
	DPS	Dvizhenie za Prava i Svobodi	Movement for Rights and Freedoms
	SDS	Sayuz na Demokratichnite Sili	Union of Democratic Forces
Czech Republic	CSSD	Ceska Strana Socialne Demokraticka	Czech Social Democratic Party
	KDU-CSL	Krest'ansko a Demokraticka Unie –Ceskoslovenska Strana Lidova	Christian Democratic Union – Czechoslovak People's Party
	KSCM	Komunisticka Strana Cech a Moravy	Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia
	ODS	Obcanska Demokraticka Strana	Civic Democratic Party
Hungary	FKGP	Fuggetlen Kisgazda Part	Independent Smallhoders' Party
	FIDESZ	Fiatal Demokraták Szovetsege	Alliance of Young Democrats
	KDNP	Keresztenydemokrata Neppart	Christian Democratic People's Party
	MDF	Magyar Demokrata Forum	Hungarian Democratic Forum
	MSZP	Magyar Szocialista Part	Hungarian Socialist Party
	SZDSZ	Szabad Demokratak Szövetsege	Alliance of Free Democrats
Poland	PD	Partia Demokratyczna	Democratic Party
	PIS	Prawo i Sprawiedliwosc	Law and Justice
	PO	Platforma Obywatelska	Civic Platform
	PSL	Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe	Polish People's Party
	SLD	Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej	Alliance of the Democratic Left
Romania	PDL	Partidul Democrat-Liberal	Democratic-Liberal Party
	PNL	Partidul National Liberal	National Liberal Party

	PRM	Partidul Romania Mare	Greater Romania Party
	PSD	Partidul Social Democrat	Social Democratic Party
	UDMR	Uniunea Democratica Maghiara din Romania	Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania
Slovakia	HZDS	Hnutie Za Demokraticke Slovensko	Movement for a Democratic Slovakia
	KDH	Kresťanskodemokraticke Hnutie	Christian Democratic Movement
	MKP	Magyar Koalício Partja	Party of the Hungarian Coalition
	SDKU	Slovenska Demokraticka a Kresťanska Unia	Slovak Democratic and Christian Union
	SNS	Slovenska Narodna Strana	Slovak National Party
	SDL	Strana Demokratickej Ľavice	Party of the Democratic Left

List of Acronyms for Other Political Parties, Coalitions, or Alliances in the Book

Country	Acronym	Original name	English name
Bulgaria	Ataka	Natsionalen sayuz "Ataka"	National Union Attack
	BBB	Bulgarski Business Bloc	Bulgarian Business Bloc
	NDSV	Nacionalno dvizenie Simeon II	National Movement Simeon II
	NS	Naroden Sajuz	People's Union
	ODS	Obedineni Demokratichni Sili	United Democratic Forces
Czech Republic	DEU	Demokraticka Unie	Democratic Union
	KDS	Krestanska Demokraticka Strana	Christian Democratic Party
	LSU	Liberalne Socialni Unie	Liberal Social Union
	ODA	Obcanska Demokraticka Aliance	Civic Democratic Alliance
	OF	Obcanske Forum	Civic Forum
	SZ	Strana Zelenych	Green Party
	US	Unie Svobodi	Freedom Union
Hungary	EKGP	Egyesult Kisgazdapart	United Smallholders Party
	KGPKGSP	Kisgazdapart a Kisgazda Szovetseg Partja	Smallholders Party - The Party of the Smallholder Alliance
	KFKGP	Kiegyezes Fuggetlen Kisgazdapart	Compromise Independent Smallholders Party
	KOP	Konzervatív Part, Gazdak es Polgarok Szovetsege	Conservative Party
	JOBBIK	Jobbik Magyarorszagert Mozgalom	The Movement for a Better Hungary
	MIEP	Magyar Igazsag es Elet Partja	Justice and Life Party
	MPP	Magyar Polgari Part	Hungarian Civic Party
	MPSZ	Magyar Polgari Szovetseg	Hungarian Civic Union
	RKGP	Reform Kisgazdapart	Reform Party of

			Smallholders
	USZM	Új Szovetseg	New Alliance for Hungary
Poland	AWS	Akcja Wyborcza Solidarnosc	Solidarity Electoral Action
	KLD	Kongres Liberalno-Demokratyczny	Liberal Democratic Congress
	LID	Lewica i Demokraci	Left and Democrats
	LPR	Liga Polskich Rodzin	League of Polish Families
	PZPR	Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza	Polish United Workers' Party
	SDRP	Socjaldemokracja Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej	Social Democracy of the Republic of Poland
	SDPL	Socjaldemokracja Polska	Social Democracy of Poland
	SRP	Samoobrona Rzeczpospolitej Polskiej	Self-Defense of the Republic of Poland
	UD	Unia Demokratyczna	Democratic Union
	UP	Unia Pracy	Labor Union
	UW	Unia Wolnosci	Freedom Union
	ZSL	Zjednoczone Stronnictwo Ludowe	United Peasant Party
Romania	APR	Alianta pentru Romania	Alliance for Romania
	CDR	Conventia Democrata Romana	Romanian Democratic Convention
	DA	Alianta Dreptate si Adevar	Truth and Justice Alliance
	FDSN	Frontul Democrat al Salvării Nationale	Democratic National Salvation Front
	FSN	Frontul Salvarii Nationale	National Salvation Front
	PAC	Partidul Aliantei Civice	Party of Civic Alliance
	PDSR	Partidul Democratiei Sociale din Romania	Party of Social Democracy in Romania
	PL	Partidul Liberal	Liberal Party
	PLD	Partidul Liberal Democrat	Liberal Democratic Party
	PNL-AT	Partidul National Liberal Aripa Tanara	National Liberal Party Young Wing
	PNL Campeanu	Partidul National Liberal Campeanu	National Liberal Party Campeanu
	PNL-CD	Partidul National Liberal	Christian Democratic

		Crestin Democrat	National Liberal Party
	PNL-Traditional	Partidul National Liberal Traditional	Traditional National Liberal Party
	PNTCD	Partidul National Taranesc Crestin Democrat	Christian Democratic National Peasants Party
	PSDR	Partidul Social Democrat din Romania	Romanian Social-Democratic Party
	PSL	Partidul Social Liberal	Liberal Socialist Party
	PUNR	Partidul Unitatii Nationale Romane	Party for Romanian National Unity
	NPL	Noul Partid Liberal	New Liberal Party
	UFD	Uniunea Fortelor de Dreapta	Union of Right Forces
Slovakia	HPS	Hnutie Poľnohospodarov Slovenskej Republiky	Farmers Movement of the Slovak Republic
	KSS	Komunisticka Strana Slovenska	Communist Party of Slovakia
	SDA	Socialnodemokraticka Alternatíva	Social Democratic Alternative
	SDK	Slovenska Demokraticka Koalicia	Slovak Democratic Coalition
	SDSS	Socialnodemokraticka Strana Slovenska	Social Democratic Party of Slovakia
	SMER	Smer – Socialna Demokracia	Direction – Social Democracy
	SV	Spolocna Volba	Common Choice
	SZ	Strana Zelenych	Green Party
	DUS	Demokraticka Unie Slovenska	Democratic Union of Slovakia
	MKDH	Mad'arske Krest'ansko Demokraticke Hnutie	Hungarian Christian Democratic Movement
	ZRS	Zdruzenie Robotníkov Slovenska	Workers' Association of Slovakia

Introduction | Institutional Determinants of Voter Choice

New democracies face the crucial challenge of constructing and maintaining strong and stable political institutions. As political parties are key components of representative systems of government (Bryce 1921, 119; Schattschneider 1942, 1), the emergence of regimes in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) after the fall of communism coincided with the (re)appearance of a multi-party system in which independent and competitive actors had the opportunity to run in elections and form governments. Their status as primary post-communist institutional actors – with their existence prior to elections, separation of powers, constitution drafting, and legislatures – allowed political parties to play a major role in the regime change (e.g. the Round Table Talks[1]) and in initial institutional design choices (Schopflin 1991; Kitschelt 1992; Bozoki 1993; Berglund and Dellenbrant 1994; Elster et al. 1998). More specifically, political parties decided upon the general framework for economic change, constitution making, and rule of law (Pridham and Lewis 1996, 5; van Biezen 2003, 5) thus legitimizing and shaping the processes of democratization and democratic consolidation. As an illustrative example, Kopecky (1995, 516) argues that the Czech post-communist designers perceived parties as the core foundation of the democratic system. The end of the communist regime and the shift of power in most CEE countries took place in response to bottom-up pressures exerted by the population using street protests (Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Poland) and violence (Romania).

However, the decisive factor was institutional (van Biezen 2003) as the beginning of transition was marked by negotiations among political elites grouped in proto-parties or political formations (e.g. umbrella organizations). This top-down practice in combination with the fact that parties emerged prior to any other political institutions guaranteed the increased importance of parties in the political life of these countries. As a result, post-communist politics soon became party politics (Enyedi and Toka 2007). Empirically, this claim is substantiated by the only isolated instances in which independents managed to secure seats in CEE legislatures. The vast majority of decision-making processes in the most recent two decades were the result of intra- and inter-party competition and negotiations.

[1] The Round Table Talks were a series of negotiations taking place in several countries from Central and Eastern Europe between communists and opposition. Their general aim was to set the grounds for the first non-controlled elections.

The prominence of parties within the political system of the new democracies from CEE is accompanied by the long-lasting feature of electoral volatility. The background in which post-communist political parties emerged explains the initial difficulties they encountered in obtaining stable support among citizens. Their birth took place on barren soil in the absence of multi-party competition and representation for almost half a century, in the absence of democratic experience even in the inter-war period prior to communism, and in the context of adversarial attitudes and behaviors towards parties due to their identification with the communist state. This unfriendly environment, combined with ideological confusion and weak programmatic identities among the competitors in the first post-communist elections (Kitschelt 1995; Millard 2004; Grzymala-Busse 2006) led to a situation in which voters could hardly be expected to develop identification with and attach loyalty to particular parties (Mair 1997). However, this inability to rely on relatively stable electorates was not limited to the first election, but was perpetuated over time.

Previous research has indicated high levels of electoral volatility throughout the entire post-communist period, both in absolute terms and relative to that of the Western European countries (Rose et al. 1998; Toka 1998; Krupavicius 1999; Lewis 2000; Birch 2001; Sikk 2005; Tavits 2005). A quick look at the governments of these countries indicates that there are only rare cases when the same party governs in consecutive terms, and out of the few hundred parties competing in elections over the past two decades, less than a quarter has sustained a continuous presence in Parliament. Such evidence goes against claims that post-communist parties and party systems have a tendency towards consolidation and stabilization (Agh 1998; Olson 1998a; Lewis 2001a; Casal Bertoa 2008). Moreover, citizens continue to be skeptical of parties. Parties are the least trusted political institution in the region, and this situation has persisted since the beginning of the transition (Rose 1995). Despite governments' visible success at domestic (e.g. significant economic growth, political stability) and international levels (e.g. NATO and EU accessions), parties are perceived negatively by citizens and instill only low levels of confidence, rarely exceeding 15% of the population (CCEB 2001-2004; EB 2004-2007).

How can electoral volatility in the new European democracies be explained? The main goal of this book is to address this question by examining the political parties that have maintained a parliamentary presence in at least half of the national elections in six CEE countries over two decades. This study focuses on individual political parties for three interconnected reasons: they are the agents of representation that interact directly with citizens, demand their support, and are directly influenced by vote shifts; there are large, unexplained variations in terms of electoral volatility within party systems; and other levels of analysis are not appropriate in the CEE context (see Chapter 1).

Previous studies identify two sets of factors as the main explanations of electoral volatility. The first set includes all those elements belonging to the sociology of politics. This approach argues that party formation and competition takes place along various cleavage lines ranging from age, education or professional background, to religion, ethnicity, and social class. The electoral loyalty of the voters is the result of their social characteristics and their alignment along various competition lines. The particular features of the post-communist space, described in detail in the following section, illustrate how cleavage-related factors cannot represent valid explanations of electoral volatility. Unlike in other regions (i.e. Western Europe in particular) and time periods, there are fewer opportunities for the CEE political parties to reach out to their voters on cleavage grounds. The second set of factors includes the institutional determinants of party competition and the role of the agency in structuring voter preferences.

Following this line of reasoning, I propose an institutionally embedded framework to explain voters' choice in new democracies that illustrates how political parties can influence the electoral environment in which they are active. The logic behind the key argument is briefly discussed in the second section and can be summarized in a few sentences. The survival of parties on the political scene implies that a relevant contingent of parties' voters do not alter their choices. To encourage such an outcome, political parties provide their voters with incentives. However, the CEE electoral environment makes this task quite difficult: the weak societal roots of parties do not allow for party identification or voter alignment; the unclear patterns of competition make the policy dimension not very relevant; and the lack of elite loyalty reduces leadership continuity.

Post-communist political parties do not have numerous tools at hand to mobilize the open and available electorates. As party organizations create effective gates of communication with the electorate (Adams et al. 2005), political parties can use them to stabilize their electorates. To this end, I argue and test that party organization can contribute to the creation of a recognizable label that voters can identify with over the medium to long term, that it may favor the creation of popular networks, and can promote and rely on recognizable candidates in consecutive elections.

In order to do so, three distinctive means are employed: intra-party decision-making, membership rates, and re-nomination of incumbent members of parliament (MPs). With regard to the first, the party may be better connected with voters through its decentralized decision-making. Decentralization of decision-making enhances the citizens' perception that problems are tackled at the local level and that they may have some say in the process of representation. Second, the party can create long-term attachment vis-à-vis member recruitment. Members build their own networks and through

these the party acquires easier access to broader segments within the electorate. Third, through legislators' re-nominations, party organization delivers recognizable candidates who may help to reach two interrelated goals important to the process of representation: a) the increased perception of continuity on the part of voters; and b) the diminishing of the level of abstraction in politics by associating candidates with party labels. In a nutshell, the sources of electoral volatility are considered to be mainly institutional. Therefore, party organizations can diminish volatility, and thus increase electorates' stability.

Why is the Story Different?

Three macro-characteristics – party formation, unstable political environments, and non-mobilized elites – are key in demonstrating that cleavage-related factors have little if any potential to explain the variation of volatility in the CEE countries. Cleavage structure analysis, as put forward by Lipset and Rokkan (1967), cannot be used as a tool to investigate party formation in the CEE countries. The communist regimes leveled out any type of major social differentiation using their egalitarian ideology (van Biezen 2003, 35-36). Ethnicity, language, religion (i.e. Church isolation), and urban positioning did not produce significant differences between citizens. With regard to ownership, only the state benefited from this right, eliminating possible disparities between owners and workers. As a result, the cleavage lines common to Western European countries do not find correspondence in the CEE space (Rivera 1996). Therefore, because parties could not appeal to interest representation of collective identities formed on fault lines, their formation had to have other roots. Instead, parties were created on the basis of attitudes towards institutional aspects of regime change (van Biezen 2003, 159). That explains why in these countries, more than one anti-communist party emerged with similar societal targets, but nuanced attitudes towards the previous regime.

Given the general absence of cleavages, the vast majority of the CEE parties do not have societal, but rather institutional origins. This situation made it difficult to recognize the existence of traditional left-right axes of party competition within the CEE region. However, the absence of cleavages enforcing ideological and social differences does not imply that divisions associated with the electoral choices of citizens do not exist. Thus, although ideological differences between parties were blurry, electoral competition was marked by debates over the specific means by which to achieve common goals such as democratization, privatization, European accession etc. For example, economic issues revolved around differences of opinion on growth and distribution of resources within society: the role and intensity of state

intervention in redistributing income, free vs. directed mechanisms of distribution, and public vs. private property (Evans and Whitefield 1993).

The CEE electorates are open and volatile, and are rarely characterized by party identification (Rose and Mishler 1998; Millard 2004; Gherghina 2009; 2011). Votes are generally (re)allocated to reward or punish parties' behavior. Frequent vote shifts imply a fragile identification of the electorate with established parties, and indicate the availability of many voters for new electoral alternatives. CEE represents an illustrative case of this situation. Having emerged in an environment with strong anti-party feelings, post-communist parties faced an initial legitimacy problem that made the existence of stable psychological attachments among voters difficult. The non-crystallization of identities did not allow for a clear pattern of alignment (Mair 1997, 182). Weak societal roots strengthened the reticence of voters to attach long-time loyalty to one political competitor. The picture of low party loyalty is complete if we add the absence of stable constituencies that may enact strong political identities among voters (van Biezen 2003, 37), and the occurrence of numerous small parties with no stable norms and conventions in patterns of competition (Mair 1997). The latter render the electoral environment uncertain. All of these factors indicate that high levels of party identification cannot and should not be expected in CEE.

The fluidity of political support in CEE can also be demonstrated in the context of two macro-perspectives of global trends and technological developments. First, the CEE post-communist political parties emerged when volatility increased in the once stable Western European party systems (Rose and Urwin 1970; Pedersen 1983; Crewe and Denver 1985; Bartolini and Mair 1990; Franklin et al. 1992; Dalton and Wattenberg 2000). Therefore, even within party systems in which preferences were stable, voters modified their preferences. Second, these parties skipped a few phases of development (i.e. the mass party phase and communication with the electorate via members and local organizations), and had direct access to modern resources. They emerged in an era of developed media with multiple channels of information, in a time at which opinion polls are a widely used means of measuring public opinion, and voters have greater access to higher education and develop different values and interests compared to those of their predecessors. Apart from the observable advantages of such a context for political parties (i.e. effectiveness of communication, higher visibility), there are a few disadvantages that can favor shifts in electoral preferences. Electorates have access to more information about competitors, thereby widening their spectrum of choices, and increasing their availability.

These contextual situations indicate that cleavage-related factors cannot explain either the levels of or the variation in electoral volatility in CEE. Overall, as a consequence of the communist legacy, the post-communist space

has only very weak, if any, cleavages. The ideological fuzziness, the institutional origins of parties, the numerous entries into and exits from the political scene, the limited elite loyalty, and electorates' availability either contradict or have a logic parallel to the one implied by party competition along cleavage lines. This is the reason for which I now turn to non-cleavage factors (i.e. institutional determinants).

Institutional Explanations for Volatility

This section elaborates on the institutional sources of voter choice, explaining how certain features of party organization can diminish electoral volatility. Voters' preferences are more than just the result of socialization or experience (Berelson et al. 1954; Easton 1957). Politics consists of complex and sophisticated processes. As the choice among initial alternatives is not often accessible to ordinary voters, political parties simplify choices. In doing so, they generate symbols of identification and loyalty (Neumann 1956; Key 1964; Borre and Katz 1973; Rosenstone and Hansen 1993; Dalton and Wattenberg 2000) that can stabilize the democratic polity and create continuity in electoral choices (Converse 1969). This process occurs if parties can create a communication chain with the citizens (Colomer 2001, 136). Voter choice is sensitive to the structure and positioning of competitors in the political space (Roberts and Wibbels 1999). Following this logic, the stability of political parties may lead to the maintenance of electoral preferences. In this context, stability requires the sending of coherent messages, the continuous presence of parties on the political arena, homogenous actions, and long-term perspectives for representation (i.e. recognizable labels and candidates).

Given their institutional origins and weak linkages to society, the CEE political parties developed two additional means of communicating with voters in addition to their use of the media: by way of ancillary structures (e.g. youth organizations), and/or active local party branches. The latter can establish direct communication with voters and can mobilize them if local organizations have autonomy in reaching decisions. To fulfill this communication task, local organizations should be able to – or be perceived by voters as being able to – channel societal demands and give them priority. For example, local organizations can set salient societal issues on the party's agenda or can promote candidates perceived by voters as being capable of representing them. In this respect, intense action at local level can bring parties closer to the voter, and can increase the probability of long-term attachment.

Strong anti-party feelings in the aftermath of regime change and the continuously low levels of trust in political parties can be partially explained by the lack of citizen involvement in politics. Low levels of party membership reflect this issue of involvement. At the same time, the membership organization creates the premises for societal webs that result in a stable core

of voters (i.e. low volatility). In this respect, complementary to the previous argument about decision-making at the local level, party members help to build an image of legitimacy and societal linkage. Members create social networks in which they can spread the message of the party or even create party loyalties. A high roster of party members sends the electorate a message of popular legitimacy, and provides the basis of a partisan discourse of strong ties with ordinary citizens (Scarrow 2000, 84). As a result, party membership can influence voters' preferences.

Similarly, the promotion of recognizable candidates on party lists can shape citizens' preferences.[2] It does so in three ways. First, it ensures long-term communication between candidates and voters – assuming that the candidate does not regularly shift between local constituencies – allowing a permanent exchange of votes for quality of representation. This communication often occurs as a result of the free media access of the incumbent MP. Consequently, the visibility of the candidate and of the party increases. Second, due to their access to state resources, incumbents bring benefits to their constituencies or at least they can always claim to do so. By adding extensive access to media channels to this situation we acquire a picture in which incumbent MPs can promote their image and constantly remind their voters of all the good things they do (Fiorina 1977; Stonecash 2008). Third, the promotion of incumbents can always bring to the fore messages of experience and professionalization of elites that newcomers cannot use. MPs who are re-nominated do not need time to accommodate to the workings of the legislature, understand the problems of their constituencies, or to become aware of the solutions at hand. These advantages can make a difference and their re-nomination may shape voters' preferences.

Summing up, the autonomy of local branches, membership rates, and re-nominated candidates are useful tools that parties can use to establish a better connection with the electorate. These variables are central to the key theoretical arguments (see Chapter 1) that are empirically tested (Chapters 3-6) to explain volatility in CEE. To this end, the following section briefly describes the case selection, general methodological issues, and data employed in the rest of the book.

Method and Data

Based on similarities in terms of former political regime, non-belonging to the Soviet Union, and paths towards democratization, this book focuses on the six

[2] The mechanism presented here complements the classic perspective according to which political parties renominate candidates considered to be successful. In doing so, I emphasize the supplementary benefit of voter stability that renomination can bring on top of the reelection (electoral performance).

former Warsaw Pact countries: Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, and Slovakia. The case selection has both theoretical and methodological underpinnings. Most studies of the post-communist space represent either extensive single-country studies or comparisons of two countries upon which generalizations can rarely be made (Pop-Eleches 1999; Szczerbiak 1999; Lewis 2000; 2001b; Kopecky 2001; Moser 2001; Spirova 2007), or broad comparisons that include general explanations, but neglect details and variables relevant for many observed countries (Miller et al. 1998; Moser 1999; Tavits 2005).

However, occupying a middle position on the ladder of generality, there are several relevant studies that selected a medium number of cases to provide both an in-depth analysis of political developments and a comparative perspective (Markowski 1997; Golosov 1998; Kitschelt et al. 1999; Lawson et al. 1999; Grzymala-Busse 2002a; Bozoki and Ishiyama 2002; van Biezen 2003). This approach provides at least two advantages. First, it is possible to conduct a better investigation of the processes and developments in the selected countries. Second, due to the different nature of variables, such a design allows for the combination of statistical and narrative comparisons based on extensive information gathered (Mahoney 1999). Moreover, a mid-range comparison is suitable for use in both a longitudinal and cross-country research contexts, provides rich information, and increases the quality of comparisons made.

By conducting an analysis that takes almost two decades into account for all these countries, I focus on the relevant political parties. In this context, relevance bears a different meaning than the one coined by Sartori (1976) who refers to the coalitional and blackmail potential of a political actor. My criteria for relevance are continuity in representation (i.e. spending a long period of time on the political scene), and contestation in a relatively independent manner. Accordingly, relevant political parties should be present in at least half of the legislatures elected after the fall of communism, and their presence there should be mainly the result of contestation on an individual basis (for details, see Chapter 2). These criteria eliminate parties with sporadic appearances in Parliament and those that got there due to specific conjunctures. For example, due to the lack of an effective electoral threshold, there were 29 parties in the 1991 Polish parliament, out of which only five survived in the subsequent 1993 parliament (Table 1 refers to six parties for 1993, as one emerged between the two elections).

The second criterion explicitly refers to those parties that gained access to parliament after running in various electoral alliances and coalitions. This is a specific situation in which the parties' appeal to voters remains a dilemma, as it is very difficult to asses whether citizens cast votes for them or for their partners. For example, the Christian Democratic National Peasants Party

(PNTCD) was the leading party within the Romanian coalition government between 1996 and 2000. However, it experienced contestation on individual grounds only once (in 1990) with modest results (2.6% of the votes). In the following three elections, the PNTCD formed a broad electoral coalition with various compositions and levels of success ranging from a peak of 30.2% in 1996 to 5% in 2000. In such instances, the evaluation of electoral potential is difficult.

Given the longitudinal nature of this study, these criteria diminish existing problems rather than create new ones. One may claim that a focus on parliamentary parties with a continuous presence in the legislature leads to a biased calculus of volatility. This is a valid observation for a different level of analysis – the party system – in which every component can make a difference in explaining vote shifts. However, when looking at individual parties, it is highly problematic to asses the volatility of actors with little support among citizens or with only sporadic appearances on the political scene. On the one hand, parties that are permanently outside the legislature have a very low level of electoral volatility, but this fact has virtually no substantive meaning. A party obtaining around 1% of the votes in a general election will appear very stable, but its performance makes it irrelevant in terms of the national political system. Consequently, by leaving them out, I avoid over-estimation of their electoral stability.

At the same time, in empirical terms, it is highly problematic to calculate the volatility for such parties as they are often included in the "other" category when electoral results are reported. On the other hand, neither the extra-parliamentary parties nor those with an occasional presence in the legislature develop the means – including the organization – to encapsulate the preferences of voters for a longer period of time. Quite often, some political actors gain short-term support as a result of factors such as the economic situation, or failure of the previous government or coalition partners. To conclude, application of the continuity and independence criteria leave minor parties or parties with a short existence based on contextual factors for their electoral performance outside the analysis.

The unit of observation in this study is the political party at election time. The time-period of analysis is the beginning of the transition period (1989-1990) until the most recent elections (Romania 2008). Table 1 presents the selection made for each country. The last column includes the number of parties that fulfill the selection criteria. By comparing it to the number of actors present in the legislature after each election, we get a rough estimate of the entries to and exits from the political scene. Bulgaria is the country with the least continuous parties in parliament, being characterized by numerous entries and exits into the party system (Spirova 2007). Hungary and Poland have the highest number of parties with consistent presence in parliament since their formation. The raw numbers hide the structural evolution of representation.

These two party systems have different traits in terms of volatility and stability (Lewis 2000; Bielasiak 2002; Birch 2003; Millard 2004; Sikk 2005; Webb and White 2007; Enyedi and Casal Bertoa 2011) which are also visible at the party level. Whereas in Hungary most of the six parties from the last column are in the legislature throughout the entire analyzed period, until 2001 only three Polish parties fulfilled the selection criteria. The most recent three elections promoted three more stable parties on to the political scene.

Table 1: Representation and Continuity in the CEE Legislatures (1990-2008)

Elections / Countries	Parties represented in parliament						Parties with consistent presence in parliament
	First	Second	Third	Fourth	Fifth	Sixth	
Bulgaria	3	5	5	4	7		3
Czech Republic	8	6	5	5	5		4
Hungary	6	6	6	4	5		6
Poland	29	6	5	7	6	6	6
Romania	17	7	6	5	5	6	5
Slovakia	5	7	6	7	6		5

Notes: a) independents are not counted; b) The numbers refer only to parties winning seats: reserved seats like those for the German minority in Poland or for the national minorities in Romania are excluded; c) in Hungary, I did not include the Agrarian Union (ASZ) in 1990 and 1994 as it obtained only a single seat.

This analysis approaches the topic of volatility from the perspective of political parties which has two immediate conceptual and methodological consequences. First, the concepts of electoral stability and volatility are used interchangeably throughout the book as they are complementary: low electoral volatility implies high electoral stability and vice versa. Second, this study uses net volatility as a measure of aggregated vote shifts because the primary focus lies within the mechanisms that mobilize the electorate as a whole, and not particular individuals (see Chapter 2). The quest for sources of electoral volatility at the party level in new democracies from CEE relies on several arguments about the role of party organization in shaping voter behavior. With the contextual features of the post-communist space as a basis, the theoretical framework goes beyond the particularities of investigated party systems and sketches unifying principles that explain longitudinal and cross-country variations. In doing so, I construct a model to predict levels of electoral volatility. The empirical testing is organized in two phases: a) investigation of the bivariate relationship (i.e. correlation) between various components of party organization and net electoral volatility and b) use of the multivariate model (i.e. ordinary least squares regression) that includes – apart from the

three main effects presented in the previous section – control and systemic explanations.

Political and historical similarities were the main criteria used to select the six countries included in my study: Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, and Slovakia. The parties included in the analysis are[3]: BSP, DPS, and SDS in Bulgaria, CSSD, KDU-CSL, KSCM, and ODS in the Czech Republic, FKGP, FIDESZ, KDNP, MDF, MSZP, and SZDSZ in Hungary, PIS, PO, PSL, SD, and SLD in Poland, PDL, PNL, PRM, PSD, and UDMR in Romania, HZDS, KDH, MKP, SDKU, SNS, and SDL in Slovakia. As many of these parties have changed their labels across time and, as such, their histories are difficult to follow, I use the most recent label for the sake of consistency. This does not always correspond to the name of the actors involved in the political events. For example, the Romanian PSD acquired its current label in 2001 (renamed from PDSR), but I use this name when referring to the government period of its predecessor from 1992-1996.

Longitudinal developments represent a key issue in my study as they allow for the mapping of institutional effects on volatility over time within the same country. Accordingly, all data are collected at the level corresponding to the unit of observation (i.e. party/election). The period of investigation starts with the first free and fair elections in Hungary (1990) and ends with the most recent legislative elections in Romania (2008).[4] For most of the countries I account for five elections, though for Poland and Romania I account for six. As volatility is calculated only from the second election onwards, there are four observations for most countries, whereas Poland and Romania have five. The total number of political parties under investigation is 29; the number of analyzed political actors is different across countries ranging from three political parties in Bulgaria to six in Hungary. By combining the number of elections with that of political parties, the result is a total of 121 observations.

My analysis and argument follow a deductive model that starts with the most general level of explanation and is gradually narrowed to the most particular. It is organized in three layers: 1) patterns that are valid across time and countries, 2) country specifics and differences within the same party system, and 3) illustrations of how observed mechanisms function for individual parties. Whereas the statistical analyses are crucial for empirical testing at the first two layers, the mechanisms are revealed through single-case studies. Such insights are useful to illustrate how patterns identified by means of statistical analysis function in specific contexts.

[3] The full names of the parties included in analysis can be found in the list of acronyms placed at the front of the book.

[4] Czech Republic and Slovakia organized their first free elections as independent states in 1992; the ones in 1990 were still organized under the label of Czechoslovakia.

Overall, I use a combination of behavioral and institutional data relative to the conceptualization and type of variables. The dependent variable in the analysis is net electoral volatility and is calculated as a weighted difference in electoral performance in consecutive elections for each political party present in at least half of the national legislatures during the investigated period (for details, see Chapter 2). The three independent variables are centralization of candidate selection for the national elections, size and variation of membership organizations, and candidate re-nomination rates. The centralization of intra-party decision-making refers to the layer of decision-making pertaining to the list of party candidates used in national elections. Using document analysis, data are retrieved from party statutes and constitutions (Chapter 3).

Membership rates are calculated as the percentage of party members within the electorate as a whole. Data are collected from political parties (e.g. party headquarters, official websites, and publications), newspaper articles, secondary literature, and survey data. Accurate membership figures are difficult to obtain and claimed totals should be treated with caution. Whenever possible, I used triangulation to ensure data validity. This was particularly important due to the fact that various sources provided different estimates of party membership at similar moments in time. I have relied on three types of sources: the parties' official reports or estimates of their individual memberships[5] and secondary sources[6].

Re-nomination of candidates refers to the percentage of previous MPs that are re-nominated on the lists of candidates. The calculus of the ratio was based on the data provided by national parliaments' websites and on party lists of candidates (see Chapter 5). The data used for these three main effects are original and often complement existing figures (e.g. party membership). For control variables (see Chapter 1), the data were collected from secondary sources (for party system volatility), electoral databases and websites of national elections (for turnout), and party websites or secondary literature dealing with histories of the parties (for government incumbency). Unless sources are explicitly specified at the bottom of tables or graphs, the data used in this book are original. Similarly, although the results of elections are publicly available, the electoral volatility - and related concepts such as elasticity – is calculated on the basis of formula provided in the following chapters.

[5] Parties report aggregate figures and often use suspiciously rounded numbers. They are not very reliable sources for data on membership (Mair and van Biezen 2001) as they often augment their number of members. I carefully handled this type of information and – whenever possible – confronted the figures with those existing in previous studies.

[6] When figures were contradictory, a choice between the alternative numbers had to be made. in doing so, I followed the numbers provided by more independent sources.

What is New?

Earlier research on electoral volatility has two visible shortcomings. First, there are no studies that have tested the relationship between institutional structures and their acceptance in society. Instead, the latter is generally explained by exogenous factors at aggregate level (i.e. party system). Second, many conceptualizations of party organization allow little or no replicability, as they are based more on in-depth or contextual knowledge of the cases. There are very few indicators to allow comparability and further investigation. This study fills these gaps using three interrelated strategies. First, unlike previous explanations that emphasize the effects of exogenous factors on electoral volatility, this book focuses on the impact of endogenous factors. In this respect, the central argument is that certain features of party organization can explain variation in electoral volatility. At the party level, electoral volatility is not solely the result of general processes such as democratization, economic performance, or electoral framework (see Chapter 1). In an unstable environment such as that of CEE in the first decade after the fall of communism, I argue that party organization can play a crucial role in shaping voter choice.

Second, from a methodological standpoint, this analysis combines quantitative and qualitative techniques in an innovative design intended to capture the substance of relationships between party organization and the electorate. This analysis operationalizes the concept of party organization and measures its component features to identify differences and the effects they produce. These measurable indicators of party organization justify the consideration of this variable in further research designs to explain other processes related to electoral systems (e.g. the entries and exits of parties to and from the political arena).

Apart from these contributions, this research yields three other innovations. First, it shifts the level of analysis from party system to party level, investigating what happens *within* the system. By narrowing the analytical focus, I examine variations in volatility often disregarded by system-level approaches. Political parties represent the basic unit of interaction and change within a political system. They are the primary agents of representation and the main competitors in legislative elections. Consequently, political parties are the level at which vote shifts should be observed and explained. Second, the book proposes a different approach to the study of the manner in which political parties relate to their electorates. Previous studies illustrate how parties react to existing constraints (Harmel and Janda 1982; Mair et al. 2004).

Parties are politically purposive organizations with a political ideology (Luther and Muller-Rommel 2002, 6) that individualizes them in the electoral space and shapes their relationships with the voters. They are dynamic organizations that suffer changes at the structural and institutional levels (Katz

and Mair 1992; 1994; Dalton and Wattenberg 2000, 4) most of the time as an effect of the environment. This mechanism is underpinned by a two-faceted reasoning. On one hand, parties are considered rational actors that react and adapt to the constraints and opportunities provided by the electoral market (Kirchheimer 1966). On the other hand, political parties are influenced in terms of their organization, ideological positioning, membership, and policy proposals by state organizations, the type of government (i.e. presidential vs. parliamentary systems), the electoral system, democratic experience (Rae 1971; Harmel and Janda 1982), and electoral law (Sartori 1976; 1997). However, my analysis investigates whether or not this relationship is univocal. The central argument is that political parties can also be in the position to influence the institutional settings in which they operate.

Such an argument was earlier explored by Sartori (1969) in his theoretical review of the differences between the sociology of politics and the political sociology. The latter states that politics is no longer solely a reflection of the society; it can also shape it. In particular, when investigating the relationship between social class and political party, Sartori concludes that the existence of political parties is not a consequence of class. On the contrary, the political parties, through their organizational coverage and pressure, shape the class and the ideology that accompanies (or implies) it (Sartori 1969, 84-85). Accordingly, political parties do not only reflect the cleavages, but also produce them. Consequently, parties activate, channel, deflect, repress, or reinforce the cleavages, thus shaping their environment (Sartori 1969, 89).

A further example of party organizational influence on external settings can be identified in Katz and Mair's discussion (1995, 22) about the cartel party. They argue that once in government, parties practically become the state, having the capacity to influence the rules of the game and, thus, the environment. Third, it is the first comparative study to test the relationship between components of party organization and the electorate. By explaining behavior~~s~~ in the context of endogenous institutional features, the results can provide an institutional explanation for the level of electoral volatility in CEE states, and can reveal the mechanisms used by parties to influence their environment. In this respect, this study may contribute to the institutional theory by providing an explanation for variations in electoral volatility and by showing that formal and structural institutionalization of political agencies enhances further institutionalization.

The societal relevance of this study rests on two arguments. First, this study offers an empirical test of institutional influence on behaviors of voters. Party organization may have both a direct and indirect effect on society. The direct effect to be investigated implies a relatively stable electorate as a result of organizational stability. The indirect effect is based on two consecutive steps. Initially, the organizational structure of political parties leads to an

organizational culture shaping the values of its members. Afterwards, these values are propagated in society through various channels of communication and institutions (bureaucracies) to which party members have access. Second, the existence of a nexus between party organization and electoral volatility can illustrate specific attitudes and expectations of the voters towards electoral competition and political actors. Voters' long-term preferences for a certain type of political party add new incentives in the context of electoral competition. In doing so, parties have the capacity to indirectly influence competition. For example, as parties depend heavily on votes, it is their interest to converge with citizen opinion. Consequently, they are likely to be sensitive to voters' messages.

In addition, a policy dimension can be identified. Policy-makers and party-strategists can use the fact that party organization has an influence on political institutions. Parties have the tendency to expand their patterns of organization to institutions in which they are involved. For example, relationships between MPs and members of government belonging to the same party are rooted in specific organizational structures created by that party.

Plan of the Book

The book is divided into six chapters evolving from basic guidelines on institutional explanations of electoral volatility to substantial empirical evidence. The sections above have introduced the key concepts, logic of the tested relationships, main determinants of electoral volatility, and methodological approaches. I will be returning to all of these subjects in greater detail in the first chapter of the book. This first chapter focuses on existing explanations of electoral volatility and also provides an analysis of the multi-layered character of the concept. The literature review and empirical evidence reveal two interrelated situations. First, given the contextual factors in CEE, the analytical level that makes most sense for the purposes of this study is the individual party. Second, there exist only poor explanations of variation in electoral volatility among these parties. Consequently, three institutional explanations are formulated to account both individually (on a bivariate basis) and collectively (in a multivariate model) for this variation.

Building on these premises, Chapter 2 conceptualizes and operationalizes electoral volatility, including also an empirical description of volatility throughout CEE. Two types of analyses are employed in order to gain a better picture of the region: the identification of general patterns for the CEE parties either at various moments – by introducing the time dimension – and by accounting for extreme support (i.e. the electoral elasticity); and the focus on a handful of cases to illustrate the evolution of their extreme volatility during the two post-communist decades.

Each of the following three chapters represents an empirical test of the bivariate relationship between components of party organization and electoral volatility: decentralization of candidate selection for the national elections (Chapter 3), party membership (Chapter 4), and MP re-nomination rates (Chapter 5). Their structure is similar: each chapter begins with a general description of the analyzed organizational component, continues with the statistical analyses, and ends with comparative cross-national and cross-party perspectives. The results of the bivariate analyses are comprehensively explored as they may provide relevant empirical support for each hypothesis. Each chapter concludes with an in-depth discussion of two political parties from different countries selected to provide an accurate representation of the observed effect.

The last chapter brings together the main effects and investigates the explanatory power of a multivariate model in which I introduce the control variables outlined in Chapter 1: party system volatility, turnover rates, and government incumbency. The chapter includes the substantive and methodological implications of this analysis for the study of electoral politics in new democracies in general.

Chapter 1 | Party Organization and Electoral Volatility: An Analytical Model

Introduction

What is electoral volatility and how can it be explained? As these questions represent the starting points of my study, the purpose of this chapter is to provide a clear answer to both. Previous research has shown that electoral volatility is a multi-layered concept with complex analytical and empirical dimensions. Often calculated and analyzed at the aggregate party system level, electoral volatility emphasizes changes that occur at different levels of representation (Crewe 1985a, 8). Bartolini and Mair (1990, 25) distinguish between the party system, party block, and individual parties as three distinct levels at which volatility can be calculated. At the party system level, volatility encompasses electoral variation as a whole and includes the sum of parties' net electoral gains or losses in consecutive elections. It is a reliable indicator of relative strength and social rooting of political actors in consecutive elections (Krupavicius 1999, 8).

With respect to the changes identified at the party block level, these can refer either to a party family or to parties grouped along several dimensions: left-right, old vs. new, or opposition vs. government (Pennings and Lane 1998). We can distinguish between intra- and inter-block volatility. The first refers to electoral changes between parties from the same block, whereas the second captures vote swings between blocks. At the party level, electoral volatility is a reliable indicator of the acceptance of a party in a society (Lane and Ersson 1999, 127) and is often included in measurements of party institutionalization. Electoral volatility at the party level provides an indication of the number of voters gained or lost by individual parties between elections. Calculating volatility at the party level diminishes the major shortcoming of volatility calculated at the party system level: its blindness towards the parties contributing to it (Sikk 2005, 408). Thus, an accurate estimation of vote shifts between existing parties is captured best by party volatility.

Analysis of volatility at any of the three levels has a unique departure point: the electoral performance of a political party across time. The stability of electoral performance over time can be assessed within the broadest framework in which the party competes (i.e. the party system), alongside competition partners on various dimensions (party block), or at the individual party level. In this respect, the political party is the most important unit of analysis. This observation is also valid on theoretical grounds. In a functional

sense, political parties are the main tools of citizen representation. Parties are the visible actors that run in elections and are held accountable by voters for their actions and policies. A party's electoral performance is a function of the interaction between this party and voters, of the exchange of votes for policies. In this respect, it makes the most sense to analyze volatility where it occurs in practice – at the level of the individual party.

Party system and block volatilities have analytical value, but are constructed on the basis of behaviors observed at other levels. In this sense, Bartolini and Mair (1990, 4) explain that "electoral instability is a phenomenon originating at the level of individual behavior, but which acquires political relevance only by reference to the changes which it produces in the structure of party systems". Block volatility is an intermediary between the party system and individual party levels. It aggregates electoral swings on certain dimensions: ideological, governmental etc. Although it is necessary to understanding the dynamics within a political system, block volatility does not provide the basis upon which substantial conclusions can be drawn about parties' electoral volatility, as the configuration of these blocks often changes. In conceptual and empirical terms, of the substantive characteristics of party blocks are rarely consistent across countries thereby limiting our ability to compare these units across different settings. This is why this concept has been left out of my analysis.

In light of the exclusion of block volatility from this analysis, this chapter focuses on volatility from the standpoint of both the macro (party system) and meso (party level) perspectives. This chapter differentiates between these two analytical levels and explores the determinants of electoral volatility. The first section provides an analysis of the layers of volatility and explains the reasons for which volatility in CEE should be regarded as a function of individual parties and not of the party system. In spite of this analytical differentiation, the party system and party levels are interconnected. This is the reason for which the sources of electoral volatility can have an influence on both layers. As such, the second section of this chapter emphasizes explanations of electoral volatility in a sequential manner, approaching then general (party system), mixed, and individual party levels in that order.

In this section, I argue that despite theoretical reasons to expect various institutional and behavioral factors to have an effect, most determinants of volatility have either no variation or no explanatory potential in the CEE context. Consequently, previously unexplored factors are considered as possible explanations. In this sense, the third section of this chapter proposes an institutionally-embedded explanatory framework – based on party organization – as the key explanation of party level volatility in CEE. An idea such as this is expressed in broad terms by Kostelecky (2002) who argued that the organizational weakness of parties is a major factor contributing to the

observed electoral volatility in CEE party systems. Of the many party organization components that may influence electoral volatility, only three have the potential to explain variation in CEE: candidate selection, party membership, and MP re-nomination. I formulate testable hypotheses for each of these components. The fourth section of this chapter presents my analytical model which includes these three main effects and the control variables. This model represents the basic skeleton of the empirical tests in Chapters 3-6.

Party System and Party Volatility

Most of the existing literature refers to the party system when analyzing electoral volatility. However, as was shown in the introduction to this chapter, there are theoretical and methodological reasons for favoring the party level approach. In addition, three empirical arguments – all specific to CEE – lend support to this idea. First, the post-communist party systems are structurally unstable. They are characterized by a large number of entries and exits thereby generating episodic appearances in the political space. In consecutive elections, the format and composition of the party system are rarely similar and methodological problems related to comparability arise. For example, Bulgarian politics has displayed continuous change over the past two decades, with only three parties that have successfully participated in half of the elections (BSP, SDS, and DPS).

As a result of the fact that the same parties have not participated in all elections, the party system measurement cannot distinguish between volatility among stable parties and volatility created by entry and exits (Neff Powell and Tucker 2008, 2-3). As these two types of volatility have different causes and effects on political processes, it is crucial to isolate and calculate them separately. By lumping them into a common measurement we create confusion and provide results that are not only difficult to interpret, but also far removed from reality. Moreover, previous studies (Sikk 2005) illustrated that in CEE an index of volatility calculated at party system level ignores the parties contributing to it. Consequently, looking at the components of the party system and evaluating their performance from a cross-sectional and a cross-time perspective allows for a deeper understanding of the political dynamics in the region.

Second, only an investigation conducted at the party level is able to answer questions related to splits, mergers, coalitions, and label modifications. Such developments are essential to tracing the histories of political parties which are relevant in terms of electoral performance. These decisions are elite driven and usually rely on beliefs about voter behavior, assumed to either influence it or to be an effect of it. Sometimes the two rationales are combined. For example, electoral coalitions are both proactive (as the parties that decide to join forces wish to maximize their performance in the upcoming elections)

and reactive (as they are built on favorable signals received from the electorate). Empirically, this interplay between political actors and their supporters can only be fully captured if developments within parties are closely examined. The following example illustrates this argument: Party A, running in the elections *t* and t_1, has a split at half the distance between the two elections. The splitter, Party B, does not compete alone in elections, but merges with Party C in election *t1*. Assuming that Party B has some electoral support, Parties A and C will both end up with different degrees of electoral volatility. Thus, without accounting for party dynamics, the relationship between voters and representatives is misleading.

Finally, size is a relevant feature of political parties when considering their societal support. Apart from the visibility of the party dimension in terms of government functioning or in occupying positions in the political system, this feature also differentiates parties with respect to electoral volatility. A small party that appeals to 5-6% of the electorate and loses 2% of its usual vote share suffers much more than a large party that gathers, on average, 20-22% of votes and loses the same amount. Thus, without accounting for differences and conflating the volatility scores into a single measurement at the party system level, the gains and losses of small parties are underestimated, whereas for large parties they are overestimated. A methodological shortcoming such as this cannot be overcome when accounting for the effective number of parties. The score obtained indicates a relative division of power and importance between parties within the system at a given moment; it still does not say much about the extent to which parties perform relative to their own position in the system. Put simply, calculating absolute vote transfers does not provide an accurate image of voting patterns within a party system. It provides only comparability between countries. The longitudinal performance of parties is best accounted for in terms of relative gains and losses.

As a consequence of all of these features, electoral volatility at the party system level may not reflect the dynamism of relevant competitors within the system. That is why I focus on the volatility of individual parties that are *relevant* to the political system (see Introduction). However, there is a linkage between parties and the party system that is visible in many areas from policy drafting to electoral results. Accordingly, it is expected that a linkage will exist between the party and party system volatility. Moreover, as they are not always easy to separate in practice, the effect of some determinants is visible at both levels. For this reason, the next section structures the discussion of the determinants of electoral volatility in three separate categories. First, it refers to the determinants (e.g. electoral system, democratization) that are visible solely at party system level. Variations are expected to occur across time and space.

Second, there are some country level determinants (e.g. the number of parties, voter turnout) that may have an influence on parties. Finally, there are determinants (e.g. party organization, party identification) that have an influence exclusively at the party level. These indicators are the most important in the context of my research design. If this is the case, why then should I account for the other factors? The determinants of party system volatility cannot explain variation in volatility at the party level. These determinants are constant for all of the components of a party system at a particular moment in time. For example, political parties within a country develop in the same democratic environment, face similar economic crises, and fight according to the same electoral rules. Although such determinants appear irrelevant in the context of the cross-party analyses pursued in this book, they may be valuable in the context of longitudinal comparisons. This is the reason for which they are approached systematically in the following section, with an explanation of both the theoretical reasons behind the relationship with volatility and the reasons for which they may or may not represent relevant explanations.

Determinants of Electoral Volatility

Many factors shape a voter's decision to attach loyalty to a particular political party. These factors range from the socio-psychological characteristics of the voter, to institutions and the outcomes they generate. Previous research on advanced democracies has tended to explain electoral volatility according to three major categories of factors: cleavage structures, electoral institutions, and economic performance. The resulting picture is complex and blurred, characterized more by mixed evidence rather than by clearly identifiable explanatory patterns. In general, these explanations appear to be context-dependent, as they are often case (e.g. country or region) or time specific.

The inception of this type of explanation was prompted by Lipset and Rokkan (1967) who argued that parties mobilize voters on the basis of cleavage structures that have existed for decades in Western European countries. Two studies that followed sought to add nuance to Lipset and Rokkan's theory. First, in their attempt to explain the stability of post-1945 Western European countries, Rose and Urwin (1970) presented refined evidence of the strong social connections between voters and parties. Second, Pedersen (1979) argued that electoral volatility after 1960 – within the same universe of cases studied by Rose and Urwin – was rooted in the de-alignment of class and party. All these studies reveal one basic conclusion: longitudinal change in electoral preferences is a result of the transformations that take place in terms of value and social structures (Dalton et al. 1984, 451).

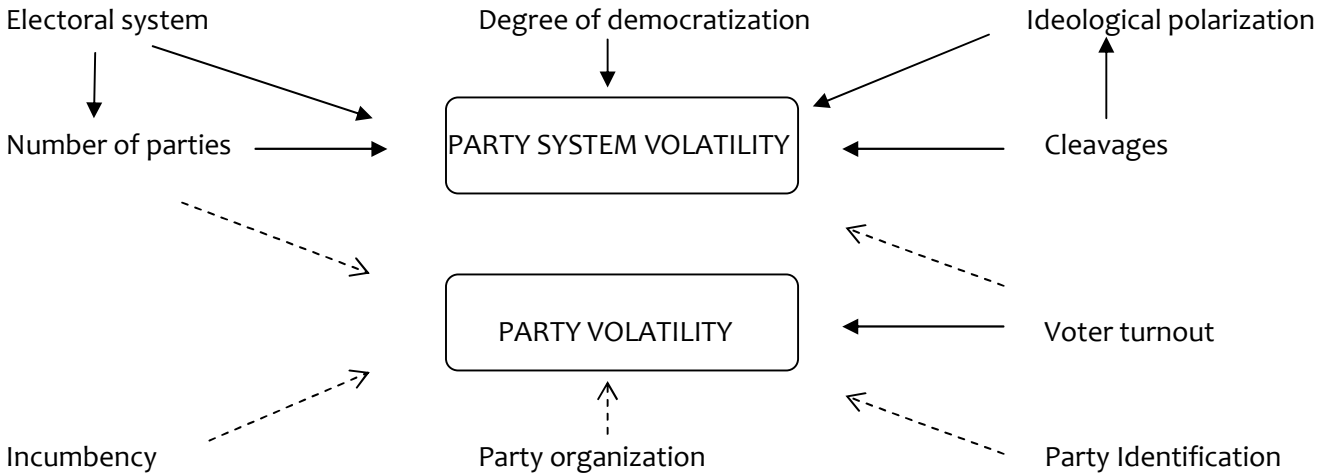
Building on these two studies, the research to follow put forth yet more explanations of electoral volatility. In his analysis of several Western European countries, Crewe (1985b, 129) argues that ideology plays a role in voting

behavior. The way in which people vote and change their vote can be explained in terms of the relationship between their own positions and the perceived party positions on major divisive issues. This emphasis on the ideological sources of vote commitment is complemented by Bartolini and Mair's focus (1990) on the party system format (i.e. the number of competing parties), the electoral system, and the political system (i.e. voter turnout). The complexity of providing an exhaustive explanation of volatility convinced Bartolini and Mair (1990, 282) to categorize the causes of volatility in five main groups: changes in the electoral system, the format of the party system, cultural segmentation, the density of organizations connected to political parties, and short-term factors.

Lane and Ersson (1999, 198) conceptualize and operationalize this last "short-term factors" category by breaking it down into party membership, votes for the left, convergence on the economic right-left scale, and economic vulnerability due to openness. Using such detailed accounts, their results explained almost 70% of the aggregate variation in electoral volatility compared to the less than 50% explained by Bartolini and Mair. Summing up, over the course of three decades, the number of explanations applying to a limited number of countries significantly increased. Similarly, the type and nature of explanations became diversified.

Following the recent research focus on post-Communist countries (Lewis 2000; Birch 2001; Sikk 2005; Tavits 2005), a few additional causes of electoral volatility can be put forth. These causes are depicted graphically in Figure 1.1 and include country level (i.e. the electoral system, cleavage structure, the number of parties, or degree of democratization), party level (i.e. ideological polarization, incumbency, and party organization), and voter related (i.e. party identification and turnout) determinants of electoral volatility. In line with the discussion of the previous section, this figure suggests a multi-layered approach. It differentiates between determinants of party system and party level volatility. Previous research has often referred to these two layers interchangeably. However, the separation of these two layers is empirically necessary to avoid confusion and to illustrate the effects at the primary level of occurrence. Accordingly, Figure 1.1 explicitly illustrates what previous research assumed or implied: some determinants act at the system level through individual parties.

Figure 1.1: Determinants of Electoral Volatility for Party System and Individual Party Levels



Note: The different styles of arrows[7] indicate the various levels at which the effect is observed (regular arrow for party system and dotted arrows for party).[8]

[7] The arrow structure in the figure is simplified, without connecting all inter-dependent variables, as the goal was to illustrate how determinants connect with volatility. Thus, clearcut relationships like the one between ideological polarization and the number of parties is not visible in the

Though not depicted in the figure, these two layers are expected to be permanently inter-connected: party level volatility influences party system volatility and vice versa. The electoral volatility of the party system is the sum of the vote shifts among its components. Conversely, the volatility of individual parties can be shaped by the environment in which they develop. That is why some explanations provided by previous studies were primarily identified at the level of individual parties and afterwards extrapolated to the party system.

The following three sub-sections examine the relationships between these causes and the electoral volatility at party system and party levels. The theoretical rationales behind these linkages are complemented by empirical results that clarify their functioning in CEE. Following these insights, the central argument of this section is that explanations of volatility at party level are better than those at the party system level to capture the dynamism of electorates in general and in CEE in particular. Such an insight allows for cross-party analysis within the party system in which large variations are observed (see Chapter 2). Among the party level explanations, the most salient and underexplored relationship is the one between party organization and electoral volatility to be thoroughly examined in the second section of this chapter.

Determinants of Party System Volatility

Figure 1.1 includes four factors considered to influence electoral volatility in the party system exclusively: the electoral system (and changes to it), the level/degree of democratization, the party system format, and the ideological polarization of political parties. This sub-section sheds light on the way in which these factors function and how they apply to the CEE context.

The Electoral System

The components of the electoral system appear to make a difference with respect to the level of party system volatility. In general, the linkage between the stability of institutional rules and that of electoral choice is uncertain (Bielasiak 2002). In particular, there are a few observable linkages. In their longitudinal study of the Western European countries, Bartolini and Mair (1990, 39) explain volatility in terms of several changes in electoral institutions (including regulations), franchise enlargement, introduction or abandonment of compulsory voting, provisions of electoral laws, and the disproportionality of different electoral systems. In contemporary times, most of these elements either do not vary (i.e. the franchise) or they are no longer on the political agenda (i.e. compulsory voting). Consequently, only the proportionality of the system continues to be a variable that can explain variation in electoral support. The mechanisms at work here are driven in large part by the formula employed and the electoral laws at work specifying modifications to the electoral threshold or district magnitude.

Electoral setting can, thus, indirectly influence voter choice and the stability of preferences by way of the "psychological" (complementary to the "mechanical"[9]) effects of electoral systems (Duverger 1954). These effects imply the presence of strategic incentives both for voters (who seek to avoid wasting their votes) and politicians under different electoral rules (Blais et al. 2001; Gschwend 2007). These incentives influence the number and nature of political choices that voters confront. For example, high explicit electoral thresholds discourage political parties from contesting seats (Rae 1971; Lijphart 1994; van Biezen 2003; Bakke and Sitter 2005). In a situation such as this, voters face limited choices and are encouraged to cast strategic votes for larger parties. By discouraging the expansion of alternative vote choices, the level of electoral volatility is likely to be reduced.

Yet none of these theoretical arguments are supported by evidence from the CEE countries. To start with, the electoral threshold, the average total electoral volatility calculated at the party system level (Enyedi and Casal Bertoa 2011, 134), indicates that countries with similar thresholds display stark differences. For example, Romania and Poland have similar thresholds for political parties (5%) and coalitions (8%)[10], but the average volatility scores are extreme in both cases: 19.1 for Romania and 34.3 for Poland. As these are also the only countries in CEE that did not use electoral thresholds in their first free elections – 1990 in Romania and 1991 in Poland – the likelihood that similar volatility trends and values will be experienced in both cases increases. Similarly, the Czech Republic and Slovakia have the same 5% threshold for political parties, but the average volatility of the former is situated around 21%, whereas in Slovakia it is 6% higher.

Moreover, the theoretical expectation according to which countries with higher thresholds should have lower volatility is not supported by evidence in CEE. 176 out of the 386 seats in the Hungarian parliament are allocated on the basis of competition in single member districts. These districts have very high implicit thresholds. The average volatility of Hungary's party system is higher than that of Romania and that of the Czech Republic, both of which have lower electoral thresholds: 19.1% and 21% respectively. In addition, a longitudinal investigation provides supplementary evidence. Contrary to the argument presented above, the electoral volatility of one country is proportional to the size of the electoral threshold (e.g. when one increases, the other increases as well). If we look at 2000 when the electoral threshold in Romania increased to 5%, its party system volatility scored 29.1 compared to

[9] They refer to the aggregation of votes into seats under different formulas.

[10] The difference between the two electoral systems consists of supplementary thresholds in Romania, depending on the number of parties within a coaltion: 9% for three parties and 10% for four or more parties.

14.3 in 1996 (Sikk 2005, 396). Similarly, the threshold cannot explain variation in volatility when the threshold remains constant. For example, Hungary has had a stable set of rules throughout the entire post-communist period, yet its volatility varied greatly reaching a peak of 31.7 in 1998 and a minimum of 8.4 during the 2006 elections (Enyedi and Casal Bertoa 2011, 134). Summing up, the electoral threshold appears to have no impact on volatility levels, as there is no visible empirical pattern in their relationship.

With respect to district magnitude, the theoretical expectation is that large magnitudes yield an increase in the number of parties and diminish disproportionality in representation (Rae 1971; Taagepera and Shugart 1989). High district magnitudes allow a large number of political parties to coexist and compete, thereby expanding the breadth of choices available to voters and increasing electoral volatility. However, the results of the study conducted for CEE countries by Tavits (2005) indicate that magnitude is negatively related to electoral volatility.

Regarding another component of the electoral system, earlier research has shown how the electoral formula employed can indirectly influence volatility. The effect of electoral formula is mediated by proportionality (Lijphart 1994). Assuming that voters are at least minimally rational, Bartolini and Mair (1990, 152-155) explain how strong and perceptible constraints on voting choice lead to increased volatility. The electoral formulas that ensure high proportionality when transforming votes into seats allow voters to maintain partisan preferences. Extremely disproportional systems require voters to employ strategic behavior, as they have to avoid wasting their votes. As a result, individuals replace their potentially losing preference with the most acceptable alternative and, as such, a greater degree of vote switching is likely to be observed. In terms of further constraints on the voter, majority formulas are more likely to produce higher volatility than proportional representation (PR) formulas.

The evidence from CEE does not support this linear linkage. The countries with a partially different formula than the rest (Hungary and Romania as of 2008) do not display a clear pattern of higher/lower electoral volatility compared to the rest. Moreover, they do not cluster at various moments in time. At a general level of abstraction, the Czech Republic resides in between the two countries, with Slovakia following Hungary closely in terms of volatility. Moreover, the party system volatility of Romania in 2008 is considerably lower than it was in 1996 when a PR system was used. In light of this evidence, it appears that electoral system components are not helpful in explaining party system volatility in CEE.

The Degree of Democratization

A second major determinant of party system volatility is the level of democratization. Its influence is both direct and indirect. Increased democratization stabilizes patterns of party competition. The direct consequence of this is the production of a low-volatility system in which the entry of new competitors is highly unlikely. The continuous existence of parties combined with low turnover allows voters to get used to the competitors and start attaching their loyalty accordingly. Given the relatively low vote fluctuations, the citizens are able to learn what these parties stand for from one election to the next. Along these lines, a recent study of Third World countries indicates that volatility is negatively correlated with the degree of democratization (Lundell 2008).

Furthermore, the level of democratization has an indirect effect on party system volatility, which is intermediated by the time factor and the number and polarization of parties. The heterogeneity, division, and polarization of the political spectrum in the years immediately following regime change appear to influence the behavior of the political parties. As time passes by, countries reached democratic performances. There was the expectation to have more stable party systems in countries that have finished their transition and reached democratic performance. Tavits (2005) shows that in the first years of political transition to democracy, the level of electoral volatility was high in post-Communist countries and that stable support emerged only after a decade, when democratic performances were reached.

However, inspection of further evidence from the CEE countries reveals a blurry picture. A close look at the speed of democratization in the former Warsaw Pact countries until 1999[11] and their party system volatility does not reveal any linear cross-country and/or longitudinal relationship. For example, the Bulgarian party system (in a country that has experienced a slow democratization process) has a smaller average party system volatility over the first three democratic elections (20.7) compared to Hungary (28.4) or Poland (26,4) that were forerunners of democratization in the region. Moreover, within the same country, there is no coherent pattern to be identified. For example, party system volatility values in the 1992 and 2000 Romanian elections were similar; the Czech Republic registered a decrease in party system volatility as democratization progressed (from 27 in 1996 to 15.8 in 1998); whereas Bulgaria consistently increases from 18.5 in 1991 to 24.6 in 1997.

[11] This is the year in which all these countries signed on to initial EU accession negotiations, thus receiving formal recognition of their democratic achievements.

Summing up, there is no identifiable linkage between democratization and party system volatility in the six studied countries.[12]

The Ideological Polarization

The ideological polarization of parties represents a third factor that can influence party system volatility. The spatial models of competition illustrate how both policy positions (Laver and Hunt 1992) and distances between these positions can have an impact on volatility. The theoretical underpinnings of this claim draw on Enelow and Hinich's claim (1984) that voters cast their votes for the parties closest to them in a political space of salient issues. Regarding the positioning on the ideological spectrum, it is argued that parties to the left are better able than those to the right to create local organizations and maintain a more stable core of voters (Duverger 1954). In the post-Communist space, the political actors of the left are mainly successor parties that inherited organizational resources from their predecessors and experienced continuity in their relationship with the voter (see Chapter 2).

In this particular case, institutional legacies coincide with the party's positioning to the left. In general, mapping the political space in CEE is problematic. It is difficult to specify a set of non-controversial ideological dimensions upon which to distribute parties (Bohrer II et al. 2000, 1164). Mapping is impeded in part by the blurry cleavage structure discussed in the following sub-section. Even if conventional axes are drawn, there is often substantial disagreement regarding the placement of political parties on them (Kitschelt 1992; Day et al. 1996; Bugajski 2002; Millard 2004; Vachudova and Hooghe 2009). Given these methodological and empirical obstacles, policy positions provide no substantive explanation for volatility in CEE.

Regarding political distance, Bartolini and Mair (1990, 38) test its influence on the electoral mobility of voters. Bartolini and Mair (1990, 196) argue that preferences may become stable and behavior can change according to the choices available. However, they found no evidence to support this relationship in the Western European democracies. In CEE, where parties lack clearly defined competition axes and occupy loose ideological positions, such a relationship is even more difficult to observe. Moreover, Bielasiak (2002) presents evidence illustrating that even when voters identify party positions on issue dimensions, there is still little attachment to political parties.

Overall, the application of the three determinants of party system volatility appears to be problematic in the CEE context. In spite of strong theoretical reasons to expect explanatory potential and previous evidence in

[12] This conclusion does not imply only linear relationships. The matrix of the democratization levels and electoral volatility reveals a spread of cases that does not allow for the identification of any pattern,

support of such explanations in other regions of the world, the relevance of these three determinants in the post-communist landscape is limited. One reason for this situation is the specific character of CEE (see Introduction). There is little if any correspondence between the concepts employed for other regions and those for CEE (e.g. the format of the party system, ideological polarization, etc.). A second reason is the absence of variation in some determinants (e.g. some components of the electoral system, the age of democratization). A third reason is based on empirical evidence that either goes against previous results or illustrates a random distribution of values (e.g. the electoral system). On these grounds, none of the three possible causes plays a crucial role in explaining variation in volatility between party systems. With this in mind, let us now turn to the variables influencing both party system and individual party volatility.

Determinants of both Party System and Party Volatility

Earlier studies have revealed the importance of the number of parties and cleavages in shaping voter preferences. Consequently, these two variables can also explain the variation of electoral volatility for individual parties or for a party system.

The Number of Parties

The number of parties has been identified in previous research as playing a role in determining party system volatility. High degrees of electoral competitiveness and party system fragmentation coincide with high electoral volatility (Coppedge 1998; Mainwaring 1998a; 1998b; Bielasiak 2002). When voters have many available alternatives among the parties running in elections, there is a general tendency towards high rates of electoral volatility. Bartolini and Mair (1990, 136-138) present evidence from Western European countries showing that the number of parties positively correlates with electoral volatility. Further arguments explain why volatility is expected to be greater in those systems in which voters have more choice in elections.

Pedersen (1979; 1983) was the first to reveal a positive relationship between the number of parties and electoral volatility, yielding two conclusions: more parties create more volatility and a change in the number of parties fielding candidates increases volatility. The latter is Janus-faced as it can mean an increase in the number of parties due to new entrants or a decrease in this number due to erstwhile competitors dropping out. However, when voters have fewer choices and they want to change their preference, there are insufficient choices available to them in order to do so. However, Bartolini and Mair (1990, 131) show that a change in the number of parties cannot explain volatility; a change in the number of parties can also be an effect produced by volatility not only its cause. Consequently, the number of parties remains a

determinant of volatility. How does it influence volatility? There are two mechanical effects at work. First, voter choice is characterized by a certain degree of randomness. An increase in the number of competitors leads to an increase in random choices. Accordingly, volatility increases as a result of this randomness (Neff Powell and Tucker 2008, 12-13). Second, related to the policy positions, Madrid (2005, 2) shows that an increase in the number of parties decreases the policy distance between competitors (as the political space becomes more crowded). As a result, voters have more options close to their policy preferences and can easily shift their votes between elections. Again, volatility is expected to go up in response.

In spite of these clear theoretical linkages, previous research has revealed mixed empirical evidence. On one hand, Bartolini and Mair (1990), Remmer (1991), Roberts and Wibbels (1999), Birch (2001), and Birnir (2001) report a positive correlation between party system fragmentation and volatility. According to their results, the presence of more competitors coincides with high volatility. On the other hand, Mainwaring and Zoco (2007) and Neff Powell and Tucker (2008) find little or no effect of the number of competitors on electoral volatility. In addition to these inconsistent results, there are a few empirical problems. First, the number of parties can explain volatility at the party system level only. This measurement captures the cross-country differences, but fails to account for differences at the party level within the same party system. For example, the variable cannot explain why parties from a certain country have different levels of electoral volatility in the same election when the number of competitors is the same. Second, the evidence from CEE reveals one further empirical problem. Following the theory, fewer parties should lead to a decrease in volatility. There is a relatively constant decrease in the number of parliamentary parties in CEE elections (see Table 1 in the Introduction), but electoral volatility is characterized by ups and downs (see Chapter 2). Given these issues, the number of parties does not appear to be a useful indicator of volatility in the CEE countries.

The Cleavages

The second variable relating both to party system and party level volatility is the cleavage structure. Previous research has shown how social cleavages stabilize electoral politics (Lipset and Rokkan 1967; Horowitz 1985; Bartolini and Mair 1990). Although considered thus far exclusively in relation to the party system, the cleavage structure relates to the social make-up of support accruing to individual parties, not to the system. The effects of social cleavages at the system level are registered through individual parties (Smith 1989, 351) and are usually reflected in the ideological alignment of parties on the political spectrum, the political identification of voters with specific parties, and the number of political parties within the system. Lipset and Rokkan (1967) argue

that societal cleavages provide anchors that stabilize mass preferences, thus reducing volatility. The basic mechanism at work is that parties are deeply rooted in class, religious, and other types of generative cleavages that are institutionalized through party competition and the development of mass parties. Once on the political agenda (i.e. by generating political conflict), cleavages provide bases of support for parties (Dalton 1988) and structure party competition and partisanship, allowing parties to target particular groups with their messages (Katz 1990; Birnir 2006). Accordingly, voting is primarily an expression of social position, values, and interests formed along cleavage lines (Tavits 2005, 287). The presence of cleavages can solidify the ties between parties and the electorate and can increase the predictability of political outcomes (Lijphart et al. 1993). Well-organized social cleavages close the electoral market (Bartolini and Mair 1990) and stabilize the preferences of the electorate, decreasing volatility. The absence of social cleavages leads to swings and volatility associated with personality politics and authoritarian populism (Evans and Whitfield 1993).

Specifically, the role of cleavages in determining voter preference is captured through electoral or partisan dealignment, referring to the eroding ties between parties and voters (Dalton 2000). This process had a variety of causes ranging from voters' social modernization (Franklin et al. 1992) and cognitive mobilization (Nie et al. 1976; Dalton 1984) to challenges faced by political parties in fulfilling their traditional functions (Flanagan and Dalton 1984; Lawson and Merkl 1988; Dalton and Wattenberg 2000). In CEE, there is no prior alignment and political parties still search for mechanisms by which to strengthen their bonds with the electorate. The cleavage lines common to established democracies in the West can hardly be identified in CEE. The communist regimes leveled out major social differentiation with their egalitarian ideology and policies (van Biezen 2003, 35-36). For example, communist economic policies implied public property, mass education, and lack of wealth discrepancies, thereby inhibiting the formation of social classes (Evans and Whitefield 1993; von Beyme 1996; Elster et al. 1998).

Although social cleavages are absent in CEE, legacies of the past can be identified in contemporary societies in the form of divisions. Schattschneider (1960) explains that not all social differentiation is organized into politics. A division becomes a cleavage only when it structures people's identities and social actions (Gallagher et al. 1992). The absence of major cleavage lines does not imply the homogeneity of the CEE societies or the lack of divisions.[13] On the contrary, there are a few obvious divisions that communism could not level out

[13] Whitefield (2002) provides a list of social divisions for 12 East European democracies upon which voters can align. However, these divisions did not become cleavages as neither were parties formed along these lines nor were votes cast according to them.

(Tucker 2002) and may have even reinforced. One such example is the divide between the winners vs. losers of transition. The industrialization of some countries was equivalent to urbanization, in which massive movement of people from rural to urban areas was visible. Rural areas relied mainly on agriculture and the dissolution of collective farms created large-scale unemployment. During the transition to a market economy, state subsidies for agriculture were dramatically reduced, transforming the rural population into the losers of transition.

Based on these discrepancies between the winners and losers of transition, which correspond to various geographical areas, a few studies (Whitefield 2002; Tworzecki 2003) explain its impact on post-communist electoral behavior. If alignment is made on these cleavage lines, we would expect more agrarian parties to win seats and maintain rather stable electoral support. Only three parties belonging to this category have enjoyed a rather continuous presence on the political scene of their country (PSL in Poland, PNTCD in Romania, and FKGP in Hungary), the last two parties were not able to obtain seats in parliament starting 2000 and 2002 respectively.

Two other divisions had the potential to become cleavages in CEE: religion and ethnicity. Posner (2005) shows how cleavages can occur when circumstances change. The isolation of the church in most communist regimes could create a division within society between its supporters and opponents. As a result, we can expect societal divisions to exist in the post-communist period. However, with the exception of Poland, the religious cleavage is not observable in other countries. This outcome was also due to the fact that the church was represented only by few parties during democratization (Crawford 1996; Wittenberg 2006).

The issue of ethnicity is more nuanced. In the aftermath of regime change, one major challenge for many CEE countries was the accommodation of ethnic minorities and their re-emerging identities. During communism, nurturing ethnic identities was discouraged. The CEE nations were kept together by a common identity, imposed on them by the USSR – the politics of "one state, one nation, one population" (Linz and Stepan 1996). Three CEE countries under scrutiny have significant minorities that reside in their territories: the Hungarians in Romania and in Slovakia and the Turks in Bulgaria.[14] Previous research has viewed ethnic identity as a function of contextual factors and political strategies adopted by the group leaders (Horowitz 1985; Laitin 1998; Chandra 2004). The early years of transition set the stage for such identities to reemerge. First, there were some clashes between majority and minority populations in Bulgaria (in the two regions where the

[14] In the Czech Republic there is a secessionist movement belonging to the Moravians. However, they are not a distinct ethnic group, but rather have a strong regional identity.

Turks represent the majority of the population), Romania (in mixed towns in Transylvania), and Slovakia (on the border with Hungary).

Second, debates about the first post-Communist constitutions were dominated by ethnic issues in these three countries. Restrictive measures were included in the laws mostly consisting of the non-recognition of collective rights. Third, these ethnic disputes were politicized by the formation of parties along ethnic lines: Hungarians in Romania mobilized in 1989 and formed the UDMR, the Turks in Bulgaria founded the DPS in January 1990, while in Slovakia (then part of Czechoslovakia) several Hungarian parties were also formed in 1990 (Gherghina and Jiglau 2011). Fourth, as a response, a few nationalist parties emerged: the PRM and the PUNR in Romania or the SNS in Slovakia. For example, the PUNR was formed in 1990 as the successor of the Transylvanian nationalist movement (Gallagher 1997, 29-31) perceiving its major role as a reply given to the political structures representing Hungarians in Transylvania (Soare 2010).

Accordingly, it seemed that an ethnic cleavage would develop in CEE and was expected to play an important role in post-communist politics (Lewis 2000, 143). Kitschelt (1992, 20) expected the ethnic dimension of collective political identification (including religious and linguistic differences) to be one with particular features. The first elections provided partial empirical support for these expectations. As a response to the ethnic mobilization described above, many parties played the nationalist card. For example, the successor communist parties in Bulgaria (BSP) and Romania (PSD) adopted an anti-ethnic minority discourse as an electoral strategy. However, the ethnic issue remained minimally salient throughout the post-communist period. It did not create a sharp societal division on which voters could align. It was mainly visible in the electoral support provided to ethnic parties. There is a process of stable ethnic voting amongst the minorities that is mainly fueled by ethnic socialization through information shortcuts. The most important source of political learning for ethnic voters is the members and leaders of their own ethnic group (Birnir 2007). Ethnic parties rely on these cues and this is the main reason for which the volatility of these parties is usually reduced.

This process did not lead to the creation of ethnic cleavages within societies, but only encapsulated voting preferences of ethnic minorities. The other side of this division is also no longer present in CEE: voters are no longer mobilized by anti-ethnic discourse. Although radical right or nationalist parties have not ceased to exist, their discourse changed as a result of the adaptation function. The initial anti-minority focus – characterized by xenophobic messages and appeals to violence – and defense of the country against external interference gradually lost the ethnic component and now targets contemporary issues such as social protection, migration, and the EU. Contemporary CEE radical right parties are preoccupied by different issues than

they were in the beginning of the transition period. Their discourse diversified to appeal to a broader electorate. Those parties that did not adapt also failed to enter parliament, for example the PUNR in Romania or the Justice and Life Party (MIEP) in Hungary. This adaptation function and change of discourse lead to the occurrence of nationalist parties long-time after the ethnic parties were constituted (e.g. Ataka was formed in Bulgaria in 2005) or to the emergence of these type of parties in countries with a very small percentage of ethnic minorities (e.g. Jobbik in Hungary). These late appearances on the political scene are accompanied by populist messages oriented not only against ethnic groups, but also against other political parties. All this empirical evidence suggests that ethnicity did not represent a major issue within the CEE societies.

Next to these institutional features, there is one behavioral aspect: electoral participation (Franklin 2004). Although changes in the size of the electorate were associated with party system electoral volatility, the basic mechanism exists at the party level. When turnout decreases and citizens who vote maintain their preferences between elections, the support for one party increases. Although the absolute number of its voters remains the same, its vote share increases. If one party has the same number of voters in consecutive elections, the oscillations of turnout lead to different calculations of the percentage of total vote share. As a result of this mechanism, it is theoretically possible to experience volatility without losing or gaining supporters. Empirically, earlier studies point out that changes in the size of the electorate are positively associated with volatility in Western European (Bartolini and Mair 1990) and Latin American countries (Madrid 2005). In a departure from these theoretical and empirical reasons, the turnout variable can explain volatility. As no previous study has tested its impact in CEE, I use it as a control variable in the empirical model I develop at the end of this chapter.

Summing up, the two variables that can explain party system and individual party level volatility are generally problematic in the CEE context. Most of the problems with these variables are empirical in nature. The number of parties provides mixed evidence in the post-communist region and has problems explaining longitudinal development of volatility. With the exception of an ethnic division that has the potential to mobilize voters of the few ethnic parties from CEE (see Chapter 2), cleavage structures are almost non-existent in CEE societies. Let us move on to the most particular level of explanation: the factors that can explain party level volatility.

Determinants of Party Level Volatility

The three variables that can influence party level volatility are government incumbency, party identification, and party organization. One of them, the party identification, is an individual level variable, whereas the other two are

party related. Accordingly, they explain the variations in electoral support from various perspectives.

Government Incumbency

First, elections often serve as visible milestones that reflect voters' tendency to hold incumbents responsible for their performance. Overall, there is demand for political change whenever significant downturns occur between elections. In CEE, citizens often evaluate government performance strictly in economic terms. When asked in an international survey about the most salient issue in the country, more than 80% of respondents indicated economy (ESS 2003). Using the same data, the correlation between evaluation of government activity and the economic situation in the country is above 0.6 – with modal values of 0.8 – in the CEE countries, all statistically significant (Gherghina 2011).

Political contexts are sometimes relevant in the assignment of credit and blame to incumbents (Anderson 2000) especially in local elections (Boyne et al. 2009). However, in CEE economic evaluations appear to be empirical proxies for government performance especially in the first post-communist decade (Fidrmuc 2000). A recent cross-national empirical study focusing on the six countries analyzed in this book shows that government performance is one key determinant of voter preference for incumbent political parties (Gherghina 2011). Moreover, Roper (2003) has shown that voters in Romania were repeatedly disappointed with incumbent governments and based their votes on these attitudes.

The economic variable appears to play such an important role that even partisans can turn away from their party in times of poor economic performance (Kinder and Kiewit 1981). Incumbent parties are directly affected by retrospective evaluations that are transformed into punishment or reward-based behavior on the part of voters (Kramer 1971; Fiorina 1981; Bellucci 1984; Ferejohn 1986; Lewis-Beck 1988; Powell and Whitten 1993; Lewis-Beck and Stegmaier 2000; Freire and Lobo 2005; Anderson 2007). In spite of their lower level of experience in elections, these mechanisms are also at work in the new democratic post-communist countries. Earlier studies (Fidrmuc 2000; Jackson et al. 2005; Tucker 2006) have indicated an economic effect of the vote for particular types of parties (e.g. reformists or successor parties). In short, with these attitudes at work, fluctuations in economic conditions increase electoral volatility (Roberts and Wibbels 1999; Tavits 2005). These theoretical and empirical factors indicate that government incumbency is a potential source of volatility at the party level. Accordingly, this book's empirical analysis includes it among the control variables.

Party Identification

If people were to vote based purely on their perception of the economy, approximately half of the voters would regularly change their electoral preferences (Wlezien et al. 1997). As that is not the case even in the unstable CEE (see the levels of volatility in Chapter 2), other underlying factors must affect volatility. A second variable that may explain volatility is an attitudinal feature identifiable at the individual level: party identification. Party identification has received considerable attention as determinant of vote choice (Belknap and Campbell 1952; Miller 1952; Campbell et al. 1954; 1960; Burdick and Brodbeck 1959; Converse 1962).

Two possible interpretations of the concept are available. First, party identification is seen as an enduring psychological affinity between the individual and the party (Campbell et al. 1960). Second, party identification is considered to be specific to short-term policy preferences and evaluations influencing vote choice (Miller and Shanks 1996). From this perspective, it is not rigid and is often modified depending on societal conditions (Lawson 1980) or political contexts (Fiorina 1981, 102). Irrespective of the manner in which it is conceptualized, the logical mechanism through which party identification represents an important predictor of voting behavior is the same: individuals who identify with a party tend to support it in elections.

In CEE, electorates are open and volatile and are rarely characterized by party identification (Rose and Mishler 1998). Frequent vote shifts suggest that the electorate identifies only loosely with established parties and indicate the availability of many voters for new electoral alternatives. CEE represents a case that is illustrative of these situations. Having emerged in an environment characterized by strong anti-party feelings, post-communist parties faced an initial legitimacy problem that made the establishment of stable psychological attachments among voters difficult. The non-crystallization of identities prevented the emergence of a clear pattern of alignment (Mair 1997, 182). Weak societal roots strengthened the reticence of voters to attach long-time loyalty to one political competitor. The picture of low party loyalty is complete if we add the absence of stable constituencies that may enact strong political identities among voters (van Biezen 2003, 37) and the presence of several small parties with no stable norms and conventions in the pattern of competition (Mair 1997). The latter renders the electoral environment uncertain. These are all reasons for which we should not expect high levels of party identification.

Party Organization

In addition to incumbency and party identification, party organization is another variable that can explain electoral volatility at the party level. The primary linkage between organization and volatility resides in the communication established between parties and voters. Why do parties

connect to citizens? The mechanism is straightforward: the exchange of voter mobilization for policy responsiveness (Poguntke 2002, 44-46). For the most part, parties connect with voters using two types of linkages, those at the elite level and those at the organizational level. Elite communication implies a linkage with voters through direct communication initiated by party leaders or visible party elites (i.e. MPs, ministers, mayors). The second type of communication uses the party organization as an intermediary (including party members) to establish the connection. In this respect, the party organization can complement leaders' communication with the electorate in providing incentives to the voters to stabilize their preferences. The party organization plays two roles: 1) it acts as an effective communication channel through which the party messages reach voters; and 2) it mobilizes voters and enhances their loyalty.

There are three major differences between parties' direct and organizational styles of communicating with the electorate. First, the complexity, coverage, and length of the process differ. Direct communication is relatively simple and reaches a large audience in a short period of time. Organizational communication requires more resources and time. Its coverage, however, can be wider than that of direct communication. More importantly, through its personal approach it enhances long-term bonds between voters and parties. Second, while organizational communication can employ direct communication; the reciprocal is not possible. For example, not only party leaders use TV outlets, leaders of local branches or prominent members can do the same. Third, direct communication is almost a constant within the party system, whereas organizational communication differs greatly given the different development of party organizations.

Consequently, direct communication cannot explain volatility in CEE. Given the institutional roots of these parties (see Introduction), the necessity to compete before developing appropriate organizations, and their emergence in the era of media politics, post-communist political parties were likely to rely more on direct communication of the elites in public office with the voters (van Biezen 2000, 397). However, most parties have access to media and, thus, can establish direct contact with the electorate, but their volatility varies. At the same time, direct communication cannot explain the electoral success of new parties.[15] Similarly, it is quite difficult to explain why parliamentary parties once highly successful fail to reach the legislature in subsequent elections in these terms.

[15] These arguments refer to the general process of communication. One particular variable that may explain electoral volatility is the communication strategy of political parties in elections. This variable was not considered for practical reasons: the communication strategies are not available for most elections (especially in the 90s) and such information is usually controlled by campaign specialists or high profile party elites in office at election times.

On the other hand, organizational communication *can* explain volatility. At a general level, the organization of parties, similar to electoral volatility (see Chapter 2), varies greatly. The existence of strong organizations in CEE is quite unlikely. Given the elite-driven, top-down formation of most parties, their weak grounding in society, low party membership, financial dependence on the state, and dominance of the party in central and public office over the party on the ground (Kopecky 1995; Lewis 2000; Szczerbiak 2001a; van Biezen 2003; Millard 2004; Enyedi 2006), the organizational structures of the parties are underdeveloped. In spite of these general labels – most of them applied after comparison with Western European reference points – there is visible variation in the organization of post-communist political parties (see Chapters 3 and 4). In particular, party organizations may be fundamental for electoral stability in the long run. In spite of the fact that a strong electoral performance could be achieved without building organizations (van Biezen 2000, 396), the survival of political parties depends on their societal connections.

This can best be achieved through party organization, as this is the most stable component of a political party. In the context of the volatile and uncertain CEE electorate, with floating elites, and a context of competition in which the number of actors often changes (Mair 1997), parties with strong organizations have an advantage over newcomers; established parties display solid bases on which they can attract voters. Changes at the organizational level (e.g. leaders' migration, decision-making layers, mergers and splits) are often visible and reflected in elections and voters may support or oppose these changes. Summing up, party organizations deliver coherent messages to the voters, ensure a continuous and stable presence in the political arena, undertake homogenous actions, and enhance long-term perspectives for representation. How do they do this? A few mechanisms by which this takes place are explored in the following section.

The Party Organization and Electoral Volatility: Relevance, Components, and Linkages

Organizational aspects represent the core of political parties (Panebianco 1988, 3). Their features are comparable and thus allow for cross-country and longitudinal comparative research (Janda 1980; Katz and Mair 1994). Most functions performed by parties take place at the organization level (Dalton 1996). The importance of party organization is emphasized by Huntington (1968, 461): "organization is the road to political power, but is also the foundation of political stability (…). The vacuum of power and authority which exists in so many modernizing countries may be filled temporarily by charismatic leadership or military force. But it can be filled permanently only by political organization". Along the same lines, Duverger (1954, 4) claims that party organization "constitutes the general setting for the activity of members,

the selection of leaders, and decides their powers. It often explains the strength and efficiency of certain parties, the weakness and inefficiency of others".

The organization provides identity and substance to the party. Moreover, it ensures the predictability and continuity of political and social processes (Harmel and Janda 1982, 42). Party organizations eliminate uncertain and episodic policies and politics by coordinating individual actions within a fixed framework that enhances group responsibility. The organizational dimension involves effort mobilization and coordination of party members to promote party strategies and policies (Harmel and Janda 1982, 43). Moreover, party organizations separate members (partisans) from voters, providing the former with an internally derived identity that allows them to perceive themselves within the party framework (Waller 1996, 24).

The Party Organization and Its Components

The party organization is a broad concept used to denominate a conglomerate of internal structures and procedures such as party units, membership, allocation of resources (e.g. power, finances), decision-making, elite behavior (e.g. unity, leadership continuity), and organizational autonomy (Michels 1911; Schattschneider 1942; Duverger 1954; Neumann 1956; Kircheimer 1966; Epstein 1967; Harmel and Janda 1982; 1994; Panebianco 1988; Katz and Mair 1992; 1994; 1995; Kitschelt 1995; Kopecky 1995; van Biezen 2000; Gunther and Diamond 2001; 2003; Ishiyama 2001; Randall and Svasand 2002; Wolinetz 2002; Krouwel 2006).

A century ago, the party organizations in Western European democracies developed from the necessity to mobilize and encapsulate voters after the suffrage extension. Initially, they were created to provide a coherent image of the party and disciplined pursuit of its goals (Weber 1948). Over the following decades, the differences between party organizations rested mainly on two dichotomies between: 1) the quality and quantity of party decision-makers and supporters (Michels 1911; Duverger 1954; Neumann 1956; Katz and Mair 1995) and 2) loosely and well-articulated structures on the ground (e.g. territorial coverage and strength of the party through local branches). The first ideal types of parties were sketched along these features, with various combinations leading to different labels. For example, the cadre party involved a small amount of decision-makers and members, and had poorly articulated structure. The mass party was characterized by broader decision-making process, intensive membership, and territorially developed branches.

Although each party type appeared as a reaction to previously existing types (Katz and Mair 1995) and was focused on change (van Biezen 2003), the scholarly debate around these types brings to the fore essential components of the party organization. New party types lay out specific dimensions of the

organization. Panebianco's (1988) mass-bureaucratic and electoral-professional types explicitly add two components of organization: the financing and the importance of the central elite in the internal life of a party. The mass-bureaucratic model – built on Duverger's (1954) mass party and Neumann's (1956) party of mass integration – considers the interest groups as main sources of party funding and emphasizes the central role of a representative bureaucracy. The electoral-professional party relies on organized interests or government subsidies for funding, whereas the prominent role in the party belongs to elected representatives and professionals.

The emphasis on the role of representatives within the party indicates the existence of specific structures. The debates around various types of parties – cadre, mass or cartel – reveal two ways of structuring the organization: hierarchy vs. stratarchy. On the one hand, Michels (1911) portrayed political parties as monolithic organizations in which the power is located in a single place – in the hands of a strong oligarchy. In light of these features, the party is a hierarchical organization in which a few people decide what happens in the party. On the other hand, the idea that power in a political party cannot be located in a single place (Carty 2004) generated the model of stratarchical organization. According to this, the party organization includes a few units enjoying various degrees of autonomy in their particular activities. However, these are interdependent: local units mobilize the voters and recruit members (and candidates), whereas the central units ensure the general integration of the organization and formulate the party policy (Eldersveld 1964; Katz and Mair 1995).[16]

As Bolleyer (2011) points out, even the stratarchical structures presuppose some hierarchy in the distribution of power and resources between party units. In their activities, central elites are likely to channel the internal organization. For example, they set the rules according to which the local branches undertake their activities and are expected to invest resources in local infrastructures (Carty 2004). Panebianco (1988) argues that a suitable indicator for party organization is the degree of development of its central organization. This distribution of power within the party organization is labeled centralization and refers to the extent to which the national level of party organization controls the regional and local levels in conducting politics and enforces its decisions on subnational organs (Harmel and Janda 1982, 59-60). A few dimensions were used to reflect party centralization: control over communication, administration of discipline, selection of legislative candidates,

[16] Bolleyer (2011) mentions the federation as a type of structure characterizing the new parties in Western Europe. Such a structure emphasizes the role of territorial units with respect to the locus of power, basic organizational principle, logic of representation, and logic of competence distribution across levels.

allocation of funds, selection of national party leader, formulation of party policy, and nationalization of structure (Janda 1980; Harmel and Janda 1982, 60).

However, a clear division of power between party units and their subsequent autonomy does not reflect the complexity of the organization. It is also important how these subunits interact and their degree of interdependence – the feature of systemness in Panebianco's words (1988). To this end, the three "faces" of parties proposed by Katz and Mair (1990; 1993) fulfill a double task: better capture the power divisions and connections between party subunits and clearly outline features of every subunit. The party in public office includes the representatives of the party in legislative or government, the party in central office is the national leadership of the party, and the party on the ground refers to the territorial units. The relations between these three layers took different forms focusing especially on the relative size of membership, officeholders, and activists from the central office (Koole 1994; Ignazi 1996).

One illustrative example for the interactions of the three faces is the issue of party homogeneity and the means to achieve it. For the party in public office homogeneity means party unity and loyalty of the legislators and government officials (i.e. the extent to which they behave similarly and follow the party line). The national leadership of the party is usually responsible to achieve such ends and employs a variety of means: (candidate) selection procedures disciplining mechanisms, pressures, and socialization (Katz 2001; Davidson-Schmich 2008; Kam 2009; Andeweg and Thomassen 2010). However, the party on the ground can become part of the decision making process. For example, the candidates for legislative elections can be selected – partially or totally – through primaries involving the party members and/or sympathizers. In this case, the effect on the party unity is often mediated. A low cohesion of the party on the ground does not necessarily lead to a heterogeneous behavior of the party in public office (Bolleyer 2009). The control mechanisms of the party in central office can alter the direct effect.

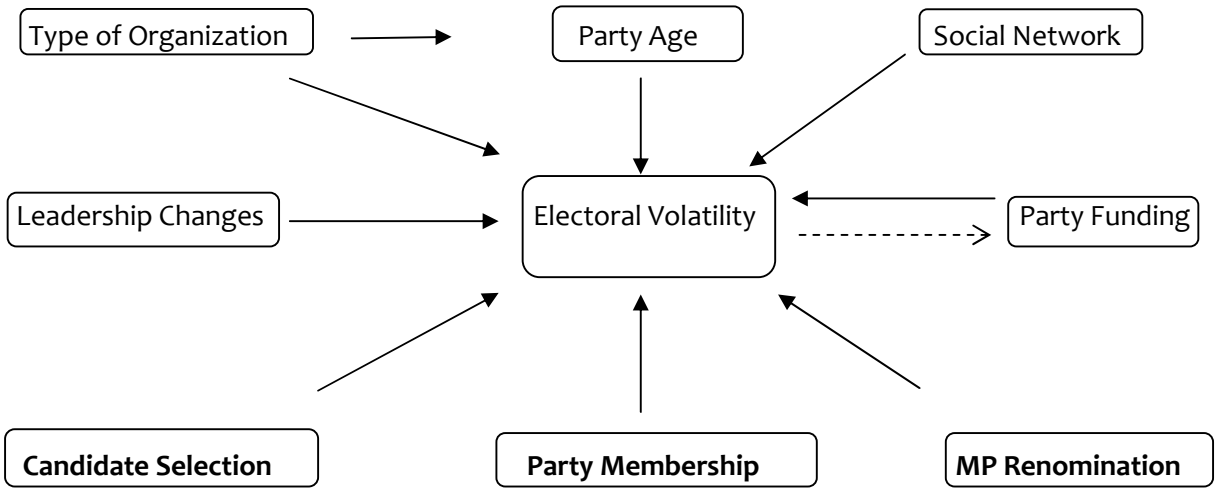
The structure of organizations and the control mechanisms illustrate the role played by elites in the internal life of the party. Connected to their decision-making freedom, general activities, and relationships with the members, the leadership continuity is a relevant component of party organization. Such a claim is even more relevant in the context of accumulated influence gained by contemporary party leaders in the legislature, electorate, and own organizations (Bean and Mughan 1989; Wattenberg 1991; Mughan 1993; 2000; Farrell 1996; Davis 1998; Scarrow et al. 2000). Moreover, the elites in central and public office are the visible representatives of the party. Their political professionalization and behavior can ensure continuity, coherence, and homogeneity to the organization.

The notion of party organization is not limited solely to internal mechanisms. The connections established by the party with other organizations are also relevant. These connections usually target the financial and electoral benefits. The issue of party funding was briefly mentioned in a previous subsection and will be approached in detail in another subsection. The social networks refer to the relationships established by the party organization with non-political institutions in an attempt to mobilize and channel the votes of the population. Putnam (1993) illustrates the increased role played by local associations in political participation in Italy. Political parties that are able to attract the loyalty of such local organizations have more opportunities to reach out to voters and can consolidate their electoral position more easily.

Summing up, the party organizations include a multitude of components important for the internal life of the party: the organizational units and the internal decision-making procedures, the party elite, the membership organization, and the connections established with other organizations (e.g. trade unions, the church). Most of these elements are essential to illustrate the various ways in which party organization is linked with the electoral volatility. Figure 1.2 depicts the major components of party organization and their hypothesized or empirically tested impact on electoral volatility. Two provisions are necessary. First, the figure includes only those elements that can be linked theoretically with electoral volatility. There are more components of party organization (e.g. nationalization of party structure, party unity etc.) without theoretical arguments connecting them with volatility. Along the same lines, some components are very specific. For example, the candidate selection is part of the decision-making process; only this particular aspect is included in the figure due to its potential impact on electoral volatility. Second, the figure is schematic and focuses on the relationships between the components of party organizations and electoral volatility. Thus, it ignores the connections and interactions between the components of party organizations. For example, there is expected to be a general linkage between the type of organization and the social networks established by parties. Moreover, in the CEE context, as it will become clear from Chapter 4, there is an empirical linkage between the type of organization and membership.

In spite of their theoretical relevance, earlier studies or specific examples indicate the absence of empirical evidence to support the relationship between some components and the electoral volatility. The variables at the bottom of Figure 1.2 (bold font) are the ones for which hypotheses are formulated. Age is the only feature of party organization that was not yet discussed and party funding is the only variable for which the relationship with volatility is bi-directional. The logic behind all these linkages and their empirical relevance for CEE are thoroughly discussed in the following subsections.

Figure 1.2: The Components of Party Organization and their Influence on Electoral Volatility



The Type of Organization

In CEE, the type of party organization can explain electoral volatility in terms of differentiated social roots. Three different types of parties were observable at the beginning of transition (Kopecky 2001, 74–75): continuous, revived (with existence before communism and reemerged after this regime fell), and newly emerged parties. Kostelecky (2002) nuanced this typology by adding a new type of party to the newly emerged category and by distinguishing between two types in the continuous category. Regarding his additional type, the parties originating out of dissident movements represent a special category. This new type is relevant in terms of the connections these parties are able to establish with voters. Although new, the social roots of these parties are likely to be stronger compared to those of newly emerged parties, as they opposed the previous regime and thus aggregated particular interests.

A further nuance is the division between the satellite and successor parties to better identify the parties associated with the previous regime. The main difference between the two is that successor parties inherited the structure and organization of the communist parties, whereas the satellite parties were somewhat weaker developed during communism and their legacies were less rich in organizational terms. Moreover, given these features, the visibility of successor parties is likely to be higher than that of satellites. The evolution and electoral performance of these parties in the post-communist period were consistent with this expectation: unlike successors, very few satellite parties managed to survive and play relevant roles in politics.

There are theoretical reasons to expect the social rootedness to be higher for successors, satellites, and parties with origins in dissident movements than for the revived and newly emerged parties. The revived parties enjoyed strong electoral and governing performance in the inter-war period; an alternative label for these parties was "historical parties". As they opposed communism – not at official or formal levels, as their elites were often sent to exile – they were likely to have some social support. However, memories of their existence were quite weak and most of their supporters were very old at the moment of their revival. The newly emerged parties have no electoral experience, often born on the eve of elections, with no appropriate organization and no social roots.

Moreover, political parties with an organizational heritage are better represented at the local level than newly emerged parties that have not had time to develop an extensive web of branches. This was reflected mostly by successor parties (Ishiyama 1999). For example, in the Czech Republic the KSCM and KDU-CSL cover the territory of their country extensively compared to the newer and more electorally successful ODS and CSSD (van Biezen 2003, 140; Kopecky 2007, 135). Similarly, the Romanian PSD and PDL have twice as many local organizations as the PNL (a revived party) and the PRM (a newly

emerged political actor). With these premises as starting point, successor parties are expected to have low electoral volatility, whereas newly emerged parties are expected to exhibit high electoral volatility. An empirical analysis reveals that these differences are relevant only for the first two elections, but with the logic reversed. The evidence shows that newly emerged parties were less volatile than successor or satellite parties as voters remembered the past and punished existing parties for past performance (Gherghina 2008). These differences vanish as time passes and cannot explain variation in electoral support.

Party Age

Party age has been widely considered to be an important indicator for the effectiveness of organizations (Huntington 1968; Janda 1980; Roberts and Wibbels 1999) with effective institutions seen as slow growing. In the life cycle of an organization, there are three phases: genesis, institutionalization, and maturity (Panebianco 1988, 19). The older the party is, the more opportunities it has to reach institutionalization and maturity. Each round of participation in elections makes the party more familiar to voters and creates the opportunities for a regular exchange of votes for policies. Brand new political organizations, emerging from scratch or after a party split, are likely to be more volatile in elections.

It is difficult for parties in the genesis phase to generate stable electoral loyalties as they first must identify and address niches in the political spectrum, acquire experience and visibility, and initiate contact with voters. Following this logic, older parties are likely to be less volatile. In CEE, the type of organization influenced the age: continuous parties enjoy uninterrupted existence for many decades, revived parties have ceased to exist for almost half a century, and newly emerged parties. As the type of organization does not systematically explain electoral volatility, there are low expectations regarding the explanatory potential of age. Indeed, Gherghina (2008) presents empirical evidence showing that party age does not explain electoral volatility at the party level.

The Social Networks

The CEE parties do not have stable connections with local associations. The linkages between Christian-Democratic parties and the Church, for example, are quite loose. In fact, the role of such parties in CEE politics is minimal: in some countries they have a limited presence in parliament, whereas in others they failed to gain parliamentary seats at all for a period of time. In some cases, there are isolated agreements with trade unions prior elections, but they are not durable, nor are they consistent over time.

The trade unions facilitate access to the voters they mobilize on a pragmatic basis. The unions negotiate agreements with political parties willing to do so and simply pick the best offer. For example, in the two most recent legislative elections in Romania, the biggest trade union cooperated with the social-democrats during one election and with their opponents, the liberal-democrats, in the next. Summing up, there are isolated connections between some CEE political parties and other organizations; most examples are limited to the successor parties (e.g. MSZP in Hungary or PSD in Romania) or to political formation with short life (e.g. Solidarity in Poland or CDR in Romania). Thus, the social network factor has weak explanatory potential regarding the shifts in electoral support.

Party Funding

There are two ways in which party funding can influence the electoral volatility. The mechanism at work in both is similar and relates to voter perception of parties. First, the financial dependence of political parties on private donors may cast doubts on the legitimacy of their proposed policies. Instead of pursuing legislation for the public, parties can reward major private contributors by proposing and adopting legislation to their benefit. Accordingly, corrupt or clientelistic allegiances may exist which can negatively affect parties' image in the eyes of citizens. Second, public funding requires detailed justification. Voters are aware that their money is used to achieve democratic goals (Szczerbiak 2001d; Enyedi 2006c; van Biezen and Kopecky 2007). However, there are instances in which extensive campaign spending surpasses the amounts received from the state and parties are unable to (or poorly) justify their revenue. As a result, corruption scandals often influence the result of elections and represent a salient issue in most CEE countries as they also positioned low on Corruption Perception Index (*Transparency International*).

The relationship between funding and volatility is not unidirectional. This is especially the case with state funding. State revenues are allocated on the basis of electoral success and parties have a critical incentive to maximize or at least stabilize their vote share. State funding can either promote electoral approaches based on short-term linkages with the electorate (van Biezen 2003, 40) or the development of permanent links with voters. Once a party achieves a strong electoral performance, its incentive to maintain this level of popular support is high. In other words, parties that are able to achieve a level of electoral support that permits them to receive state subsidies have a financial

incentive to aim for low volatility. Moreover, state funding legislation lacks great variation in CEE.[17]

All analyzed countries provide extensive state subsidies[18] (Ikstens et al. 2002; van Biezen 2003; Roper 2007; Smilov 2007; Walecki 2007; Lewis 2008; Gherghina et al. 2011) to political parties, creating almost full financial dependence. This is confirmed by figures from the mid-1990s with the exception of communist successors. Political parties in the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland could not rely on receiving more than 10% of their income from members (Lewis 2008, 184). With membership fees and small donations as only a very small proportion of parties' income, the remaining majority of the funding comes from the state. Given the theoretical circularity of the linkage between funding and volatility and the empirical lack of variation, party funding cannot represent a potential explanation for electoral volatility in these six countries.

As these four variables fail to account for variation in electoral volatility, the following three sections discuss the way in which the remaining three components of party organization can influence volatility. Accordingly, three hypotheses are formulated. Unlike some of the aforementioned variables, candidate selection, membership organization, and MP re-nomination exhibit a high level of variation across time, countries, and parties. At the same time, none of these variables has been explored thus far; therefore there are no empirical tests to indicate their explanatory power.

The Centralization of Candidate Selection

Candidate selection is one of the central functions of political parties. The importance of this process had already been acknowledged as early as the first decades of the previous century when Schattschneider (1942, 101) explained, "he who can make the nominations is the owner of the party". Ranney (1981) follows this argument and argues that candidate selection ensures control over party activities. At the same time, candidate selection distinguishes parties from other organizations (Sartori 1976), sheds light on the type of policies to be pursued (Crotty 1968; Cross 2008), and reflects the internal democracy of the parties (Gallagher and March 1988). There is a rich body of literature broaching

[17] Instead, what differs is the extent to which parties operating under similar finance regimes differ in terms of their financial resources. This variation is visible across parties and also over time for the same political party. Consequently, the impact of financial resources on electoral volatility is an empirical question that deserves investigation. However, a recent study on the Romanian political parties illustrates the diversity of financing sources and the difficulty to assess the financial resources of a party (Gherghina et al. 2011). Such difficulties originate in the indirect use of public money and clientelistic networks that are often not visible.

[18] Until 2001 in Bulgaria, state funding was rather symbolic. The main source of funding was private corporate donations.

the issue of candidate selection, ranging from various forms encountered in party models (Duverger 1954; Kircheimer 1966; Panebianco 1988; Katz and Mair 1995) to the degree of democratization of candidate selection processes (Epstein 1967; Ranney 1981; Gallagher and Marsh 1988; Bille 2001; Rahat and Hazan 2001; Lundell 2004; Lisi 2009).

This study focuses on the level of decision making within the party organization regarding candidate selection. I investigate whether or not the national level exerts more control over candidate selection for the national legislative elections compared to the regional and local levels.[19] This is the reason for which the variable is labeled "centralization of candidate selection". In the words of previous studies on party organizations, I am interested in observing whether or not the national office leads the selection politics of the party and enforces its decisions upon sub-national organs (Harmel and Janda 1982, 59-60) or it is the other way around. The endeavor is relevant in the context of the list PR systems used extensively in CEE.

How can candidate selection explain volatility? The causal mechanism relates to the perceived responsiveness of the party to citizens' needs and can be summarized as follows. Autonomy of local branches in intra-party decision-making brings parties closer to the voter. The local branches are often the primary unit of interaction between voters and parties (Frendreis et al. 1990). Thus, the local branches are familiar with voters' needs and policy priorities. By conducting activities intensively at the local level, parties demonstrate their willingness to respond to problems raised by citizens. Indirectly, they send a message of better representation. Based extensively on personal contacts, local organizations often manage to mobilize voters from marginal categories (e.g. youth) that are not likely to participate in elections unless there is a different type of motivation than the conventional one (Geser 1999, 13). Thus, they enhance the societal penetration of the party, reaching electorates through other means than conventional communication.

If local organizations have autonomy, they will be able to channel societal demands and give them priority. In this respect, local organizations' views and proposals may fulfill two tasks: they may provide necessary feedback for the central office and the may indicate to the electorate that their voice is being heard. Local organizations need political power to reflect responsiveness and to create an institutional linkage with the voters. Their strength ensures tighter relations with voters. In particular, the selection of candidates for legislative elections at the local level sends a message to voters that problems

[19] I focus on the selection of candidates for the national elections for two reasons: 1) the legislative elections are very important across all examined countries and 2) the candidate selection for the local or regional elections has almost no variation (i.e. there are rare instances in which the central office is involved in).

are addressed by candidates recruited among them. By successfully adapting to specific features of local politics, parties increase their attractiveness to the public and reflect sensitivity to priority issues. The immediate benefit of this to the party is that voters are able to recognize the candidates on the ballot. Through all these procedures parties create more intense and stable communication with the electorate. As a reward, voters may attach long-term loyalty to those parties that show more consideration of their daily problems. These strong and consistent ties with voters allow local party organizations to rely on stable shares of votes irrespective of changes at the national level. Consequently, I suggest that parties selecting candidates for the national elections at the local level are less volatile than the rest.

Along these lines, the autonomy of parties' local organizations makes a difference at the social level and secures minimal electoral stability. Conway and Feigert (1968) identify two types of motivations that prevail at the local level. At urban and suburban levels, ideological motives prevail in making the choice for a particular party, whereas in rural areas, social motivations are salient (e.g. enlarging the field of acquaintances, entertainment in social gatherings, and a feeling of solidarity with members of the community). Territorial party organizations tackle community priorities and transform them into political issues, socializing citizens into the functioning of the party. Local units not only mobilize these orientations, but also act as marketing agencies for the parties, promoting the priorities and leaders publicly (Geser 1999, 11).

CEE is the fertile soil in which such mechanisms can develop. Political parties need stronger connections with the voters. Whereas in most Western European democracies mass mobilization preceded the creation of national party organizations, parties in newly emerged democracies pursued the expansion of their organization after winning the first elections that were based predominantly on elite support (van Biezen 2003, 30). This beginning was followed by the establishment of close ties with the state in terms of financing. As a result, the majority of parties were interested in mobilizing voters *around* elections (Szczerbiak 2001a; Millard 2004) rather than in between them (Rohrschneider 2002; van Biezen 2003; Enyedi 2006a). In this context, party structures on the ground, with decision-making power, may be able to create tighter connections with voters.

The autonomy of local branches can hardly be total as it may negatively influence the coherence of the party. A tightly organized and highly disciplined political party is very likely to behave as a unitary actor in elections and coalition negotiations (Katz 2002, 87). At the same time, parties must send homogenous messages to voters to persuade them to acknowledge the party's the capacity to represent their interests. A party with highly autonomous local organizations can be perceived as a less unitary actor, unable to draft and promote national level policies given the existence of multilevel competition

within the party. In this respect, there is a thin line between rigidity and unity in the eyes of the electorate. The perception of rigidity occurs most often when national organizations dominate the activities of local branches and impose policies that do not mirror citizens' needs. The unity of the party is not influenced if the autonomy of the local branches indicates patterns of competition and cooperation between the decision-making levels in the party. If that is the case, the effect is positive and enhances the idea of intra-party democratic procedures. It also provides the sense of responsiveness to various challenges (e.g. government at the national level, people's needs at the local level). The candidate selection process does not have an impact on the unity of the party. Instead, a centralized selection process indicates rigidity, whereas decentralization of selection creates the foundation for voter loyalty in the long run.

Two supplementary arguments illustrate how decentralized selection of candidates for the national elections can enhance the relationship between parties and voters. First, the electorate is more likely to be familiar with those candidates nominated at constituency level. The enlargement of the number of voices to count in the process of candidate selection – mainly through primaries – allowed political parties in old democracies to strengthen their ties with the electorate (Hazan 1997; Carty and Blake 1999; Pennings and Hazan 2001). In the quasi-total absence of primaries and limited involvement of citizens into politics (Lewis 2000; Weldon 2006) throughout CEE, any attempt made by political parties to bring the selection closer to the voters can be rewarded in elections. By providing autonomy to the local organizations in the process of candidate selection, political parties deliver the message that they care about voters' opinions. Second, politicians usually show the greatest loyalty to the locus that influences their re-election (Pennings 2000). The local selection of candidates is likely to enhance further connections between citizens and elected candidates. Corollary, from the voters' perspective, a nominee at local level increases the chances of occurrence for a "psychological constituency", i.e. the group of people who believe they are represented by the candidate (Katz 2001, 279). Consequently, their chances to rely on a core of voters increase as local organizations have extensive powers in the decision-making process.

Following all these arguments, I hypothesize that:

H1: Political parties with decentralized candidate selection have lower levels of electoral volatility than the centralized political parties.

There are theoretical reasons for which the relationship can be formulated in the opposite direction. Thus, the electoral volatility can generates post-election adaptation strategies that can modify the candidate selection process.

However, the post-communist realities justify the hypothesized direction of the relationship. As it will be shown in the analysis from Chapter 3, the CEE political parties rarely changed their process of candidate selection. Even after major electoral loses, the political parties do not modify the distribution of internal power.

Party Membership

Party members are ambivalently perceived. On the one hand, they are seen as advantage seekers and tiresome demanders who negatively influence the democratic process (Seyd and Whiteley 1992, 1). Their party affiliation is considered as driving towards benefits not available for the rest of the citizens. The nominations in public office based on political criteria are illustrative examples in this respect. On the other hand, party members ensure long standing contributions to the political life, provide campaign (including funding) and electoral support to parties, and constitute appreciative audience for party elites. Party members provide financial support and volunteer work on a continuous basis, not solely around elections. The difference between them and regular citizens resides in their political participation pushed beyond the occasional voting turnout. Apart from fees, party members develop local networks and organizations necessary in elections (Kopecky 2006, 133). They are a valuable pool of resources for recruiting and socializing political leaders (Kopecky 1995). The party organizations act as training grounds where actively involved individuals acquire and develop skills for future political careers. Kopecky (2006, 133) shows how in the 1998 local elections parties with minimal membership in the Czech Republic faced difficulties in active involvement as they were unable to field candidates outside the main cities.

Moreover, party members are the primary source of electoral support for any political party. Although the importance of party membership reached its apogee during the era of the historical mass party (Duverger 1954), contemporary political parties continue to rely on the support of their members in elections. As will be discussed in detail in Chapter 4, even after the decline in party membership in Western Europe (Tan 2000; Dalton et al. 2000; Mair and van Biezen 2001; Dalton 2004), its levels in CEE are still much lower than that of their Western counterparts (Lewis 1996; Bielasiak 1997; Kopecky 2001; van Biezen 2003; Millard 2004; Enyedi 2006a; Spirova 2007; Enyedi and LInek 2008). This low party membership was explained through a combination of contextual elements, communist legacies, and institutional and behavioral components of both the supply (political parties) and demand (voters) sides (Wyman et al. 1995; Mair 1997; Szczerbiak 2001a; 2006; Bozoki and Ishiyama 2002; Innes 2002; van Biezen 2003; Millard, 2004; Deegan-Krause 2006; Enyedi 2006b; Webb and White 2007; Gherghina 2008; Pop-Eleches 2010). In the case of Western European parties, Katz and Mair (1995) identify a fundamental

transformation in the public's sense that parties became associated less with society and more with the state. Thus, the shift from mass to cartel party leads to a lower willingness to attract more members on the part of elites who argue that the costs of extensive membership exceed its benefits. Parties are no longer willing, as Widfeldt (1999) argues, to seek the greatest possible membership.

Post-communist countries never witnessed such a shift given the nature of their formation and the strong ties with the state that existed from the time of their inception. The institutional origins of CEE parties (van Biezen 2003) determined a different dynamic than in Western Europe. Political parties in new democracies have experienced several more phases of development than Western European parties. New democracies feature elite and catch-all party models with no reference to the existence of the mass party in the past (with the exception of the single-party in the previous regime that cannot be a unit of comparison). At the beginning of the post-communist period, parties ignored membership organizations due to the scarcity of time and resources (van Biezen 2003; Millard 2004). Most parties used electoral mobilization, which was faster and easier, but produced contextual and unstable attachments (Mair 1997). The short interval between the negotiations for power transfer and the first free elections did not allow parties to seek membership mobilization (van Biezen 2003, 44).

Additionally, in most of these countries, forced party membership that characterized the previous regime was still fresh in the minds of citizens and new political organizations often avoided calling themselves parties, not to mention asking citizens to become party members. The few exceptions to this were the direct successor parties and the historical revived parties. The latter claimed high membership in Romania and Hungary, with no clear arrangements for party membership (i.e. subscription form, regular fee, etc.) and with most of the members being above 50 years of age at the moment of the first democratic elections. From the beginning of their existence CEE parties used means of communication and technology for direct communication with voters extensively. Moreover, as previously explained, the parties relied on large state subsidies without prior self-funding. All these are reasons for which CEE political parties do not strive for high membership rates. The traditional roles of party members (e.g. to provide financial support) are fulfilled by the state or private donors.

However, there are other reasons for which party membership is relevant in CEE. One of these reasons relates to the creation of a positive image of the party through the active involvement of citizens. In all the analyzed countries, the level of confidence in parties is low (see Introduction). This is partially the result of the anti-party sentiment generated by the previous regime (Kopecky 1995; Mair 1997). Another factor that contributes to this low

confidence is the evaluation of parties on the basis of their poor performance in government and opposition (often perceived as a routine activity with no effective results), corruption scandals, false declarations of politicians pursuing their own interest rather than that of the public (Szczerbiak 2006, 116), and lies. These negative perceptions are fueled by parties' controversial acts, leading to deadlocks. It is a vicious circle in which the initial absence of interaction between the organization and potential members generates adversity and makes further interaction less likely. This is where party members can make a difference. Active involvement in the internal workings of parties may enable some voters to better understand the functioning of the party and to change their negative attitudes.[20] Furthermore, as members interact with other voters, this more positive image of the party can be widely spread.

Furthermore, there is an important linkage to be observed, depicted in Figure 1.2. Party membership can influence the level of electoral volatility. There are theoretical reasons to expect such a relationship. As membership is a long-term commitment, networks of support are likely to have an effect that extends beyond only short-term voting behavior. In this respect, party members fulfill a relevant communication function with regard to voters (mostly from their own network) between elections. Members are the carriers of party message and means of persuasion for those connected to them (e.g. a snowball effect). Member positioning and activity at the workplace and in community allows the party to gradually expand and stabilize a core electorate. They create the premises for political enrolling and education in which citizens expand their regular political participation. Their active involvement in politics leads both to a short-term effect – the mobilization of voters at constituency level during elections and to a medium to long-term effect – the dissemination and maintenance of party loyalty feelings among people from their social networks. The permanent anchoring of the party in society through an intensive activity on the ground has the advantage of mobilizing voters' sympathies in the long run.

This process leads to a stronger bond between the party and voters. Duverger (1954) explains how in Western European countries, parties constructed nation-wide networked membership associations that cultivated political identities and mobilized newly enfranchised populations. With an emphasis on enrolment, political education, and encouraging citizens to extend their political involvement beyond merely voting, these mass parties established concrete links with those they claimed to represent (Widfeldt 1995, 135; Scarrow 2000, 79). The same logic can apply to the CEE context. At a general level, the quasi-absence of mass parties in CEE and high values of electoral volatility indicate a potential linkage. In the dry climate of weak

[20] This logic rests on the assumption that members are happy with their activity in the party.

societal penetration that characterizes CEE, party members can create strong networks of electoral support in society. In this sense, van Biezen (2003, 43) argues that large membership enhances durable relationships with society and supports the party's stability.

The increased use of technology in voter mobilization does not reduce the importance of party members. Even for the electoral professional parties (Panebianco 1988) the active involvement of members is desirable as they can develop stronger ties with the electorate through specific means. Such means include local level activities, voluntary information collection, and campaigns during elections (i.e. enlarging the circle of voters through personal approach, enrolling new members in the youth clubs or door to door canvassing). The party members are the promoters of a social logic of bounded partisanship in which their personal approach is much more influential than other types of communication (Zuckerman et al. 2007). Such an influence is reflected in the intensity of relations as well as in the durability of achieved preferences. The importance of party members increases in the absence of linkages – characteristic to the CEE space – between political parties and other organizations (e.g. church, trade unions). The creation of a large membership organization may narrow the gap separating the CEE political parties from the voters.

At the same time, a high roster of party members sends the electorate a message of popular legitimacy and sets the bases for a party speech of strong ties to ordinary citizens (Dickson and Rublee 2000; Scarrow 2000. 84). Summing up, membership organizations build an image of legitimacy and create societal linkages between parties and members. The direct consequence of this is stronger attachment of the voters to parties and low electoral volatility. In light of all of these arguments, two aspects of party membership are expected to diminish electoral volatility: the size and the constant number of members. The logic behind the size of membership was explained in the previous paragraphs. I expect parties that broaden their membership base to have lower volatility in comparison with the other political actors:

H2a: Political parties with large membership organizations have lower levels of electoral volatility than the political parties with small membership organizations.

In addition to the size of the membership organization, its longitudinal variations can also explain electoral volatility. The above mentioned mechanisms work best if membership organizations are relatively stable over time. Variations in the share of members can create discontinuities in their approach and require extensive effort from the party to accommodate them. Dramatic modifications in the number of members may destabilize the electoral support of the party. A large increase in membership rates can

represent a major boost in electoral support. A severe decrease in the number of party members usually coincides with a loss of votes, as this is a sign of the decreasing popularity of the party. Such changes affect also the social networks created around the party and the recipients of the party message. As a result, constant rates of membership are likely to correspond to stable levels of electoral support:

H2b: Political parties with low variations of membership between elections have lower levels of electoral volatility than the political parties with high variations of membership.

MPs' Renomination

The MPs are divided in two major categories when speaking about their future in the legislature: those who terminate their term in office once new elections are organized and those who get reelected. Incumbent MPs[21] are not reelected for one of the following reasons: they do not want to be, they are not successful in their attempts to get nominated by the party or they are rejected by the voters. The first situation is the effect of a voluntary exit of the MPs from the election process. The second instance can have multiple causes: the incapacity of MPs to persuade the party regarding their potential to gain votes, the desire of the party to leave out compromised candidates, or a party strategy – generated by both endogenous and exogenous factors (e.g. electoral system reform) – to renew the candidates. The third situation implies that unsuccessful candidatures can be the result of a party strategy or direct failure of the MPs to gain support. At the same time, in the case of blocked list PR, the MPs are placed by political parties low on the lists, on non-eligible positions. In such a situation, everything depends on the amount of votes cast for the list; there is not much room for maneuver for bottom candidates to increase their chances. For open list PR and single member district (SMD) voting, the failure to get elected can be justified by the incapacity of the MPs to persuade voters.

Conversely, those who get reelected fulfill all the conditions absent in the previous setting: they strive for reelection, persuade a party to renominate them (and eventually to place them high on the party list), and gather enough votes to allow them to return to Parliament. The analysis from Chapter 3 will reveal a variety of nomination procedures across political parties in CEE ranging from totally decentralized to highly centralized manners. As the overwhelming majority of members of the CEE Parliaments have a political affiliation (Enyedi

[21] At a conceptual level, I follow Norris and Lovenduski' s definition of incumbent (1995, 24) and I include in this category those MPs who run for a seat, under the label of the same party or coalition in which their party is part of, in the subsequent general election.

and Toka 2007), legislative careers are dependent on the support of party leaders either at local or central level. In this context, why would political parties renominate incumbent MPs? There are at least four straightforward advantages - all with positive spillover effects for the supporting parties – that incumbents have over challengers. They derive from the (voluntary) exploitation of the office.

1) The representatives who hold the elective office have access to free publicity through media channels. They are often in the spotlight through organized press conferences and interviews aimed to reveal to the public their policy initiatives. Even conflict situations in which representatives engage with other public officials increase their visibility. The unequal press coverage of incumbents and challengers transformed media in the US in a factor triggering the invincibility of incumbents (Herrnson 2004). Moreover, the television broadcasts of the plenary sessions increase the visibility of MPs, especially of those delivering speeches and working hard.

2) Given the resources they have access to, incumbents bring benefits to their constituencies or at least they can always claim to do so. By adding to this situation the extensive access to media channels we get a picture in which incumbent MPs can promote their image (Fiorina 1977; Stonecash 2008). Moreover, MPs have allowances to travel to their constituency and thus interact with local groups and discuss various perspectives. At the end of the day state funding is used to portray a positive image of the MP (Mayhew 1974; Jacobson 2001) in the eyes of the voters and thus creating a direct advantage against any challenger.

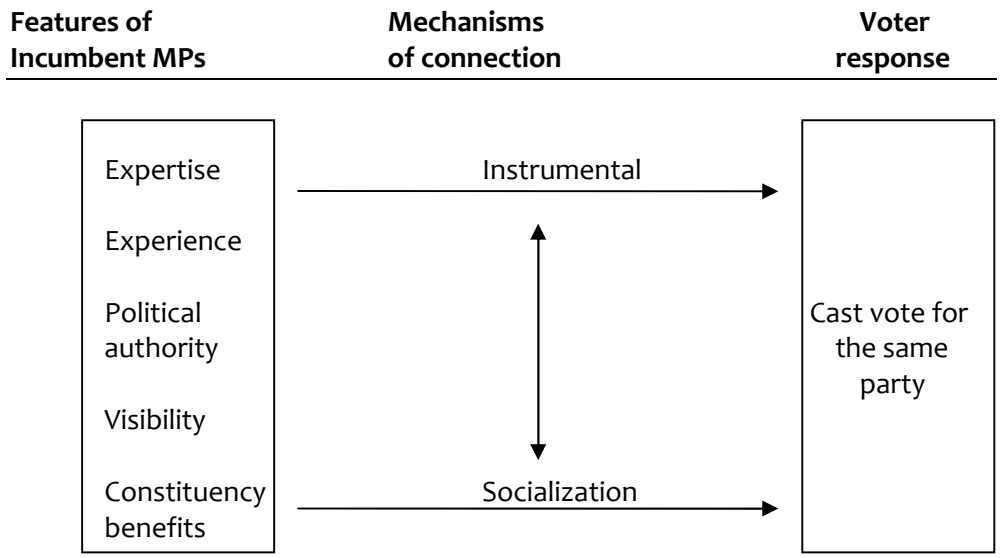
3) On the basis of the MPs experience in office, voters may perceive incumbent MPs as having political authority, status (i.e. influence), and expertise. On the average, incumbents are likely to have higher credibility than the challengers with respect to political issues. Such a situation favors incumbents as elite professionalization appears to be favored by citizens across Western (Cotta and Best 2007) and Eastern Europe (Shlapentokh et al. 1999; Ilonszki and Edinger 2007; Linek and Mansfeldova 2007; Nalewajko and Wesolowski 2007).

4) Incumbent representatives develop fundraising networks (Davidson and Oleszek 2004, 74) and get easier access to campaign donors as they can use their potential influence on legislation and promotion of specific agendas as bargaining leverage (Huckabee 2003, vii). Whereas such a practice is common in the US, there are numerous corruption scandals that involved the CEE MPs in the past two decades having as basis money for campaigns.

As a result of these benefits, incumbents have always had a high success rate versus challengers (Gelman and King 1990; Norris and Lovenduski 1995; Stonecash 2008, 3).[22] These advantages of are not limited to the individuals holding the office but are spilt over the party supporting them. Voters appear to consider candidates mostly as representatives of their parties; they hardly separate between the two even in the electoral systems where a personal vote is expected. Previous research illustrates that the personal vote for incumbents in the UK is modest with most citizens casting their vote for the party (Butler and Cavanagh 1992). Levels of constituency work of individual MPs produce only minimal swings of votes (Cain et al. 1987; Norton and Wood 1990).

The continuity of MPs in the legislative office helps their parties to establish a strong connection with voters and can influence their preferences (see Figure 1.3). There are two interconnected mechanisms of communication.

Figure 1.3: The Schematic Relationship between Incumbent MPs and Voters



First, there is an instrumental role of incumbent MPs who have a great visibility, publicity, and name recognition for the voters. They act as recognizable labels who add a personal dimension to the prior organizational attachment of the voters. The previous section revealed how the individual and party do not represent alternatives for voters but complements. Accordingly, citizens willing

[22] There are also downsides of these advantages. One of them is that safe incumbents pay less attention to the needs of citizens and directly diminish the representation and responsiveness (Fiorina 1973; Poole and Rosenthal 1997; Poole 2003; Griffin 2006). Moreover, the scandals have remarkably little effect on incumbents (Palmer and Simon 2008, 43-44).

to cast their votes for certain political parties – based on their policy/message preferences, voting histories, previous performance – have the additional argument of being familiar with the faces and names of those to represent them in the national legislature. It is more likely for citizens to rely on a familiar face when reaching the final voting decision. Elements such as candidates' charisma have additional benefits to the voting decision in this situation.

Second, there is a process of voter socialization. Through their constituency service, MPs accustom voters with the issue of representation and responsiveness to their needs. Although elite circulation is considered to be positive as it is a source of new ideas and brings legitimacy to the political class (Matland and Studlar 2004, 88), the low turnover can provide stability. This is the case especially in CEE countries that are characterized by low elite loyalty towards their parties. Voters get socialized with the mechanism of direct control over the composition of Parliaments. Apart from the negative effects of high levels of turnover on representation[23] (Andersen and Thorson 1984), numerous changes in the composition of Parliament can reflect political instability. For parties, it reflects the inability to maintain a core of voters where they once had them. Consequently, at organizational level, they are expected to promote candidates in the constituencies in which they were successful in order to maintain if not increase their previous performance. As all analyzed countries use list PR (with the partial exception of Hungary), the key point resides in the list making for elections.

Following these arguments, it is expected to have a situation in which more renominated MPs bring more electoral stability to their parties:

H3: Political parties who renominate more MPs for the legislative elections have lower levels of electoral volatility than those parties who renominate less MPs.

The Analytical Model

The analytical model used to test these hypothesized effects is graphically depicted in Figure 1.4. The main variables – decentralized candidate selection, high and stable party membership, and high rates of re-nominated MPs – are expected to have both an individual and an aggregate effect on the electoral volatility at party level.

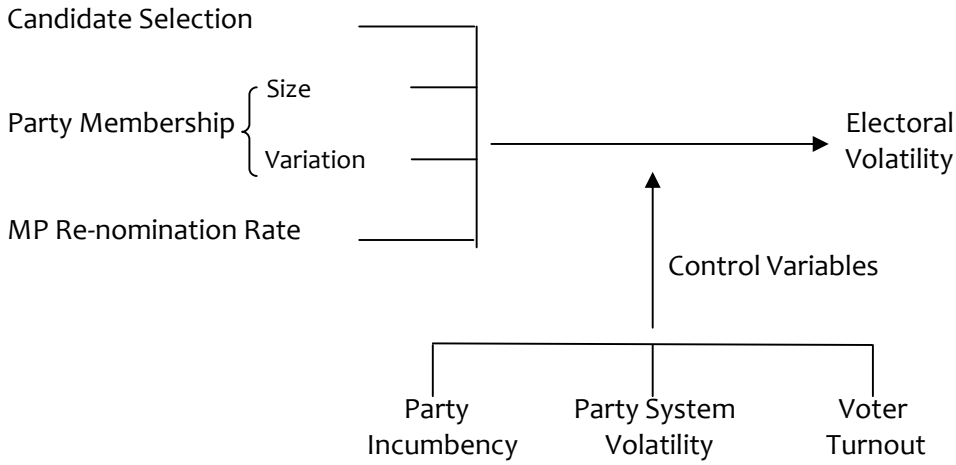
To identify these effects, a two-step research design is used. First, the individual relationships between the independent variables[24] (from the left side

[23] It is not often the case in the analyzed context as the composition of the constituency does not dramatically change in consecutive elections.

[24] The terms "independent" and "dependent" variables do not apply generally to correlations. However, given the direction and the logic of the earlier presented hypotheses, the components of the party organization can be treated as independent variables; electoral volatility at party level is the dependent variable of this study.

of the figure) and electoral volatility at party level are observed with the use of bivariate analyses (correlations). Each of Chapters 3-5 deals with one independent variable[25] focusing on the empirical strength of the relationships, and the cross-country and –party comparisons. In doing so, I aim to provide both general and contextual explanations for observed patterns.

Figure 1.4: The Research Model for Electoral Volatility at Party Level



Second, a multivariate regression model – Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) with robust standard errors – is used for two purposes. Such a model allows capturing the predictive power of each variable for electoral volatility when holding the other variables constant. At the same time, it reveals the aggregate explanatory potential of these variables. The model has the following form:

Electoral volatility = constant + β_1 Centralization of Candidate Selection + β_2 Size of Membership + β_3 Variations in Membership Size + β_4 MP Renomination Rate + μ (1)

On theoretical grounds, I test for the effects of three control variables: party incumbency, party system volatility (referring to the environment in which parties act), and voter turnout. While the effect of all these variables is discussed extensively and tested in Chapter 6, the previous sections have already delved into the possible influence of the government incumbency and voter turnout. The only as yet unexplained variable is party system volatility

[25] There are three components of party organization and four hpotheses due to the fact that party membership can influence volatility through size or variations in size. Accordingly, Chapter 4, dedicated to party membership, tests both hypotheses.

and its interaction with the party level. Two possible effects of the party system on its components (i.e. political parties) may be at work. First, there is isomorphic mimetism (DiMaggio and Powell 1991) or experiential learning. Political parties learn from each other's experience. Once a party manages to stabilize its electorate, its techniques are known by its competition partners and may be imitated. Second, there is competition for a limited number of votes. Irrespective of the number of parties, the number of voters remains approximately constant within a country. As a result, losses for one party quite often imply gains for another.[26] The OLS model including these three control variables has the following form:

Electoral volatility = constant + β1 Centralization of Candidate Selection + β2 Size of Membership + β3 Variations in Membership Size + β4 MP Renomination Rate + β5 Party System Volatility + β6 Voter Turnout + β7 Government Incumbency + μ (2)

Why do the main effects matter over controls? There are both theoretical and empirical reasons that justify such an expectation. A growing body of evidence suggests that voter perception is biased as a result of party or candidate preference (MacDonald and Heath 1997; Wlezien et al. 1997; Nannestad and Paldam 2000; Anderson et al. 2004). The independent variables from Figure 1.4 – corresponding to β1- β4 and in model (2) – emphasize such factors characterizing the relationship between parties and voters. Moreover, the logic behind the hypotheses focused on psychological effects that may determine voting stability. By contrast, the control variables refer much more on formal or mechanical effects that are sometimes unknown to individual voters (i.e. party system volatility or voter turnout). At the same time, the level of measurement is different: all independent variables are measured at party level, whereas this applies to only one out of the three control variables (government incumbency). The other two control variables are systemic and their cross-party explanatory potential is significantly diminished. Accordingly, these variables are likely to shape voters behavior more than the controls that focus more on general aspects of the

Conclusions

There is a great deal of work that has been carried out on addressing the causes of high electoral volatility in CEE. Most of this work focuses on party systems, discussing both their volatile features and determinants of volatility.

[26] Even if I do not consider all the parties in a party system (the sum of the votes of the analyzed parties rarely equal more than 80% of the votes cast), the degree of interdependence between the political parties in a national party system remains considerable.

In this context, there is little systematic analysis conducted at the party level. The first two sections of this chapter presented theoretical and empirical arguments in favor of this approach in CEE. Consequently, the differentiation between party system and party level volatility appears to be an analytical necessity. The third section of this chapter illustrated the limited explanatory potential of macro level factors (i.e. party system level factors) in the post-communist political context. Comparisons across time and countries do not reveal any clearly identifiable pattern; the distribution of volatility appears to be random when those determinants are considered. A similar situation is observed with respect to the factors influencing both the party system and party volatility. There is one exception – voter turnout – which has not yet been explored for CEE and is included as a control variable in the empirical test in Chapter 6.

Thus far, party level determinants have been both theoretically ignored and empirically unexplored in the literature. Most existing studies accounted for exogenous determinants of electoral volatility (e.g. electoral system, degree of democratization, voter turnout, etc.). The arguments presented throughout this chapter converge towards the idea that the causes of volatility may be identified within the party itself. The way in which political parties organize can shape the electoral stability of voters. The three factors advanced as major explanations propose different mechanisms by which variation in electoral volatility can be explained.

Candidate selection refers to the enhancement of strong communication with the electorate and adaptation to its necessities. By providing autonomy to the local organizations in selecting candidates, political parties send voters a message that they are receptive to their concerns. Local candidates are more likely than those selected at the central level to be familiar with constituency problems. Membership organizations can ensure the stability of support by means of the social networks developed by members. In addition to direct communication during electoral campaigns, political parties with established membership organizations can also benefit from the interactions between their members and regular voters in the time period between elections. Moreover, members provide an alternative, more personal approach to reaching out to voters than what is generally used by most parties in contemporary times. The re-nomination of MPs can lead to the idea of continuity and professionalization in the eyes of the voters. As it does so, parties also rely on recognizable candidates; a challenger is less visible than an incumbent.

This new perspective has two major implications. From a theoretical point of view, for the first time party organization is considered to be a predictor of electoral stability. So far, studies have focused on the emergence and types of political organizations (Kopecky 1995; 2001; Roper 1995; Lewis

1996; Szczerbiak 2001a; 2001b; Spirova 2007; Webb and White 2007; Enyedi and Linek 2008) or the effect of party organizations on political performance (Agh 1995; Lewis 1996; Ishiyama 2001). This chapter provides sufficient grounds to justify consideration of party organization – either as a whole or as specific constituent components – as a potential determinant of volatility. In methodological and empirical terms, this perspective proposes the investigation of causes at the level of volatility occurrence. The volatility is the change of electoral support for a party or an electoral alliance/coalition. Accordingly, the process can best be understood through an analysis at this level. The empirical evidence in the following chapters provides insight into the party support dynamics in CEE and reveals great variation in terms of party organization.

Chapter 2 | Electoral Volatility in New Democracies: Conceptualization, Measurement, and General Empirical Results

Introduction

The concept of volatility has traditionally been used to describe the electoral instability of democratic systems in Europe and North America (Blumler 1975). The previous chapter highlighted the existence of a general consensus regarding this process in contemporary democracies, not only in CEE. In this respect, electoral volatility is often conceived of as a feature of the political system. However, in analytical and empirical terms, it refers to the preferences of voters towards political formations – parties and alliances – competing in elections.

Variation in electoral support for parties should exist with no clear threshold for what an acceptable level of electoral volatility is. Nonetheless, extreme variation in electoral support is unhealthy for parties in particular and political systems in general. High levels of volatility are symptomatic of party system instability (Mainwaring and Scully 1995; Blais 2004; Lawson and McCann 2005) and reveal multiple problems: weak political parties that fail to fulfill their functions, absent partisan cues, and limited party roots in society (see Chapter 1). Similarly, the absence of vote shifts reduces incentives for electoral competition, thereby reducing the level of contestation. The quality of representation is endangered in two ways: a) it is difficult for the newly emerged actors to gain access to the redistribution of power; and b) in the context of stable electoral success, the accountability of politicians and parties and their responsiveness to citizens' needs are reduced (Bartolini 2000).

The main research question of this book is addressed from the perspective of political parties. For parties, low levels of volatility are, generally speaking, preferable to high rates of electoral change. Although electoral gains are always welcome, the arguments presented in the Introduction and Chapter 1 indicate that political parties may strive for less electoral volatility as soon as they reach a comfortable position within the system. Parties are deemed to be relatively 'comfortable' when they gain access to the legislature, take part in coalition governments, or play otherwise pivotal roles within the party system.

This chapter is structured along theoretical, methodological, and empirical lines. The first section presents a theoretical discussion of volatility and a purposive argument in favor of measuring electoral volatility at the party level. Next, several methodological issues are discussed pertaining to the

appropriate tool to be used to measure electoral volatility and other methodological choices that are made throughout the book. Finally, the chapter includes multi-layered empirical observations that shed light on the propensity for and differences in volatility across time, countries, and parties.

Differentiating Electoral Change: Voters and Parties

Volatility occurs due to dynamic and inter-related processes registered at the levels of both the party and the electorate. On one hand, one party cannot perform in precisely the same way over time. Sensitive to the context in which they find themselves, parties either adapt to favorable conditions and improve their performance, or fail to exploit their opportunities and lose votes. Due to their inter-temporal nature, elections are fuzzy and long-term contracts between those governing and the governed (Lane 2007, 174). Citizens have only one means of punishing parties for making false promises, namely voting for a different party in the next elections. As they are aware of this pattern, it is rational for political parties to shape their discourse and adopt strategies to convince the electorate of their capacity to represent their interests.

On the other hand, the electorate cannot freeze its preferences. The structure of the electorate changes and, as a direct consequence of the above mentioned mechanism, its priorities change. Apart from natural sources of change in the composition of the electorate (e.g. mortality rates, migration), electoral behavior is also a reaction to the structure of the political space and to the policy proposals made by political parties (Tavits 2008). In sum, change in electoral volatility is triggered by complex embeddedness in the competition space (e.g. composition, strategies, and prior commitments) and electorates' response to it. Within such a framework, we should investigate whether or not electoral change involves different principles at the two specified levels: the voter and the party.

What we refer to as electoral volatility is solely a technical measurement developed in order to assess the intensity and nature of change in political support. As this support is the direct effect of two interrelated forces – one exerted by the voters as principals and the other exerted by political parties acting as agents – electoral change is measured and calculated separately on the demand and supply sides. First, at the individual level, gross electoral volatility refers to the total amount of vote switching in a party system (Crewe 1985a, 9). This measure basically gauges the electorate's loyalty on a continuum with extremes at a situation in which no voters change their preferences in any way, and at an instance at which every single voter behaves differently than they did in the previous election. By focusing on vote shifts at the individual level, gross electoral volatility attempts to explain processes and phenomena within the political system with characteristics of the electorate

and observed patterns like partisan dealignment and a decrease in party identification in mind.

As individual data regarding voter behavior (i.e. election surveys) are rarely available, net electoral volatility is the appropriate proxy by which to measure political change and reflects the aggregate vote transfers between political parties within a party system in subsequent elections. Net electoral volatility is considered to be the measure that can best capture electoral change between two consecutive elections (Bartolini and Mair 1990, 19). The measurement equivalence rests on the assumption that aggregate changes at various levels over time accurately reflect the corresponding levels in individual volatility (Bartolini and Mair 1990, 27).

Furthermore, there is a strong empirical relationship between gross and net electoral volatility, with up to three quarters of the amount of gross electoral volatility being reflected in the measure of net electoral volatility (Lane and Ersson 1997). I have elected to use net electoral volatility as it provides two important advantages. First, by using a systematic measurement, it allows to map and compare variation in support for political parties both longitudinally and across countries. Second, it extends beyond the electorate's values in providing explanations for vote shifts, allowing institutional and contextual factors to be incorporated (e.g. party organization, cleavages, electoral system etc). Following this methodological line, the next section illustrates the difficulties encountered in measuring the concept of electoral volatility and selects out of the three existing methodological alternatives to calculate electoral volatility.

Measuring Electoral Volatility

The longitudinal and cross-sectional design of this research requires an inter-election net volatility approach (Rose and Urwin 1970; Crewe 1985a, 9). This approach reflects the net changes in the vote share obtained by a political party in consecutive elections (Bartolini and Mair 1990, 19). Several formulas are proposed in the literature to calculate electoral volatility, the most widely used by far being the one proposed by Pedersen (1979). Its properties recommend it against alternative calculations (Taagepera and Grofman 2003). Developed at party system level, the Pedersen Index bears one major theoretical and empirical shortcoming when it is applied at the party level. It weights political parties equally, includes only the absolute change in vote share, and ignores the size of the party. Designed to measure net electoral volatility, the index accounts for the difference in received votes, underestimating change for small-sized competitors (the index subtracts the vote share for election t_0 from the vote share received in election t_1). Crewe (1985a, 9) illustrates the way in which a small party that doubles its vote share

from 5 to 10% exhibits sharper volatility when compared to a large party that increases its vote share from 45 to 50%.

The example presented in Table 2.1 is similar. The scores included in the table belong to two randomly selected parties from different countries – the PRM from Romania and the MSZP from Hungary – in all elections in which they participated and simulations for all mentioned formulas are listed. Looking at the difference between the PRM's performance in 1996 and 2000, we observe that in 2000 the party has four times as many supporters (as a percentage of the total voters) as it did in the previous election. However, Pedersen's formula indicates that the electoral volatility of the party is 15. Similarly, comparing the electoral results registered by the MSZP in 1990 and 1994, we observe that its vote share increases three fold. The formula reveals a paradox: although the MSZP's evolution is less spectacular than that of the PRM, the MSZP's volatility is higher than that of the PRM (calculated at 22.1 and 15 respectively).

Table 2.1: Comparing Measurements of Party Electoral Volatility

			Measure		
Party	Election	Results (%)	Rose and Urwin	Pedersen	Birch
	1992	3.9			
	1996	4.5	5	0.6	7
PRM	2000	19.5	5	15	62
	2004	13	5	6.5	20
	2008	3.1	5	9.9	61
	1990	10.9			
	1994	33	7.5	22.1	50.3
MSZP	1998	32.9	7.5	0.1	0.1
	2002	42	7.5	9.1	12.2
	2006	43.2	7.5	1.2	1.3

A similarly striking situation is registered when comparing the PRM's election results in 2004 and 2008 with those of the MSZP in 1998 and 2002. In the case of PRM, there is a decrease in vote share from 13 to 3%, whereas in the case of MSZP, the vote share increases from 33 to 42%. Calculations based on Pedersen's formula reveal that the two parties exhibit similar volatility (9.9 for PRM and. 9.1 for MSZP). In fact, the net difference is indeed similar, but without reporting it relative to the size of the parties, erroneous conclusions may be drawn. For the PRM this difference meant losing approximately three quarters of its previous support and, thus, failing to enter parliament in 2008. In 2002, the MSZP, a large party in Hungary, experienced an increase in support equal to approximately one quarter of vote shares compared to the 1998 elections.

This pattern is suggestive of the situation described in the previous section in which two parties of different dimensions gain/lose a similar number

of votes, but the volatility differs with a higher impact on the small competitor. The index proposed by Pedersen is not sensitive to these discrepancies. This shortcoming is not diminished in the modified version proposed by Neff Powell and Tucker (2010). Their volatility index accounts for the character of shifts in electoral support: type A reflects the shifts caused by the emergence or disappearance of political parties, and type B corresponds to electoral shifts among existing parties. The separate counting of the two types increases accuracy only at the party system level – at which entries and exits are isolated – but does not change the structural problem highlighted above that is inherent to Pedersen's index of party volatility.

The formula provided by Rose and Urwin (1970) almost one decade before Pedersen captures the trend of party support. They regress the vote share received by parties against time in order to calculate the annual change in party support. Although they focus on the party level, their measure has two major shortcomings that render it inappropriate for use as a calculus of electoral volatility at the party level. On one hand, the formula is not sensitive to modifications in consecutive elections, but detects long-term trends. The examples in Table 2.1 reflect this situation: both parties have the same score in every electoral year. On the other hand, the measure yields errors even when calculating the long-term trend. Following the figures provided in Table 2.1, the average volatility of the MSZP is larger than that of the PRM. The index appears to be sensitive to electoral performance rather to its differences and indicates that the larger party bears higher volatility. In reality, the opposite is true.

Birch (2001) calculates volatility in a relative manner, reporting the difference in vote shares relative to the total votes received by the party in both elections. This measurement eliminates the problems inherent to the other two measures, and accurately describes fluctuations in party support relative to its vote share. For example, the measurement correctly shows that an increase in vote share from 4.5 to 19.5% (PRM in 1996 and 2000) is similar to a decrease from 13 to 3.1% (PRM in 2004 and 2008). Moreover, it reveals that *the* MSZP has a more stable electorate than *the* PRM and shows that the highest volatility of the former is significantly below the highest electoral instability of the latter. Intuitively, and consistent with electoral results, we assert that *the* PRM is more unstable that *the* MSZP, a claim that is revealed by this formula. One more advantage of this measure is that allows for comparability. Unlike Rose and Urwin's index that is biased towards stability of low-performing competitors, Birch standardizes differences that occur at the party level by using party support as a reference, thereby making the scores comparative.

All these arguments favor the adoption of the formula proposed by Birch:

Formula (1): The Electoral Volatility at Party Level

$$V_j = \frac{|V_{t1} - V_{t0}|}{V_{t1} + V_{t0}}$$

V_j = party *j* electoral volatility,
V_{t0} = the share of votes obtained by party *j* in election *t0*,
V_{t1} = the share of votes obtained by party *j* in election *t1*.

Electoral volatility is calculated for the second chamber or for the entire legislature whenever this is unicameral. Data are compiled from various sources, most of these sources being electoral databases and handbooks. The next section complements the methodological information and provides details on case selection, units of analysis, and time period.

Methodological Choices

The most important methodological choice for the analysis employed throughout this book pertains to the selection of parties. In my study, I include those parties that simultaneously satisfy the following two criteria: 1) gained seats in at least half of the legislative elections under study; and b) ran in elections and gained seats in parliament at least once on an individual basis (i.e. without relying on electoral alliances or coalitions). The first criterion is intended to isolate the political actors without electoral appeal – those consistently failing to obtain seats – or those political parties with sporadic or contextual presence in the legislature. In all such instances, volatility is either difficult to calculate or overestimates the electoral stability of the political parties. For example, a political party that obtains 1% of the votes in elections across two decades exhibits low volatility. At the same time, the party in question has low public appeal and little if any relevance to the political system. The second criterion aims to capture electoral support for individual parties. As the book focuses on party-level volatility, and due to the fact that elections in CEE are characterized by numerous electoral alliances and coalitions (see Chapter 3), electoral support for *specific* parties is a key analytical component.

Does this selection process influence the results? As is the case with every methodological choice, the application of these two criteria has a certain impact on the empirical analysis. However, this impact is minimal and does not systematically bias results for at least two reasons. First, the analysis includes almost all parties with a relevant voice in domestic politics during the post-communist era. Quite often, support for the political parties under scrutiny adds up to more than 80% of the vote share in national elections. There are only

three political parties/organizations – NDSV in Bulgaria, LPR in Poland, and PNTCD in Romania – that actively participated in the government of their countries and are not included in this analysis. NDSV and LPR do not display continuity of representation in half of the elections, whereas PNTCD does not fulfill the criterion of running alone in elections.[27]

Second, as Table 1 (in the Introduction) illustrates, for most countries the number of parties included in the analysis is a good approximation of the average number of parliamentary parties present during the entire post-communist period. On these grounds, concerns regarding biased results are not justified. The criteria do not distort the universe of observed cases. Instead, the criteria were designed to limit the analysis to the most relevant political parties and to shed light on their development. Moreover, from a methodological perspective, limiting the analysis to the parties that fulfill these criteria allows for more reliable measurement of volatility. The electoral evolution and stability of political parties with a prolonged presence in parliament and the ability to mobilize voters on their own can be traced without further problems.

Calculating volatility in CEE is not limited to the mathematical operations outlined in Formula (1). Numerous party name changes, splits and mergers, entries to and exits from the legislature, and the formation and disentanglement of electoral alliances are major challenges that precipitate several coding decisions. First, party name changes raise problems only when they are the result of splits and mergers. If political parties change their name in order to become more appealing to the voters or do so following a merger with a minor party (see below), there is no direct influence on the calculus of volatility as the succession can be clearly established. For example, not much changed with the FIDESZ in Hungary in 1995 when it decided, following poor electoral results one year before, to add the Hungarian Civic Party MPP to its name. Similarly, the HZDS in Slovakia made a strategic decision in 2000 to add "People's Party" (LS) to its name. This was done in an attempt to achieve increased membership in the European People's Party (Henderson 2008). However, when a name change is accompanied by more dramatic alterations such as a change in leadership or organization, there is no continuity and parties with new names are considered to be new parties altogether.

Second, frequent splits and mergers complicate the calculation of volatility. In general, for party mergers, splits and name changes, the guidelines of Bartolini and Mair (1990, 311) are followed. For party splits, they mention that "when a party splits into two or more parties, the relevant electoral volatility is computed by subtracting the combined vote of the new parties

[27] PNTCD competed on individual grounds in 1990 when no electoral threshold was in place and thus obtained parliamentary representation.

from that of the original party in the election immediately preceding the split". When parties merge, the vote for the new combination is compared to the combined vote of the merged parties in the previous elections. Given the complicated picture in CEE, I have developed a few specific coding rules that address these issues in a consistent manner. If a party splits after elections t_0 and one party is the clear successor (e.g. maintains party leadership, label, or organization), this party is not considered to be a new party at t_1 and volatility can be calculated in this case. Difficulties occur, however, when a party splits and there is no clear successor party. In this case, I consider the electoral support at t_1 to be a reference indicator.

This can be explained in practical terms as follows, Party A splits after the elections t_0 and the resulting parties are B and C. If B scores very low in the t_1 elections – much lower than expected after the split – and C has electoral success comparable to that of A, then C is the direct successor of Party A as it has maintained existing voter support. In this situation, Party B is considered to be a newly emerged party. One further example helps to illustrate this point. Following the Civic Forum's clear victory (more than 50% of the vote share) in the 1990 Czechoslovak elections, the movement split into four parties to contest the subsequent 1992 election in the Czech Republic. Out of these, ODS was most prominent, gaining 33.9% of the votes. The three remaining parties obtained more modest results: the Civic Democratic Alliance (ODA) achieved 5%, the Civil Movement 4.4%, and the Club of Engaged Non Party Members 2% (Neff Powell and Tucker 2010, 11). According to my coding scheme, the ODS is the successor of the Civic Forum, whereas the other parties are new.

If the resulting Parties B and C have similar electoral strength after the split, I consider both B and C to be successors. In this case, volatility is calculated by dividing the electoral result of A at t_0 into equal shares. One example illustrates the appropriateness of my choice. In Romania, the National Salvation Front (FSN) split in 1992 and the resulting parties were the National Salvation Front (FSN, later PD) - that inherited the label, office, and the central organization of the original party – and the Democratic National Salvation Front (FDSN, later PDSR, and from 2001 PSD) that retained most of party elites and local branches of the initial party. Thus, both splinters had advantages with FDSN winning the next election, and the new FSN finishing third.

With respect to mergers, there are two possible outcomes: the continuation of old parties with new partners under a common label, or the emergence of a new party. My coding is best illustrated in terms of the example of the t_1 election with the t_0 election as a reference point. A merger at t_1 is considered to be a continuation when it takes place between one party that won parliamentary seats in the t_0 elections and a minor party that was either recently created or performed poorly in those elections. The party that resulted after the merger is considered to be the continuation of the larger party

irrespective of the label adopted. Accordingly, the calculus of volatility includes the electoral result of the larger party at t_o. Quite often, the change of party's name as a result of a merger is a good indicator of the impact of the merger (i.e. large parties do not generally change their name when merging with small parties). One exception to this observation is represented by the PSD that emerged in 2001. Prior to that date, there existed two different parties: the PDSR – the successor communist party – and the PSDR, a revived socialist party. PSDR only contested elections on its own in 1990. After this point, it joined various alliances: the CDR (with other three parties) in 1992, the USD in 1996, and an alliance with the PDSR in 2000. The PSDR's electoral support is, thus, not high and therefore the result of the merger – PSD – is the continuator of PDSR. A party is coded as newly emerged at t_1 if it results from the merger of two or more parties gaining parliamentary seats after the t_o elections.

Third, the reported national election results in CEE always include the category "other" (Neff Powell and Tucker 2010, 9) which makes tracing the records of political parties more difficult. The most common problem is related to those parties that win parliamentary seats in election t_1 – and thus pass the electoral threshold – without being registered on the results sheet in election t_o. Are these parties newly emerged? Or did they have such a low score at t_o that they belonged to the "other" category? The analysis of party histories plays a crucial role in answering these questions. The documented birth and evolution of CEE political parties (Lewis 1996; Szczerbiak 2001a; Kopecky 2001; Bugajski 2002; Millard 2004; Szajkowski 2005; Spirova 2007; Webb and White 2007; Szczerbiak and Taggart 2008) reduce this uncertainty and help distinguish between newly emerged parties that did not participate in the t_o elections, and those existing parties that obtained poor results in those elections. With this in mind, volatility can be calculated accurately when the emergence and trajectory of political parties is known.

Fourth, electoral alliances and coalitions are also problematic for the calculus of volatility. The simplest situation exists when the parties forming an alliance specify the number of seats allocated to each party after elections. For example, the FIDESZ and the KDNP contested the 2006 elections in Hungary as an alliance with a clear division of their mandates. The difficult cases are those in which there is no reference made to the share of votes divided among the constituent components of the electoral alliance or coalition. I use two techniques to reduce the distortion produced by this type of situation and to limit the shortcomings generated by lack of data. Both techniques involve a comparison between the votes received by the alliance or coalition and those received by its constituent parties in the previous election. I weight the parties forming an alliance differently based on the share of votes they received prior to the electoral alliance or coalition formation. For example, if Party A receives 10% of the votes in the t_o election and forms an alliance in the t_1 election with

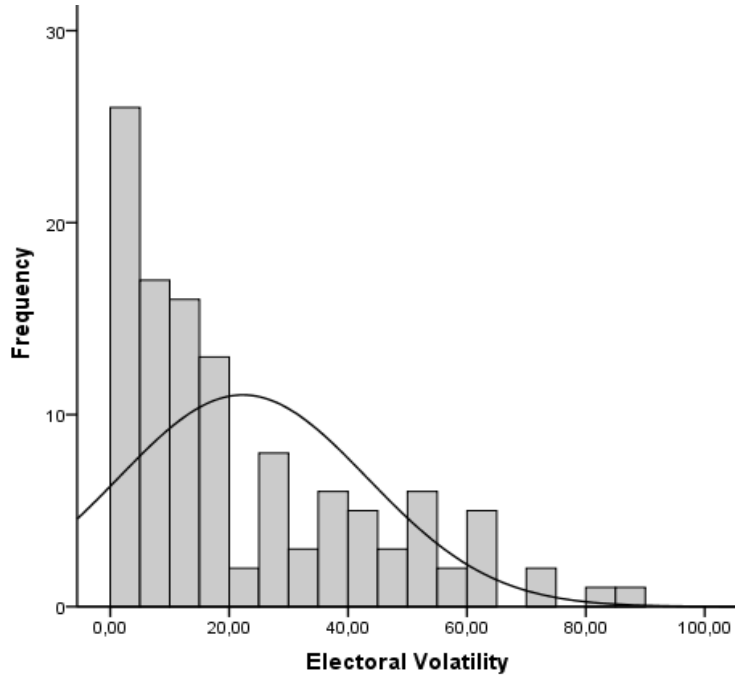
three other parties – extra-parliamentary at t_0 – and this alliance obtains 15% of the votes, the credit for this result goes to Party A. In a theoretical instance such as this, the electoral support for this party did not change dramatically between t_0 and t_1. If, on the other hand, there is an alliance of parties that were not in parliament at t_0, I weight all the members equally. All these decisions are based on the assumption that an alliance is the sum of the votes of its constituent parts, although this is not true all of the time. In this case the electoral potential of the alliance is ignored to better approximate the results obtained by individual parties.

This logic also covers those cases in which political parties join an electoral alliance or coalition between two elections contested on an individual basis. In other words, in those cases in which the parties compete alone at t_0, join the alliance or coalition at t_1, and contest alone again at t_2. The procedures explained in the previous paragraph apply irrespective of our knowledge about the ratio of votes belonging to each party within the alliance or coalition at t_1. The t_2-t_1 volatility presupposes the application of a symmetric principle to the one described for parties entering a coalition. In this case, I compare the votes of the parties exiting the alliance or coalition at t_2 with those at t_1.

Mapping Volatility in CEE

How volatile are the CEE political parties? Figure 2.1 plots the simple frequency distributions of electoral volatility across the national legislative elections held in the six investigated countries for a period of almost two decades (N=116). The vertical axis refers to the number of observations and the horizontal axis refers to the percentage of party-level volatility. In line with existing studies carried out at the party system level, the histogram indicates that CEE parties are quite volatile: the average electoral volatility is 22.30% and the standard deviation is 20.98. The figure illustrates that this is the result of a moderate clustering of parties around the mean – the modal outcome is in the 0-5% array – rather than the outcome of outlying elections. The positive skew (1.07) and platykurtic (0.32) distribution reinforce this observation, indicating that the mass of the distribution is concentrated on the left side of the volatility spectrum, with a wider peak around the mean and relatively few high values. The universe of observations is not very homogenous. The value of the standard deviation indicates a moderate dispersion of the values. At the same time, the range of volatility is quite broad: the minimum value is 0.11% and the maximum is 89.21%. There are indeed isolated instances in which volatility exceeds 70%, but one fifth of the observations falls within the 40-60% category in terms of volatility.

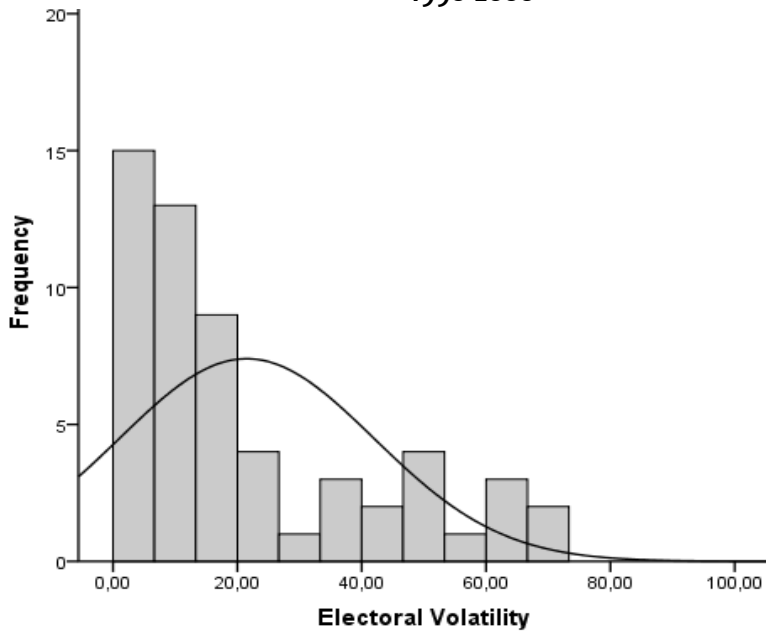
Figure 2.1: The Distribution of Party Level Electoral Volatility in CEE (1990-2008)



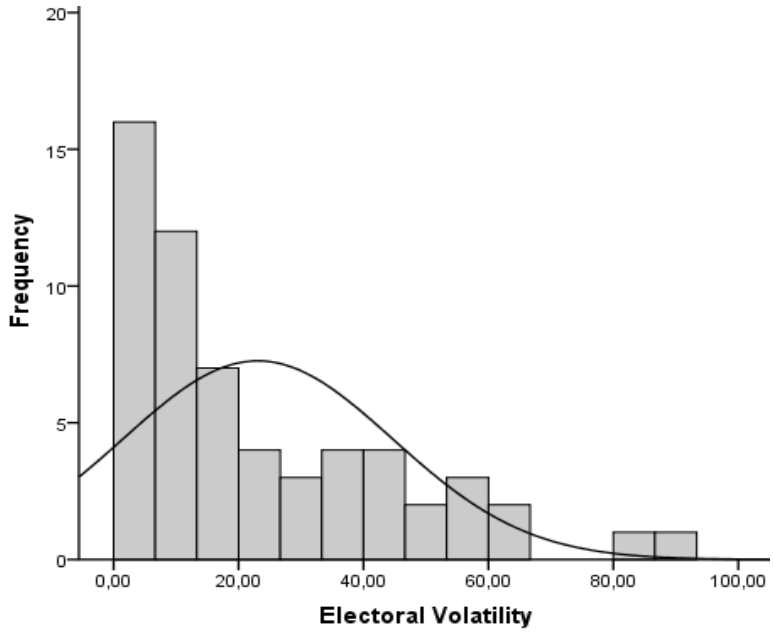
Previous research at the party system level provides mixed evidence with regard to the development of electoral volatility over time. There are a few studies that explain how electoral volatility diminishes after initial elections and how the system stabilizes with time (Agh 1998; Lewis 2000; Tavits 2005; Toka and Henjak 2007). However, other works show oscillations in the evolution of volatility as opposed to indicating the existence of a decreasing trend (Sikk 2005; Enyedi and Casal Bertoa 2011) suggesting that time has no effect on the stability of electoral preferences. Constructed on axes similar to those in the graph above, Figure 2.2 presents the distribution of electoral volatility in the two different post-communist decades to examine whether volatility is modified after a few elections. The distribution on the left side belongs to the 1990-2000 period, with three elections for most of the countries (four in Romania). The distribution on the right corresponds to the 2001-2008 period. Although in temporal terms the first appears to be more extensive, the number of cases is slightly higher in the second (i.e. 59 vs. 57). This is due in large part to the presence of three Polish political parties as of the 2001 election.

Figure 2.2: The Distribution of Electoral Volatility per Decade in CEE

1990-2000



2001-2008



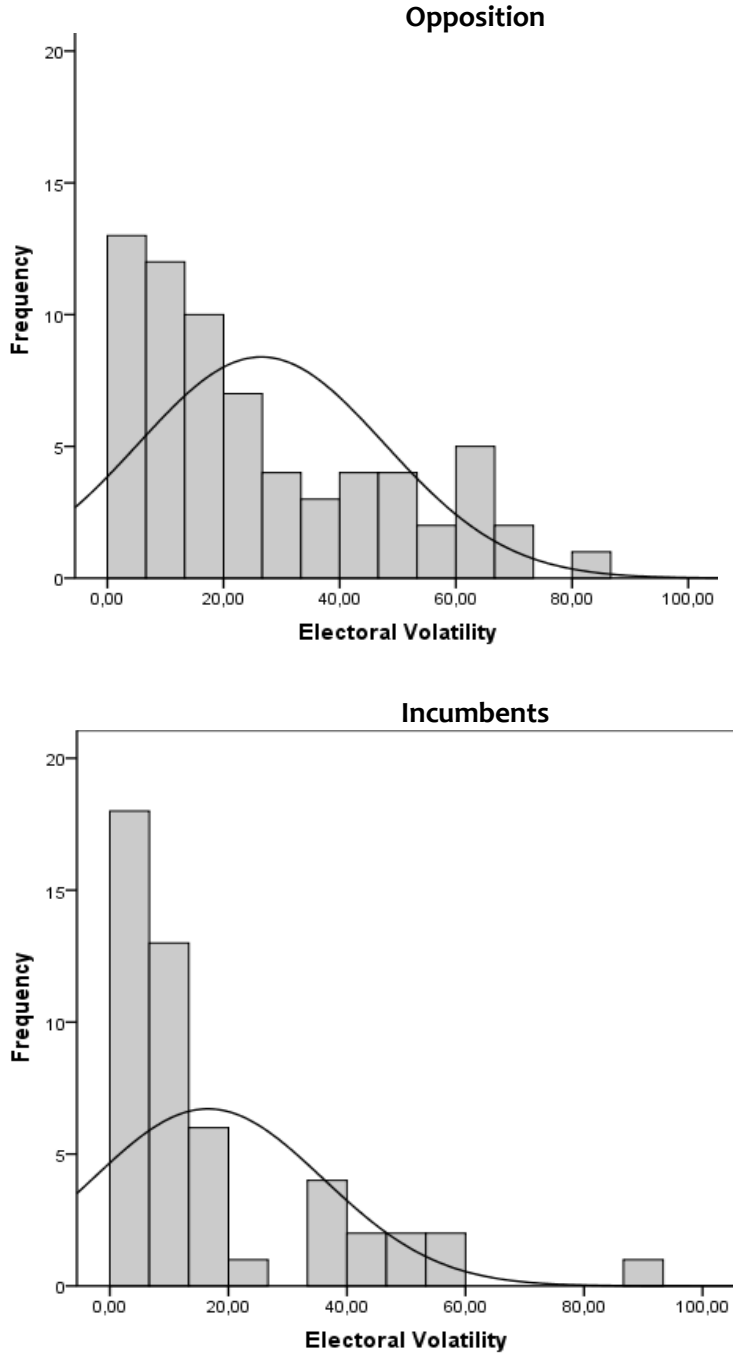
At the party level, there are no relevant differences between the distributions across the two decades. Their averages are similar, being slightly smaller in the

first decade (mean = 21.50, standard deviation = 20.49) compared to the second (mean = 23.07, standard deviation = 21.60). The absolute minimum of volatility among the CEE parties is registered in the first decade (0.11%). However, volatility in the second decade has a comparable minimum at 0.24%. The maximum volatility for the first decade is 70.86%, whereas in the second the absolute maximum in terms of volatility values is registered at 89.21%. Overall, the average, standard deviation, and range of volatility indicate that in the first elections political parties in the six examined countries were slightly less volatile than in the second. Both distributions are right-skewed and platykurtic – with similar values – indicating a concentration of the values around the mean with few values approaching the upper extreme of the volatility range. The visible difference between the two distributions is the existence of more parties above the 60% volatility level in the second decade as opposed to the first. This produces the longer tail of that specific distribution. To conclude, time has no substantive impact on the electoral volatility of the CEE political parties.

For those parties in government before the elections, their activity represents a relevant component of the voting decision (see Chapter 1). Incumbency is expected to influence the volatility of political parties and, as such, is included as a control variable in this analysis. This effect is bidirectional: incumbents are rewarded for their accomplishment and punished for the failures.

With regard to whether or not this is the case in CEE, Figure 2.3 compares the distribution of opposition and incumbent parties across all countries for the entire post-communist period. At a glance, there are three visible differences between the two distributions. First, there are fewer incumbent parties (49) than those in opposition (67). This observation is not surprising given that in most multi-party systems only a few parties form a coalition government, whereas the rest are in the opposition. Second, the distribution of opposition parties takes more values, whereas the incumbent parties mainly cluster within two areas: 0-20% and 35-60%. This situation corresponds to the reward and punishment principles outlined above. On one hand, incumbent parties with satisfactory results gain voters' confidence and, as a result, their volatility remains low. Theoretically, volatility can also increase if a party in government does very well and is able to attract voters who did not support it before. Empirically, this is not the case in CEE.

Figure 2.3: Comparison of the Distribution of Electoral Volatility for Opposition and Incumbent Parties



The high levels of electoral volatility for all incumbent political parties resulted from a loss and not from a win of support. On the other hand, the incumbent parties that fail to deliver what they promised produce a change in voter preference and, as such, their volatility increases. Third, on the basis of the previous observation, there are more incumbent parties that benefit from loyal electorates (i.e. that experience very low levels of electoral volatility) compared to the opposition parties. Approximately half of the incumbent parties are situated in the 0-10% array of electoral volatility, whereas only one quarter of the opposition parties share those values.

The statistical indicators support these observations. The mean volatility for opposition parties is approximately 10% higher that that of the incumbent parties (26.51% vs. 16.54% respectively). The averages tell different stories: opposition parties have modal values around the mean (standard deviation = 21.23) and incumbents cluster in two broad categories to the left and to the right of the mean (standard deviation = 19.41). The lower average of the latter is the result of strong clustering towards the left side of the volatility continuum. In line with this, the minimum value among the incumbent parties is the smallest among the universe of cases (0.11). The more homogenous distribution of the opposition parties is also visible in terms of the range of values: it is 82.42% in their case and 89.10% for the incumbent parties; the incumbent parties have both the absolute minimum and the maximum values.

One final difference is observable with respect to the peak of the distribution. The opposition parties have a platykurtyc distribution (0.42) that is flatter than a normal distribution, with a wider peak and a probability for extreme values that is less than it would be for a normal distribution. For the incumbent parties, the distribution is mesokurtic (2.98), which is a normal distribution in that respect. Both distributions are right-skewed with most values concentrated to the left of the mean with extreme values towards the right. Consistent with the above observations, the value of the skewness is higher for the incumbent parties (1.72) than for those parties in the opposition (0.78). This indicates a greater tendency of the cases to be positioned to the left of the mean. In a nutshell, incumbent parties are, on average, less volatile than opposition parties. At the same time, incumbent parties lack moderate volatility clustering, particularly in the lower or high arrays. One possible explanation for this is that these volatility values may correspond to the reward and punishment attitudes of the voters.

This brief description of the electoral volatility distribution in CEE – and ways in which time and government incumbency shape it – revealed general tendencies visible across countries and parties. The following sections narrow the scope of the discussion and focus on the other two aspects of my analysis: a) country differences examined in terms of volatility distribution and extreme

values; and b) cross-party comparisons conducted in light of their average volatility and elasticity (i.e. a concept used only in this chapter).

Country-Level Similarities and Differences

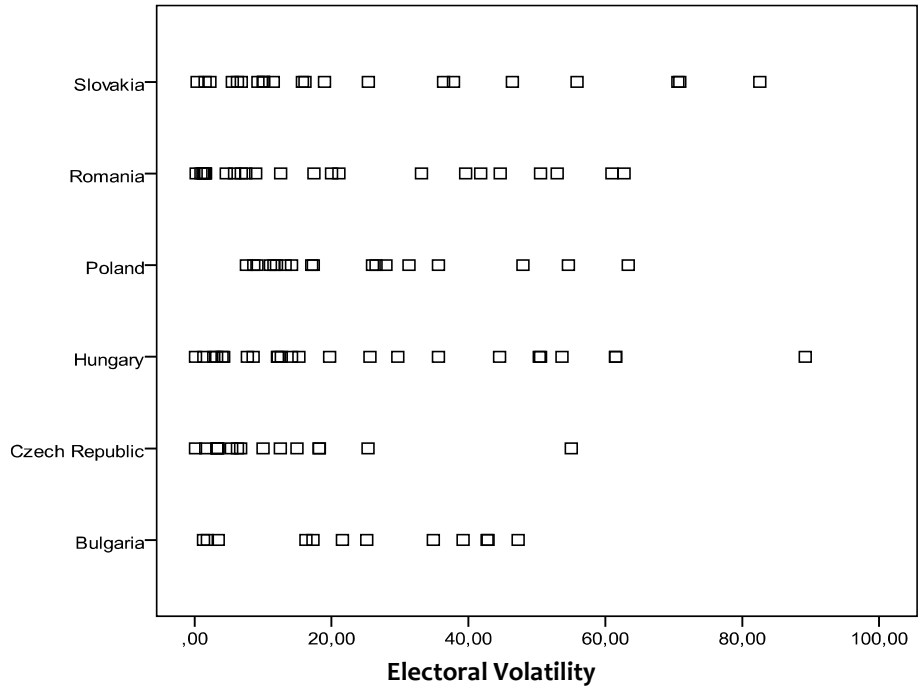
The cross-national focus of this section complements the longitudinal distributions examined so far. Figure 2.4 reflects the clustering of volatility: each square represents the electoral volatility (on the horizontal axis) characterizing a political party in one election. The similarity of all those clusters is consistent with the graphical representation in Figure 2.1. The majority of CEE political parties, irrespective of the timing and country in which they compete, have large volatility arrays. There are at least two major observable differences between the countries, all relevant in the process of understanding the electoral diversity of the CEE region. First, even among the least volatile parties (i.e. those included in the 0-20% category), the starting point and dispersion of volatilities are country specific. In four out of the six countries, there are political parties with volatility close to absolute zero. The Bulgarian and Polish parties are a bit further away from this extreme value with minimums of 1.3% and 8.6% respectively. These same two countries have the lowest density of political parties with low volatility, whereas the highest density is observed in Hungary and Romania. At the same time, the Czech Republic has the highest percentage of its total number of political parties clustered in this low range of volatility (only two values are above 20%).

Second, the homogeneity of dispersion and the maximum values reached by electoral volatility differ across countries. Hungary and Slovakia have the broadest dispersion, and are also the only countries in which political parties register the highest values of electoral volatility above 80%. Apart from the Czech Republic, the countries with the most homogenous distributions are Bulgaria, Poland, and Romania. The shape of these distributions, however, differs. The Bulgarian political parties are divided into three categories that cluster around certain increasing values of volatility: a small group situated around 3%, a larger group around 20%, and the largest group around 40%. The Polish political parties have a similar distribution, but the categories of party clusters are reversed: most parties are positioned around the 15% value, slightly fewer around the 50% value, and the smallest cluster resides close to 65%. One further difference when compared to the situation in Bulgaria is that the categories get closer in terms of value towards the upper extreme of the volatility spectrum. Romania has two main groups of parties – those with low volatility (up to 20%), and those with high volatility (more than 40%) with no values in between.

The visualization of these distributions is complemented by descriptive statistical indicators that confirm these country differences. With the exception of the Czech Republic, which has an average volatility of 11.73% (consistent with

its clustering described above), the mean electoral volatility over all countries is very similar (around 25%). However, the mean does not tell us much without considering the standard deviation. The values of the latter support the earlier observation that Hungary and Slovakia have the highest dispersion of volatility as their standard deviations (around 25) greatly exceed those of other countries. Furthermore, the range of volatility values reaches its peaks in these two countries, at 89.10% in Hungary, and 82.21% in Slovakia. The next country, Romania, follows far behind at 62.50%. Bulgaria has the smallest volatility range (45.97) followed by the Czech Republic (54.88). This confirms the existence of a homogenous sample of parties in both countries. It is relevant to note that without an outlier situated at close to 60% volatility, the Czech Republic would have by far the smallest range with a difference of about 25% between the maximum and minimum volatility. The similarities between the distributions in Bulgaria and Poland are also visible when reporting the indicators of central tendency: there is a striking similarity in terms of averages (24.48 and 24.17) and standard deviations (16.88 and 16.78). However, the observations based directly on the graph were better suited to highlight differences in the clustering (i.e. the categories around certain values).

Figure 2.4: Clusters of Electoral Volatility at Country Level



Summing up, the distribution of electoral volatility across countries indicates a few notable similarities and differences. First, there is a general tendency of

most parties to cluster in the area between 5-40% electoral volatility. Extreme values of volatility – both minima and maxima – are quite rare. Second, the countries pair up in terms of the range of volatility or shape of dispersion. At the same time, differences are identified along the same lines. Even in those instances at which general resemblances are noticeable, a closer look reveals various patterns. Following this line of reasoning, it is useful to analyze the political parties with extreme volatility (both low and high) from these countries. In doing so, I use their average volatility calculated as the mean electoral volatility in all elections in which these parties competed between 1990 and 2008.

Table 2.2 includes these values and provides an indication of the average range of electoral volatility at the party level in CEE countries. These extremes (i.e. the least and the most volatile party in every country) reflect general differences between the observed cases. For example, Poland is characterized by small discrepancies between the parties situated at the ends of the volatility continuum, but their electoral volatility values are high. By contrast, Slovakia widens the gap between the volatility extremes. Furthermore, the least volatile Polish party has higher values than the most volatile Czech party, but Hungary and Slovakia have parties that are more volatile than the most volatile Polish party.

Table 2.2: Extreme Averages of Electoral Volatility in CEE Countries

Country	Political Party / Formation	Average volatility (%)
Bulgaria	DPS	17
	SDS	31
Czech Republic	KDU-CSL	9
	CSSD	18
Hungary	SZDSZ	11
	MDF	45
Poland	PSL	22
	PO	32
Romania	UDMR	3
	PRM	30
Slovakia	KDH	5
	SDL	75

In fact, the parties that exhibit extremely high volatility in Hungary and Bulgaria are not (or are no longer) major political actors. For example, the MDF did not gain access to the 1998 legislature, and the SDS in Bulgaria continuously lost ground in national politics. Two observations can be made on the basis of this general data. On one hand, the level of volatility at the party level is rather high

and partially consistent with previous research that identifies such trends at the party system level in the region. Moreover, the most volatile party in the entire region, the Slovak SDL is no longer in parliament. In the most recent election (2006), SDL did not compete individually as it merged in 2004 with Direction – Social Democracy (SMER which was initially a faction of SDL). On the other hand, consistent with the observations made previously in this section, electoral volatility has a high degree of cross-country variation.

According to the data presented in Table 2.2, there are three types of parties that exhibit the least electoral volatility. First, ethnic parties, with their clearly targeted appeal and focus of representation, stabilize their electorate quite well in two out of the three countries in which they can be found in CEE. The Turkish minority party[28] in Bulgaria (DPS) and that of the Hungarians in Romania (iUDMR) count on a quite consistent body of voters, with the UDMR being the most stable in the region. Its average volatility of 3% is, in large part, the result of a relatively constant share of votes – very closely reflecting the proportion of Hungarians in Romania – in all the elections irrespective of the turnout. This evidence suggests that ethnic Hungarians mobilize to a similar extent as ethnic Romanians. Second, there are two Christian-Democratic parties that appeal to rather stable electorates in the Czech Republic and Slovakia. Third, successor parties display divergent paths: they are the most stable in Hungary and Poland, and the most volatile in Slovakia in which the successor party is the most volatile from the party system.

This apparent discrepancy (i.e. the variation in success of successor parties) can be explained by a taking a closer look at cross-country political developments. Comparative analyses indicate that the ex-communist parties in the region generally followed the path of "pragmatic reform" (Ziblatt 1998) and/or made a "nationalistic-patriotic" maneuver (Bozoki and Ishiyama 2002). The first strategy refers to the invocation of the Western social democratic tradition and called for "a sort of pro-capitalist policy 'with a human face'" (Bozoki 1997, 56; see also Sitter 2002). Given their inability to pursue classical redistributive social-democratic policies alongside market-economic transformation, the regenerated communist heirs dressed up their tactics into "the catchy but empty slogans of competence and modernization" (Bozoki 2002, 6). As such, the key issue of their election campaigns became the exclusive claims to political experience and technocratic expertise in administering market restructuring more sensitively and effectively than any (supposedly novice and inept) competitors. Ultimately, this strategy amounted

[28] Due to constitutional provisions, in Bulgaria DPS is not referred to as a "political party"; in Romania, UDMR also avoids the term of party, using instead the term "alliance". However, both political entities fulfill the functions of parties as defined by Sartori (1976) and, as such, the term party is used to refer to both in this work.

to the neo-liberalization of the communist successor parties which tended to pay off for those that managed to radically and credibly reorganize into European social democratic parties into "competent arbiters of change" (Hough 2005, 5). The most notable cases in this regard are the MSZP in Hungary and the SLD in Poland. The achievement of these parties had a positive impact upon the stability and clarity of at least their side of the political spectrum.

However, the successor parties in Bulgaria and Romania (BSP and PSD) are seen as the least compelling examples of communist regeneration. Rather than turning wholeheartedly towards social democracy, these parties "transmuted", or moved away from their leftist traditions and drew nearer to the cultural right, nationalist angle of politics (Bozoki and Ishiyama 2002). Their "patriotic" line of adaptation was not so much the reflection of deep ideological commitments, but rather an opportunistic (and largely successful) attempt to retain power by means of dispersing populist propaganda and making concessions to ultra nationalistic formations. (Pop-Eleches 1999, 132) This tactic amounted to a lethargic and largely simulated transition that essentially sabotaged economic reform and party system consolidation, thereby relegating Bulgaria and Romania to the trenches of progress in the CEE region.

As for the right-wing actors in Central and Eastern Europe, they seem to have opted for a programmatic fusion of (neo-)liberal and various conservative elements in order to gather electoral support and assert themselves in the political arena (see Hanley 2000). The most remarkable case is that of the FIDESZ in Hungary, which capitalized on the fragmentation of the right in the country by forming strategic party alliances and absorbing smaller organizations into a broad and durable block. In stark contrast, the tragic narrative of the Solidarity Electoral Action (AWS) in Poland resulted in the disarray of the right, characterized by a great deal of party fragmentation and almost continuous new arrivals on the political stage (e.g. LPR, PIS, or SRP).

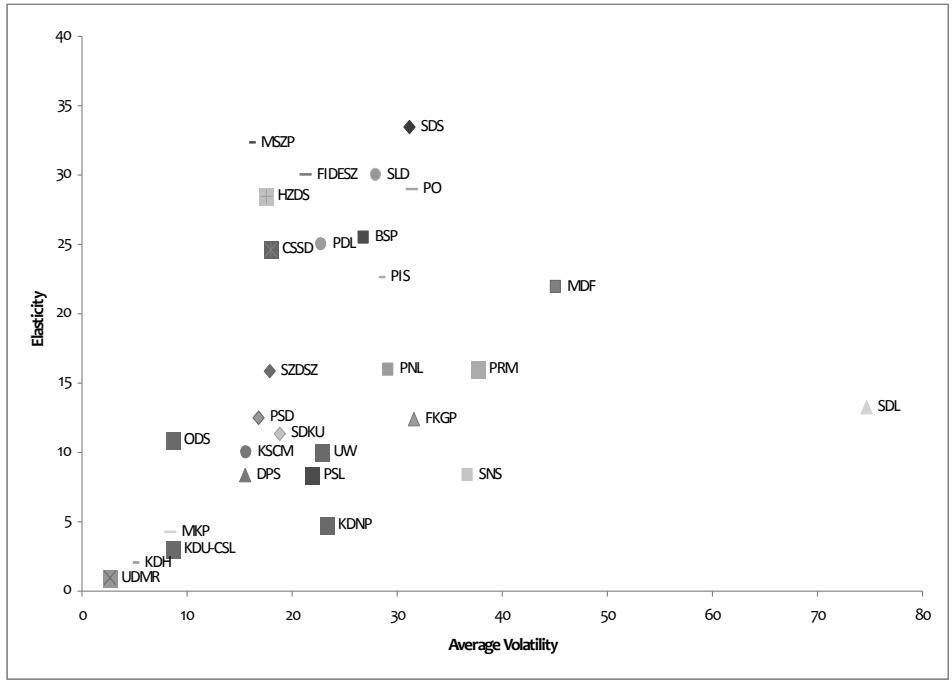
Cross-Party Comparisons

The extreme values displayed in Table 2.2 provide the basis for useful comparisons at the country level. In narrowing down the scope of this analysis, supplementary information is necessary. In this respect, a map of all analyzed political parties in the region helps to sketch an accurate picture. In this respect, the longitudinal distribution of volatility presented above is complemented in this section by a bi-dimensional graph that both illustrates the positioning of political parties relative to one another – revealing commonalities and differences – and particularizes the analysis by associating labels with specific values. The bi-dimensional space consists of the average volatility calculated for some parties in Table 2.2 and a second dimension used

only in this chapter for a general electoral mapping of the CEE parties, namely vote elasticity. Calculated on the basis of the formula proposed by Rose and Urwin (1970), vote elasticity is the difference between the highest and the lowest vote share received by a political party in all the legislative elections in the period under scrutiny. The vote elasticity can also be seen as a function of the size of the party. The measure emphasizes the homogeneity of voters for a specific political party. A measurement such as this accounts only for the difference between extreme performances in all elections in which a party competes (unlike volatility that refers to consecutive elections).

In light of this, a party with stable electoral support scores low both on elasticity (i.e. the vertical axis) and average volatility. Figure 2.5 draws a complex picture in support of previous observations according to which UDMR and KDH benefit from stable electoral support and are thus positioned in the bottom left corner of the graph. At the other extreme, SDL in Slovakia is situated towards the upper right corner, indicating high volatility and elasticity. Before delving into the details, a methodological and an empirical observation deserve attention. Methodologically, there are two parties with similar levels of volatility and elasticity: KSCM in the Czech Republic and DPS in Bulgaria.

Figure 2.5: The Distribution of CEE Political Parties based on Average Volatility and Vote Elasticity



On empirical grounds, there is higher variance on the volatility dimension compared to vote elasticity. The figure depicts a variance in elasticity of up to 34% (SDS in Bulgaria), with more than 60% of parties being clustered below 20%. However, on the volatility scale, the maximum score is 75 and the cut-off point for half of the parties is somewhere around 30. The more homogenous distribution in terms of elasticity is also indicated by the maximum point on the graph (40) compared to that of volatility (80). This variance increases for volatility when analyzing the volatility of electoral cycles. The figures and graphic representations in this section are aggregated and refer to averages and extremes only. More of this diversity is revealed in the following chapters in which the formulated hypotheses are tested.

According to Figure 2.5, CEE parties can be clustered into four different categories. The first category consists of parties with very low volatility and very low elasticity. These are the competitors that are best able to mobilize a stable core of voters across time. Two of these parties were referred to extensively in the previous paragraphs (UDMR and KDH). The other two are the MKP and KDU-CSL. All of the parties in this category are relatively small and, in terms of their electoral performance, obtain an average of 8-9% of the total vote share. It comes as no surprise that this category includes all the ethnic parties as they have a clear target group and convey messages that appeal to a stable core of electorate. Chapter 1 concluded that in CEE cleavages have in general a weak explanatory power regarding the electoral volatility. Whereas such a claim is valid for the broad universe of cases, this first cluster of parties represents an isolated situation in which the ethnic cleavage is a particular explanation for the level of electoral volatility.

However, the cleavage explanation does not cover the Christian-democratic parties. All of them with the exception of the KDU-CSL were unsuccessful in a series of elections, some of them failing to access the legislature over several elections (e.g. KDNP in Hungary). The KDNP secured a rather stable share of votes in the first elections (6.5% in 1990 and 7% in 1994), but it dropped to half of this share in the subsequent 1998 and 2002 elections as its message was taken over by major parties in Hungary. If the KDNP had continued along the same line it did in the first electoral competitions, its score would have placed it in the category of low volatility (elasticity is low).

The second category, which includes more parties, is characterized by low to average volatility and elasticity. The two parties situated in the proximity of the cluster are the KDNP and the ODS. Similar in terms of ideology to two of the parties placed in the first category, the ODS has low volatility and high elasticity brought about by a decrease in support in 2002. One of the two large parties in the Czech Republic, the ODS is one of the least volatile in the region, situated at the same level as the KDU-CSL on this dimension. In fact, the rest of the ethnic and Christian-democratic parties are located within this category,

thus strengthening the argument that their appeal is precisely targeted and usually mobilizes specific voters. The rest of the parties in the category cluster homogenously, with the SZDSZ in Hungary being the most elastic of all.

The third category is comprised of those parties with average volatility and high elasticity. It is a less homogenous category than the previous two and includes most major parties in the region: the BSP in Bulgaria, the CSSD in the Czech Republic, the MSZP and the FIDESZ in Hungary; the PO and the SLD in Poland, the PDL in Romania, and the HZDS in Slovakia. Overall, the major parties can be expected to have higher elasticity for at least two reasons. On one hand, most of these parties were small at the outset and gradually became larger. Thus, the difference between the initial and most recent scores is great. On the other hand, those parties that started out large (e.g. BSP) experienced sudden drops in electoral support.

The fourth cluster of countries is heterogeneous and is characterized by average elasticity and high volatility. It includes parties that, with the exception of PNL in Romania, have failed at least once to gain access to parliament. The average value of elasticity indicates that these parties perform similarly in electoral terms, but the high volatility reveals the more important characteristic these parties share: they are rather small parties that occasionally register very good electoral results. Both parties that fail to enter parliament after 2000 – FKGP – reside in this category. In fact, counter-performance such as this triggers high levels of volatility, irrespective of the homogeneity of a party's range of electoral results.

One final relevant point revealed by Figure 2.5 is related to the dispersion of parties within the same party system. There are rare occasions on which parties from the same country follow similar patterns. In Poland, the PO, the PIS, and the SLD reside in the third category. In Romania, the PNL and the PRM reside in the fourth cluster. In the vast majority of cases, political parties from the same country perform differently on the two dimensions, revealing once more the need to study them closely in order to fully understand the dynamics at work. In this respect, the most illustrative case is that of the PSD and the PDL in Romania. These parties emerged after the 1991 split within the FSN (i.e. the umbrella organization that played a major role in the 1989 regime change). Their development over the course of two decades differs significantly. The PSD registers stable levels of support and keeps the discrepancy between its best and worst performance to a minimum.

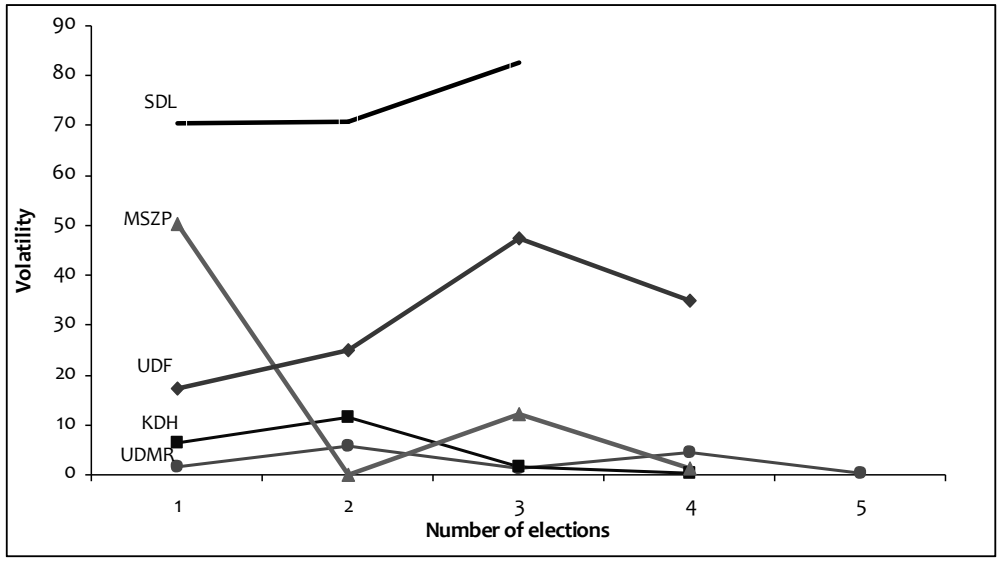
Unlike the PSD, the PDL ran in elections in multiple coalitions (only in 2000 and 2008 it run on its own) and its performance varied greatly. With average results in the first three elections, the party became larger as of 2004 and managed to maintain relatively stable core of voters (although it performed more poorly than PSD). The real difference between the two parties can be expressed in terms of elasticity: the PDL oscillates between the 7% it

received in 2000 and the 32% it received in the most recent elections. Conversely, the PSD has a narrower interval of electoral support (21.5% in 1996 and 24% in 2004).

The Role of Extremes within Party Systems

As a final point, the emphasis has been placed on specific cross-party differences derived from Figure 2.5. In doing this, the five parties positioned at the extremes of the volatility and/or elasticity axes are selected and their development between elections is briefly analyzed. Beginning with volatility trends, the parties with extreme values are examined from the perspective of the role they play within party systems. The observation of trends in volatility implies a return to the initial calculations based on formula (1). Throughout this book, the unit of observation is the political party/election and – unless specified as in the previous sections – the analysis employs calculations at that level. Figure 2.6 traces the evolution of levels of electoral volatility (Y axis) for each party in consecutive elections (X axis)[29].

Figure 2.6: The Outliers' Development in terms of Electoral Volatility



Note: The elections included on the horizontal axis refer to 1994, 1997, 2001, and 2005 in Bulgaria; 1994, 1998, 2002, and 2006 in Hungary; 1992, 1996, 2000, 2004, and 2008 in Romania; 1994, 1998, 2002, and 2006 in Slovakia.

[29] The numbers on the horizontal axis mark the election in which volatility is calculated. Thus, the number 1 corresponds to the second election in which the party competes.

The selected parties are the UDMR and the KDH[30] (low elasticity and electoral volatility), the SDL (medium elasticity and high volatility), the MSZP (low volatility and high elasticity), and the SDS (medium volatility and high elasticity). Given the profiles of these parties, their volatility trends are expected to differ considerably. Figure 2.6 confirms this expectation with the two least volatile and elastic parties having low volatility values with little variation across time. At the other extreme, SDL has consistently high levels of volatility. With the exception of the first period (between election one and two on the graph), the intermediary cases of the MSZP and the SDS display similar volatility trends at various levels. The following paragraphs attach meaning to these values and tendencies and explain the role played by these political parties within their systems.

UDMR is the high performer of the CEE region in terms of volatility and elasticity. Formed on the same day on which the Ceausescu couple was sentenced to death and executed –Christmas Day, 1989 – the UDMR refers to itself as an alliance rather than a party. In practice, this is connected not so much with anti-party feelings amongst citizens, but with the institutional origins of this political actor. It initially included sixteen different parties and associations that were able to preserve their status inside UDMR. This was made possible by the internal organization of the party which grouped local caucuses into autonomous county[31] branches (Bugajski 2002, 865).

The party statute granted decision-making power to the local branches. The common denominator between all component entities was that they ran under the same label, proposing a unitary list of candidates in the national legislative elections. With a message focused on the representation of Hungarians in Romania, this party consistently gravitates around 7% of the vote share. The quest for a legal framework in which collective rights for national minorities would be secured determined the UDMR to seek inclusion in government coalitions. Its stable electorate allowed the party to play a pivotal role in Romanian politics. After two terms in opposition (1990-1992 and 1992-1996), as of 1996, the UDMR either took part in government coalitions with various partners or maintained a "silent agreement" with the minority cabinet (2000-2004). Its party discipline, capacity for adaptation, and loyalty to the government coalition[32] transform it into a reliable partner. Thus, with the

[30] The two parties are selected because they have similar average volatility and electoral elasticity scores.

[31] The county is the main territorial-administrative unit of Romania, it corresponds to the constituencies in the legislative elections.

[32] UDMR joined the government coalition led by CDR between 1996 and 2000. When its term of office was close to an end, one of the coalition partners (USD) defected and CDR created a minority government relying on the suport of UDMR. A similar situation, with more or less the same actors, was recorded in 2007 when PD (half of USD) left the coalition government created

exception of the extremist PRM, most parties are willing to take UDMR on board when forming governments.

This pivotal role of the UDMR is made possible by permanent discourse adaptations. The goal of UDMR to represent the interests of the Hungarians both from the perspective of their particular ethnic background and ideological perspective (Bugajski 1994, 18) provides room for maneuver. The party was always a mixture of radicals and moderates and experienced ongoing internal disputes. Although the leaders of the party were generally moderates, the beginning of the UDMR's existence was marked by radical action that was largely a response to the nationalist acts on the part of Romanian leaders. For example, in 1992 an autonomy manifesto of the Hungarian minority was launched as a response to the anti-Hungarian measures adopted by the mayor of Cluj-Napoca (Bugajski 2002, 868). This is the main city in Transylvania in which Hungarians make up almost one fifth of the population. These internal divisions characterized the party throughout the entire post-communist period, but no defections were recorded (Millard 2004, 136). Although the moderate approach granted the party access to coalition governments, workable compromises between internal factions became more difficult to achieve as the party became a solid pillar of the Romanian party system. The party has made slight modifications to its discourse in recent years in response to numerous signals that it would lose votes to a more radical faction to be formed within the Hungarian minority (i.e. the Hungarian Civic Forum) (Gherghina and Jiglau 2008). The achievement of internal balance cleared the path towards low levels of volatility in elections.

Similar to the UDMR in terms of elasticity and average volatility, the KDH shows a stability pattern only as of the third election in which it participates. The curve in Figure 2.6 indicates that these two parties follow paths similar to that of the UDMR at a lower level of volatility. The party garners more electoral support than the UDMR, with results around 8.5% of votes in elections with a peak in 1994 at which point it obtained 10% of votes. Founded in 1990 by a Catholic dissident from the communist era, the party combines the tradition of Slovak pre-WWII political Catholicism and the ideology of Western European Christian democracy (Szajkowski 2005, 527). Based on this close connection with Christian Democratic parties around Europe, the party was a strong supporter of the European and Atlantic integration project throughout the 1990s (Bugajski 2002, 308; Henderson 2008, 286). In the second post-communist decade, the Catholic ideological roots of the party gave rise to conditional support for the EU, and the contention that accession should be accompanied by active involvement. For example, in 2003

with PNL (part of CDR back in 1996) and UDMR. The latter two parties supported a minority government that finalized its term in office without early elections.

KDH supported a motion in parliament on the sovereign right of EU member states to decide on cultural and ethical issues (Haughton 2004b).

In organizational terms, the KDH faced two relevant splits that weakened its appeal to voters. This is particularly true in that the most recent split took place in a period of electoral apogee. Two years after its formation, in the aftermath of the 'velvet divorce' from the Czech Republic, a nationalist faction split from the party (Bugajski 2002, 306-307). The second split took place in the wake of the 1998 elections at which point disagreement between two leaders of the KDH about the future of the party within the Slovak Democratic Coalition (SDK) led to the separation of the Mikulas Dzurinda faction which led to the creation of a new party – the SDKU. The most recent split partially explains the KDH's shift in ideology during the second decade. Its orientation towards conservatism and soft Euro-scepticism was meant to provide a contrast with the attitudes of SDKU (Henderson 2002, 2). In spite of splits, ideological changes, and relatively low electoral support, the party remained a consistent actor on the Slovak political scene. Its electoral stability coincided with the KDH's reliability as a partner in all coalition governments in which the HZDS did not take part, as the two political actors were in fierce opposition. Thus, the KDH was in the coalition government after the 1998 and 2002 elections.[33] In 1998, they led the broad five-party coalition and provided the prime minister in the person of Dzurinda, whereas in the latter they left the government at the beginning of 2006 due to an international dispute between Slovakia and the Vatican over a religious issue.

As a successor of the Slovak Communist Party (KSS), the SDL inherited extensive membership[34], nationwide organizations, and a recognizable label. Its popularity has suffered from dramatic oscillations, transforming the party into the most volatile in CEE. Without outstanding electoral results (see the low level of elasticity in Figure 2.5), this party did not manage to maintain a stable core of voters between elections. Its evolution is characterized by high oscillations: achievements in terms of voter support were immediately followed by major drops in support and electoral success emerged after a disappointing performance. What were initially good results in 1992 (14.5%), were followed by a drop in the subsequent 1994 early elections to half of that share. However, in the 1998 elections, the party gained a similar amount of votes to those it gained in 1994. After the second major drop in 2002 (1.4% on common lists with two other parties), SDL merged with another political party

[33] KDH also took part in one government before the disintegration of Czechoslovakia and its leader, Jan Carnogursky was prime minister between 1991 and 1992. For details, see Henderson (2007, 287).

[34] In 1991, SDL decided to initiate the re-registration of members and, as such, dropped from an initial amount of more than 100,000 inherited members to 20,000 volunteer members. For details, see Bugajski (2002, 298).

(SMER), losing its label and identity. This drop was produced by the major split of a moderate faction led by Peter Weiss and Milan Ftacnik who formed the Social Democratic Alternative (Szajkowski 2005, 532).

Although it is one of the few Slovak political parties with consistent presence on the political arena next to the HZDS and the KDH, high electoral instability is only characteristic of the SDL. At the same time, it is the only Slovak party among the three that did not safeguard a key role in the political evolution of the country. It was included only once in a government coalition following the 1998 election at which point it achieved its highest electoral performance, and an invitation to engage in a cooperation agreement with the Meciar government towards the end of its second term in office. This situation was mainly the result of consistently lower antipathy shown towards HZDS by the elites of SDL compared with the other opposition parties (Deegan-Krause 2006, 104). Although this agreement to support a minority government was not enforced (Pridham 2002), it highlights the SDL's susceptibility to blackmail at that particular moment, very close to their 1998 electoral peak. Although the average electoral performance of SDL is higher than that of KDH, the trends they exhibit in the context of Slovak politics differ considerably. Ideology can play an important role in explaining these trends, but it is quite unlikely to be the key explanatory factor in this case as both the SDL and the KDH have broad views that should allow for coalitions with multiple competitors. At the same time, the SDL was not marginalized and the KDH did not display a coherent ideology throughout the investigated period. There is definitely an association between the roles in Slovak politics and electoral volatility: the more involved KDH benefited from a stable core of voters and could thus continue its activities at comparable levels across elections.

From the same category of successor parties as the SDL, the MSZP tells a different story. It is the successor of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party and it is one of the two large parties in Hungary. With low electoral volatility, the party has high electoral elasticity due in large part to the results of the first post-communist election in which it attracted only 10% of votes. As the average vote share received in the second election (1994) was around 35%, the volatility is large only at the beginning and drops again by the third election. This situation is reflected in Figure 2.6. From that moment onwards, the MSZP's volatility level can be compared to those of the UDMR and the KDH. The party formed a coalition government in 1994-1998 as well as in the most recent two terms in offices (2002-2006 and 2006-2010). Recent scandals involving the president of MSZP, and then prime minister, Ferenc Gyurcsany, revealed lies and manipulation during the electoral campaign. As a result, their coalition partner (SZDSZ) withdrew and the MSZP formed the first minority government in Hungary that lasted until April 2009 at which point Gyurcsany resigned and

the new prime minister, an independent, Gordon Bajnai, was supported by the MSZP and the SZDSZ.

The MSZP is the political party that transformed the Hungarian political life into a play with two main characters. It shaped three out of five governments until 2010, won every election but the initial ones (in 1998 it did not govern though it obtained the highest share of votes and number of seats), and represented a significant governing alternative in the form of a major opposition party during the FIDESZ government in 1998-2002. MSZP encapsulates, on a relatively constant basis, the preferences of more than one third of the electorate. Its presence in the party system coincides with the consolidation of a broad electorate.

The SDS was founded in December 1989, as a union of 11 political organizations in opposition to the Communist government (Bugajski 2002). Its composition changed immediately afterward and, in 1990, six more parties were incorporated (Waller and Karasimeonov 1996). In February 1997, SDS transformed into a single unified party. The 1990s were the years of glory for the party that reached its peak in the 1997 legislative elections at which point a coalition called United Democratic Forces (ODS) was formed around the SDS. The coalition government remained in power until 2001 and represents the only time at which SDS took part in government. During these two decades, the SDS ran only once in elections without coalition partners (1994) and their volatility is quite high. Moreover, as its scores oscillated heavily, the difference between its worst and best performance is very high and that is why the SDS is positioned at the extreme in terms of elasticity in Figure 2.6. Its support in the first three elections (1991-1997) is situated around 33%, whereas in the most recent two elections its vote share decreases to 10%. This discrepancy is reflected in the shape of the volatility curve that increases between the elections in which SDS lost a large proportion of its voters (1997 vs. 2001) and stabilizes at both ends (1991 vs. 1994 and 2001 vs. 2005). Once a major actor in Bulgarian politics, SDS consistently lost ground and succeeded in entering parliament only by joining new electoral alliances or coalitions.

This sub-section primarily illustrates the important roles played by the five parties that register extreme values in terms of volatility and elasticity within their respective party systems. Most of these parties are relevant political actors participating in coalitions and represent more than marginal forces on the political scene. However, there are a few visible differences between them with substantial implications in terms of volatility. There is a positive association between the importance of a party to the party system and electoral volatility over time. Given the dual nature of such a relationship in which volatility can be either the cause or the effect of importance within the party system, no cause-effect conclusions can be derived. Nevertheless, this systematic observation indicates that neither volatility nor importance is

influenced by the level of electoral support. Both the highly popular MSZP and the specifically-oriented UDMR shape the political environment decisively through their involvement in a number of government coalitions. In general, the more volatile parties participate in coalition governments less often. Most of the time, these parties are in opposition, although their ideology allows them to collaborate with other political actors.

Conclusions

Can volatility be measured only through individual-level voter changes? The answer to this question is negative. Relying on theoretical arguments from the literature, the first section of this chapter explored the reliability of an indicator that accounts for the aggregate change in votes in consecutive elections. At the same time, unlike previous research conducted the party-system level, this chapter argues in favor of the necessity of calculating volatility with the primary unit of political representation (the political party) as the reference point. In doing so, there are a few methodological choices that must be made in terms of the relative measurement of vote shifts and the identification of political support for individual actors following splits, mergers, or an electoral alliance formation and disintegration. In addition, the focus on individual parties requires the estimation of changes in electoral support relative to the size of the party.

The descriptive analysis presented in this chapter justifies the analytical endeavor in the four chapters to follow. There exists great variation in electoral volatility across countries and parties. Aggregate and party-level data (Figures 2.4 and 2.5) reveal important differences between political actors in terms of electoral support. In this setting, time does not influence the stability of voter preferences. This empirical evidence supports the refutation of the democratization argument presented in Chapter 1. The time passed from the moment of regime change means the achievement of democratic performances for these countries. Moreover, it coincides with an important component of institutional democratization – the experience of free elections. As post-communist citizens were deprived of the right to choose their representatives for more than five decades, their behavior was expected to be chaotic at the outset and stabilize over time. This is not the case with the parties included in this analysis. The distribution of volatility in the two post-communist decades is very similar with a slight increase in the number of stable voters in the first rather than the second decade.

Government incumbency appears to make a difference with respect to voter preferences. This observation allows for the formulation of two propositions. On theoretical grounds, voters appear to behave in a manner that is consistent with the reward or punish strategy with regard to incumbent parties. In empirical terms, incumbency may explain certain variation in party

volatility and its inclusion among the control variables is justified by these general findings. The cross-party differences, although calculated here on the basis volatility means and electoral elasticity, encourage the quest for an explanation of their dispersion. Furthermore, the analysis of the outliers revealed an association between high levels of volatility and importance of the party in the context of the political system of the country. These are the general premises on which I design and conduct the empirical tests to identify the impact of specific features of party organization on electoral volatility.

Chapter 3 | The Centralization of Candidate Selection Process and Electoral Volatility

Introduction

Political parties are composite organizations with multiple purposes that range from self-preservation to the implementation of policy preferences (Rose and Mackie 1988). Most of the times, such purposes are not exclusive but rather complementary. Their prioritization in the life of a party depends on the opportunities and constraints coming from the external environment (e.g. competition, electoral system) and internal developments (e.g. splits, mergers). To ensure its survival, the party organization seeks to stabilize and control both dimensions (Panebianco 1988, 12). In doing so, the biggest challenge for political parties is to identify the means to stabilize their most salient external feature: the electoral support. Irrespective of parties´ priorities, votes are the necessary precondition for achieving other goals (Sartori 1976, 25; Budge and Keman 1990, 10; Laver and Schofield 1990, 36-38); they are also essential for parties´ political survival. In this respect, parties seek to avoid loss of electoral support that will remove them from scene.

Hence, they behave as agents of electoral mobilization occupying a relevant position in the social flow of political communication (Hucksfeldt and Sprague 1992, 70). The instrumental dilemma is how parties communicate with their voters. Poguntke (2002, 45-48) identifies two possible ways in which the party-voter relationship can be established. First, there is a direct communication of the party leaders with the electorate through the mass-media and, more recently, Internet. The main mechanism can be summarized as follows: party leaders are aware of individual citizens' preferences and promise responsiveness in exchange for their votes. This direct linkage between leaders and electorate faces numerous challenges (e.g. issue saliency decided by elites) and bears multiple uncertainties (e.g. low levels of confidence towards party leaders). Second, the communication is mediated by own (e.g. youth organization, local branches) and ancillary organizations (e.g. trade unions, Churches). These intermediaries are meant to aggregate the multitude of individual wishes into coherent demands to be sent to the party elites. Party organizations play a much more important role in the mediated linkage compared to external organizations. Although the internal life of parties becomes increasingly complex (Kitschelt 1989; Heidar and Koole 2000; Rahat and Hazan 2001; Deschouwer 2006; van Houten 2009) and the political parties' organizations are quite heterogeneous (Katz and Mair 1994), the usage

of internal mediators is more likely to be controlled than external organizations that may attach no party loyalty.

Parties can benefit greatly from an organizational communication with the voters. As explained in Chapter 1, tighter connections with the electorate are possible through the party structures on the ground. Voters can be encapsulated through active local party branches, formally organized, and with decision-making autonomy within the party. If local organizations receive substantial powers within the intra-party procedures they will be able to channel the societal demands and give them priority. One of the most important decisions within the life of a party, visible to voters, is the candidate selection for national elections. This can have an effect on the electoral volatility; the formulated hypothesis (H1) specifies that political parties with a decentralized selection of candidates for the national elections coincides will have lower levels of electoral volatility than the parties with centralized selection of candidates.

The first section conceptualizes and operationalizes the centralization of candidate selection and explains the methodological choices. The second section compares the formal provisions regarding candidate selection identified in the statutes with the reality observable in CEE. The third section presents and discusses the general situation in CEE, emphasizing the distribution of political parties across the categories of candidate selection. Next, I discuss the results of the statistical analysis and present the party specific candidate selection. The chapter ends with a section dedicated to a detailed discussion of two political parties. These illustrate how the relationship between candidate selection and electoral volatility functions.

The Conceptualization and Operationalization of Candidate Selection in CEE

The intra-party decision-making generally refers to the overarching distribution of power within party organizations. Its importance is revealed from early assertions. Eldersveld (1964, 4) argued that political parties were poorly organized and did not posses any of the conventional systems of a bureaucracy, lacking division of roles, discipline, and sanctions. Two decades later, Gibson et al. (1983, 198) identified the necessity of political parties to have strong organizations. The two criteria used to assess the strength were the organizational complexity (i.e. the existence of enduring headquarters operation) and the programmatic complexity (i.e. the engagement in various activities related to their electoral targets). Panebianco (1988) developed the criteria and explained how the development of the central party organization may represent a key element for survival. Parties with bureaucratic organizations are able to better channel their messages and ensure consistent means of elite recruitment. The development of national offices does not

reflect only the concentration of power, but also the capacity to divide the labor so that the tasks are efficiently performed.

The key issue is who takes the decision and to what extent the central office (i.e. national level) controls the regional and local levels in conducting politics, thus enforcing its decisions on sub-national organs (Harmel and Janda 1982, 59-60). The selection of candidates is a crucial indicator for the internal party democracy (Gallagher and Marsh 1988, 1). Given its importance and the numerous problems that may occur (i.e. internal conflicts), it is likely to have all these regulated in the official documents (Bille 2001, 365). The rules about candidate selection vary among the ideal types of party organization ranging from loose rules and self-selection in cadre parties to the formalized criteria identifiable in the mass parties (Hopkin 2001, 344). This is the main reason for which I assess the candidate selection based on the formal specifications from the statutes.

Bille (2001, 365) points at the difference between the specific party regulations and the procedures adopted by the Western European political parties. The rules are too narrow to create comparable categories. A comparison can be made if concepts are reduced to their lowest common denominator and thus different phenomena are given the same name (Katz and Mair 1990, 1). The statutes of the CEE political parties raise a similar challenge. As it will become obvious from the sections dedicated to country and party descriptions, the rules are specific and employ different means of treating the relationships between the decision making layers. The empirical analysis conducted in this chapter reduces the complexity of regulatory texts by focusing mainly on the intra-party layers that decide upon the candidate nominations and the weight of their decisions. In doing so, it assigns secondary roles to particular procedures of nomination and various mediating committees between the decision layers. The resulting categories account for similar layers of decision – i.e. local, regional, and central – through a standardized procedure.

Previous studies operationalized the candidate selection rules (Bille 2001; Rahat and Hazan 2001; Lundell 2004; Kittilson and Scarrow 2006; Shomer 2009). The existing measurements focus on two dimensions of candidate selection – the centralization and the inclusiveness – sometimes treated together. As centralization is crucial for this study, the measurement of candidate selection aims to differentiate between the layers of decision.

The scale elaborated by Lundell (2004, 31) is appropriate in this respect. Given the empirical diversity of CEE, I use a modified version of this scale. I add a supplementary category (i.e. number 4 in Figure 3.1) that helps for a better differentiation between the candidate selection for the national elections across political parties. Following the analysis of party statutes, Lundell created a five point scale that had as extremes the selection of candidates at local

meetings or through primaries and the exclusive selection by the party leader or by a national selection committee. In between there are three categories in which the selection process at national and regional level is influenced by local or national bodies, with possibilities of negotiation between the two layers. The additional category created in the light of the empirical realities from CEE refers to the composition of the list of candidates through a joined effort of the local/regional and national levels. The resulted index (Figure 3.1) consists of six categories and ranges from the selection of candidates at local level to a highly centralized selection procedures.

Figure 3.1: The Index of Candidate Selection in CEE Political Parties

1	2	3	4	5	6
Selection at local level					Selection at central level

1 – Decentralized
2 – Local authority
3 – Local nominations
4 – Mixed nominations
5 – Central nominations
6 - Centralized

This selection index is used as the independent variable in the analysis from this chapter. The six categories reflect the layer of decision regarding the candidate selection within a party. The meanings of the labels and values are the following:

1) Decentralized: Selection of candidates is either done at the local level by selection committees or by primaries open to all party members.
2) Local authority: The selection takes place at the local level (e.g. committee, organization, or local assembly), but the formal approval by regional or national organs is necessary. There is no actual involvement of these organs in the outcome of decision.
3) Local nominations: The selection takes place at the local or regional level, but the national level exercises influence over the final composition of the lists through veto rights or the possibility to add names.
4) Mixed nominations: The selection takes place both at local and central level. Local and central organizations propose candidates to a relatively equal extent

or on the basis of an internal algorithm (e.g. one third local vs. two thirds central); the final decision is taken at central level.
5) Central nominations: The selection takes place at central level with the possibility for the local organizations to exercise influence over the list composition (e.g. adding names).
6) Centralized: Selection done by the party leader, national executive organs, or central office (committee).

A few practical nuances are necessary to diminish the risks of conceptual stretching or over-simplification. First, the category of decentralized decision making does not imply a total autonomy of the local branch in deciding upon candidates' selection. As each party has a national organization, the central office will always keep an eye on its local branches. Moreover, there are certain guidelines that local organizations follow in deciding who makes the party list in the future elections. There is always a minimum control that ensures the cohesiveness of the party, the coherence in transmitting the electoral messages, and avoids the confusion of the voters (Rose 1980; Harmel and Janda 1994; Pennings and Hazan 2001).

Similarly, there are isolated cases in which the decision power rests absolutely into the hands of the party leadership with no influences from territorial branches. However, when such influences are marginal and not established on institutional bases and the outcome depends to a heavy extent on the central – quite often national committee or council – office the political party is considered to be highly centralized. Second, in spite of specific regulations and particular labels assigned to decision making bodies within the party organization (e.g. National Council, Regional Committee, Territorial Organization etc.), the structure of decision follows a similar pattern. Thus, three main layers are easily identifiable: local, regional, and central.

Methodological Choices

The analysis of the statutes focuses on the provisions regarding the candidates selected for the legislative elections. In the vast majority of cases, the statutes do not distinguish between the nominations for the Chambers of Parliament. Whenever the party statute includes specific references to the nomination procedures for the Lower Chamber candidates, only those are considered.

There is one party (DPS in Bulgaria) that does not mention the candidate selection in its statute. In this case I have looked at the internal hierarchy of the party and noticed that the central office and the leader of the party (Ahmed Dogan) play a crucial role in any decision. Whenever complex divisions of power occur within the party – regarding specific issues – they are formally regulated by the statute. As nothing is written down with respect to the candidate selection, the decision-making process is hierarchically

organized, in the simplest top-down possible manner. The only provision about the candidates refers to the prerogative of the party leader to approve them. In these conditions, it is safe to consider that the selection is centralized.

Moreover, when examining the party statutes, a striking issue popped-up in the Hungarian case. Given the structure of the electoral system – which includes single member districts, regional PR lists, and local PR lists – the political parties have general rules regarding the nomination of candidates. The local organization decides the single member districts candidates, the regional organization decides and proposes the candidates for the PR system at their level, whereas national lists are compiled by the central office. Such a situation in which two thirds of the candidates are appointed by the local level and one third by the national level would generally receive a score of 4 according to the above index. This would mean the absence of variation across the Hungarian parties.

However, the provisions of the statutes mention the prerogatives of the central office in implementing this rule and thus increased variation occurs between the Hungarian parties. For example, the MSZP has absolute freedom in nominating candidates. Starting 1999, the National Council has a limited right to influence the candidate nomination. Thus, it can cancel the nominations of local branches only in exceptional cases, with very strong arguments (Machos 2000). The MDF displays a balance between the local and central layers at all decision-making levels regarding the candidates. Whenever one side proposes, the other can oppose. The FIDESZ is the party where the central office has the final word to say regarding all candidates. It always expresses an opinion based on the nominations of the local branches.

Parties make small paces towards organizational change. Once established at a certain level of centralization, political parties rarely modify this setting.[35] Adaptation processes are slow as quite often political parties, after perceiving the necessity for change, initiate internal debates that require time until a decided policy is implemented. It is more likely to have faster changes within the more centralized parties compared to the rest; they have a more direct chain of command and decision-making, with little contestation in the territory. For example, one of the two political parties that modified their degree of centralization in candidate selection is the PSD in Romania. In 2004 it implemented the primaries for all party members to select the candidates. This setting was abandoned at the 2008 elections, the party going back to the old practices. The 2005 statute mentions that primaries are optional.

[35] Some parties modified their statutes in the first years after formation as their initial power relations were quite blurry; this is the case with SZDSZ (in 1991) and FIDESZ (in 1993) in Hungary or SDS in Bulgaria. For details on these examples, see Balazs and Enyedi (1996) and Waller and Karasimeonov (1996).

With this exception and that of the KDU-CSL in the Czech Republic, the provisions regarding the decision making within the party organization are not significantly modified over time to determine shifts of the political parties between categories. Thus, the candidate selection is a longitudinal constant for a party. Methodologically, an accurate correlation should be made between the index of candidate selection and the average electoral volatility. However, empirical considerations determined a different choice. When calculating the average volatility, the differences between the electoral volatility of the parties are distorted. There are instances in which a political party has a stable core of voters for the vast majority of time, but a very high volatility at a certain moment in time (e.g. MSZP in Figure 2.6). The aggregated volatility mean puts on an equal foot such a case with that of a political party with constant medium levels of electoral volatility. To avoid such a shortcoming, the correlation is conducted between the level of centralization and the volatility at each election. Without running into the over-estimation of the relationship, such an approach isolates outlier behaviors and detects general trends closer to the real situation.

Structural and Procedural Commonalities of Candidate Selection in CEE

On the basis of statute analysis, a few common features of candidate selection cand be identified across the CEE political parties. First, given the existence of nationalized organizations, national party congresses are held regularly. Their frequency ranges both in terms of regulations and in practice. In most cases, the party statutes impose a minimum time frame between congresses. Such an interval ranges from one to four years. In practice, most CEE political parties organize their regular congresses every two or four years. The national congresses are organized strategically half way between the legislative elections and before election time. Extraordinary national meetings are usually generated by unexpected events such as major electoral failures in the recent elections, early elections, loss of leaders, possibilities of mergers, or imminent splits due to internal conflicts.

Second, the national congress generally includes representatives elected either by local organizations or through various committees at intermediate echelons. At the same time, the size of the congress reflects the extension of territorial organizations and the membership dimension. Although the ratio between delegates and party members is rarely specified (van Biezen 2003, 121), there is a general tendency among the CEE parties to have a proportional representation of their membership organizations. This is why the size of the national congress is altered between gatherings. These often modifications are a possible explanation for the lack of any explicit provisions regarding the members-delegates relationship.

Finally, most of the CEE political parties have four institutions of authority. The first in order of importance is the national congress that can wear the alternative labels of *conference* or *assembly*. The major functions of the congress target the adoption of changes in existing party documents (e.g. statutes), the elaboration of new party documents, the adoption of general decisions, and the election of an executive body for the party. The national organizational structure is the second institution of authority and it has various names ranging from *central bureau* to *supreme council*. It generally consists of an executive body that includes the key figures of the party leadership (president, vice-president, secretaries) and a national board.

Apart from its executive and general tasks between the national congresses, this structure has decision making powers that correspond to my conceptualization of centralized. Whenever decisions are taken by the national organization, there are a few influences of the local or intermediary institutions. The third institution is represented by the territorial or regional council – with alternative names such as *office* or *board* – that gathers the leaders of local organizations. There are numerous regional councils, varying according to the territorial administrative divisions of the countries. With a permanent existence, this institution is relevant within those parties where the decision represents a negotiation between the local and central organizations. Apart from its mediating role, it acts as a filter for the demands of the local organizations and in the candidate selection process. This organization also chooses the representatives for the national congress. Finally, the fourth institution is represented by the local organization that usually comes last in the chain of decision within a party. The initiatives takes at this level require approvals and often face vetoes of the superior decision layers. This is mainly the reason for which the analysis of party statutes revealed so few cases of candidate selection and program drafting at local level.

With these methodological and empirical issues in mind, the following section discusses the similarity between the formal division of power (i.e. expressed in the statutes) and the practice (on the basis of expert surveys). Such an analysis is meant to show that formal regulations are the basis of action.

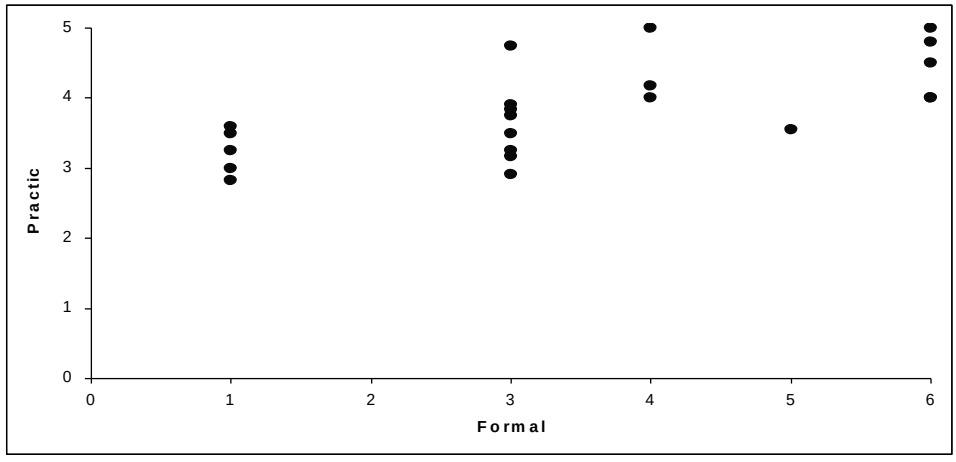
Formal and Practical Decision Making

It is common knowledge that the formal regulations and informal practices of parties often differ. This section includes an empirical test between these two variables across the CEE political parties. The formal regulations are represented by the index of candidate selection (Figure 3.1). The practices of parties are approximated through an expert survey (Borz 2009). The survey was conducted online, for three months at the end of 2007. There were three reminders for questionnaire completion. For each country there were between

five and 10 experts. No data are available for the Bulgarian parties as there were not enough experts to answer. The question referring to party centralization was the following: "Centralization of power refers to the location and distribution of effective decision-making authority within the party with regard to the top national party organs. Assign a score from 1 to 5 to each party for the level of centralization in decision-making, selection of candidates, and the distribution of party finances as of 2006/2007". The possible answers were: 1) very low, 2) low, 3) medium, 4) high, and 5) very high.

There are two methodological reasons that may influence the correlation strength between these variables. First, the question in the survey is broader than the scope of the statute analysis. Apart from candidate selection, it refers also to the general level of centralization and distribution of party finances. Second, the survey question refers to a specific period of time (i.e. 2006/2007). Thus, expert evaluations may be contextual or influenced by recent events. As mentioned in the previous section, in the case of statutes there is almost no development over time. Despite numerous modifications in the party statutes over two decades, the initial setting for decision-making within the parties is almost unchanged. Figure 3.2 depicts the distribution of the political parties on the formal dimension of centralization and the evaluations of the experts (i.e. average of evaluations for each party). The survey contains only 22 out of the 29 parties analyzed in this book.

Figure 3.2: The Distribution of CEE Political Parties according to their Centralization



Note: The formal scores are takes from Borz (2009).

As visible also from Figure 3.2, there is a high positive correlation between the variables: 0.66, statistical significant at the 0.01 level. This means that a party that has a formal centralized decision making in its statute behaves accordingly

in real life. This indicates that the CEE parties do what they preach. However, experts' opinions on these parties tend to indicate more centralized features for all of them. Although the available range of answers was 1 to 5, most evaluations are situated in the range 3 to 5; there are only two evaluations below 3. Such a tendency may be given by the other two factors that the experts had to bear in mind when making the evaluations – the overall centralization and distribution of funds. The latter is rarely the task of the local organizations within the CEE parties.

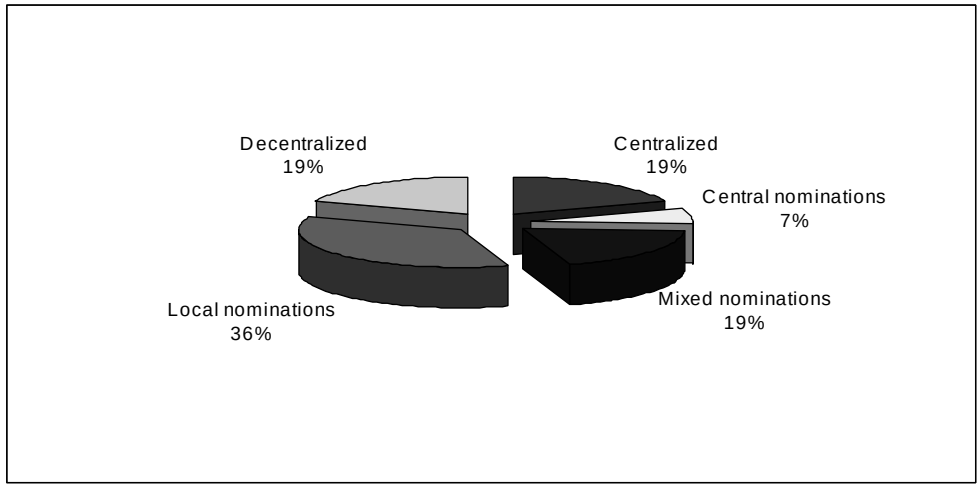
This brief statistical analysis indicates that there are deviations of the CEE political parties from their formal regulations. Based on the experts' evaluations, these deviations appear to be small. The assessment of the practical centralization of power cluster on the corresponding categories identified at formal level. For example, the experts' evaluations for the parties within the same category of formal decentralization (1 on the horizontal axis in Fiure 3.2) are homogenous. The graph illustrates that deviations are random across political parties. Consequently, there is no systematic bias in considering the formal regulations as the basis of action for the CEE political parties.

The Negotiation of Candidate Selection

This section compares the candidate selection procedures for national elections among the CEE parties (Figure 3.3). The analysis includes 31 cases due to the fact that the KDU-CSL in the Czech Republic and the PSD in Romania changed the candidate selection procedures in their statutes during the post-communist period. The category corresponding to value 2 in the index has no corresponding case. There is no party in CEE in which the statute to mention a formal role of the central organizations in the candidate selection without any effective influence.

Almost 60% of the surveyed parties opt for a balance between the local and central layers in selecting the candidates. This balance is reflected in three categories: local nominations of candidates that can be modified or veto-ed by the centre (36%), mixed nominations that involve both local and central level (19%), or central nominations that can be later influenced by the local organizations (6%). There is a tendency of many CEE political parties to allow the local organizations to organize the selection and to influence it afterwards. The predominance of this arrangement is not surprising if we consider the willingness of both central and local elites to control the nomination process. Moreover, it can be a cost-benefit assessment coming from the centre. As the selection process takes place at local level, most resources are spent by the territorial branches (e.g. time to recruit candidates, socialization processes etc.). The central level spends less time or effort and ensures an effective control if it expresses opinion on an existing list of candidates.

Figure 3.3: Categories of Centralization in Candidate Selection for National Elections across CEE



There are equal percentages of parties with centralized and decentralized selection of candidates (19%). Accordingly, there are six parties in each category. The centralized parties are the DPS in Bulgaria, the FKGP in Hungary, the PSL and the SLD in Poland, the PRM in Romania, and the SDL in Slovakia. The decentralized parties are the KDU-CSL after 1997 in the Czech Republic, the MSZP in Hungary, the PNL, the UDMR, and the PSD in 2004 in Romania, and the SDKU in Slovakia. Within each category there are observable nuances between the political parties. For example, the FKGP in Hungary and the PSL in Poland are both considered centralized, but with slightly different statute provisions. The FKGP is a pure monocracy in which the party leader nominates candidates and the National Council approves them. The central leadership plays a primary role also in the local elections where all candidatures need its approval. The PSL has a more horizontally division of power at central level, it is not concentrated in the hands of a single individual. It has an Electoral National Convention that confirms, on the proposal of the party's Supreme Administrative Committee (NKW PSL), the candidates to the Polish Parliament.

The decentralized parties display a similar variation. In general, once the nomination decision is taken at local level, there is only a minimal approval required from the National Council on the party lists (i.e. it checks the fulfillment of standard requirements regarding the candidates). Even if this organ decides the rejection of candidates, the task to replace them belongs to the local organizations that initially proposed the unacceptable candidates. However, there is an exception to this general rule – the PNL in Romania – to be extensively discussed in the section dedicated to the single case studies. The local branches of the party obtaining electoral results better than the average

share of votes received by the party (i.e. usually, half of the local branches) can propose without any restrictions candidates for the legislative elections. The other branches do not have a direct word to say, but candidates are proposed by the Territorial Permanent Delegation that is composed of members of the local branches.

The relatively low percentage of both centralized and decentralized parties can be explained through the learning process that political organizations are subjected to. The large parties' failures to survive at the beginning of the transition period (e.g. Solidarity in Poland) or the repeated splits and mergers of relevant competitors during the first post-communist decade were primarily caused by strong internal factions that quit the party or joined forces with other actors. One crucial factor contributing to this dynamic was the internal division of power. A centralized leadership produces discontent in local organizations. When these local organizations unify their claims and get a voice through Parliament representatives, an imminent split occurs if nothing changes in the decision making process.

Conversely, decentralized candidate nominations allow local organization to grow strong. Whenever they form divergent opinions from the central office or when competing interests occur, their actions will no longer be consistent with those of the central elite. An illustrative example is the recent case of the PSD in Romania. One strong local branch, situated in the Cluj county (one constituency of the country), raised voice against the proceedings from central office. Their major discontent was related to the very centralized decision-making (including the discourse) and found support among other local branches. As a result, the party was confronted with a "riot" in which numerous MPs and party officials were involved. As nothing changed, the split occurred: the Cluj local leaders withdrew from the party. The PSD lost considerable support in that constituency at the 2008 local and legislative elections and in the subsequent 2009 European elections. To avoid such situations, most parties decide in favor of a joint effort in nominating candidates, decreasing thus the probability of institutionalized discontent.

The selection of candidates for national elections appears to be dominated by negotiations between the local and central organizations across CEE political parties. This interplay between the local and central layers of decision fulfils two tasks. First, it ensures particular representation of the territorial branches' will. Thus, local organizations notice that their preferences are considered within certain boundaries. Such an approach limits the conflict potential within the party organization. Second, it allows the central office to effectively control the final composition and structure of candidate lists. In the setting characterizing the majority of CEE parties, the central level plays a very important role in either selecting the candidates or approving them by vetoing and modifying the choices of the local organizations. For only 22% of the

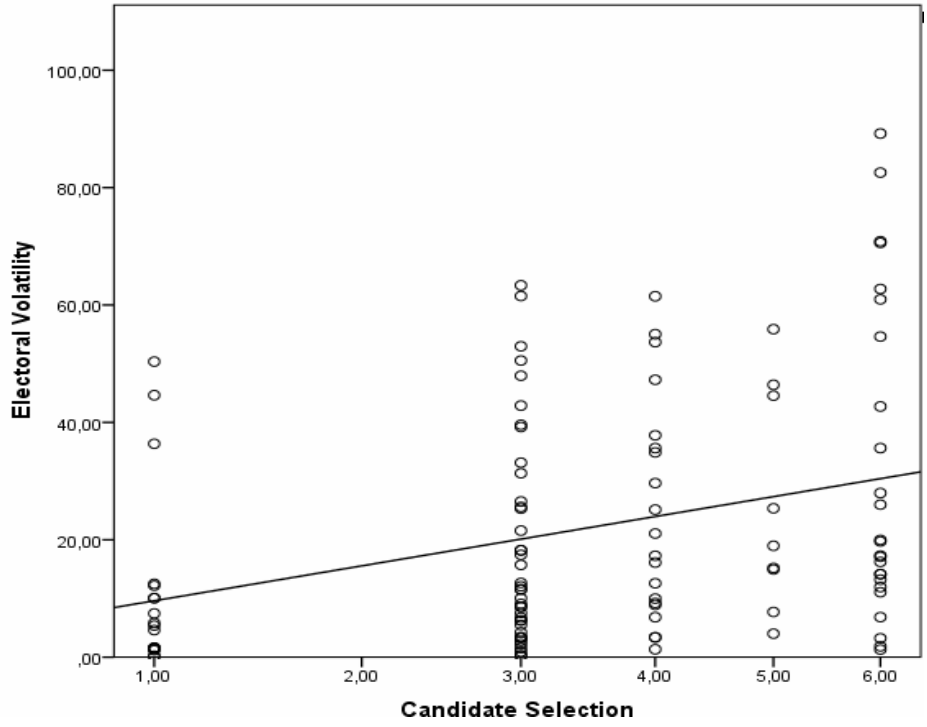
investigated political parties the centre does not have a substantial word to say in the process of candidate selection.

The next section presents and discusses the statistical relationship between the index of candidate selection and electoral volatility at party level. Departing from this correlation, it delves into the specific statute provisions across the CEE political parties.

Downplaying the Centre: Empirical Evidence from the CEE Political Parties

The statistical analysis indicates support for the hypothesized relationship. The correlation coefficient is positive, with a moderate value (0.36), statistical significant at the 0.01 level. Figure 3.4 depicts the distribution of the political parties on these two variables. The horizontal axis represents the centralization of candidate selection for national elections (1=decentralized and 6=centralized). It also shows the strength and the positive direction of the correlation. In the words of H1 this means that the political parties in which the candidate selection takes place at local level are less volatile than the rest.

Figure 3.4: The Distribution of Parties according to Candidate Selection Index and Electoral Volatility



The results are even more telling in the context of a broadly used list PR system. Also, very few parties organize primaries that ensure a direct

connection between candidates and voters. In this case, the parties that are more permissive and allow nominations from the territory or only use their veto against local proposals have lower electoral volatility than the centralized parties.

It appears that the recipe to maintain voter loyalties consists of getting closer to allow decision-making at the level that is closer to the citizen. Voters stabilize their electoral preferences around those organizations that not only play a decorative role within the larger political frameworks provided by the party. Immediate replies to voters' needs and priorities (i.e. reflected in party programs proposed at the local level) appear to provide rewards to parties. Whereas this statistical observation is sufficient to draw a few inferences regarding the hypothesized relationship, the party specific information [36]provides substantial information about the processes that take place within political systems and parties.

Bulgaria

The Bulgarian parties are characterized by relatively high levels of centralization. These levels range between local nominations requiring the approval of the central office (BSP) and the heavily centralized decision making of the DPS. The BSP had to overcome its legacy (Karasimeonov 2005, 98) and behave differently than its communist predecessor (see Chapter 4). In doing so, a decentralization of decision making in the party was a first step. Its candidates for local elections are selected by local party structures, but all proposals must be approved by the national organization) Supreme Council. The latter has the right to make modifications according to a few criteria (e.g. importance, continuity, renewal etc.). The Supreme Council decides the leaders of the lists, agrees places of coalition partners, and organizes pre-registration lists (article 57). A somewhat different process is visible within the SDS. The local organizations (District Council) propose together with the executive central body of the party (National Executive Council) the lists of MPs. These final lists require the approval of the central organization (National Council) (article 15). In the case of the SDS local branches have less freedom than those of BSP.

The DPS has a special story of centralization with most decisions belonging not only to the national organization, but particularly to the chairman of the party. With the same leader from its beginning in 1990, Ahmed Dogan, the DPS vests extensive powers in the hands of one person. He is the chairman of the Central Council (the national organization) that convenes once every three months (article 9, paragraph 2), elaborates all party documents,

[36] For consistency, the references to procedures belong to the most recent statutes from all parties.

and adopts uniform rules of conduct. The selection of candidates takes place at the central level. The president is the crucial layer of decision: he has to approve all candidates for parliamentary elections (article 10).

Czech Republic

Although Millard (2004, 161) considers that the ODS, the KSCM, and the KDU–CSL developed highly centralized selection procedures, the analysis of the statutes reveals two issues. First, their selection procedures are not very centralized; the ODS and the KSCM are in the category with most parties from CEE (local nominations on which it is exercised central influence). Second, there are relevant differences between these parties in terms of candidate selection; the CSSD is the least centralized among them. The ODS and the KSCM are on a relatively equal foot regarding the candidate selection process: both local and central levels are involved. The ODS statute mentions that the local and municipal (an intermediary layer between the local and regional) organizations propose candidates for the legislative elections. The executive body decides about the final composition of the list – and thus has the right to reject some proposals – with a final word to say from the congress that formally approves the lists of candidates.

Despite its unreformed character (Kopecky 2007, 120), KSCM has a similar setting. The local and regional organizations propose candidates and the Central Committee approves the lists with a possibility to alter them. The CSSD differs in the sense that the central level is involved in candidate selection (a score of 4 on the index). The local and regional organizations compile the list of candidates. The Central Bureau contributes to this list of candidates (article 31), whereas the Central Executive Committee is also involved in drawing up the lists and approves the final composition and order (article 30).

Starting 1997, the KDU-CSL is the only Czech party using primaries to decide on the composition of its lists following proposals arrived from members and various organs of the party. The results of the primary elections are considered by the Regional Committee that establishes their final composition. Any change must be accompanied by explanations to the regional committees and negotiations between the two party organs. Prior to 1997, the 1995 statute included a more centralized selection of candidates. The latter was nationwide compiled by the Bureau of the KDU-CSL on the basis of proposals from members submitted through three filters – local, district, and provincial. Each of these layers could attach their own nominations and the order of candidates. Although the National Bureau drew the lists of candidates, they were done after prior consultation with the provincial bureaus so that at least two-thirds of the candidates were resident in their constituencies (art. 40). Further adjustments could be made by the National Bureau on the basis of coalition agreements. Although this method of candidate selection involved a

great deal of influence from the national organization, all proposals came from the territory and the list composition was negotiated with provincial bureaus.

Hungary

The Hungarian political parties are characterized by a complex decision-making process regarding their candidate selection given the nature of the electoral system. Parties have to nominate candidates for the single member districts, territorial lists, and national lists. Accordingly, different layers of the party nominate *de facto* candidates: the local organization proposes candidates for the single member districts, the territorial organization proposes the candidates for the territorial lists, and the national lists are drawn by the central organization[37] (Makos 2000). However, there are deviations from this general rule. The MSZP is the most decentralized Hungarian Party with the local and territorial organizations taking decisions without interventions from the centre. The National Council (national organization) proposes the national lists and the decision belongs to the congress where national and local organizations are also represented. This extensive decision making at local level was not altered although starting 1999 the central level has the possibility to intervene in the process of nominating candidates. Following a request of the National Electoral Commission of the party, it can cancel the decisions of local and territorial organizations but only in exceptional situations and on solid grounds (e.g. the candidate affects party's image).

The FIDESZ and the KDNP share the same common balance between the local and central levels in deciding upon candidates. The national organization of the FIDESZ can interfere in the decision of the local and territorial organizations by expressing opinions on the proposed candidates and suggesting modifications. Following the general rules specified above, it also decides about the national lists. The central organization of the KDNP can veto the proposals from the territory about territorial lists and decide upon the national lists. The SZDSZ has an arrangement in which the negotiation plays a supplementary role: the national organization discusses with the local or territorial organizations the composition of the lists. if one third of the local or territorial organizations disagree with what suggested from the centre, the case goes to the national congress. In addition, the central organization sets criteria for nominations and all candidate proposals from the territory should fulfill them. In the MDF, the central organization has the right to propose veto (exercised by the congress) and to nominate new candidates in case of rejecting those proposed by the local and territorial organizations. The local organizations also have veto rights regarding Council's proposals (not for the

[37] The entire argument in the book is centered around the composition of the party lists. This is why only the territorial and national layers are relevant in this case.

national lists[38]). Also, the local organization can make proposals and replace the rejected candidates. The final decision reached after these negotiations are subjected to the vote of the National Council. The most centralized Hungarian party is the FKGP where the central organization decided all candidates following the proposal of the president.

Poland

The Polish political parties emerged after 2000 are less centralized than the PSL and the SLD that exist from the beginning of the post-communist period. The PIS and the PO have a medium centralized decision-making with respect to their statues and content of programs. In terms of candidate selection, the local organizations of the PIS propose candidates that have to be approved by the territorial organization and a final vote is given by the central organization (the Political Committee). Similar provisions are encountered in the PO regarding the program drafting. Regarding the selection of candidates, the territorial organizations – the layer immediately above the local ones – propose the candidates and the central organization approves them with plenty of room for negotiation. Among the long lasting parties, the PD has a candidate selection similar to that of the PIS and the PO. The territorial branches select candidates and the final approval of the central organization is necessary. The PSL and the SLD have a centralized selection of candidates. In both parties the candidates are proposed by the central organizations and approved by the national congress. No influence of the local or regional organizations is possible.

Romania

The Romanian political landscape is the most diverse among the analyzed countries, being populated with two decentralized political parties (plus PSD in 2004), one centralized, and two positioned in between, with various degrees of centralization. The decentralized parties are the PNL, extensively discussed in the case study section, and the UDMR. The candidate selection in the PNL provides extensive freedom to the local organizations in placing candidates on the lists. Similarly, the electoral program is elaborated at local level, with territorial input. The UDMR organizes primary elections for the candidate selection and allows complete freedom to its local and regional organizations in drafting the program. As the party is a mosaic of numerous organizations, it would be difficult to function otherwise. The centralized character of the PRM does not represent a surprise given the existing consensus in the literature

[38] Until 1998, the national lists composition is decided by the National Council following party leader's nominations. Since 1998, the party leader loses the nomination procedure in favor of the National Leadership Council (Makos 2000).

about the strong leader Corneliu Vadim Tudor (Gallagher 1999; Mudde 2000; Light and Phinnemore 2001; Mungiu-Pippidi 2001; Sum 2010). Candidates' nominations are done exclusively by the central organization at the proposal of the president of the party. The central figure of president is also involved in the program drafting with no input from regional or local organizations.

For most of the PSD's existence, the candidate selection was a mixture of central and local negotiation in drawing the lists of candidates. In 2004, primary elections were organized, but immediately abandoned as they created internal conflict in the party. Some of the leading elite of the party was less successful in the primaries and the centre overruled their results by appointing those candidates on the lists. The new statute, adopted in 2005, stipulates that primaries are optional and whenever they are not organized the decision is represented by the above mentioned mixture. In the PDL, the candidate selection is done at territorial level with the possibility of influence from the central organization. Any divergences are solved during the national congress.

Slovakia

Only one out six Slovak parties is decentralized confirming thus earlier qualifications regarding the centralization of decision-making in Slovakia (Millard 2004; Deegan-Krause 2006). The SLD is the most centralized party in terms of candidate selection for the national elections. This can justify its lack of adaptation and the disappearance from the political scene on December 31, 2004 when it merged with SMER. The HZDS displays a mixture of candidate proposals from local organizations, regional branches, and the central organization. Similarly, in the SNS the local and the central organizations propose candidates for the elections, a final decision is reached by the president of the party.

The KDH vests the central organization with the power to approve the nominations of the local organizations. The latter have a relevant word to say also in the drafting of the program. The electoral platform is the joint product of central and local representatives elected in the district assembly of the party. The MKP has a similar candidate selection procedure with the KDH, the major difference occurs with respect to the electoral program. The MKP works on a decentralized basis with each layer of decision having its own program. This freedom of action appears to be a characteristic of the parties representing ethnic Hungarians in the CEE region – a similar situation was encountered in Romania. The SDKU organizes primaries to select candidates for the national legislative elections. The central organization has the right to overrule, in exceptional situations the results of the primaries.

These detailed references regarding the procedures of candidate selection illustrate a diversity of settings across parties. They help understanding the way in which the centralization of candidate selection is

related to electoral volatility. For example, referring to the average values of volatility from Table 2.2 (Chapter 2), there are relevant differences. In half of the countries, the political parties with the lowest electoral volatility in their countries have less centralized candidate selection than the parties with high electoral volatility. Starting 1997, the KDU-CSL organizes primaries to select its legislative candidates and it is the least volatile Czech party. The CSSD has a mixed selection process in which the local and central levels compile together the lists of candidates. In doing so, it is the most centralized Czech party and also has the highest volatility. The same observation is valid for Romania. The UDMR organizes primaries open to all its members to select the candidates; it also has the smallest volatility in Romania and in the entire CEE region. The PRM selects its candidates at central level, with the leader of the party in a key position, and also has the highest volatility in the country. The relationship is visible also in Slovakia, but the discrepancy between the procedures to select candidates differs less starkly. In Slovakia, the least volatile party is the KDH in which the central organization exercises influence over the selection made by the local organizations. The most volatile party is the SDL that has a centralized selection of candidates.

In Hungary the political parties with a similar candidate selection occupy the extreme positions on volatility. The SZDSZ is the least volatile party, whereas The MDF has the highest volatility in the Hungarian party system. They both have central nominations that can be influenced by the local organizations. Bulgaria and Poland are the two systems in which the least volatile parties are more centralized than the most volatile ones. In Bulgaria, DPS has a centralized candidate selection, whereas the SDS opted for a mixture of decision between the centre and local organizations. In Poland it is the same distribution of candidate selection and volatility between the PSL (the least volatile and the most centralized) and the PO.

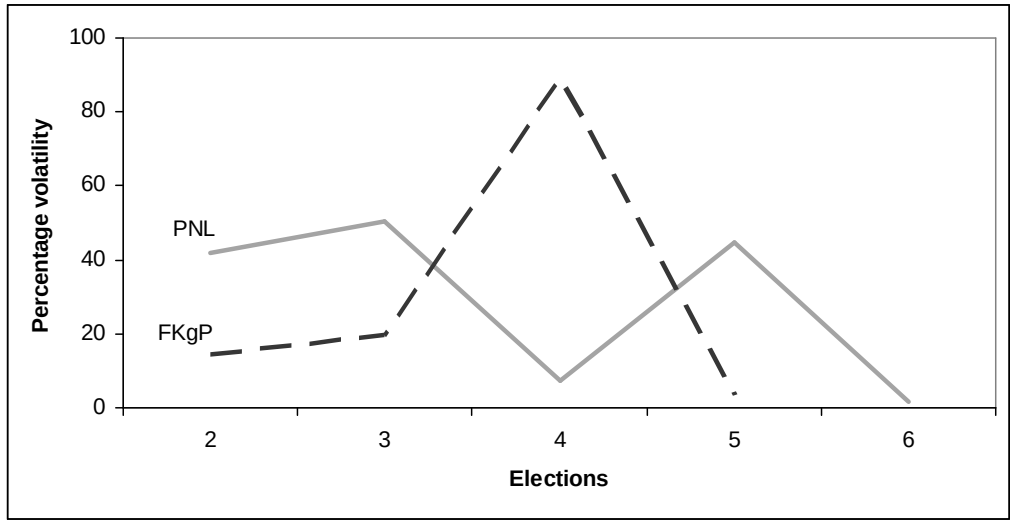
These observations are illustrative for the direction and strength of the hypothesized relationship. In some cases there is an observable linkage between the centralization of candidate selection and electoral volatility. In other cases, the relationship either does not exist or it goes against the initial expectation. The following section narrows the scope of analysis and intends to reveal how the relationship works in specific contexts. In doing so, it focuses on two political parties selected from the categories with extreme values. The cases are illustrative and not intended to be representative for their categories. The PNL is one of the two parties with complete decentralization, whereas the FKGP in Hungary is selected among those with total centralized mechanisms in taking decisions. Both cases claim their origins from successful inter-war political actors, have similar trajectories of their electoral volatility, and are less investigated. The goal of the section is twofold. First, it explores the way in which parties with completely different approaches towards the intra-party

decision-making evolved in terms of volatility. Second, it explains the formation of a relationship between these two variables over time.

Where is the Difference?

The trajectories of the PNL and FKGP's electoral volatility are quite similar, characterized by numerous oscillations. Figure 3.5 reflects the levels of volatility in longitudinal perspective, the horizontal axis marking the number of elections from the beginning of the post-communist period. The first point in time is 1992 for the PNL and 1994 for the FKGP, corresponding to the second election for each party (i.e. the first time when volatility can be calculated). The elections during the first post-communist decade are the ones in which these parties had a relatively constant electoral volatility, at various levels. The PNL had higher volatility than the FKGP, with a value around 40% as opposed to 20%. From the fourth round of legislative elections (2000 for the PNL and 2002 for the FKGP), the volatilities of these two parties contrast dramatically.

Figure 3.5: Volatility Trends for Parties belonging to Extreme Categories of Candidate Selection for National Elections



PNL: Decentralization as Mean of Political Survival

The PNL reduces its volatility in that election, it increases in 2004 to a similar level to those of the 90s, whereas for 2008 its volatility decreases to a level close to 0, managing to stabilize its electorate. In 2002, the FKGP registers one of the highest volatility in the region, above 80%, that also keeps the party outside the Parliament with an electoral support below 1%. This is a critical juncture in the history of the party as it never recovered. In that respect, the extremely low volatility in the subsequent 2006 election does not tell a success

story. On the contrary, the FKGP maintained itself at the extremely low level of support from 2002. Summing up, although the electoral volatility of these two parties registers similar oscillations, their faith is different. The following two subsections delve into this matter by closely investigating the organizational development of each party.

The PNL: Decentralization of Candidate Selection as Mean of Political Survival

The PNL is the most dynamic Romanian political party in electoral and organizational terms. The party was officially registered in January 1990, claiming the ideological heritage of a traditional actor from the Romanian political scene. Originating in the second half of the 19th century, the Liberal Party represented for a few decades the main alternative to the Conservative Party in a two-party system. Its importance was not diminished in the multiparty systems of the interwar period and it is best illustrated by the formation of numerous governments in which the leaders of the party were prime-ministers (Preda 2002; Gherghina and Chiru 2010). Following WWII, Communists banned the Liberal Party and its leaders were either executed or sent in exile. Almost half a century later, the PNL revives its tradition and builds its discourse on historical grounds with an anti-communist message.

Its electoral dynamics is visible in the number of electoral alliances and government coalitions in which it got included. The party competed alone four out of six times – passing the electoral threshold all the time but in 1992 – and whenever contesting elections within an alliance or coalition it was among the winners and got into government. Its initial anti-communist discourse did not impede the PNL to govern next to one of the successor parties – the contemporary PDL – in 1996-2000 and 2004-2008 or to sign support agreements with the other successor party – PSD – In 2000. It is the only Romanian party that does not suffer major loses of electoral support after exiting a coalition that coincides also to government incumbency. Figure 3.4 shows that at the fourth and six elections the electoral volatility of the PNL is close to 0; those are the 2000 and 2008 elections that followed The PNL's terms in government. This low level of volatility indicates almost no variation of electoral support compared to the previous elections. Paradoxically, all its coalition partners register high levels of volatility. In 2000, the PNTCD had a volatility of over 65% that lead to its disappearance from the political scene, whereas in 2008 the PDL had almost 40% volatility that secured its place into the subsequent government.

This relative electoral stability is surprising in the light of the PNL's evolution across time. Its history is marked by large numbers of splits and mergers, but no relevant ideological shift or modification and no name changes. The vast majority of these events, summarized in Table 3.1, have actors that left and came back to the PNL. The internal fractions of PNL that

left the party (PNL-AT, PNL Campeanu) made further alliances and returned to PNL a few years later or in a different format (PNL Campeanu, NPL, PL). The reverse of the coin is that there was one party, led by Niculae Cerveni that joined the PNL in 1990 (PSL) and quit the PNL two years later, staying in the CDR under a different name (PNL-CD). Three mergers with political parties situated at the centre-right of the political axis indicate Liberal's willingness to gather around them all the forces that might counter-balance the social-democratic domination in the country. In this respect, there were three fusions with small parties (1998 with PAC, 2001 with APR, and 2004 with UFD) that provided notabilities to the Liberal Party and allowed them to structure votes.

Table 3.1: The Splits and Mergers of PNL in the Post-Communist Period

Year	Splits	Mergers	New Label
1990	PNL-AT		PNL
1990		PSL	PNL
1992	PNL-CD		PNL
1993		NPL	PNL
1994	PNL Campeanu		PNL
1998		PAC	PNL
1998		PL	PNL
2000	PNL-Traditional		PNL
2001		APR	PNL
2003		UFD	PNL
2003		PNL Campeanu	PNL
2006	PLD		PNL

Source: Website of PNL.

The party also had several splits, most of them being small as intensity: the PNL-AT, the PNL Campeanu, and the PNL Traditional. However, the last split was major as the new formed party of the dissidents won more than half of the vote shares gained by the PNL in the European elections. At the end of 2006, key actors for the PNL in the 2000-2004 period, Valeriu Stoica and Theodor Stolojan, leave the party together with a few MPs and create the Liberal Democratic Party (PLD). In ideological terms, the difference between the two cannot be easily identified. The split can find its sources in the harsh relationships with the current PNL leadership and the close relationships with the Romanian president (former president of PD and very close to that party). PLD had a short life on its own as after the European elections in the autumn of 2007 they merge through absorption with the PD and create the PDL.

The political survival of the PNL after the numerous splits and mergers and its relatively low electoral volatility can be partly attributed to its

decentralized decision-making process. The basic organizational unit[39] of the PNL exists at the level of voting booth or neighborhood and can be formed by five to nine people. The next layer is represented by the local organizations that are formed at the level of village, city, or town by at least 15, 51, or 91 members, including a minimum of two thirds of from the voting booth organizations (Art. 26 of PNL statute 2009). The regional organizations can be formed by at least 10 local organizations and 300 members.

The complexity of the organizations attached to each layer increases as we get towards the centre. There are two basic structures that exist at all levels – the general assembly (labeled conference at territorial level and congress at national level) and the Political Bureau (the executive and leadership branch). The permanent delegation is an institution occurring for the first time at county level (territory) and includes the members of the Political Bureau, the leaders of the territorial organization, and representatives from local organizations. At central level the components are similar, the representatives belonging to territorial organizations instead of local. Permanent Delegations meet regularly. At central level, the supplementary institution is the National Executive Council that is the main decision maker between the meetings of the Permanent Delegation. The relationship between these auxiliary institutions is of subordination from the broadest (General Assembly) towards the narrowest (the Political Bureau).

The candidate selection for national elections takes place at local level and the approval of the National Executive Council is necessary mostly as a formal issue. The local organizations send their proposals to the territorial organizations. A dual process occurs in this case generated by the results of the local elections. The candidates proposed by organizations with results above the average of the party are directly approved by the National Executive Council that mainly checks for general criteria regarding their eligibility (only procedural issues, nothing substantial). The candidates proposed by those organizations with results below the average are filtered by the Central Political Bureau and final lists are proposed for approval to the National Executive Council (Art. 68 of PNL statute 2009).

Summing up, candidates are proposed by local and regional organizations through the voice of the latter. This happens also because the regional organizations are formed at constituency level. Thus, they decide almost entirely upon the list of candidates. The less successful organizations require a supplementary filter at central level. In this respect, the statute of the party is quite vague and does not explicitly mentions the situations in which the

[39] The 2009 statute of PNL serves best the descriptive goal of this section. The provisions of the previous statutes are slightly different, but the logic of decentralized decision is similar. The 2009 statute explains best the roles of each organization in deciding the candidates.

Central Political Bureau can reject the proposals of territorial organizations. It only says that they also can propose candidates in the name of the least successful organizations (art. 70 of PNL statute 2009).

Thanks to its decentralized process of candidate selection the PNL could maintain stable and strong ties with its voters despite the numerous changes in its composition. As the candidate selection process took place mostly at constituency level, the splits and mergers could rarely influence it. Quite often, the splitters or joiners were underdeveloped in the territory, lacking regional or local organizations. Under these circumstances, a large part of the local organizations could continue using their methods to select candidates for the national elections irrespective of party's structural modifications. Moreover, the voters get accustomed with the decentralized process of candidate selection and the names of candidates are sometimes less relevant. For example, when splitters with territorial strongholds left the party, the PNL had to develop new local organizations able to take over. Although voters were not familiar with the new candidates, they could recognize the selection style. The party continued to select candidates at the local level and thus conveyed the same message of mirroring societal needs and closeness to voters. Consequently, the candidate selection process kept the communication with voters away from the shocks suffered by the party through splits and mergers; the direct result was a relatively constant electoral support received by the PNL even in harsh times (e.g. after a failed period in government).

The FKGP: The Electoral Failure of Candidate Centralization

The FKGP made its debut on the post-communist Hungarian political scene as a member of a surplus coalition (Wolinetz 2006) government next to the MDF and the KDNP. The FKGP continued the rich tradition of the Smallholders´ Party, a party of the land-owning peasantry, with a leading role in inter-war politics and a substantial vote share (57%) in the 1945 elections (Korosenyi 1998, 44). The FKGP and its predecessor formed the last government before communism and the first Cabinet in the aftermath of regime change. Following the ideology of its predecessor, the FKGP appeals to broad segments in society, but primarily to farmers, agricultural workers, and small businessmen. In general, the FKGP was characterized by traditionalist, nationalist, and anti-communist discourse (Enyedi 2006b, 178). An example of its traditionalist approach is represented by the key feature of the 1990 campaign manifesto that claimed a return to the 1947 property status and dismantling of the large-scale production units in agriculture (Racz 1991, 115). On these grounds, the FKGP's main political elite was recruited from members of the provincial middle class with agricultural backgrounds (Korosenyi 1998).

Given the FKGP's organizational roots, discourse, and candidate profile most of its voters were clustered in the rural areas. In the attempt to better

represent its core supporters, the FKGP opposed the sale of public assets to foreign buyers. From its perspective, the privatization implied a return of assets to their previous owners. The failure of the government to act in this direction determined the departure of the FGKP from the coalition in 1992 (Korosenyi 1998, 44). These inter-party conflicts within the governing coalition were complemented by intra-party splits in the FKGP. Its division into two parliamentary factions led to the loss of 40 parliamentary seats by the next elections (Nikolenyi 2011, 24). In 1993, the party was further fractionalized (Ilonszki and Kurtan 1993; 1994). The most important breakaway group from the Smallholders Party (EKGP) existed in the legislature as a faction without a party. Its only purpose was to maintain the government's majority (Agh 1997, 425). Table 3.2 includes all the splitters that gained at least 1% in the elections following the split.

The splits starting in November 1991 ended up with four different Smallholders' parties contested the 1994 election (Millard 2004, 115). The noisy internal life of FKGP – scandals within its national organization – was also mirrored at local level. For example, in Szentendre, a small town next to Budapest, its first local leadership was ousted by a new group, headed by the generally disliked owner of a big enterprise. In this particular case, corruption was intrinsically linked to the FKGP: the wealthy entrepreneurs used the FKGP organization for converting economic to political capital and the other way around. In return, they heavily sponsored the local FKGP newspaper (Javor and Rozgonyi 1994).

Table 3.2: The Splits of FKGP in the Post-Communist Period

Year	Party Splitter
1993	KOP
1993	EKGP
1993	KFKGP
1998	USZM
2001	KGPKGSP
2001	RKGP

Notes: The table includes the splitters that obtained at least 1% in elections. It excludes those splitters presenting candidates only in single member districts or did not run at all in the election after the split.

The period spent in opposition appeared to be beneficial for the FKGP in terms of internal conflicts. It presented itself in the 1998 elections as a unitary actor, gained 48 seats in the legislature, and entered a coalition government with the FIDESZ. However, this apparent unity proved fragile and short-lived; the party fractured again as a result of public scandals and pressure from the coalition partners. In 1999, the first tensions emerged between the FIDESZ and the FKGP

over the properties of the Vasas sports club. The FKGP MPs voted against the FIDESZ Minister of Youth and Sports (Bugajski 2002, 358-359).

In 2000 the poor management of the FKGP ministries negatively influenced the image of the governing coalition. There was a financial accounting scandal surrounding the FGKP's party leadership. Some FKGP MPs raised calls for the dismissal of the Minister of Environment (Pal Pepo), but Torgyan refused to do so (Bugajski 2002, 359). The situation ended with an resignation of this minister (Ilonszki and Kurtan 2001) after pressures put by the FIDESZ. In 2001, the FKGP was torn apart after the FIDESZ forced a prominent FKGP party leader and the Minister of Agriculture to resign and rejected his FKGP-nominated successor. The subsequent departure of one third of FKGP MPs (Nikolenyi 2011, 24) created a new internal split within the FKGP. The government avoided early elections as the remaining MPs continued to vote with the government (Ilonszki and Kurtan 2002). Consequently, in the eve of the 2002 election the FKGP was considerably weakened by conflicts with the government coalition partner FIDESZ and by unresolved internal issues (Batory 2002a, 532). The party received less than 1% of the votes in the first round compared to 13.2% in 1998. Due to its highly publicized internal conflicts and eventual disintegration, the FKGP lost credibility in front of its voters (Batory 2002b, 5). According to the figures on party membership (see Table 4.5 in Chapter 4), not even all members of the FKGP voted for the party (their percentage in the electorate was 1.99 in 2002).

The internal dissent, numerous institutional splits, and desertions of individual elite members from the FKGP were primarily caused by the leadership style of Jozsef Torgyan. Throughout the years this party leader remained a perennial source of controversy. The historical roots of the FKGP and the appeal to specific segments of society provided the FKGP a strong political identity. However, the maverick features of Torgyan led to an isolation of the FKGP by the rest of the parties until the 1998 election (Fitzmaurice 2000, Karacsony and Toka 2001). The militant nationalistic discourse of Torgyan in the 1990-1994 led to the 1992 split off from the governing coalition. The declared goal was the pursuit of a more populist policy. All those factions that did not accept the party leader's authority and policy were forced to leave the party (Bugajski 2002, 358). The 1998 change of rhetoric to a more moderate centre-right position did not alter the authoritarian decision-making of Torgyan. He stepped down from the position of party leader after the 2002 failure of the FKGP to enter Parliament when not much could have been saved.

The splits and internal dissent put an end to the FKGP's presence on the political scene. Despite visible similarities with the structural evolution of the PNL in terms of splits, the major difference between the two parties consists of the degree of centralization in reaching decisions. In the FKGP, the selection of candidates is made by the national presidium following the proposals coming

from the party leader. In the presence of such formal regulations and given the authoritarian features of Torgyan's presidency, no adaptation was possible. No responsiveness was visible to the desires of local organizations or internal factions. In such a context, the splits and departures of individual MPs severely affected the electoral performances of the party. The FKGP lost MPs in each legislature (Nikolenyi 2011), being thus a unique case within the Hungarian party system.

The poor performance from the 1998-2002 period spent in government shook the electoral credibility of the FKGP. Nevertheless, the image of the party was heavily damaged by the apparently endless internal conflicts. The centralized decision process within the party made things worse for the FKGP. The PNL had a similar failure in government between 1997 and 2001 and its splits weakened the party. However, its decentralized candidate selection brought to the fore new faces, not publicly compromised during the government period. In the FKGP this was not the case. As the local organizations did not have the formal power to nominate candidates, the party relied on Torgyan's choices.

To conclude, the different processes of candidate selection can represent valid explanations for the divergent paths of electoral survival and electoral volatility of two parties with similar structural evolutions. Both the PNL and the FKGP were internally divided, had numerous splits, and individual dissent. With a decentralized decision-making in selecting candidates the PNL avoided the numerous shortcomings derived from having a strong leader in charge of everything as happened with the FKGP.

Conclusions

This chapter has shown that there is empirical evidence supporting the relationship between the centralization of candidate selection for national elections and electoral volatility at party level in CEE. The way in which a political party selects its candidates for the legislative elections is closely related to the stability of its electoral results. The political parties that allow the local organizations to play an active role in the candidate selection process are less volatile than the other political actors. The theoretical underpinning of the relationship refers to a better capacity of such parties to respond to voters' needs and priorities; parties with decision reached at local levels are able to better adapt to constituency requests. This observation received added value in the CEE context where all political parties have national organizations and most of them prefer a relatively high involvement of the centre. The limitation of such involvement appears to make a difference in the electoral volatility. The practical implication of such a finding is directly observable: political parties that want to stabilize the preference of their voters can alter the selection procedures of the candidates.

The quantitative analysis revealed a moderate – but statistical significant – correlation between the index of candidate selection and electoral volatility. Although this statistical tool does not capture a causal mechanism, the detailed descriptions of the processes in CEE illustrated how and why the relationship is unidirectional from selection to volatility. Three supplementary findings deserve closer investigation. First, the CEE political parties appear to do what they preach. The bivariate correlation between the formal provisions of candidate selection and the evaluations of experts based on the practices of political parties is high (0.66, statistically significant at the 0.01 level). This implies that the measurement based on the analysis of party statutes – employed in this chapter – is a good approximation of the internal decision-making of political parties. Second, the detailed investigation of party provisions regarding candidate selection revealed nuanced information about these processes. The index of candidate selection indicates further difference between the CEE parties than those indicated by earlier research. Finally, the two case studies from the final section of the chapter illustrated specific means to reduce volatility through candidate selection. The similar internal dynamic leads to different electoral outcomes when the decision making is decentralized.

These quantitative results and qualitative assessments indicate how one aspect of the party organization – the decentralized candidate selection – has an influence on the electoral volatility. The following chapter takes this analysis one step further and focuses on the effect of another component of the party organization on electoral volatility. It investigates the role of membership organizations in shaping the electoral volatility of the CEE political parties.

Chapter 4 | A Mobilizing Network? Membership Organizations and Electoral Volatility

Introduction

The theoretical arguments presented in Chapter 1 point in the direction of a linkage between party membership organizations and the stability of electoral support. The two hypothesized relationships refer to the positive effects that large size (2a) and minimal variation in size (2b) of membership organizations can have on the level of electoral volatility at party level. This chapter provides an empirical test of both hypotheses. In doing so, it combines a bivariate statistical analysis with qualitative assessments. The latter describe the longitudinal development of party membership in CEE. At the same time, such qualitative insights investigate the cross-country and cross-party differences regarding party membership.

This chapter follows a deductive logic, starting with a section that describes the general development of membership organizations. It also presents several aggregate data that reveal cross-national and cross-party comparisons. The following section includes the empirical testing of the hypothesized relationships (H2a and H2b) between membership organizations and electoral stability. The general results indicate that size of membership has a limited role in explaining electoral volatility, whereas the variations in membership size are not related to the stability of electoral support. The third section focuses on cross-parties development of membership organizations and qualitatively assesses the relationship with electoral volatility. The final section includes two single case studies – the BSP in Bulgaria and the SLD in Slovakia – as illustrative ways in which the membership organizations are marginal in electoral volatility.

The Phases of Membership Development in CEE

Chapter 1 briefly explained why the expectations for large membership organizations in the post-communist countries are unrealistic. That is why instead of contrasting ideal types and searching for their applicability (e.g. cadre, elite, mass etc.) this section emphasizes the longitudinal development of membership organizations departing from the existing differences at the beginning o the post-communist period. As previously mentioned, the successor parties had the advantage of an organizational legacy when compared to the political competitors starting as intellectual clubs, like-minded circles of friends, passionate units of anti-communist fight, or revived parties.

The Initial Differences

In the aftermath of regime change, mostly due to the extensive membership pursued by the communist parties, the newly emerged political actors considered membership as a legacy of the past. Their discourse responded to and further fueled the existing anti-party feelings. The avoidance of the party label, of issues resembling party discipline, structured bureaucracy, and office-seeking behavior were symptomatic for most newly created umbrella organizations. For example, the Czech Civic Forum (OF) adopted "Parties for party members – Civic Forum for everybody" as one of main slogans for the first free elections in Czechoslovakia (Toka 1997, 5). Such attitudes combined with the structural and membership heritage (Kitschelt 1995) of the successors resulted in visible differences between the membership organizations of the political parties at the beginning of the post-communist period.

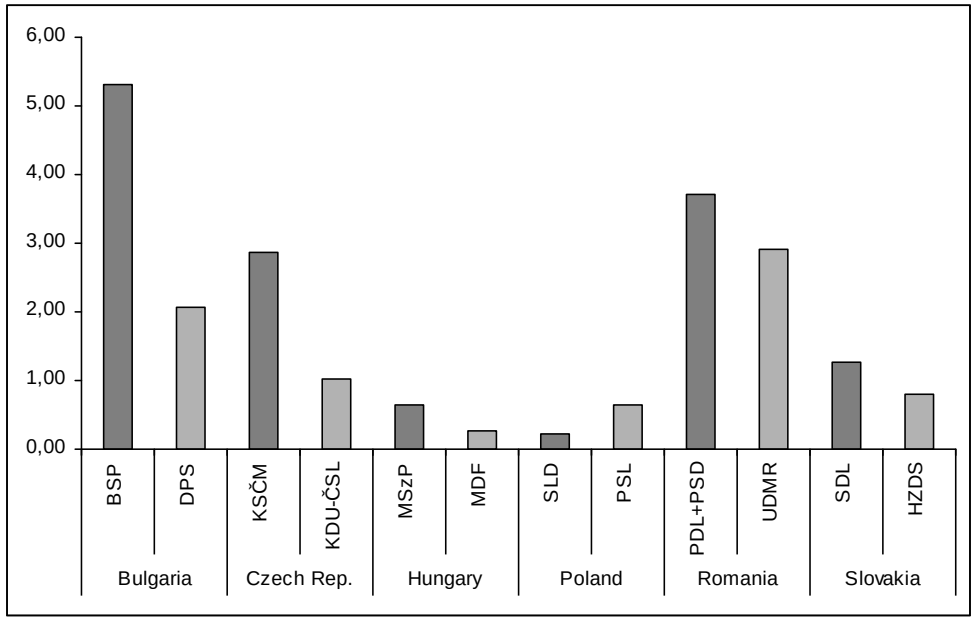
Apart from the public discourse of the newly emerged parties, their formation did not allow a lot of room for maneuver. Many actors were initially created as discussion partners for the communists in the Round Table Talks (Walsh 1994; Ester et al. 1998). This meant the legalization of parties operating as dissident/intellectual clubs, groups and circles in a clandestine manner during communism (Szczerbiak 2001a, 13) and the creation of anti-communist umbrella organizations gathering the opposition forces. The registration of these formations did not imply their conversion into articulated organizations. These political parties or electoral coalitions could rely neither on membership nor on extensive territorial organizations in the first elections. The poor membership and organizational structures was due to their embryonic form, loose organization, and ideological diffuseness (Berglund and Dellenbrant 1994).[40] At the same time, the revived parties (for details, see Kopecky 2001) failed to establish the organizational continuity with their previous existence and they could rely solely on the political memory as basis for mobilization (Waller and Karasimeonov 1996, 135).

Figure 4.1 depicts the levels of party membership of successor and newly emerged parties in the first elections. Among the newly emerged political actors, I selected those parties in the study with the highest membership rates (the vertical axis represents percentage of party members from the electorate). Even so, differences are visible: except of Poland, in all the countries the successor parties have considerably higher percentages of members compared with the best performer among the newly emerged category. The biggest discrepancy appears in the Bulgarian case where the BSP has the highest membership rate among the successor parties in the region. A

[40] One exception to this situation was Romania where the FSN also took the shape of an umbrella organization. Instead of anti-communist forces it brought together the successors (Ishiyama 1995; Ishiyama and Bozoki 2001; Bozoki and Ishiyama 2002; Pop-Eleches 2008, 466).

high level of membership is registered in Romania where the rates of the two successor parties are added (as they competed together in the 1990 elections). The successor parties from the Czech Republic are close to 3% membership of the total population, whereas the SDL in Slovakia appealed to slightly more than 1% of the population. The MSZP in Hungary and the SLD in Poland are the least successful successor parties in securing membership, the latter being the only case in the region with a smaller membership rate than another party in its country.

Figure 4.1: Levels of Party Membership (%) in the First Elections



Note: The figures for the Czech and Slovak parties are from 1992.

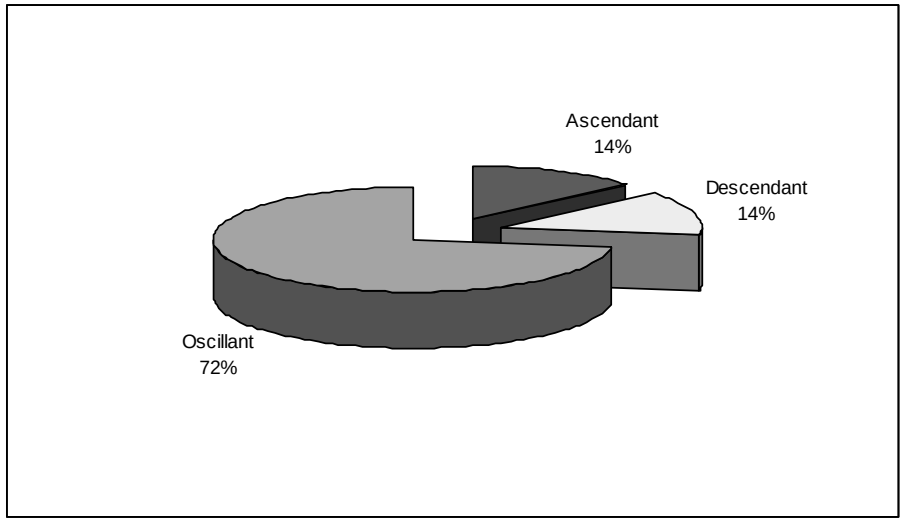
The relevant observation in Figure 4.1 is the high membership rate of the UDMR in Romania, with a level slightly higher than that of the KSCM, the third successor as membership performance in the region. The paradox for the UDMR was that the anti-party discourse determined many ethnic Hungarians to enroll and thus become members. By avoiding the party label and adopting a position in which the Alliance dissociated from political parties, the elites transformed their formation into an attractive entity for citizens. In reality, the functions fulfilled by the UDMR are those of a political party, starting with the electoral competition and ending with the policy proposals and implementation. As revealed in the next section of the paper, this was the highest membership rate they had. There are two possible explanations for the apogee of party membership in its initial period of existence: 1) the enthusiasm

of ethnic Hungarians and confidence in a new force to represent them after half decade and 2) the lack of alternative groups to promise the same thing. The appearance of other political formations targeting the same group and the disillusionment of ethnic Hungarians with the performance of the UDMR (Gherghina and Jiglau 2008) appear to be the explanations for the decrease of membership across years.

The Oscillating Paths of Membership Organizations

Despite a very good start in terms of membership organizations, none of the successor parties succeeded to maintain such high levels. In fact, most of them registered declines and oscillations. As Figure 4.2 reveals, 14% of the analyzed parties have ascendant trends, no successor party falling in this category. On the contrary, two of them (BSP and SDL) registered descending membership rates in the past two decades. A similar percentage of 14% constantly lost members between elections. Almost three quarters of the CEE political parties (72%) have oscillations regarding their membership rates, the favorable periods (i.e. gains of members) alternating with significant losses.

Figure 4.2: The Evolution of Membership Organizations for the CEE Parties



The general explanation for decreasing membership rests in the disappointment of people involved and party's inefficiency and ineffectiveness in tackling such attitudes. Most of the parties in this category (i.e. UDMR in Romania, MKP in Slovakia, and SDS in Bulgaria) initially mobilized large amounts of members, but as time passed the enthusiasm went down especially that the rhythm in which policies were implemented differed considerably from the initial expectations. The ethnic parties went down on membership as soon

as their activities did not meet to the level of expectations. Their trend is peculiar when compared to the general tendency of membership for all investigated parties: the average level of membership increased from the first (0.8%) to the second election (0.9%) and then decreased below the initial level (0.7% for the third election and 0.65% for the fourth). The apogee for party membership in a comparative perspective was between the first and second elections. As the vast majority of studied parties last from the beginning of transition, this evidence supports the theoretical underpinnings and descriptions for the region (see Chapter 2).

The first elections were often held in a tensed environment, immediately after the negotiations and the development of political parties could be observed only after setting the first government, with the first legislature at work, and with a constitution on the working table. Thus, in the second elections parties benefited of most members compared with the rest of their development and most of them are not able to maintain this level. Only 14% increase their membership rolls out of which almost three quarters are parties established after the mid-1990s. Thorough explanations for this situation are provided in the following section delving into the national contexts.

The key observation at aggregate level is the absence of stable longitudinal trends. This general picture bears relevant implications that contrast previous findings. Mair and van Biezen (2001) illustrate how party membership generally decreases over time at country level. Their findings are valid also for the CEE countries, with more people getting involved into party activities at the beginning of the democratization period. This conclusion does not hold when looking at the party level for the entire post-communist period at regional level.[41] The relevant parties from the political scene (i.e. those included in this study) are not characterized by the decrease of membership organizations. Instead, progresses in attracting members are followed by drops and vice versa. There are only isolated instances (e.g. ODS or MSZP) in which the oscillations are smooth, with relatively small discrepancies between elections. Such situations indicate consistent attitudes of the parties towards members, keeping a rather constant number of people actively involved in the internal life.

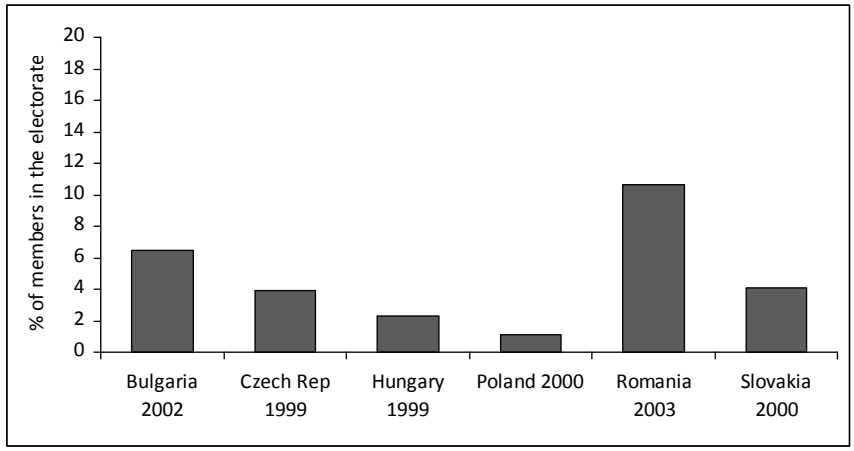
Low Membership Rates

Figure 4.3 shows country-level membership rates after three post-communist elections. These are the cumulated percentages of all parties within the political system. Romania has the highest membership rate, with slightly more than 10% of its voting population being enrolled into political parties. Without

[41] The following section indicates major oscillations at country and party levels.

diminishing the efforts of the Romanian political parties in developing membership organizations, this percentage is augmented by the election laws and counting accuracies. Various laws during the post=communist period require parties to have a few thousands members (10,000 to 25,000) to register in the electoral competition. Furthermore, most parties do not update their database and even if they have as a requirement the payment of a monthly fee, members who do not comply are not thrown away. To conclude, the high percentage of party members in Romania may have procedural bases rather than substantive meaning.

Figure 4.3: Levels of Party Membership (%) across CEE (Country Level Data)



Source: Mair and van Biezen (2001), Szczerbiak (2001a; 2001b), Official Party Registry in Romania (2003), Weldon (2006), Spirova (2007).

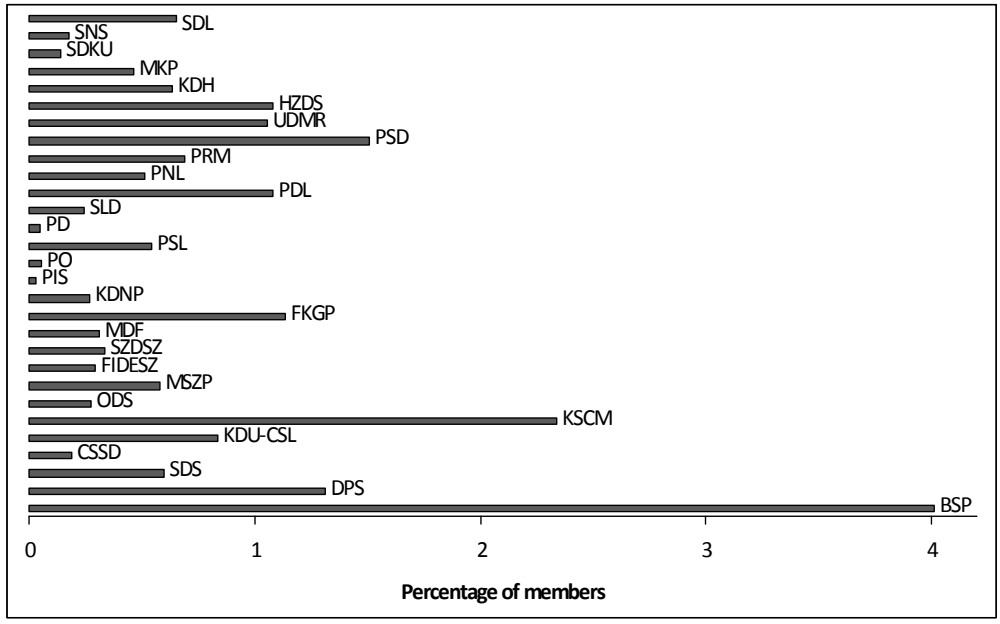
At the other extreme, Poland has less than 1.5% of its voting population enrolled in a political party. This percentage comes as no surprise as the interest and involvement into politics is generally low in post-communist Poland. It is the only state in the region where the turnout was constantly below 50%. Szczerbiak (2001a, 63) provides three possible explanations for the low membership in Poland, all being encountered at regional level as emphasized in chapter 1. First, the political parties see the enrolled electorate as a worthless electoral asset and see their recruitment and retention as inefficient use of resources. Second, there are poor logistic resources that hardly allow parties to properly recruit members and to support local initiatives. Third, the hostility and lack of trust in the political parties is still widespread and thus diminish incentives to enroll into political parties.

Figure 4.4 illustrates the average size of membership organization – calculated as percentage of party members from the electorate – for each political party. The distribution of membership in CEE allows drawing three

main conclusions. First, the vast majority of political parties has a minimal membership organization. The members of most parties account for less than 1% from the total share of voters. Only two political parties (BSP and KSCM) have more than 2%. However, their average size of membership organizations is distorted by the initial high numbers of members (both are successor parties). Moreover, their membership is in decline starting with the first or second election. Consequently, this indicates that no claim regarding mass membership is supported by empirical evidence in CEE.

Second, despite relatively low levels of membership, there is wide variation between the organizations established by political parties. Such variation is recorded both across countries – thus complementing the trends observed in Figure 4.3 - and across the political parties within the same party system. Third, all parties with large membership organizations were formed at the beginning of the post-communist period. Some of them are either revived (FKGP) or successors (BSP, KSCM, PSD, or PDL). In general, the organizational legacy of the former communist parties helped the successors to reach higher levels of membership compared with the rest of competitors.

Figure 4.4: Levels of Party Membership across CEE Political Parties (Average Percentages)



However, as illustrated by Figure 4.4 and by the case study of the SDL, being a successor does not always guarantee a large membership organization. Instead, the moment of formation and the length of existence on the political

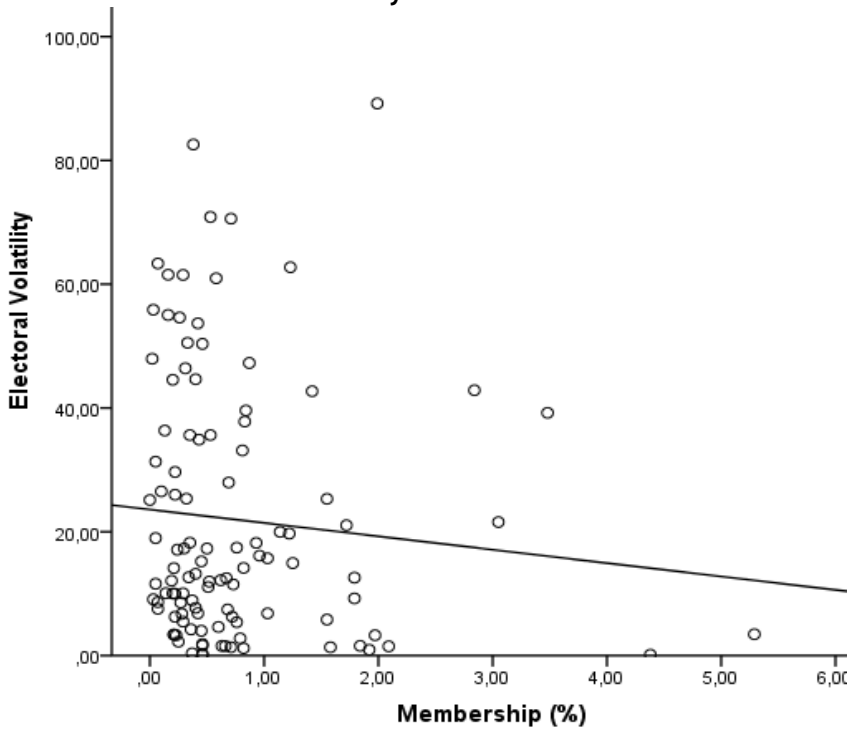
scene appear to be goo explanations for large size membership organizations. Practically, none of the parties emerging along the way managed to develop their membership organizations. The PRM is one of the performers in this category, whereas the PIS or the PO have the lowest membership rates in CEE.

In light of these general trends and figures, the next section investigates the relationship between the size and variation in size of membership organizations and the electoral volatility at party level.

Party Membership and Electoral Volatility: A Weak Link

Overall, the relationship between party membership and electoral volatility is weak. Figure 4.5 graphically depicts the distribution of the CEE political parties on two dimensions: the electoral volatility and party membership. Membership is calculated as the percentage of party members from the electorate. This distribution allows a general observation that may explain the absence of a strong relationship between party membership and electoral volatility.

Figure 4.5: The Distribution of Parties According to their Size of Membership and Electoral Volatility



There are minor cross-party differences in terms of membership size. As already pointed out in the previous section, the levels of party membership tend to be low for the vast majority of CEE parties. Figure 4.5 illustrates how

most political parties have less than 1% members. At the same time, there are major cross-party differences with respect to the electoral volatility. There is considerable variation of electoral volatility among political parties with similar percentages of membership.

The broad picture reveals the existence of a weak negative relationship that goes in the hypothesized direction. The political parties with large membership organizations have slightly lower levels of electoral volatility than those with very limited percentages of members. In this sense, it can be observed that most political parties with membership organizations larger than 1% have relatively low levels of electoral volatility. The parties with the highest percentage of members have very low levels of electoral volatility. However, this tendency is quite weak. The statistical analysis confirms this visual observation.

The statistical analysis reveals a weak negative correlation (-0.10) between the size of membership and the electoral stability of political parties, both at general and country level (Table 4.1). A large membership organization rarely coincides with lower levels of electoral volatility. The relationship also lacks statistical significance. A closer look at country level may explain why this is the case. With the exception of Hungary, there is weak empirical support for the hypothesized relationship (without statistical significance). The weakest correlation is observed in Poland (the value of the coefficient is -0.10). This is mostly due to the fact that some of the recently emerged political actors (PIS and PO) are not successful in creating large membership organizations (see Figure 4.4), but have relatively lower levels of volatility compared to the rest.

Table 4.1: The Relationship between the Size of Party Membership and Electoral Volatility

	Correlation coefficient	N
General	-0.10	109
Bulgaria	-0,15	11
Czech Republic	-0.20	16
Hungary	0.25	22
Poland	-0.10	18
Romania	-0.26	20
Slovakia	-0.16	22

Notes: Reported coefficients are *Pearson's r*.
****** statistical significance at 0.01 level.
***** statistical significance at 0.05 level.

The correlation coefficients are generally small with slightly higher values in the case of Romania and Hungary. In Romania the sign of the coefficient indicates a negative relationship between the party membership and the electoral

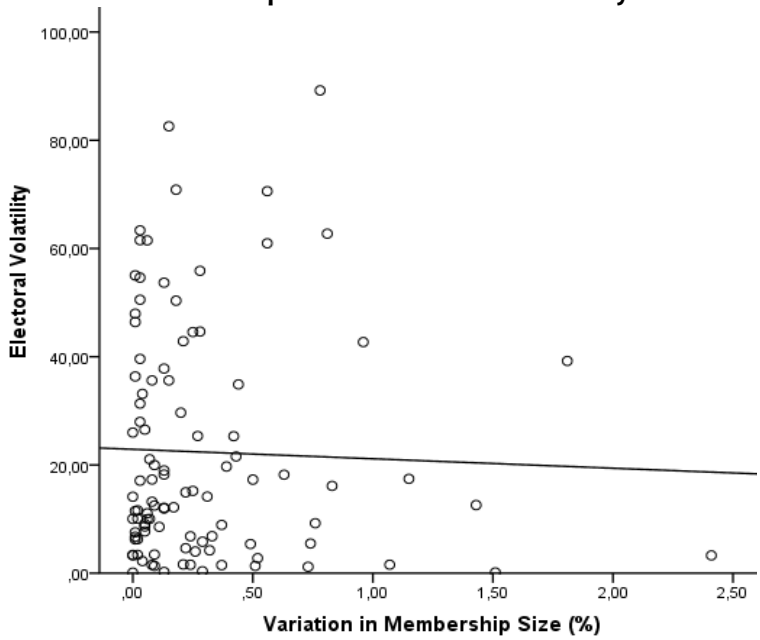
volatility. Those political formations that develop stronger membership organizations reduce the volatility. In Romania, the electoral stability of PSD and its increased claims to become a mass party together with the stable performance and high membership of the UDMR lead to the above mentioned result. Furthermore, the development of the PDL and its increasing stability in the electorate represents an asset for a stronger correlation in future elections.

The relationship has a similar strength in Hungary, but in the opposite direction. This result is counter-intuitive as Hungary was the usual suspect to observe a positive relationship between membership rates and level of electoral volatility. Given the complex electoral setting in Hungary, such small differences may count both in the networking among other voters and in electing MPs in the single member district where every vote counts. Although there are no large discrepancies between parties in terms of party members, those with less members are less volatile. The correlation coefficient would have increased if the FKGP, the largest in terms of membership, would have maintained the trend observed until 1998, its failure to enter the Parliament in 2002 dramatically increased the electoral volatility. At the same time, the FIDESZ and the MSZP, the two stable political parties in Hungary had for long time small levels of membership.

This evidence shows weak support for the hypothesized relationship between the size of membership and electoral volatility (2a). The empirical test of hypothesis 2b illustrates that even this weak linkage vanishes. Figure 4.6 graphically depicts the distribution of the CEE political parties according to the variation in membership size (calculated as difference in the percentages of members) and electoral volatility.

The vast majority of parties register small variations in the size of their membership across time. There are isolated political parties for which the percentage of members varies greatly from one election to another (e.g. BSP in 1997 or PDL in 2000); the maximum variation is almost 2.5% (KSCM in 1998). All these major differences are drops of membership (see the following section). The points in Figure 4.6 indicate a broad variation of the electoral volatility for the political parties with similar (little) variation in their size of membership. This empirical observation may explain the absence of a relationship between these two variables (see also the line in Figure 4.6).

Figure 4.6: The Distribution of Parties According to their Variation of Membership Size and Electoral Volatility



The statistical analysis confirms the above specified empirical observations. Table 4.2 includes the correlation coefficients between the variations in membership size and electoral volatility. Overall, there is no empirical relationship between the variation of membership organization size and the electoral volatility.[42] The value of the correlation coefficient is very small, with no statistical significance. The absence of an empirical relationship between these two variables complements the statistical results of hypothesis 2a in illustrating the limited role played in CEE by the membership organizations in diminishing the level of electoral volatility. Whereas size of membership brings marginal benefits with respect to electoral volatility, the variation in size appears to have no impact on it. Consequently, referring to electoral volatility, the CEE political parties are better off if they pursue the increase of their membership organization than its stability. In light of these poor results, the theoretical benefits of membership mentioned in Chapter 1 appear to find no correspondent in reality. When members create mobilizing networks, their effect is rarely visible for more elections.

[42] The number of cases differs from the previous table due to some missing values.

Table 4.2: The Relationship between the Variation in Membership Size and Electoral Volatility

	Correlation coefficient	N
General	-0.03	102
Bulgaria	0.50	7
Czech Republic	-0.23	16
Hungary	0.19	21
Poland	-0.12	18
Romania	0.01	19
Slovakia	0.01	21

Notes: Reported coefficients are *Pearson's r*.
****** statistical significance at 0.01 level.
***** statistical significance at 0.05 level.

At country level, the cases can be divided in three categories: no relationship, weak relationship in the hypothesized direction, and evidence against the hypothesis. In Romania and Slovakia the variation in membership size is not related with volatility. The political parties in the Czech Republic and Poland have a very weak tendency to have large variations in the size of their membership organizations when they have lower levels of electoral volatility. The Bulgarian and Hungarian parties display the opposite trend: the relative constant number of members is correlated with higher levels of electoral volatility. The relationship for Bulgaria is problematic given the small amount of data, only seven cases being available. The high value of the coefficient indicates a medium relationship in the Bulgarian case. The empirical evidence does not support the hypothesis 2b. A closer look at the developments of party membership across time and parties provides valuable insights that may explain the weak or lack of empirical support for the expected relationships (hypotheses 2a and 2b).

Membership Organizations and Electoral Volatility: A Cross-Party Perspective

This section focuses on the development of membership organizations at party level. By using a country level approach, it shows the similarities and differences observable between the political parties from the same political system. The comparisons include both the absolute number of members and the share of membership as a proportion of the electorate.

Bulgaria

Table 4.3 includes the available figures for the Bulgarian parties. The party with the highest membership rate is the BSP, the successor party: it starts as the party with most members in the 1990s and maintains until 2005 significant differences between its membership rolls and the rest of the analyzed parties.

If we compare the percentage of members from the electorate belonging to the BSP (Table 4.3) in 2001 with the country's aggregate percentage of members (Figure 4.3), this party alone enrolls more than half of the Bulgarian members. Its importance in terms of membership organization is also reflected on the political scene. The BSP has the most relevant electoral performances and presences in government among the three Bulgarian parties included in this analysis.

Table 4.3: Party membership in Bulgaria

	Absolute numbers				
	1991	**1994**	**1997**	**2001**	**2005**
BSP	365,567	370,333	253,802	210,961	191,000
DPS	140,000	n/a	n/a	32,000	95,621
SDS	n/a	35,000	n/a	60,000	29,000
	Percentage of the electorate				
	1991	**1994**	**1997**	**2001**	**2005**
BSP	5.38	5.29	3.48	3.05	2.84
DPS	2.06	n/a	n/a	0.46	1,42
SDS	n/a	0.50	n/a	0.87	0.43

Sources: Ishiyama and Breuning (1998), Millard (2004), Spirova (2005), van Biezen and Mair (2009), and the official party records.

The DPS had before the 2005 elections over 95,000 members, being the second party in the country after the BSP. Its continuity and presence into government represent possible incentives for ethnic Turks to join the party. Similarly to UDMR, it started with a very high number of members, probably enthusiastic of the idea of political representation. The rolls decreased to less than a quarter until 2001 and increased until 2005. The high number of members in 2005 can be seen as the result of four years in government. This high number was not influenced by the fact that three other Turkish political formations oppose DPS's politics. Although they have united to form the Balkan Democratic League, their support is reduced and failed to enter Parliament in the 2005 elections. At the latter, the DPS came third and entered the coalition for a second consecutive term government next to the BSP and the NDSV.

Unlike the UDMR in Romania, the DPS membership registered a relevant increase between two electoral moments. As previously mentioned, this corresponds to the government period of the party. Following the 2005 apogee of their membership rolls, the DPS secured an unprecedented 20.3% in European elections in 2007. Its strong mobilization of the addressed target group appears to be linear with the capacity to increase membership rates. The BSP registers an opposed trend, losing more than one third in its absolute

membership figures in approximately one decade (between 1994 and 2005). Such a trend can be explained by the terms spent out of office by the BSP between 1997 and 2005, the confidence and support of Bulgarians in the party being altered. Even with these losses, the party continues to have the highest membership in the country and being surpassed at regional level only be the Romanian Social Democrats. As a comparison, in 2005 the BSP had more members than all the Hungarian parliamentary parties (see Table 4.5).

The SDS is the party with the lowest membership rate in Bulgaria in 2005. It started in 1989 as a union of 11 political organizations opposing the communist regime and in 1990 six more parties joined (Waller and Karasimeonov 1996). This conglomerate is a possible explanation for their initial membership of 35,000, quite significant for a newly emerged political formation. The turbulent life of the party (i.e. splits and mergers, perceived government failures, corruption allegations etc.) did not transform the SDS into a popular party (Kolarova 2002) and its electoral success following the 1997-2001 term in office remained limited. In this environment, the party could not develop a strong membership organization. Table 4.3 illustrates the low SDS levels of membership, the major problem being again the few data points to draw substantial conclusions.

Czech Republic

Similarly to the Bulgarian case, the KSCM is the party with the highest membership organization in the entire party system. Its lowest number (from 2006) is slightly lower than the sum of members coming from the three other parties. The initial high level presented in Figure 4.2 is maintained throughout the entire period. In fact, between 1992 and 1996 the party registers a relevant increase in the number of members, also as a consequence of the separation from Slovakia and strong positions occupied by the KSCM in that matter. At the same time, throughout the entire post-communist period, the KSCM employed with priority the constituency representation rather than being animated by electoral catch-all strategies (Hanley 2001; 2002).

Furthermore, its organizational legacy allowed the party to build on solid bases and to enhance its membership. The KSCM managed to create a strong linkage with its members and thus create a relatively stable mass membership on which it relied for many years (Ishiyama 1999; Grzymala-Busse 2002b). Despite such mobilizing effects, the party witnessed a continuous exodus of party members starting in the second part of the 90s. In approximately two years, between 1996 and 1998, the party lost almost 200,000 members, a disproportionate share compared to what happened with the other four relevant parties in the system where gains and loses were considerably less (Mair and Van Biezen 2001, 17). The membership dropped to approximately 77,000 members around the 2006 elections and it is likely that

those remaining loyal to the party organization to belong to the older generation, with a strong leftist ideology (McAllister and White 2007).

Table 4.4: Party membership in the Czech Republic

	Absolute numbers				
	1992	**1996**	**1998**	**2002**	**2006**
CSSD	11,500	13,000	18,000	17,079	17,569
KDU-CSL	80,000	100,000	62,000	55,306	38,312
KSCM	222,000	350,000	160,000	128,346	77,115
ODS	22,000	22,000	19,000	18,432	29,429
	Percentage of the electorate				
	1992	**1996**	**1998**	**2002**	**2006**
CSSD	0.15	0.16	0.22	0.21	0.21
KDU-CSL	1.03	1.25	0.76	0.67	0.46
KSCM	2.87	4.38	1.97	1.55	0.93
ODS	0.28	0.28	0.23	0.22	0.35

Sources: Lewis (2000), Mair and van Biezen (2001), Kopecek (2002), van Biezen (2003), Toole (2003), and van Biezen and Mair (2009).

The KDU-CSL has the second strongest membership roll with an apogee coinciding with that of the KSCM (1992-1996). With an ideology dominated by Catholicism, this party is quite similar to the Communists with respect to its traditionally well-developed organization (it is a revived party) with solid grass-roots foundations at local level and material assets from the past (Klima 1998, 498). These resemblances may justify why these two political actors are the only that can be considered mass parties in the Czech Republic (Vlachova 2001; Kopecky 2006, 132-133). With a continuous increase of electoral support between 1992 and 2002, the KDU-CSL could rely on the eve of the 2006 elections on approximately one third of the members it got ten years before. Apparently, the initial stronger ties between the party and its members ended up in a less severe drop of membership compared to that of the KSCM. However, this situation had some downsides during the post-communist period, the party being less flexible in the negotiations with coalition partners due to wishes of its members (Deegan-Krause 2006, 105-106).

The two other parties from the Czech party system have minimal membership and there were a few occasions in which this issue influenced their recruitment procedures. For example, the ODS and the CSSD had to fill their lists with independent candidates (van Biezen 2003, 143). High problems occurred in the local elections where independents dominate (Brokl and Mansfeldova 1995; Kopecky 2006; Linek and Outly 2009). For example, in 1994, the KDU-CSL and the KSCM fielded candidates in more than 2,300

municipalities. In comparison, the ODS fielded candidates in nearly 1,700 municipalities, whereas the CSSD in nearly 800 municipalities (Deegan-Krause 2006, 261). The organizational procedures can contribute to this general problem: the local branches of the ODS and the CSSD meet less often than those of KSCM (van Biezen 2003, 143).

The emergence of the CSSD as an alternative to the KSCM (Hlousek and Kopecek 2008) and its stable success (Hanley 2004; Deegan-Krause 2006) did not increase significantly its membership organization. Instead, its rank-and-file stabilized around 18,000 for the last decade. The low electoral volatility and high stability of the CSSD membership partially explains the correlation coefficient for the Czech Republic in table 4.2. The ODS has a similar story of electoral success and weak membership organization. Although its initial number of members was twice higher than that of the CSSD, it slightly decreased until 2002 to approximately 18,000. The 1997 split of the party may have affected the initial membership roll, noticing a loss of 3,000 members between 1994 and 1998. The four years spent in the "real" opposition[43] between 2002 and 2006 did not only secure the winning of the subsequent elections, but also allowed a relevant increase of the membership organization with more than 50%.

Hungary

The Hungarian political parties are characterized by low and extremely low membership rates that sometimes raise difficulties in filling lists of candidates (Ilonszki and Kurtan 1995; Ilonszki 1999; van Biezen 2003) or in the penetration of local politics in villages (Enyedi and Toka 2007, 149). The membership figures from 2006 are not very different from those of 1990 with no great fluctuations in between. This picture indicates a general lack of mass membership; voters are reluctant to get involved in the internal working of the institutions they vote for.

The two parties dominating the Hungarian political life – the MSZP and the FIDESZ – have in 2006 the highest membership rolls. Although the MSZP built on the organizational grounds of the former communist party, it was usually second until recently. The hesitant electoral start, mainly caused by the difficulty to shake off its communist image, coincides with a loss of members. The difference between the 1990 and 1994 rolls has a few alternative explanations. On the one hand, the initial reported figure includes some of the people who were enrolled in the former communist party and did not have time to withdraw until the official figures were released. On the other hand, it is possible to have members dissatisfied by the way in which the MSZP shaped

[43] In 1998-2002, ODS was also in the opposition, but signed the Opposition Agreement through which it provided support to the CSSD government of Milos Zeman.

its ideology in the post-communist period and thus left the party. Irrespective of the reasons, it is quite clear that the MSZP can count on a low but stable membership organization between 1994 and 2006 (e.g. oscillations of 1,600 people).

Table 4.5: Party membership in Hungary

	Absolute numbers				
	1990	**1994**	**1998**	**2002**	**2006**
MSZP	50,000	36,000	37,000	37,600	36,000
FIDESZ	5,000	15,000	13,000	16,500	39,932
SZDSZ	15,000	35,018	16,000	27,000	20,000
MDF	21,000	27,000	23,000	25,000	11,000
FKGP	40,000	64,378	98,000	120,000	n/a
KDNP	3,500	28,203	26,500	n/a	17,000
	Percentage of the electorate				
	1990	**1994**	**1998**	**2002**	**2006**
MSZP	0.64	0.46	0.46	0.62	0.71
FIDESZ	0.06	0.19	0.16	0.27	0.79
SZDSZ	0.19	0.45	0.20	0.45	0.40
MDF	0.27	0.35	0.29	0.42	0.22
FKGP	0.51	0.82	1.22	1.99	n/a
KDNP	0.04	0.36	0.33	n/a	0.34

Sources: Agh (1995), Toka (1995), Balazs and Enyedi (1996), Korosenyi (1998), Toka and Enyedi (1999), Mair and van Biezen (2001), van Biezen (2003), Toole (2003), Spirova (2007), and the Annual Official Report of Political Parties (2001-2006).

The membership of the FIDESZ follows a similar pattern with its electoral success. Founded in 1988 by 37 young intellectuals as a liberal alternative to the communist regime (Batory 2007, 268), the FIDESZ grew rapidly and by 1990 had 79 candidates for 136 single-member districts (Lomax 1996: 35; Millard 2004: 159). At that moment, the party could practically rely on 5,000 members. The party approached the second elections with a membership organization of 15,000 (Spirova 2007: 128). It gained popularity with the ideological shift towards conservative positions until the 1994 elections, but this caused also a split with the opponents of this measure leaving the FIDESZ before the 1994 elections (Lomax 1996: 38).

As a result of the shift, the FIDESZ occupied the MDF's previous place on the political scene (Lomax 1999) and became successful in the consequent 1998 elections when it also led the coalition government. When holding office its membership slightly increased to 16,500 members. Its changes of labels in

1995 into the FIDESZ-MPP and the FIDESZ-Hungarian Civic Union (MPSZ) in 2003 went along with the formation of a centre-right identity capable of attracting voters from multiple societal segments (Enyedi and Toka 2007, 150). The latter modification is accompanied also by a relevant increase in the membership rolls: the FIDESZ double the number of members between 2002 and 2006 although it was in opposition.

The MDF, the FKGP, and the KDNP formed the first government of post-communist Hungary. In less than a decade, their electoral fortunes knew a dramatic shift with the MDF and the KDNP being able to get into Parliament only after coalitions with other parties. The initial membership of MDF and FKGP was among the highest in the initial elections. The conservative-nationalist MDF attracted a reasonable amount of members due to its protest discourse in 1989. Its membership organization was relatively stable for more than a decade. A split of the party – with most MPs leaving the party – before the 2006 elections reduced the number of members to less than half.

Although the figures indicate the FKGP as the party with the largest membership in Hungary, there are at least two problems. On the one hand, the part had a regionally concentrated membership base that did not allow it to field candidates in every single-member district (Enyedi and Toka 2007, 151). On the other hand, its reports are suspected of gross inflation. For example, according to these figures, not even half of their 2.2% members in the electorate cast its vote for the party as it got 0.8% in the legislative elections. Re-emerged after the fall of communism as a historical party, the FKGP was characterized by internal conflicts that eventually led to splits in 2001 (Sitter and Batory 2004). The KDNP started with the smallest organization and things did not alter dramatically since then – in 2006 only the MDF has a smaller organization than the KDNP. The stable electoral support in the first two elections was accompanied by a steady increase in membership to slightly less than 30,000 members. The failure to enter parliament and the necessity of a coalition with the FIDESZ is reflected in a loss of members to the level of 17,000 in 2006.

The SZDSZ started as a party opposing the communist regime and the second place received at the 1990 elections suggests its strong appeal. It is the party characterized by continuous oscillations in terms of membership. Until the 1994 elections the SZDSZ doubled its number of members, but got to the initial level four years later. The party is characterized by two periods of electoral stability: one at a relatively high level around 20% in 1990 and 1994 and another at low level of success around 5% between 1998 and 2006. The oscillations of membership appear to be indifferent to such stability trends. Instead, the SZDSZ losses members when it governs. Both increases of membership took place when the party was in opposition and whenever it was incumbent the losses were as relevant as the previous gains.

Poland

The Polish parties surveyed in this book pursue rhetorical commitments to developing party membership bases and establishing basic organizational networks on the ground (Szczerbiak 2001b). However, none of them had organized a central membership recruitment drive nor had explicit development strategies at national level (Szczerbiak 2001a, 113). Only the isolated case of the PSL is empirically consistent with claims related to mass membership. Formed in 1990 as the organizational successor of the United Peasant Party (ZSL), a satellite of the former communist party, the PSL traced its tradition to the peasant movement dating back in the 19th century (Szczerbiak 2001c, 96). Thus, the party combines organizational assets from its communist-era predecessors with a relevant rural base ending up with the most impressive membership roll within the Polish party system. Moreover, the party maintains strong connections with the Voluntary Firemen Association, a network that represents a stable the source of votes and members (Jasiewicz 2007, 103). Stability appears to be the characteristics of the PSL not only in terms of votes – its performance evolves around 8-9% with quite low volatility – but also in terms of membership. This was relatively constant above 150,000 members with a drop in 2005.

Table 4.6: Party membership in Poland

	Absolute numbers					
	1991	**1993**	**1997**	**2001**	**2005**	**2007**
PIS				2,500	6,000	22,000
PO				5,000	15,000	32,000
PSL	180,000	190,000	150,000	150,000	120,000	160,000
PD	15,000	18,000	14,000	22,000	10,000	1,800
SLD	60,000	60,000	60,000	87,000	80,000	72,000
	Percentage of the electorate					
	1991	**1993**	**1997**	**2001**	**2005**	**2007**
PIS				0.01	0.02	0.07
PO				0.02	0.05	0.10
PSL	0.65	0.69	0.53	0.48	0.40	0.52
PD	0.05	0.07	0.05	0.07	0.03	0.01
SLD	0.22	0.22	0.21	0.30	0.26	0.24

Sources: Gebethner (1996: 130), Mair and van Biezen (2001), Szczerbiak (2001a; 2001b; 2001c), Grzymala-Busse (2002a), and Jasiewicz-Betkiewicz (2003).

The SLD was initially a conglomerate – dominated by the Social Democracy of the Republic of Poland (SDRP) – including several trade unions, youth, women's, and social organizations that enjoyed benefits during communism

(Zubek 1995; Szczerbiak 2001c, 95-96). Its membership was built on this cluster of various organizations and on the inherited organizational structures from the communist Polish United Workers' Party (PZPR). Apart from the human resources, the SLD also took over the infrastructure (e.g. buildings) of the PZPR (Grzymala-Busse 2002a). On these grounds, the SLD could rely on a significant roll of members driven by their interest to avoid change (Szczerbiak (2001c, 116), but still did not reach a comparable level with the PSL. Its ideological monopoly on the left of the political spectrum for over a decade (Jasiewicz 2008) may explain the relatively stable amount of members. The organizational transformation and change of name in 1999 marked an increase in the membership rates with almost 50%. This was the last increase of the number of members as the following elections of 2005 and 2007 witnessed gradual losses.

Rooted in the Solidarity trade union, the PD did not persuade relevant amounts of voters to become members. The numerous splits and organizational transformations made unlikely a major boost of the membership in the PD across time. There are minor oscillations in the membership rolls until 2006 when it dropped dramatically to 1,800. Its merger in 1994 with the Liberal Democratic Congress (KLD) affected the already low number of members that decreased below the initial level. Although the following period – coinciding with a term in government – marked a slight increase, in the eve of the 2001 elections a few prominent members left the party to join the PO. The PD failed to enter Parliament in 2001 and its membership decreased to less than half until 2005. A new restructuring of the party in 2005, when it got its current name, appears to have lead to a severe loss of members until 2007. Emerged in 2001 from parts of the AWS, the PIS and the PO have a remarkable positive evolution in terms of membership between elections with figures in 2007 nine and six times higher than the initial levels. Both parties dominated the Polish arena in the most recent decade and this may be an explanation of their rapid development in terms of membership. Despite this trend, the levels are still very low compared with the performers PSL and SLD.

Romania

The Romanian political parties are characterized by various approaches towards the issue of party membership. With the most specific regulations about members in the CEE region, the absolute figures of membership are among the highest in the region. This situation is influenced by the fact that the successor party (FSN) split early in the transition and thus generated two organizationally strong competitors: the PSD and the PDL. By 1996, both parties had more than 300,000 members. However, their different approaches towards organization were visible from the separation. FSN's split in 1992 followed the divergence of opinions within the bloc: Petre Roman, recently dismissed from the prime-minister position at that time, won the elections

against president Iliescu's ideological group. Roman's party remained FSN (further PD and PDL), whereas the losers of the FSN internal elections formed the Democratic National Salvation Front (FDSN, later PDSR, and finally PSD) (Crowther 1998; Pop-Eleches 1999).

In theory, the PDL inherited FSN's organizational structure and membership. In practice, the departure of key figures of FSN determined a massive migration of members and local organizations to the splitter (PSD). The latter proactively worked to form its organization and was oriented towards the enlargements of its membership base. The result was a slow increase of the membership rate until 2004, the following four years being marked by a sudden drop. The PDL was less active, being satisfied with the remnants of the FSN membership. The consequence was a severe decrease of their membership with two thirds in a period when they governed the country.

Table 4.7: Party membership in Romania

	Absolute numbers				
	1992	**1996**	**2000**	**2004**	**2008**
PDL	n/a	330,000	135,288	148,992	153,333
PNL[44]	n/a	n/a	120,115	73,185	116,134
PRM	15,000	72,000	218,002	210,827	106,797
PSD	60,000	309,000	304,713	385,481	290,116
UDMR[45]	301,000	267,000	145,000	110,000	85,000
	Percentage of the electorate				
	1992	**1996**	**2000**	**2004**	**2008**
PDL	n/a	1.92	0.76	0.81	0.84
PNL	n/a	n/a	0.68	0.40	0.63
PRM	0.09	0.42	1.23	1.14	0.58
PSD	0.37	1.79	1.72	2.09	1.58
UDMR	1.84	1,55	0.82	0.60	0.46

Sources: Ishiyama (2001), the Official party Registry (2003; 2007), Preda (2005), Soare (2007), and data supplied by parties' headquarters.

In fact, with the exception of the UDMR that registers constant decrease of membership from its creation, the 1996-2000 period is the only time when a party in government losses members in Romania. For example, the second term of the PDL in government (2004-2008) marked a small increase of approximately 5,000 members. Their level of membership stabilized starting

[44] In the process of data collection for this book, the PNL officials declared that they were not aware of their membership levels for 1992-2000 since no central national register of members was maintained.

[45] UDMR had 500,000 members in 1990 when it was formed.

2000 when the party was reformed and a new leader – successful in getting two terms in office as president of the country – replaced Roman. Consequently, in 2008, the first two parties in terms of membership size are the PSD and the PDL with the former having twice as many compared to the latter.

The troubled organizational history of the PNL during the 90s (see Chapter 3) explains why records of membership were hard to keep. The first figures are available since 2004, one year after the most recent merger. The party was reorganized in 2001, with a new president who was supposed to avoid low electoral results like the one from 2000. Although not much was done explicitly with respect to the approach towards membership, the party became attractive in the eve of the 2004 elections and registered an increase with 50% of its membership organization while in government (2004-2008).

The remaining two political parties display contradictory patterns. On the one hand, for previously explained reasons, the UDMR dropped from half a million members in 1990 to less than 100,000 in 2008. This happens also on the background of not many formal requirements imposed by the UDMR to its members, the regulations being the most relaxed in CEE. On the other hand, PRM started with the smallest membership organization that increased five times by 1996, being also favored by a short-term presence in government. Its apogee of membership organization coincides with the best electoral result obtained by the party in 2000. Such increase is fueled by the discourse of its leader Corneliu Vadim Tudor who considers large membership as a source of legitimacy. Following those elections, the MP floor-crossing were accompanied by many local organizations changing together with their members the political affiliation. In 2008 when the party failed to reach the electoral threshold the membership was reduced to less than half compared to 2000.

Slovakia

The Slovak political parties have similarly low records of membership to the Hungarian parties. With the exception of the HZDS and the SDKU, the Slovak parties have in 2006 less members – both in absolute numbers and percentage of the electorate – than in the beginning. Half of the Slovak surveyed parties display constantly decreasing trends in the percentage of their members from the voting population (SDKU, SNS, and SDL). In this respect, Slovakia is unique across CEE as none of the previously examined countries had so many parties with continuous losses of members over time. Similarly to the successor parties in other CEE countries, SDL started with the largest membership roll due to its organizational legacies. However, throughout the 90s, the party was characterized by tensions between the intellectual modernizing leadership and old membership base (Haughton 2004a, 180). The evolution of membership in relation to the internal struggles and electoral performance is discussed in detail in the following section.

Table 4.8: Party membership in Slovakia

	Absolute numbers				
	1992♦	**1994**	**1998**	**2002**	**2006**
HZDS	30,000	40,000	72,200	40,000	35,370
KDH	26,352	27,888	29,541	27,400	15,297
MKP		40,000	11,600	12,034	10,500
SDKÚ			5,489	5,396	8,569
SNS	7,000	2,000	11,500	13,000♦♦	1,370
SDL	48,000	27,600	22,482	21,233♦♦	
	Percentage of the electorate				
	1992	**1994**	**1998**	**2002**	**2006**
HZDS	0.79	1.03	1.79	0.96	0.83
KDH	0.70	0.72	0.73	0.66	0.37
MKP		1.03	0.29	0.29	0.25
SDKÚ			0.15	0.14	0.13
SNS	0.19	0.05	0.32	0.31	0.03
SDL	1.27	0.71	0.53	0.38	0.37

Sources: Malová (1997), Haughton (2001), Ishiyama (2001), Kopecek (2002), Deegan-Krause (2006), Rybar (2006), and Rybar and Deegan-Krause (2008).
Notes: ♦The number is from 1993.
♦♦The number is from 1999.

The HZDS started with the second membership organization and had the largest in 2006. The longitudinal distribution of membership is symmetrical having the year 1998 as a peak. That is the year that coincides with the end of the HZDS domination in Slovak politics. Membership rates are related to the practices of the HZDS when in government: the party recruited numerous employees from the state administration with the promise of securing their jobs (Deegan-Krause 2006, 33). Such an explanation of the membership augmentation is plausible as the following four years when the HZDS ended up in opposition the level of membership decreased to the value of 1994.

Although in 2002 the HZDS was the largest single party in elections, it got into opposition mostly dues to its lack of coalition potential – apart from SNS there was not political party in Slovakia willing to get into a coalition with Meciar's party. This isolation was not beneficial for the membership rolls that continued to decrease. In fact, the nationalist and populist approach characterizing the HZDS (Carpenter 1997) and the SNS (Ramet 1997; Cibulka 1999; Mudde 2005) do not appear to attract numerous members. SNS has a modest membership organization that reached in 2006 a minimum of 1,370 members. The party claims to be the ideological heir of the historical party with the same name active from the second half of the 19th century until 1938. Not

even its continuous presence in Parliament (only in the 2002 elections SNS did not pass the electoral threshold) and terms in office helped improving the membership figures.

These country insights indicate various developments taking place within and across the party systems. Membership gains or loses can be associated to multiple events in the life of parties: organizational changes, incumbency, electoral alliances, splits or mergers etc. Overall, three general conclusions can be drawn. First, there is at least one party in each political system to pursue the enlargement of its membership base or to maintain the existing one within reasonable variation. Dramatic increases are rare in all examined countries especially in the direction of increasing membership. The attractiveness of political parties remained generally low and without specific incentives voters do not join parties.

Second, no systematic factor appears to be connected to the size and variations in size of the membership organizations. For example, although it explains the evolution of membership for particular parties, incumbency does not make a great difference across CEE. The statistical test (see chapter 6) reveals no empirical relationship between membership and incumbency. Furthermore, parties to the left do not appear to have necessarily more members than those to the right. It is more a spurious relationship in which the real cause is represented by the past of those parties. Connected with the last observation, there is a general tendency of the parties starting off with a large membership to maintain along the way. Most of the times, these parties are those with an organizational heritage (the successor parties). More importantly, the relationship between membership and electoral volatility appears to be weak. This was indicated both by the statistical analyses and cross-party comparisons from this section. What are the reasons for such a weak linkage? The following section tries to provide an answer by exploring the development of two successor parties with different electoral evolution and approaches towards membership.

Where Does the Mechanism Collapse?

The Introduction to this book explained that the purpose of the case study sections is to reveal how the statistically identified relationships work in particular contexts. The empirical evidence presented in this chapter indicated only marginal support for one of the two hypothesized relationships between party membership and electoral volatility. Accordingly, this section aims to illustrate how and why the membership organization was eclipsed by other organizational (e.g. leadership style or splits) and systemic factors (e.g. party competition) in shaping the stability of electoral support. Each party history illustrates how membership longitudinal development coincided only to a limited extent to that of the electoral volatility.

The two political parties presented in this section were chosen on the basis of their different levels of success in securing large membership organizations. Both BSP in Bulgaria and SDL in Slovakia are successor parties and inherited similar organizational assets. However, the former managed to maintain a high number of members and to remain an important actor in a system characterized by numerous entries and exits. On the contrary, SDL gradually lost more than half of its members and eventually disappeared from the political scene after a merger with a party created by one of its factions.

BSP: Between Members and Voters

Starting with the early days of transition, the BSP has been one of the most influential actors in the Bulgarian post-communist politics. Apart from the PSD in Romania, the BSP was the only successor party in CEE winning the first elections following the regime change. Since then it showed a remarkable capacity to persist as a main contender on the political stage despite harsh defeats in three rounds of elections (1991, 1997, and 2001). Despite winning the first elections, it lost power after being toppled by a general strike in late 1990; then lost the early elections of 1991. It spent three years in opposition, returned in government between 1994 and 1997, and ousted again in the context of poor economic performances. However, it showed considerable capacity to rebuild and returned to government in 2005.

The BSP's link with the Bulgarian Communist Party brought both advantages and disadvantages in the newly created context. The first years of transition saw the BSP trapped in the discourse of its predecessor, unable or unwilling to distance itself from its legacy. After Todor Zhivkov was ousted in late 1989 following an internal rebellion of the reformers, the new leadership broke ties with the former elite of the party, but did not embark a decisive path towards "social democratization". Until losing the elections of 1997, the discourse and program of the BSP maintained numerous references to the benefits of state economy, attacked capitalism, and developed a significant nationalist dimension. Moreover, the party made ambiguous references to NATO and EU membership (Spirova 2005; 2008). It was labeled as partly reformed (Ishiyama 1999, 97) and considered to adopt a leftist retreat strategy (Ishiyama 2006, 24).

The BSP took over the bulk of membership and infrastructural resources of the former communist party (Spirova 2008, 483). Among the 42 parties competing in the 1990 elections, only the BSP had consistent organizational structures throughout the entire country (Karasimeonov in Spirova 2005, 603). The transfer of membership organization did not happen by default. During the transformation phase (from a communist to socialist party) there was a renewal of membership affiliation to the party through the

participation in the referendum to decide the name change[46] (Baeva 2001, 245). This referendum illustrated a decline in membership – in April 1990 the party kept 73% of its members compared to 1989 – but remained nevertheless very significant in numerical terms: 726,000 members (Kumanov and Nikolova 1999, 122); this was almost 10% of the country's total population.[47] However, figures from the next year, when the party also lost the legislative elections, indicate a sudden drop to approximately half of this number (see Figure 4.4).

The inherited organizational infrastructure and membership of the former communist party provided the BSP leverage compared to all the other Bulgarian parties. Despite a constant loss of members, as Figure 4.4 illustrates, the BSP still maintained a higher number of members compared to any other political actor – 210.000 in 2001, 191.000 in 2005. It continued to be the wealthiest in terms of properties and financial resources (Spirova 2005, 606-608; Spirova 2008, 486). Moreover, newly-emerged Bulgarian parties saw the strong organizational structure as a successful strategy to win elections or at least to maintain political influence (Spirova 2005). Accordingly, they perceived the BSP as a trend-setter in the early stages of multiparty politics in Bulgaria.

The dynamic of membership organization can be divided in two different periods according to the amount of loss. The year 1997 appears to be the critical juncture. Prior to 1997, there is a dramatic decrease in the share of members – the party loses approximately one third of its membership organization. The harsh defeat in the 1997 elections forced a decisive change in leadership and style. A new reformist and pragmatic team of leaders, led by Sergey Stanishev, took the top seat in 2001 (and is still of the party today), after the former chairman, Georgi Parvanov[48], was elected as president of Bulgaria, and gradually set the party on the path towards real transformation into a European-style social-democratic one. This evolution was acknowledged by the Party of European Socialists that accepted the BSP in its ranks, after rejecting it since 1990 (Spirova 2008, 491-492).

The BSP benefited from this newly created public profile by slowing the pace of membership loss and regaining votes that promoted them in government in 2005. In this respect, an essential element meant to diminish the drop in membership was to change the way it regarded the form of membership. The BSP maintained the "traditional" members as a base for the

[46] In March 1990, the new leaders of the Bulgarian Communist Party asked all members of the party to vote in an internal referendum concerning the change of the name into "Socialist".

[47] We should also mention a second successor party in Bulgaria: the Bulgarian Agrarian National Union. It had been a satellite of the communist party before 1990. However, the party was affected by no less than 11 splinters in the first decade of democratic politics; therefore its relevance is minimal compared to that of the BSP (Spirova 2005, 604-605).

[48] Previously, the party had only two other presidents after the post-communist transformation began: Aleksandar Lilov (1990-1991) and Zhan Videnov (1991-1996).

party, but also tried to build around it a more flexible group of supporters (Krusteva 2003 cited in Spirova 2008). The decisive re-orientation of the party towards European-style social-democracy and the confirmation of this trend through gaining PES membership made the party more appealing to the younger generation and intellectuals. These new orientations contrasted with the nostalgic leftist discourse from the 90's and thus provided new ideological sources to potential members, activists, and voters. Moreover, the party appeared to benefit from the eight years spent in opposition (1997-2005) with respect to its relationship with the youth. By 2005, a small share of the young electorate remembered the Socialists for their poor economic performance or previous nationalist discourse during the early 90's. Instead, many became familiar to its image as an exponent of European social-democracy. Nevertheless, according to the Bulgarian media outlet *Dnevnik*, in 2005 only 9.4% of the BSP's members were aged below 35 (Website Dnevnik).

A supplementary organizational feature may further explain the dynamics of party membership. Such a feature is particular to BSP among the Bulgarian parties and refers to the creation of ideological platforms or factions within the party (Krusteva 2003 cited in Spirova 2008). One of these factions was DEMOS that caused the only splinter within the BSP. It left the party in 1993 and later became the Bulgarian EuroLeft, the only competitor alongside the BSP on the left side of the political spectrum. However, it did not manage to threaten the position of the official successor party, but gained additional defectors from the BSP, beside the initial members of the faction (Spirova 2008, 490). Millard (2004, 55) also notes that the internal divisions within the party have always been high, yet it managed to keep its unity. A potential explanation for the constant high number of members, compared to its internal opponents, is the undisputed dominance of the BSP over the left side of the ideological spectrum.. With the notable exception of the EuroLeft in the mid-90's, no other party came close to challenging the BSP's strong position. Furthermore, the electoral strategy of the BSP prevented any major internal dissent and migration towards other political parties. It participated in broad electoral alliances with smaller parties, it facilitated their access to Parliament, and consolidated its position as the main voice of the Bulgarian left.

The hypothesized relationship between membership organization and electoral volatility is well illustrated by the BSP in the first decade of its existence. Between 1991 and 1994 both the membership organization and electoral performance of the BSP were stable. The party gained 5,000 members between the two elections, a small number compared to the total of 370,000 displayed in 1994. The BSP had slightly better results in the 1994 compared to the 1991 election, with very low volatility. The large membership decrease from 1994 and 1997 is associated with a large volatility in the 1997 elections (39.22). The dramatic loss of members – almost one third of the total

share – corresponds to weakened support in society. The electoral support dropped to 22% for the alliance formed around BSP; thus, the electoral appeal of the party was even lower. As the membership organization continued to shrink from approximately 250,000 to 210,000 members, the party also lost electoral support. The 2001 electoral result was the worst in the entire post-communist history of the BSP. Summing up, for more than a decade the party membership and electoral support for the BSP followed similar trends. Major changes in the membership organization coincided with high levels of electoral volatility.

However, following the 2001 elections the leadership changes and discourse modifications were the measures that interrupted this linkage. Until 2005, the membership decreased to a level of approximately 190,000 members; according to the previous trend, the electoral volatility for the 2005 elections was expected to be smaller than in 2001. However, it increased given a boost in the electoral support for the BSP. Together with its allies, the BSP obtained 31% votes and formed the coalition government. The 2005 volatility is also the highest registered by the party. It was for the first time when the electoral performance improved on the background of decreasing membership.

Overall, the case of the BSP allows three relevant observations. First, despite a continuous loss of members, it secured the largest membership organization in Bulgaria and in CEE. In this respect, the party ensured the continuity of its organizational legacy. Second, the membership rates appear to influence the electoral performance of the party. Between 1991 and 2001 there was an immediate reaction of the voters to the changes in the membership organization. As soon as other elements got in the picture (e.g. leadership change), the size of membership could no longer predict volatility. At the same time, the relatively large membership organization (3-5% of the voting population) prevented the party from obtaining poor electoral results. The members developed social networks on which the party could rely even when the competition was fierce (e.g. 2001). Moreover, it ensured a solid electoral base on which the party could start building its comeback on the political scene in 2005.

SDL: The Lost Legacy

For the communists in Czechoslovakia, the end of 80s was marked by the rise of reformists among party's leadership. Peter Weiss, who later became one of the exponents of the Slovak social democrats in the '90s, was one of the main vectors of internal reform. In January 1990, his faction pushed for a significant change in the name of the party, adding the acronym SDL to the official communist label of the Slovak component (KSS). A year later, the party dropped the communist part of its name completely and remained as SDL,

while the KSS continued to exist as a radical communist splinter. The SDL broke all ideological ties with its communist predecessor and centralized its decision-making mechanism. It asked all the nostalgic elements of the former communist party to join its radical splinter – the KSS (Grzymala-Busse 1999). Weiss pushed for a reshuffling of the party's leadership, narrowing the membership of the Central Committee from 260 to 90 and later on concentrating the power in the hands of just 11 people, coordinating the entire local infrastructure (Grzymala-Busse 2002b, 94; Haughton 2004a, 179).

This structural reform was easier as the SDL took over the formal organization from communists. The centralized decision-making allowed the SDL to rapidly change its position on matters such as the economy or secularism when it felt that this would bring better electoral results. This change in discourse took place faster than in the case of other successor parties, such as those in Bulgaria, Poland, or Romania. SDL had initially a moderate position towards the free market in 1990. It switched to an openly liberal vision in 1993 and then back to a more critical discourse in 1995 (Grzymala-Busse 2002b). The SDL promoted through its discourse and programs the idea of a strong commitment to democratic values, in order to distinguish itself from the ruling HDZS, seen as populist, anti-minority and with authoritarian tendencies.

The membership organization had a special story. As part of the effort to break away from the past, the SDL leadership initiated a process of re-registration of the former communist party's members and to sign a declaration of support towards democratic values (Rybar and Deegan-Krause 2008, 504). For the BSP the re-registration was automatic for those members who participated in the referendum for the name change. The SDL opted for a different re-registration process based on the expressed willingness of the people to get involved. Following the re-registration, the SDL managed to attract less than a quarter from the members of the communist party (Kopecek 2002, 253). Thus, in 1992, it had 48,000 members (1.27% of the voters), the largest in Slovakia at the time.

Although the membership organization was not directly inherited, almost all SDL's members have also belonged to the communist party (Kopecek 2002). In this respect, the organizational and leadership heritage of SDL influenced people's decision to join the party. However, the fact that the re-registration took place on voluntary basis would suggest the existence of a rather stable number of members in the years to follow; this was not the case. By 1994, this number shrank to almost half and registered continuous decrease until 2002 when the number of members was around 21,000 (see Table 4.8). In absolute terms this number is not high, but it remains one of the highest in Slovakia. In 1998 and 2002, the SDL was the third party in terms of membership, following the HZDS and the KDH.

The SDL followed a sinuous path within the Slovak party system, itself marked by a high degree of instability. This is reflected in the volatility scores from the first 1992 elections until its ultimate failure in 2002: 70.59 in 1994, 70.86 in 1998, and 82.57 in 2002. Starting 2004 the SDL steadily transferred its membership and properties towards SMER (Rybar and Deegan-Krause 2008, 501).[49] At a glance, there is a relationship between the decreasing number of members and the increasing electoral volatility. The party relied on fewer members every election and this predicted its ultimate failure. However, there are two empirical dilemmas. First, there are other Slovak parties with more dramatic loss of membership (e.g. MKP) and still survived the electoral competition. Second, the loss of members does not always coincide to loss of votes, but with volatility (which marks also major gains). The severe decrease of membership organization between 1992 and 1994 (from 48,000 to 27,600) coincided with a major loss of electoral support. The explanation consistent with the statistical findings from this chapter is that the few members left in SDL were not able to mobilize a stable core of voters and that is why the party registered major oscillations. In practice, there were at least two intervening variables that can explain the instable electoral performance of SDL: the context of competition and the internal divisions.

The electoral performance in the 90's was heavily influenced by the strong position of the HDZS within the party system (Haughton 2004, 180-184). For instance, the ideological proximity to a party benefiting of large popular support could only harm SDL. In economic terms, the SDL's discourse was very similar to that of HZDS: the privatization combined with social equilibrium. In addition to what claimed by the SDL, the HZDS promoted a much more aggressive nationalist dimension that resonated with the population's newly discovered sense of identity. This originated in the independence and in the ongoing quarrels with the 10% Hungarian minority concentrated in the South of the country. SDL's strategic decisions to form a coalition with three other small left-wing parties were not fortunate. They did neither strengthen its role on the political scene nor establish it as the main voice of the left. The "Common Choice" coalition gained 10.41%, barely crossing the 10% electoral threshold for coalitions, the electoral input of the smaller parties being insignificant. An additional element that hampered the SDL's ability to evolve in a strong actor within the Slovak post-communist party system was the "more hard-line nature of the communist regime" in Czechoslovakia (Fisher 2002, 116). The population was reluctant to the SDL's appeals because of more negative feelings associated with the former regime and distrust transferred towards the SDL as

[49] Following the merger between the SDL and SMER, in 2005 a new Party of the Democratic Left, with the same acronym – SDL – was formed. This party is brand new, it cannot be considered the successor of SDL; it failed to gain any seats in the 2006 elections.

the main successor party. This may be also one reason for which almost half of the members left the party in less than two years following the independence.

Apart from the HZDS dominated structure of competition in the early '90s, the electoral performance of the SDL was also affected by the ongoing internal struggles. In 1994, before the early elections called by a new caretaker government dominated by the right, but in which the SDL was part, the first post-independence splinter took place, after Jan Luptak, a popular SDL figure, chose to leave the party and form the Workers' Association of Slovakia (ZRS). In only a few months after its birth, the new party gained 7.34%, presumably taking over part of the SDL's potential voters. In this context, the membership dropped by 43% compared to 1992. There were numerous internal divisions within the SDL emerging by the mid 90's. Peter Weiss, Robert Fico, Brigita Schmognerova, and Jozef Migas, who succeeded Weiss as president of the party in 1996, led competing factions within the SDL (Deegan-Krause 2006, 264-265). Migas' win in the party elections in 1996 illustrated a different distribution of power within the party: while Weiss's reformist win promoted centralization, Migas' support relied on strong influential local organizations (Deegan-Krause 2006). This de-centralizing trend within the party continued towards the end of the '90s, as the divisions within the central leadership deepened (Borz and Enyedi 2007; Rybar and Deegan-Krause 2008, 504).

These internal tensions continued after the 1998 entrance in the Christian-Democratic dominated government, a bitter personal struggle emerged between Weiss's pro-European camp and leftist hardliners. Robert Fico left the party in 1999 and formed *Smer*, who later became the main party in government, following a similar pattern of discourse as the HZDS's in the '90s. In November 2001, a new president, Pavol Koncos was elected, and forced Schmognerova, the finance minister, to resign, despite having the support of the prime-minister. Following her resignation in February 2002, she joined Peter Weiss in the formation of a new party, called the Social Democratic Alternative (SDA). Smer managed to gain 13.46% of the vote in the 2002 elections, taking over a quarter of the SDL's electorate from 1998, while the SDA failed to pass the threshold, with only 1.79%. However, the SDL performed even poorer, receiving only 1.36% of the votes (Haughton 2004, 186-187). Rather paradoxically, despite the two splinters between 1998 and 2002, the party lost only 1.000 members, counting 21.233 members at the time of the 2002 elections. Surprisingly, the first splinter of the SDL, the radical communist KSS, which had a poor performance during the '90s, managed to gain over 6% of the vote and enter Parliament. Between 1994 and 1998 the SDL continued to lose members, despite not undergoing another splinter within the party. At the time of the 1998 elections, it counted only 22.482 members.

These competition and organizational factors transformed the SDL in a unique case among the successor parties in CEE. It is the only successor party

that did not manage to persist on the national political stage. Its organizational legacy got lost along the way. The SDL did not adapt to the political competition, took wrong political decisions, and faced numerous internal divisions. On top of these features, the membership organization slowly shrunk. With its decision to re-register members, the SDL severely reduced the membership organization. The SDL practically traded size for legitimacy and active involvement of the interested citizens. Such a strategy was not helpful and the party registered weak electoral performance in 1994 and vanished in the aftermath of the 2002 elections. Unlike the BSP, the SDL's inability to cultivate its organizational heritage - including the initial amount of members originally in the communist party – lead to its failure in elections.

Conclusions

The analysis of party membership in CEE allows several empirical observations. The most general refers to the fact that the CEE political parties are far from the mass membership organization. The vast majority of the 29 investigated parties do not have an average share of members (calculated as a percentage of the electorate) larger than 1%. At the same time, the longitudinal study indicates that more than two thirds of the CEE parties are characterized by a non-linear development of their of the membership organizations. Oscillations in the share of members are common. There are very few parties that manage to increase their membership organizations over time. Usually, the increases are marginal. There is an equal proportion of parties (14%) that register constant increase or decrease during the entire post-communist period. Such development trends are neither country specific nor depending on the membership size.

In spite of these low levels, there is variation in the extent to which parties grow their membership organizations across countries and parties. The country-level figures indicate large discrepancies between the countries with most (Romania) and least (Poland) party members. Regarding the variation of membership organizations within the same party system, it appears to be no contamination effect. In each country there is at least one party that has a much more developed membership organization than the rest of the actors. There are rare instances in which political parties imitate the forerunner and start building similar membership organizations.

The statistical analysis indicates very weak empirical support for the one of the two hypothesized relationships. In general, the political parties with large membership organizations have slightly lower electoral volatility compared to the rest of political actors. The correlation lacks statistical significance. The strength of the relationship varies across countries; its extreme values appear to be related to the share of party membership in the population (Figure 4.3). The relationship between party membership and

electoral volatility is the weakest in the country where few people become party members (Poland). The strongest relationship is observed in the country with the highest percentage of party members in the population (Romania). Apart from these observations, one country deviates from the general trend. In Hungary, the relationship goes in the opposite direction: the MSZP and the FIDESZ are the political parties with relatively small membership rates and low volatility.

There is no discernible difference in terms of electoral volatility between the parties that experience dramatic variations in the size of their membership organizations and the rest of political actors. The cross-party comparisons within the countries reveal mixed results that increase the difficulty of substantial conclusions. One possible explanation for these statistical results is represented by the small differences in membership organizations. The majority of the CEE political parties have small membership organizations and their variations are often marginal (see Tables 4.3-4.8). The only partial exceptions are represented by those parties with relevant organizational heritage (i.e. the successors).

The quantitative tests were complemented by qualitative insights into the longitudinal evolution of membership organizations and the relationship with electoral volatility. The comparative assessment highlighted several relevant distinctions between parties from the same political system. These differences explain the size and variation of membership size across time. In some instances, the evolution of membership organization was somewhat related to the electoral support for the party. This marginal influence is best observed in the detailed analysis from the case study section where the electoral volatility of both BSP and SDL – parties with contrasting membership tracks – was influenced by other factors.

Unlike the centralization of candidate selection for national elections, the membership organization marginally explains the variation of electoral volatility at party level in CEE. The following chapter tests the relevance of the MPs' renomination rates for the electoral volatility. Whereas this chapter emphasized the role of members in creating an extensive social network within the electorate, Chapter 5 shifts the focus towards party elites. The empirical testing departs from the argument that the visibility and continuity in the public office can lead to stable preferences of voters over time.

Chapter 5 | The Continuity of Representation: MP Renomination Rates and Electoral Volatility

Introduction

The low levels of confidence vested by citizens in the legislature and the effective loss of its competencies in favor of executive agencies (Mishler and Rose 1994; Newton and Norris 2000; Loewenberg et al. 2002; 2010; Mezey, 2008, 181) does not alter the importance of parliamentary representation for democracy. Following the breakdown of communism, most CEE countries placed Parliaments at the core of their institutional setting (Lijphart 1992; Elster et al. 1998). In this sense, previous studies reveal the dominance held by the legislature in relationship with the other state actors (Gherghina 2007; Elgie and Moestrup 2008). Two features of the post-communist legislatures are observable. First, they start as transitional legislatures: with the exception of Poland, they were in place before the drafting of constitutions. They lacked regulations on internal procedures and their effects on behavior and policy occurred at a later stage. Second, as a consequence of the central role played by Parliaments in the institutional design, the CEE legislatures became the major stage where politicians met and where political parties made their presence visible (Olson 1998b). In the words of Polsby (1975) – who differentiates between Parliaments as transformative institutions and as arenas – the newly emerged CEE legislatures appear to be part of the latter category. Whereas the transformative legislatures imply that the internal institutional structures and procedures influence MPs' behavior and the legislative outcomes, the Parliaments as arenas offer platforms for governments and political parties to exert their influence.

The importance of Parliaments in the decision-making process raises the stake of representation for political parties. They are more interested to secure their presence into powerful legislatures than in those playing symbolic roles. Such incentives are even stronger as the CEE Parliaments appear to be stable and consolidated institutions in an environment characterized by turbulent political and economic developments. Rich literature focuses on the institutional determinants of turnover – electoral system (Rosenthal 1974; Niemi and Winsky 1987), term limits (Francis and Kenny 2000), and separation of powers (Persson et al. 1997) – and on economic failures or decisions of the incumbents (Chubb 1988; Sobel 1998). All these factors lead to specific quantities and qualities of information that reach the voters and influence their choice. Additionally, there are numerous studies (see Chapter 1) emphasizing

the linkage created between voters and MPs to ensure the reelection of the latter. However, earlier research ignored the potential influence of incumbent MPs on voters' choice. On the basis of the theoretical arguments outlined in Chapter 1, this chapter tests the hypothesis according to which political parties that renominate more MPs are likely to have lower levels of electoral volatility than the parties renominating less MPs (H3).

The first section operationalizes renomination and proposes a formula for its measurement. The formula is sensitive to both the total number of candidates in elections and to the number of MPs from which the party renominates. The second section uses aggregate data to discuss the patterns of competition and renomination rates at country level. The following section includes the statistical analysis of the relationship between renomination rates and electoral volatility at party level. Drawing on an original dataset including more than 5,000 MPs and 60,000 candidates, it shows empirical support for the hypothesized relationship. Departing from the results of the quantitative analysis, the fourth section discusses the differences between political parties from the same party system. The final section includes two single case studies meant to shed light on the way in which renomination can influence electoral volatility in specific contexts.

The Renomination Rates: Operational Issues

The renomination rate refers to the percentage of MPs that candidate for their parties in the elections following their term in office. As the size of parties and number of candidates differ, the operationalization of this concept needs to be relative. Accordingly, the renomination rate is calculated as the simple average of two ratios: 1) that of incumbent MP candidates from the total number of candidates selected by the political party in the subsequent election and 2) that of incumbent MP candidates from the total number of MPs that party had in the previous term.

The formula (2) reflects these issues and uses two different weighting measures to control for biases. First, the number of incumbent MPs is divided by the total number of candidates as the latter varies greatly among parties. Some parties have lists with more candidates than seats and others do not have enough people to run for every available seat. In fact, with the exception of Slovakia in 2002, the political parties within the same country do not have an equal number of candidates. Additionally, the cross national variation in the number of candidates is also covered. Second, the number of seats accounts for the size of the party, thus standardizing the obtained rates. Consequently, the formula is sensitive to both the total number of candidates in elections and to the number of MPs from which the party re-nominates. Such an index produces values on a 0-1 scale with the maximum value corresponding to the

situation in which a party uses as candidates for the coming elections only its MPs – all of them – from the previous term.

Formula (2): The MP Renomination Rate

$$R_j = \frac{1}{2}\left[\frac{IC_{t1}}{TC_{t1}} + \frac{IC_{t1}}{S_{t0}}\right] \times 100$$

R_j = renomination rate for party *j*,
IC_t = the total number of incumbent MPs renominated by party *j* in election *t1*,
TC_t = total number of candidates of party *j* in election *t1*,
S_{t-1} = number of seats held by party *j* in the previous term *t0*.

This rate is calculated for each term in which the party had access in Parliament. Its value ranges between 0 and 100 and it is interpreted in the analysis in percentage points. The reference point for the incumbents is the previous election.[50] Formula (2) is the basis for the statistical analysis from this chapter and for all the graphical representations with the exception of Figure 5.1 that is calculated on the basis of another formula (see below).

When employing Formula (2), there are two methodological aspects that require special attention. First, the incumbency can be calculated only if the party secures seats in consecutive terms. However, there are instances in which although the party did not gain access to Parliament, the incumbency rate can still be calculated. It is usually the case of parties resulting from a split. Using the same complicated example of the Romanian FSN and its 1992 split, it secured 263 seats in the 1990 national election. The parties resulting from the split (PSD and PDL) promoted in the 1992 elections MPs from the previous legislature. Although both parties were new from an institutional point of view, they relied on old representatives to earn votes. Second, the calculations take into account the initial political affiliation of the MPs and the number of mandates at the beginning of the legislative term. In doing so, I avoid the switches in political affiliation and the modifications of seats. Using the same example of the PDL, during the 2004-2008 term it jumped from 48 initial seats to 67 seats.

Before testing the hypothesis, a macro-perspective on the development of the CEE Parliament in the past two decades is useful for two

[50] I refer to the MPs renominated on the candidate list in the election following their mandate. Absolute incumbents (i.e. with a continuous presence in all post-communist legislatures) are not considered.

reasons. On the one hand, it describes the dynamics of the process of representation within the legislatures. The number of parliamentary parties discussed in the next section accounts for the longitudinal and cross-country variations.[51] On the other hand, such an approach allows substantial observations about the process of representation. In this respect, the following section accounts for the re-nomination rates at country level and compares them with the dynamic of competition.

Aggregate Dynamics of Competition and Renomination Rates

In general, the fragmentation of the political space in the CEE countries decreases with every new election. The composition of the legislature clearly reflects such a pattern. Previous studies indicate the existence of a decreasing trend from the first post-communist decade, the effective number of parties being on a descending slope (Fillipov 1999). Table 1 illustrates that in four of the examined countries the number of competitors diminishes over time from extreme values – 29 parties in the 1991 Polish Parliament and 17 in the 1990 Romanian legislature to approximately six political parties in the second post-communist decade. In part, this dynamic is determined by the electoral threshold – inexistent in the initial Polish and Romanian elections – which require political competitors to achieve electoral support to gain access to seat distribution. In many post-communist countries the threshold was repeatedly modified and quite often it differentiates between political parties and coalitions. For example, the Czech threshold for the 1996 and 1998 elections used a threshold of 5% for one political party, 7% for a coalition of two or three parties, and 11% for a coalition of at least four parties. In 2002, even the coalitions of multiple parties were discouraged by changing the thresholds: 10% for a coalition of two parties, 15% for a coalition of three parties, and 20% in the case of a coalition made of at least four parties.

However, the restrictions in the form of electoral threshold are feared mostly by small and less popular parties that decide to run into electoral alliances or coalitions. This justifies the genesis of the Liberal Social Union (LSU) coalition in the Czech 1992 elections (formed by parties failing to gain access in the 1990 elections) or the appearance of the AWS in the 1997 Polish elections following the failure of five parties to gain access in the 1993 Parliament. A similar example is the SDK formed by Christian-democrats, Social-democrats and Greens out of which solely the KDH survived in the subsequent elections. In fact, this is the major problem of most CEE coalitions. Once they dissolute – and it happens almost all the time – there is only one party that manages to gain access to Parliament on its own. Quite often, other parties of the coalitions

[51] This indicator is preferred to the effective number of parliamentary parties as the following section focuses on the decreasing number of competitors - not on their strength.

reorient after disintegration and form new alliances. This is the case with the Common Choice (SV) formed in 1994 by the Party of the Democratic Left (SDL), the Social Democratic Party of Slovakia (SDSS), the Farmers Movement of the Slovak Republic (HPS), and the Green Party of Slovakia (SZ). In the 1998 elections, only the SDL ran independently, whereas SDSS and SZ joined the emerging SDK.

Table 5.1: Number of Parties in the CEE Parliaments by Term

	Parliamentary Terms					
	First	Second	Third	Fourth	Fifth	Sixth
Bulgaria	3	5	5	4	7	
Czech Republic	8	6	5	5	5	
Hungary	7	7	6	5	4	
Poland	29	7	5	7	6	6
Romania	17	8	6	5	6	5
Slovakia	5	7	6	7	6	

Notes: Electoral alliances and coalitions are treated differently when calculating the number of parties in Parliament: for alliances I account for the number of component parties, whereas the coalition is considered a monolith.
The terms are: Bulgaria (1991, 1993, 1997, 2001, and 2005), the Czech Republic (1992, 1996, 1998, 2002, and 2006), Hungary (1990, 1994, 1998, 2002, and 2006), Poland (1991, 1993, 1997, 2001, 2005, and 2007), Romania (1990, 1992, 1996, 2000, 2004, and 2008), and Slovakia (1992, 1994, 1998, 2002, and 2006).

All over the region, the reduced number of parties in Parliament implies either the existence of umbrella organizations (the case of the elections in the first term) or the formation of electoral alliances and political coalitions with the aim to increase the chances for representation (starting with the second term). There were special circumstances in which the presence of umbrella organizations, in the absence of an electoral threshold, did not limit the number of parties (e.g. Poland and Romania). Bulgaria and Slovakia are marked by oscillations of the number of parties in the legislature. The surprising fact, compared with the other four countries, is that they both start with quite reduced numbers (three in Bulgaria and five in Slovakia) and progressively increase the number of parties up to seven in the case of Bulgaria, the highest from the fifth term and among the highest in the region from the second term onwards (only Romania had eight parties in its 1992 elections). Their trends can be explained by analyzing the domestic structure of competition.

In Bulgaria, the 1991 elections were marked by the rivalry between the BSP and the ODS clustering the anti-communist parties (SDS was part of it). Preferences were thus divided between these competitors, the third actor being the party representing the Turkish minority. By 1994 two other political

formations - the Bulgarian Business Bloc (BBB) and People's Union (NS) – managed to channel particular preferences drawing their success particularly on people disappointed with the successors. They have both played episodic roles in the Bulgarian politics, NS being solely an electoral coalition that failed to exist for a longer period of time. The presence of short-term alliances in Parliament reduces the number of successful competitors and provides an impression of stability. However, the situation changes if we consider that only three parties secured seats on a continuous basis in the Bulgarian legislatures. Moreover, when we account for the structure of consecutive Parliaments, the numerous entries and exits are quite striking, the most in the CEE region. Around 14 parties and coalitions were part of the Parliament between 1991 and 2005, figures contrasting sharply with eight parties in Romania between 1992 and 2008 or seven parties in Hungary between 1990 and 2006.

Aggregate Renomination Rates at Party Level

Although the number of parties in Parliament is a useful indicator of the dynamics of representation, it has inherent limitations. For example, it does not capture the composition of the legislature, being insensitive to entries and exits. As a result, there is an overestimation of the stability of competition. These are the reasons for which the renomination rate adds information about the dynamic of competition within and across party systems. In this respect, it accounts for the extent to which successful candidates are supported by their parties on a continuous basis.[52] As this analysis is broader than the party level, formula (3) is useful. It reflects a relative renomination rate at legislature level by dividing the number of incumbent MPs renominated as candidates in the coming elections by the total number of MPs belonging to the analyzed parties.

Formula (3): The Relative Renomination Rate

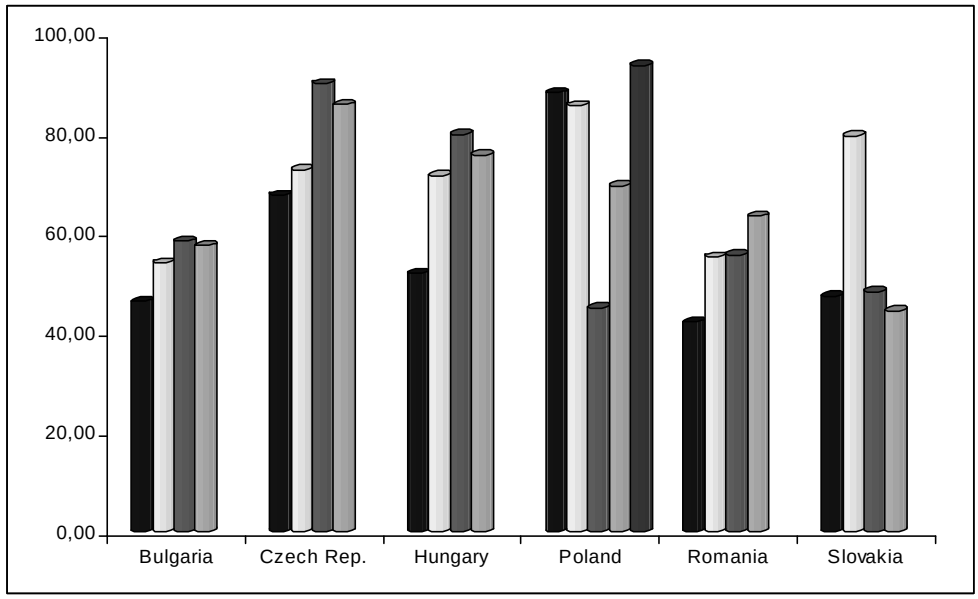
$$R_p = \frac{\sum_{j=1}^{n} IC_j}{\sum_{j=1}^{n} S_j}$$

R_p = renomination rate at parliamentary level (aggregated),
IC_j = the number of incumbent MPs renominated by parliamentary party *j*,
S_{t-1} = the number of seats held by party *j*.

[52] For reasons connected with the employed mechanism at theoretical level, my operationalization excludes those MPs elected in consecutive terms that belong to different parties.

Based on Formula (3), Figure 5.1 depicts the evolution of the aggregated incumbency rates in the Parliaments of the investigated countries. Each bar represents an election and they are arranged chronologically: Each country, with the exception of Poland with five elections, has four elections ordered from left to right. For example, in each country the dark grey bar to the left marks the first election (see the note under the graph), the light grey bar to its right the second election and so on. At the same time, the colors are used to reflect similar moments of elections in each country. For example, the above mentioned dark grey bar corresponds to the first term in each country.

Figure 5.1: Levels of Renomination Rates in the CEE Parliaments in Consecutive Terms (1991-2008)



Notes: The terms are: Bulgaria (1993, 1997, 2001, and 2005), the Czech Republic (1996, 1998, 2002, and 2006), Hungary (1994, 1998, 2002, and 2006), Poland (1993, 1997, 2001, 2005, and 2007), Romania (1992, 1996, 2004, and 2008), and Slovakia (1994, 1998, 2002, and 2006).

There is a similar evolution of the aggregated renomination rates in four out of the six countries. The Bulgarian, Czech, Hungarian, and Romanian parties increase the rate of MPs they renominate for a new seat in legislature with every new election. There are cross-country differences in the percentage of renominated MPs with Bulgaria and Romania at a low level and the Czech Republic peaking in 2002 and 2006 when more than 80% of the existing MPs were placed on lists for reelection. With the exception of Romania where we observe progressive increase, the other three countries display a small

drawback between their third and fourth election. At a glance the time factor appears to be relevant, being visible a positive association between the periods passed from the first elections and the renomination rates. However, the decreasing number of competitors presented in Table 5.1 may also represent a valid explanation.

A dual connection can be identified between the number of parties in Parliament and the incumbency rates. On the one hand, political parties often rely on the same candidates for numerous reasons: the quality of representation, the candidates' capacity to attract votes, the network established by the MPs within the party (e.g. their positions within intra-party politics). High rates of incumbency may structure the competition by limiting the share of available votes. In other words, by proposing the same MPs as in the previous elections, parties encapsulate preferences of specific voters – those who voted with the candidate in the previous term are expected to cast a similar vote – and thus decrease the available voting basis for the rest of the parties.[53] On the other hand, experienced MPs may represent the life vests of parties in the insecure electoral environment especially when competitors gradually disappear.

The Slovak and Polish legislatures deserve closer inspection as they have particular dynamics. Both countries have a symmetric situation in their elections. In Slovakia, out of the four elections the first two terms are marked by an increase of the renomination rates, whereas the most recent two elections show a steady decrease in which the levels are the lowest in the region. In Poland there is a descending trend of renominations until 2001 followed by dramatic increases with a peak reached in 2007 of almost 95%. The previous high level was registered in 1993, whereas the minimum point of around 42% corresponds to the election in which two important parties emerged on the political scene (PIS and PO) and one disappeared (PD). This is the country in which different parties were successful in different decades. Until 2001, the SLD, the PSL and the PD were the prominent political actors. PIS and PO emerged and in 2005 they have both gathered more than 50% of votes. This sudden shift in which the SLD lost numerous MPs and the PIS and the PO promoted new faces in Parliament resulted in the lowest incumbency rate in post-communist Polish legislatures. As a comparison, it is lower than in the 1993 term when reelection was quite small due to the previously fragmented Parliament (with 29 parties). Despite such oscillations, the Polish Parliament has among the highest renomination rates in the CEE region.

This country level perspective provides an accurate assessment of the longitudinal evolution of the renomination rates. However, it overlooks the

[53] The entire reasoning is based on the assumption that parties seek to maximize their votes and offices and their candidate renominations are not often driven by corruption incentives.

similarities between political parties either within the same party system or across countries. Figure 5.2 depicts the average renomination rates for each analyzed party.[54] Most CEE political parties nominate more than one third of their MPs on candidate lists for future elections. There are a few political parties (e.g. KDNP, FKGP, MDF, or SDS) that rely on approximately one quarter of their MPs in the future elections. Similarly, there are a few parties that place approximately half of their MPs (e.g. KDU-CSL, PIS, PSL, SLD, or FIDESZ) on the lists of candidates.

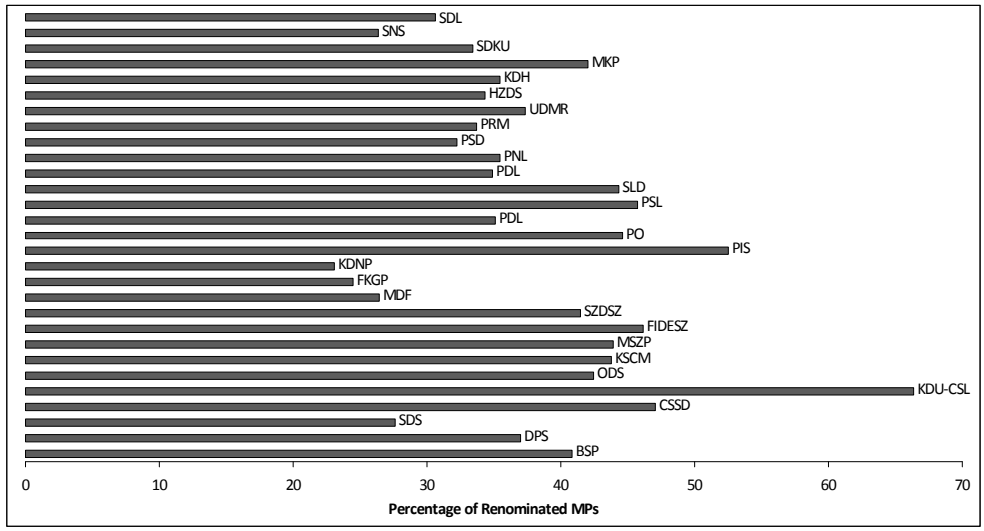
Aggregate Renomination Rates at Party Level

There is great variation in the degree to which MPs are renominated by parties. Such variation is observed both across parties from different countries and within the same party system. Figure 5.2 graphically depicts the aggregated levels of renomination rates, using Formula (2) as a basis for calculus. The Czech and Romanian parties partially cluster more than the rest in terms of their renomination rates. The broadest variation is observed within the Polish and Slovak party systems. Some young CEE parties renominate more MPs than the rest of political actors. They have to do so for a number of reasons such as credibility or continuing with the elite that formed the party. For example, PIS and PO have among the highest rates of renominated MPs. At the same time, some traditional parties (KDNP and FKGP) or political parties with origins in the last days of communism (MDF) have the lowest renomination rates. One motivation for higher renewal rates among the old parties is the desire of such political actors to send their voters a message of openness (i.e. different from an oligarchic organization) and adaptation potential.

One further theoretical reason behind this empirical observation is related to the recruitment pool. Old parties are likely to have a broader recruitment pool than the new ones since they generally benefit of larger membership organizations (see Chapter 4). In this situation, they are able to fill in the candidate lists without appealing to their MPs especially if these were unsuccessful during their term in office. One final observation refers to the level of renomination within countries. In general, in each party system, the parties with large presence in Parliament during the post-communist period renominate more MPs on their lists of candidates compared to the rest. In this respect, the BSP in Bulgaria, the FIDESZ and the MSZP in Hungary, and the PIS and the PSL in Poland are the political parties with highest renminationrates. One exception to this trend is Romania where the PSD relies the least on its MPs when drafting the lists of candidates. A similar situation is observed in Slovakia where the HZDS – with major electoral performance in the '90s – comes after the MKP and the KDH.

[54] The average percentages are calculated based on the results from Tables 5.3-5.8.

Figure 5.2: Percentages of MPs Renominated across the CEE Political Parties (averages)



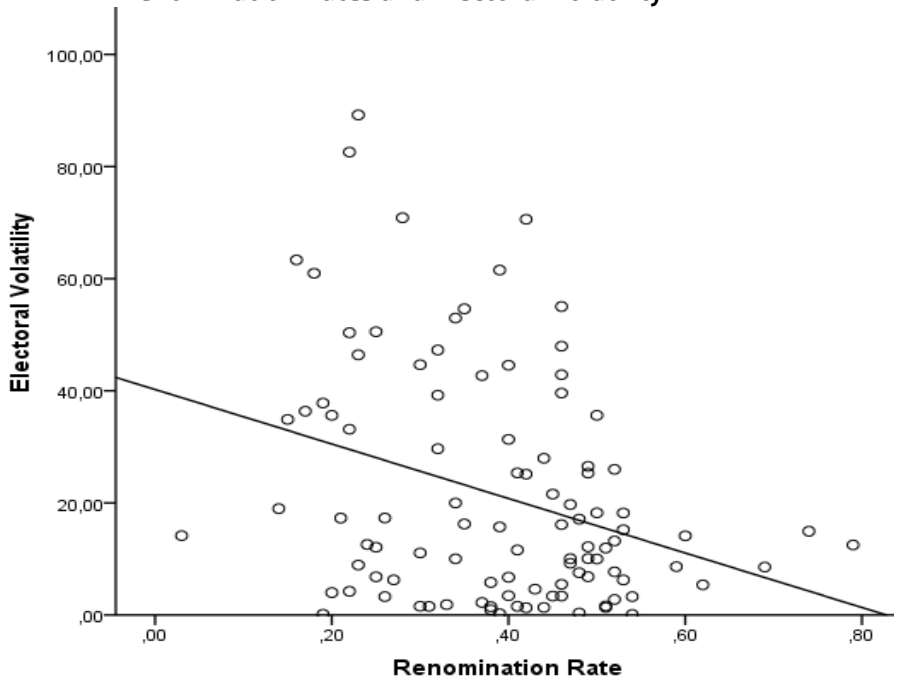
Summing up, this section revealed three general tendencies. First, the number of competitors in the legislatures decreases across the CEE countries with voters being oriented towards fewer parties. Second, the percentage of MP renominations on the lists of candidates generally increases as time passes by. Third, political parties use at least one third of their MPs in drafting the electoral lists for the next elections. There is great variation in the percentages of renominated MPs across parties. The following section builds on these observations to identify the statistical relationship between the renomination rates and electoral volatility.

Renomination Matters

This section includes the empirical results of the hypothesis testing both at general and country level. The analysis takes into account more than 5,000 MPs and 60,000 candidates from six countries over the past two decades. The data about the candidates from the legislative elections from Romania in 2000 are not available. At the same time, for Hungary in 1994 I had access only to those candidates renominated for 176 out of the 386 seats of the Parliament. It had to be standardized in order to provide comparable data with the rest of the years. The most common problem was encountered in the case of the MPs who got elected at the beginning of one term, but ended their term in office – for various reasons – before the next elections. Their replacements were considered incumbents. Figure 5.3 reflects the distribution of the political parties from each country based on their renomination rates (Tables 5.3-5.8) and electoral volatility. On the renomination dimension, most parties have

average rates situated between 0.4 and 0.6, with very few parties having less than 0.2. The maximum renomination rate is close to 0.8. One such example is of the Czech KDU-CSL in 1996 and 2002 that got a relatively constant number of seats in Parliament and renominated many of the former MPs. In fact, quite a few of those are the same over a sequence of elections.

Figure 5.3: The Distribution of the CEE Political Parties According to the Renomination Rates and Electoral Volatility



Overall, the clustering of points indicates that higher renomination rates correspond to lower electoral volatility. Such a negative relationship provides empirical support for the formulated hypothesis. These visual components are complemented by the results of the statistical analysis (Table 5.2). There are no parties with high volatility and high renomination rates. However, there are a few outliers with high levels of volatility and low renomination rates. One such example is the FKGP in 2002, after joining for four years the coalition government, decided to renominate less than half of its MPs (20 out of 48), but suffered a major electoral loses. Thus, it failed to enter Parliament and never returned on the Hungarian political scene ever since.

Table 5.2 includes the correlation coefficients between the renomination rates and electoral volatility. The general correlation between the two variables is -0.30, statistically significant at the 0.01 level; it indicates a medium and robust relationship between the two. The sign of the coefficient

indicates that parties renominating more MPs have less volatility compared with the rest. The strongest correlation is observed in Poland (-0.50) and Slovakia (-0.39).

Table 5.2: The Correlation between the MP Renomination Rates and Volatility across CEE Political Parties

	Correlation coefficients	Number of cases
General	-0.30**	101
Bulgaria	-0.13	12
Czech Republic	0. 16	16
Hungary	-0.36	19
Poland	-0.50*	17
Romania	-0.25	17
Slovakia	-0.39	20

Notes: The partial correlations included the government incumbency as control variable.
** Statistical significance at the 0.01 level.
* Statistical significance at the 0.05 level.

The correlation coefficient for all the parties in the region indicates empirical support for the hypothesized relationship. There is a moderate negative correlation between the renomination rates and electoral volatility. Parties that place more MPs on their electoral lists have more loyal votes compared to the rest. This relationship is statistically significant at the 0.01 level. Within each country, with the exception of the Czech Republic, there is empirical evidence in the same direction. The strongest is in Poland where the relationship is quite high (-0.50), statistically significant at the 0.05 level. In the Czech Republic the relationship is weak (0.16) and goes against the initial expectation. One empirical explanation for this result may be the structure of the Czech party system in which greater parties renominate less MPs but are more stable from an electoral perspective than the minor parties (see Table 5.4). This aggregate picture indicates that small and large parties have contrasting approaches towards renomination in the Czech Republic. Small political parties renominate a large percentage of their MPs to send a message of credibility and unity to their voters. The Czech parties with high electoral performances renominate less candidates to ensure a similar message of credibility; in their case, the elite renewal is at the core of the message.[55]

[55] A parallel can be drawn between this observation and the case in which age created a difference between political parties (the previous section).

The observation at aggregated level indicates the presence of a mediated or non-linear relationship between renominations rates and electoral volatility. The statistical analysis and longitudinal descriptions from the following section illustrate that this seldom happens at party level. To statistically test for mediation, I run partial correlations[56] to observe the intervening effect of age or party size on the hypothesized relationship. The results indicate that none of the two variables influences the strength or level of significance of the relationship. The statistical test for non-linear effects involved the comparison of linear and non-linear models (e.g. curvilinear, cubic, quadratic etc.) for the effect of renomination rate on electoral volatility. The cubic model appears to be the only that predicts slightly better (with marginally higher parameter estimates) than the linear model; this comes at the cost of lower statistical significance. Empirically, this non-linear effect was mainly driven by a few outliers visible in Figure 5.3. When including the cubic effect in the multivariate analysis from Chapter 6, its results are similar to those of the linear effect. On the basis of these methodological observations, the concerns regarding the existence of a non-linear effect should be minor. Moreover, such an effect does not add substantial knowledge to the already described linear effect. To further clarify the developments taking place at party level, the following section discusses in detail the differences between the parties from the same country.

Insights into the Party Systems: Comparing the Renomination Rates of Political Parties

The aggregate renomination rates (Figure 5.2) indicated some general trends observable between the CEE political parties. Insights into the party systems are useful for the longitudinal and cross-party comparison of renomination rates. This section reflects the extent to which political parties relied on their MPs when drafting the lists of candidates. In doing so, it provides details regarding the relationship between renomination and electoral performance or volatility; thus, it complements the general picture observed in Figure 5.1. A supplementary reason to analyze the developments of political parties within the same party system is the possibility to observe different manners in which parties react to the similar constraints of the political environment.

Bulgaria

The three Bulgarian political parties investigated in this study reflect different approaches towards the renomination of their MPs. This difference is visible at aggregate level: the BSP is among the parties with the highest renomination rates in CEE, the DPS has an average position, whereas the SDS is among the

[56] For details regarding the use and interpretation of partial correlation, see Field (2009).

political parties with the smallest number of MPs running on candidate lists in the subsequent elections (Figure 5.2). In this respect, the distribution of the Bulgarian parties on the renomination variable is representative for the post-communist world. Table 5.3 nuances this observation by providing supplementary information regarding the decision of the Bulgarian political parties in each election. The longitudinal trend of renomination rates differs across parties. The BSP starts with a high rate of 40%, drops to 32% in the year marking its first major electoral defeat and increased to 45 and 46% in 2001 and 2005. The DPS is characterized by an oscillation of its renominations: an increase from 35% in 1994 to 42% in 1997, followed by a decrease to 33% in 2001, and an increase to 37% in 2005. The SDS reached the apogee of its renominations in 1997, the only time when it was in government. The following two elections marked a severe drop of the renomination until a level lower than the one from the beginning of the '90s.

Table 5.3: The MP Renomination Rates of the Bulgarian Parties (%)

	1994	1997	2001	2005
BSP	40	32	45	46
DPS	35	42	33	37
SDS	21	42	32	15

Based on these different longitudinal developments, time does not influence the variation in renomination rates. Similarly, the presence in government does not explain the variations across parties. For example, when the BSP was incumbent (i.e. before the 1994 and 1997 elections) it put less MPs on the candidate lists then when it was in opposition. The DPS renominated more MPs when it was a government party before the elections. The percentage of renominated MPs in 2001 (i.e. the party was in opposition) is the smallest compared to the other years. When in government, before the 2001 elections, the SDS has an intermediary percentage of renominated MPs, situated between the value recorded before the 1997 win of elections and the 1994 and 2005 poor results.

One possible explanation for the variation of renomination rates is the performance of individual MPs and their relationship with the party. For example, some MPs were notorious for corruption acts or formed a negative image throughout the years in office; both situations resulted in no renomination. In other cases, mostly encountered at the SDS, the MPs were undisciplined in crucial votes and they were no longer supported by the party for reelection. MPs with controversial statements and activities were also punished by their parties and not being offered a position on the candidate lists. These reasons are often encountered for other countries. However, the occurrence in Bulgaria was higher than usual. Especially in the mid '90s there

were numerous politicians involved in corruption scandals and controversial activities.

In addition, the variation of renomination over time for each political party has particular causes. As explained in the case study section in Chapter 4, BSP underwent a major internal change. Starting 2001, the organization and discourse started to differ. This also coincides with the starting moment of increased renomination of MPs. In the case of the SDS, the initial low rate of renominated MPs (1994) corresponded to a reorganization of the party. Following the 1991 failure to enter government, the SDS modified its strategy and hoped that new candidates will bring more benefits. DPS is known for its centralized decision making evolving around the leader of the party. This concentration of power and the pursuit of an image of disciplined party lead to the exclusion of those MPs who did not toe the party line during the terms in government or even opposition. In spite of all these reasons to change the composition of candidate lists, the placement of party leadership or high echelon elites on candidate lists was not subject to variation. It appears almost as a sufficient condition for an MP to be part of the party elite in order to get the renomination. All three Bulgarian parties filled the first positions of their lists in elections with prominent members of their parties.

Although the quantitative analysis indicates a weak relationship between the renomination rate and the electoral volatility of Bulgarian parties, the reasons presented above follow the theoretical arguments of this chapter. With a few exceptions, the Bulgarian parties place more than one third of their MPs on the lists of candidates in elections. They tried to keep away from the public eyes those candidates who – with their deeds in office – could have harmed their electoral appeal. One empirical reason for the weak statistical relationship is that the party with a moderate renomination of its MPs (DPS) has lower electoral volatility compared to the other two parties. Why? The rewarding and punishing strategies can be based more on MPs behavior and performances than in the other two parties. Quite often, the high positions in the intra-party hierarchy are not affected by such decisions. An MP who is among the leaders of the party has an almost ensured renomination. For example, the BSP placed a few problematic MPs on its lists of candidates in the 2001 elections although some of them were involved in scandals during the 1997-2001 period.

Czech Republic

The Czech Republic is the only political system in which the relationship between MP renomination and electoral volatility is positive: A high percentage of MPs on the lists of candidates implies more electoral volatility. The aggregate figures can be misleading as they indicate the contrary. Table 2.2 indicates that the KDU-CSL has the lowest electoral volatility within the Czech

Party system throughout the post-communist period. At the same time, figure 5.2 illustrates that the KDU-CSL has the highest rate of renomination among all the CEE political parties. Consequently, we might expect that the Czech political parties placing more of their MPs in the next electoral competition to have lower volatility. The examination of the longitudinal development of renomination rates makes clear why this is not the case. For the KDU-CSL the highest renomination rates (79% in 2002 and 73% in 1996) correspond to its highest volatilities. Moreover, the CSSD, the Czech party with the highest electoral volatility (see Table 2.2), has among the highest rates of renomination in CEE.

Table 5.4 shows that the CSSD makes regular use of approximately half of its MPs to fill the lists of candidates. Moreover, the ODS has low volatility throughout the post-communist period, comparable to that of the KDU-CSL, and displays lower renomination rates than the CSSD or the KSCM. At the same time, the high renomination rates brought with them high volatility. For example, the 2002 and 2006 elections were the most volatile for the ODS (6.26% and 18.23%). They also correspond to the highest percentages of MPs running in the following elections.

Table 5.4: The MP Renomination Rates of the Czech Parties (%)

	1996	1998	2002	2006
CSSD	46	50	45	46
KDU-CSL	73	62	79	51
ODS	40	26	53	50
KSCM	19	54	49	53

Although it goes in the opposite direction than hypothesized, the statistical relationship between renomination and electoral volatility is not strong. This happens primarily due to the mixed evidence in the case of most parties. For example, the KSCM has a similar level of renominations for two elections with completely different volatility – the 1998 (low) and the 2006 (relatively high). The same happens with the ODS and the KDU-CSL. Moreover, the Czech parties are quite homogenous in terms of volatility (Table 2.2) and renomination rates (Figure 5.2). Such observations are valuable for the broader comparisons at CEE level. However, problems occur when attempting to differentiate between these parties with the help of party level data (Table 5.4). This is where the theoretical underpinnings appear to collapse. The only similarity between them is that the renomination rates oscillate – every increase in the percentage of renominations is followed by a decrease. It is puzzling that this dynamic does not follow a general pattern. Similarly to Bulgaria, time and government incumbency are not valid explanations for differences in renomination rates.

Apart from the broad framework of using their MPs for a better communication with their voters, the Czech parties have specific decisions that make the difference. One such example is represented by the different strategies of parties before the elections. On the one hand, the CSSD, irrespective of its electoral performances, constantly relies on approximately half of its MPs when making the candidate lists. On the other hand, mostly resulted from the split (as in the SDS case in Bulgaria), the ODS dramatically altered the percentages of renominated MPs. Another explanation for the reverse relationship is that the size of the parties limits the possibilities for renomination. In the case of the KDU-CSL, its electoral support increased whenever the party used a high percentage of its MPs on the lists of candidates. As the party has a relatively small support in the electorate (approximately 10%), the floor-crossing of a few MPs makes impossible the high renomination rates in the following elections. \

A further reason for the direction of the linear relationship between renomination rates and electoral volatility is weak in the Czech Republic is represented by the approach towards candidate lists in times of internal reform. When the KDU-CSL undertook such a reform – before the 2002 elections – it relied heavily on its MPs to draft the lists of candidates (79%). However, the KSCM before the 1994 elections and the ODS before the 1998 elections decided to use as few as possible of their MPs, promoting instead new figures on the lists. Although it had renomination rates, the volatility of the KDU-CSL was higher than that of the ODS or the KSCM.

Hungary

The Hungarian political parties are characterized by low renomination rates at the beginning of the transition to democratization. On average, one out of five representatives from the legislature elected in 1990 ran for the 1994 elections. An exception to this share was the FKGP that renominated only 3% of its MPs. This represents by far the lowest percentage in CEE and has a particular cause. The FGKP lost 40 of its deputies elected in 1990 – 36 switched to the EKGP. As a result, the few MPs who were left in the party received were renominated for the 1994 elections. The general low percentage of renominated MPs had a few general causes across the Hungarian parties. First, most political parties decided to alter the composition of their lists of candidates to alter the relatively poor electoral result from 1990. For example, the FIDESZ and the MSZP underperformed. The former, as one of the fierce opponents of the communist regime, expected to win more seats in the first post-communist elections. The MSZP is a successor party and its initial failure was mostly based on the negative attitudes of the Hungarian voters towards the communist past. As the party spent the first term in opposition, a change was initiated among the candidate composition.

Second, the numerous party switchers in the first Hungarian legislature affected a few parties such as the FKGP (losing 40 MPs), the MDF (losing 39 MPs), and the SZDSZ (losing 10 MPs) (Nikolenyi 2011, 24). Finally, related to the second cause, there is the issue of a relatively weak relationship between the party and its representatives (Chiru 2010). Apart from floor-crossing, one feature of such a relationship was the voting unity. The first post-communist government of Joszef Antall had a surplus member in the coalition government (i.e. large majorities) [57], MPs could defect from the party line without a visible effect for the passing of the laws. Some controversies within the small governing parties (FKGP and KDNP) in the 1990-1994 legislative term (Korosenyi 1998) indicate that there were problems related to voting unity.

Table 5.5: The MP Renomination Rates of the Hungarian Parties (%)

	1994	1998	2002	2006
MSZP	22	54	49	51
FIDESZ	25	39	69	52
SZDSZ	20	40	53	52
MDF	20	n/a	-	32
FKGP	3	47	23	-
KDNP	22	25	-	-

Following these observations and the gradual increase of renomination rates in the subsequent elections from Table 5.5, time appears to play a role in the decision of Hungarian parties to use more MPs to fill their candidate lists. In the next elections of 1998, the renomination rates differed significantly. Some parties were witnessed dramatic increases of their renomination rates (e.g. MSZP, FKGP). The other parties had a progressive increase of their share (e.g. KDNP, FIDESZ and SZDSZ). Further differences can be observed with respect to the trajectories followed by parties. Some did not gain seats in all the elections and thus no renomination was possible (MDF, FKGP, and KDNP); the MSZP was characterized by oscillatory percentages of renominations; whereas the FIDESZ and the SZDSZ registered a continuous increase of the percentages of MPs running on candidate lists in the first three elections, having a drop to a similar level of 52% in 2006.

One further observable difference between the levels of renomination is that parties in government have the tendency to renominate more MPs than the parties in opposition. Similarly, when a party is in government, it renominates more MPs than when it is in the opposition. For example, in the 1998 elections the FIDESZ had 39% of its MPs running for a new term in office. Until then, the FIDESZ was in opposition. Four years later, following a term in

[57] In fact, the first three Hungarian cabinets had surplus members in the coalition governments.

government, the FIDESZ had 69% of its MPs on the ballot. In 2002, following a new term in opposition, this percentage decreased to 52%. A similar trend is observable for the other large party in Hungary – the MSZP – and partially for the SZDSZ and the FKGP. Moreover, size appears to make a difference in renominating MPs. The large Hungarian parties rely on a much higher percentage of their MPs in the subsequent elections compared to the small parties. Apparently, this is a key for increased electoral stability. Unlike the small KDNP and FKGP, both FIDESZ[58] and MSZP have low volatility and continue to persist on the political scene.

These are the reasons behind the sign and strength of the quantitative analysis from the previous section. The aggregate percentages from Figure 5.2 and the previous descriptions of party trajectories in Chapters 3 and 4 also pointed in the direction indicated by the correlation coefficient. The medium relationship between renomination and electoral volatility could have been stronger if the SZDSZ, the political party with the lowest level of volatility, would have renominated more MPs. On the average, its renomination rates come after those of the FIDESZ and the MSZP.

Poland

In general, the Polish parties have among the largest renomination rates in CEE. Four out of the five examined political parties have averages above 45% (Figure 5.2). The fifth, the PD – extensively discussed in the case study section of the chapter – had until 2001 a similar renomination rate. In this particular case, the explanation is straightforward: the PO split from the PD and the renomination rates of dropped dramatically. Two other general similarities are observable at the Polish parties. First, unlike in Hungary, they start with high renomination rates. In the 1993 elections, following a very divided legislature, the PD, the PSL, and the SLD placed approximately half of their MPs on the candidate lists.

Second, the dynamic of the renomination rates across time indicate large discrepancies between elections. The longitudinal trajectories are rarely linear (e.g. PD), the most visible feature being the high discrepancies between the percentages of MPs placed on candidate lists. For example, even in the case of the parties formed after 2000 – the PIS and the PO – the renomination rate increased by approximately 10% between the 2005 and 2007 early elections.[59] This finding is counter-intuitive given the exchange of political elites

[58] In 2006, KDNP ran on the lists of FIDESZ and this is how it made it into Parliament after a break of eight years.

[59] This increase can also be caused by the features of the 2007 elections. The early elections are the usual suspect for high renomination rates. The MPs hold strategic positions and political parties rarely have the time and capacity to mobilize candidates that may turn successful. This mechanism does not discriminate between government and opposition parties, it is applicable to both.

between the two parties at that time. The reason behind the increase of renomination rates may be the character of elections. Without having time to prepare the selection of candidates, both parties relied more on the prominent members of their parties – those remaining after the desertions.

Table 5.6: The MP Renomination Rates of the Polish Parties (%)

	1993	1997	2001	2005	2007
PIS				46	59
PO				40	49
PD	48	41	16	-	-
PSL	44	50	30	52	51
SLD	52	60	26	35	48

In longitudinal terms, there is a moderate tendency of some Polish parties to have higher renomination rates when they are in government. For example, the PSL in 1997 renominated more MPs than in 1993. The same happened in 2005 compared to 2001. However, there are more contextual explanations that justify the differences rather than general factors. In the case of the SLD the modification of renomination rates between the 1997 and 2001 elections may be due to its transformation from coalition to political party. During this transformation, the legitimacy of the SLD was questioned by some members (political parties) of the former coalition. To diminish discontent, the SLD allowed these parties to propose their own candidates in the upcoming elections. Consequently, the renomination rate was low in the 2001 election.

Figures were again low in 2005 due to two reasons: 1) the split of the SDPL (the party of Marek Borowski) from the SLD and 2) the departure of leading party elite to the PD. These low renomination rates coincide with large oscillations in electoral support and high levels of volatility. The 2001 situation brought a steady increase of the electoral support. Apart from the failure of the AWS government, the SLD's composition of candidate lists contributed to this result. The party promoted promising candidates and did not renominate some MPs with negative image. In 2005, the low percentage of MPs from the lists of candidates was the result of migrations and splits. These also lead to a decrease of the electoral support.

Overall, there is a high negative correlation between the renomination rates of the Polish parties and their electoral volatility. This means that political parties that use more MPs to fill in their lists of candidates are less volatile than the rest. The relationship appears to be driven by three concurrent factors. First, the newly emerged parties rely more on their elite (also because they do not have a large pool of recruitment, see Chapter 4). They are less volatile than the parties established at the beginning of the transition to democracy. Second, the relationship is connected to the density of splits and desertions.

Under such circumstances, parties are forced to use new candidates. They can hardly choose for re-election candidates who can be recognized by voters; thus, they present a less credible continuity of representation. Finally, there is a tendency of Polish parties to renominate numerous MPs. This formed certain expectations of the public. When these expectations are no longer met (i.e. parties renominate less MPs than usual), the voters can shift their electoral preferences.

Romania

The Romanian parties have similar averages of MP renomination during the post-communist period (Figure 5.2). This relative homogeneity is observable also across time at party level. As shown in the lines to follow, size, government status, and time do not explain the variations in renomination rates. Similarly to the Hungarian parties, the initial levels of renomination were lower than those from the following elections. The two successor parties were differentiated by more than 10%: the PSD had less than a quarter of its MPs running in the 1992 elections, whereas the PDL promoted approximately one third of their representatives in the subsequent elections.

The UDMR started with a 30% renomination rate that was gradually increased to an average of 40% for the other three observed elections. Overall, there is no clear tendency of the Romanian parties to increase their percentages of renominated MPs over time. Three out of five parties are characterized by oscillations, as it was the case with most parties from the previously discussed party systems. The PSD and the PRM display contrasting trends over time. The PSD has a linear increase over time with renomination percentages ranging from 23% in the 1992 elections to a peak of 44% in the most recent elections from 2008. The PRM had its peak in the 1996 elections, following its only months in government. Since then, the party constantly reduced its renomination rates reaching a minimum level of 18%.

Table 5.7: The MP Renomination Rates of the Romanian Parties (%)

	1992	1996	2000	2004	2008
PSD	23	24	n/a	38	44
PDL	34	38	n/a	22	46
PNL	-	-	n/a	30	41
PRM		49	n/a	34	18
UDMR	30	38	n/a	43	39

The most volatile political party in Romania is the PRM (Table 2.2). The large variations in terms of electoral support coincide to the most dynamic evolution of the renomination rates. Given the highly centralized decision making and the few political elites held by the PRM, the expectation was to have the same

people as candidate in all elections. However, the strategic behaviors of candidates and elected MPs influenced the list composition. There were candidates running under the label of the party with the sole purpose of getting elected. The reasons for such a behavior varied from the absence of opportunities in other parties to the identification of the electoral potential of the PRM in specific elections (Gherghina 2008; Sum 2010). As soon as they got elected, the defection was imminent. This is the reason for which in the aftermath of the 2000 elections the parliamentary party group of the PRM reduced by one third in less than half a year after elections. This migration was often accompanied by exclusions of key members by the party leader for reasons ranging from indiscipline to the pursuit of private interests.

The PSD relies on a core of MPs in consecutive elections. These MPs are constantly renominated and most of them are highly disciplined in their voting (Gherghina and Chiru 2011). It is one of the political parties with most MPs present in almost all legislatures during the post-communist period. These MPs are usually the leaders of county organizations or politicians with strong electoral support in the territory. The emphasis on the territorial strongholds was especially visible in the 2008 elections when a new electoral system with voting in single member districts was in place. The primaries organized in 2004 to select the candidates for the legislative elections removed only a few of these core MPs to be renominated. All of those who lost their positions on lists in 2004 were allowed to run in the 2008 elections and most of them got reelected. This core of MPs may secure the stable electoral support that the PSD enjoys. In the most recent three elections its volatility is very small, having a high support around 35% of the votes.

Although it is also a successor party like the PSD, the PDL displays a different pattern. The dynamic of renomination has two phases separated by the organizational reform (leadership change). The first, until 2001, was characterized by a stable core of MPs who got reelected in consecutive elections. Following the leadership change, the renomination rates dropped to 22%. This critical juncture interrupted the communication established between parties and its voters; consequently, the electoral volatility increased. This moment represented the formation of a new core of stable MPs who were renominated in the 2008 elections, to a greater extent than before.

The UDMR is the party with the most stable electorate and renomination rate across time. The party constantly renominates one third of its MPs, most of them being the same across time. Similarly to the PSD, the UDMR has among the highest rates of absolute incumbents renominated (i.e. MPs in consecutive terms). This core of representatives established strong connections with the voters. Sometimes, these linkages were suspected of being formed on clientelistic bases generated mostly by the absence of contestation for many years.

Slovakia

The Slovak parties are heterogeneous in terms of their renominations. This is suggested by the aggregate data from Figure 5.2 and by the longitudinal evolutions captured in Table 5.8. Unlike other party systems, the level of renominations in the first studied elections varies greatly from 14% in the case of the SNS to 42% for the SDL. The common feature of the renomination rates is their oscillatory trends across time. With the exception of the SDL that displays a continuous decline over time, the other Slovak political parties alternate the low and high renomination rates.

Table 5.8: The MP Renomination Rates of the Slovak Parties (%)

	1994	1998	2002	2006
HZDS	25	47	46	19
KDH	27	33	31	48
MKP	39	46	47	37
SDKU[60]		49	17	34
SNS	14	41	23	-
SDL	42	28	22	

Most of these oscillations were due to the internal splits or attempts to reform the party. The HZDS had low renomination rates before the 1994 elections due to a series of defections in 1993 and 1994 (Szajkowski 2005, 529). Its high renomination rates came as a result of a political domination of the HZDS in the Slovak politics. The HZDS won both the 1994 and 1998 elections although it was in opposition starting 1998. The "old guard" of the party was conservative and managed to keep dissent to a minimum despite the public scandals in which Meciar was involved (e.g. the open conflict with the President of Slovakia, his arrest etc.). The drop of renominations from 2006 was mainly the effect of the splits after the 2002 election. The attempt to re-brand the party by softening the nationalist discourse determined a few departures from the party.

For the SDKU, the dramatic drop of renominations in 2002 compared to 1998 was the result of the KDH leaving the coalition. This happened when the leaders of the former The SDK coalition decided to transform it into a political party. Most MPs belonging to the KDH and being elected in 1998 under the label of the SDK followed their party. This is the main reason for which the KDH renominated a similar percentage of MPs in the 1998 and 2002 electons. Returning to the SDKU, in 2006 the renomination rates were influenced by splits and MPs leaving the party. Similarly, the SNS witnessed a party split

[60] SDKU was founded in 1998 under the name of SDK and included five parties. The renomination rate is calculated on the basis on the founding members' MPs. The reference number of MPs for the 1998-2002 term was calculated after subtracting the number of MPs who returned to KDH.

before the 2002 elections and the renomination percentage dropped to half of its previous percentage.

More important, the relationship between the MP renomination rates and electoral volatility is quite relevant in Slovakia. The evidence indicates that high renominations lead to low electoral volatility. This is immediately visible if we refer to the most volatile party in CEE: the SDL. Its volatility increased with every election following also a dramatic drop in the renomination rates. The KDH and the MKP are the least volatile Slovak parties and their renomination rates are among the highest. Also, longitudinal comparisons indicate this relationship. The detailed case of the HZDS points in that direction. The high renomination rates from 1998 and 2002 coincide to electoral volatilities that are much lower than in 2006.

These detailed discussions regarding the reasons behind MP renominations indicate mechanisms through which these can be connected to electoral volatility. For example, the internal splits and MP departures heavily influence the communication with voters. This section has shown how discontinuity of representation has consequences in the plan of electoral support for many parties. The following section takes this analysis one step further and illustrates how the renomination of MPs can influence the electoral volatility in two specific cases from different party systems.

Loyal Elites and Voters

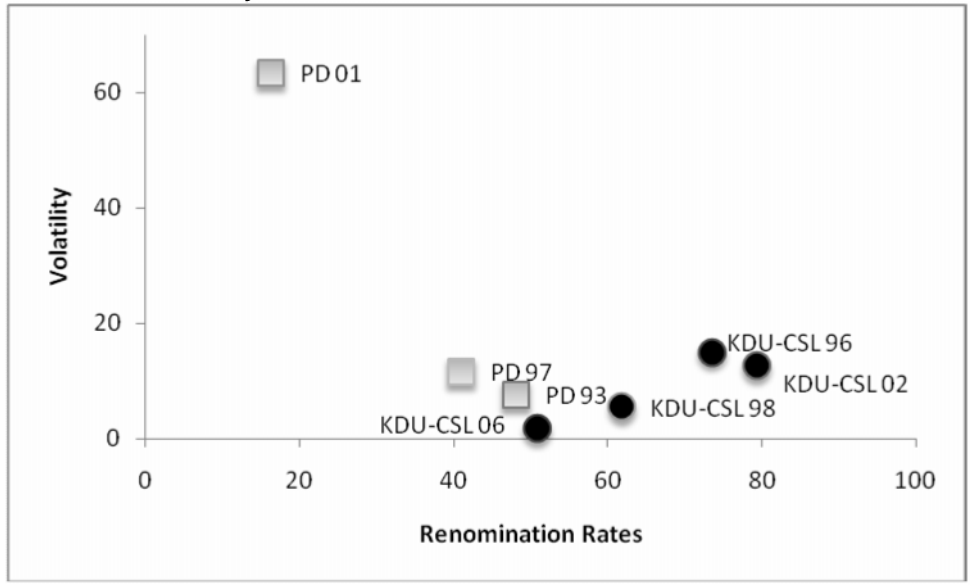
The two political parties analyzed in this section – the Czech KDU-CSL and the Polish PD – share a common feature: they are small parties, with an electoral support that rarely exceeds 10%. This limited electoral appeal did not allow them to play leading roles in government coalitions or to represent solid opposition actors. Nevertheless, their presence in the political life of their countries cannot be neglected. Given such a similar profile, their different persistence within the party systems of their countries raises a question mark. The following two sub-sections show how a combination of factors led to different outcomes: the KDU-CSL continued its existence in the Czech political life, whereas the PD gradually disappeared from the important political actors between 2001 and 2007.

These diverging trajectories were not indicated solely by the electoral performances, but also by the level of electoral volatility. The KDU-CSL is on average the least volatile Czech party (Table 2.2). On the average, the electoral volatility of the PD is three times larger than that of the KDU-CSL. This does not represent a surprise as the least volatile Polish party has higher volatility than the most volatile Czech party (see Chapter 2). One determinant of these different trajectories is represented by the MP renomination rates. As illustrated in Figure 5.2, the KDU-CSL is the champion of renominations in CEE

with an average situated around two thirds. The PD has one of the lowest renomination rates.

Figure 5.4 graphically depicts the distribution of the two parties according to their renomination rates and electoral volatility. The dark circles mark the position of the KDU-CSL, whereas the light gray squares represent the PD. The numbers represent the election years (e.g. 02 is 2002). In all elections the KDU-CSL has considerably higher renomination rates and lower electoral volatility than the PD. In terms of renomination rates, the KDU-CSL has used consistently more than half of its MPs to fill the lists of candidates. For the PD there is a clear negative relationship between renominations and electoral volatility. Starting 1993, the percentage of renominated MPs decreases considerably from approximately 50% to less than 20% in 2001. At the same time, the electoral volatility increases from 7.5% in 1993 to 66.4% in 2001. In 1993 and 1997, the electoral volatility of the PD was comparable to that of the KDU-CSL. This coincided with the fact that the renomination rates were still high, around 40%. Each of the following two sub-sections explores in detail the paths followed by the two parties and tries to explain the persistence of KDU-CSL and the temporary disappearance of the PD.

Figure 5.4: The Positioning of KDU-CSL and PD on the Renomination and Volatility Dimensions



The KDU-CSL: Shaping a Loyal Elite

The KDU-CSL is the successor of the Czechoslovak People's Party (CSL) that was created in 1919 out of the merger of numerous Czech Catholic parties (Linek and Lyons 2009, 3). With a constant presence in all interwar

Czechoslovak government between 1921 and 1938, CSL was allowed as a satellite party under the communist regime. In the attempt to reaffirm its Christian Democratic ideology and to escape accusations of cooperation with the communist regime CSL joined in 1992 the Christian Democratic Union (KDU) to form the KDU-CSL. It soon became a relevant party on the political scene by having three presences in government between 1992 and 1998 and from 2002 (Saxonberg 2003).

The KDU-CSL registered consecutive increase of its electoral support until 2002. In the 1992 election the KDU-CSL obtained 15 seats and joined the government coalition. The following election from 1996 provided the party 18 seats and allowed its presence in the ODS governments (Klaus and Tosovsky). Although its 20 seats from 1998 allowed the party to get in government, the failure to reach a consensus with the CSSD sent the KDU-CSL in opposition next to the US, the DEU, and the ODA. The 2002 election brought 31 seats to the coalition formed by the KDU-CSL and the US-DEU (that merged before the election for reasons related to threshold). The KDU-CSL had 21 out of the 31 seats (Szajkowski 2005, 163). Both members of the coalition were included in the CSSD government. Although in 2006 the KDU-CSL obtained only 13 seats it still managed to participate in a coalition government next to the ODS and the SZ.

These results indicate a relatively stable electoral support for the KDU-CSL situated between 7 and 14% of the votes – corresponding to the described range of received seats. This stability was partially the result of a large proportion of candidates promoted in consecutive elections by the KDU-CSL (Table 5.4). Three main mechanisms lead to such high renomination rates: the involvement of MPs in the internal life of the party, reduced internal dissent in the party, and the usual presence in the government coalitions. Let us examine closely each of these factors.

First, the executive committee of the KDU-CSL incorporates five members of parliament, speakers and vice-speakers from the legislature, and all its government ministers (van Biezen 2003, 149; Linek and Lyons 2009, 7). Moreover, the leaders of the parliamentary party groups are granted full membership in the congress. All these reveal a thorough involvement of the high profile elite of the party in the decision making of the party organization. Apart from MPs in the national executive board and the national executive committee, the presidium consists almost exclusively of MPs (Linek and Lyons 2009, 7). The process of candidate selection explored in Chapter 4 revealed two different phases for the KDU-CSL. The first, until 1996, included a general control of the national executive committee over the candidates to be on party's lists. Practically, MPs and members of the cabinet were in charge of deciding upon the lists of candidates. The second phase includes primaries or decision reached by committees at local or regional level. Even under these

conditions, given the key role held by MPs in the central office, there is informal influence going on. Thus MPs had no difficulties in placing their names on eligible positions (Linek and Lyons 2009, 8).

Second, the existence of the KDU-CSL was marked by isolated internal dissent. The most dynamic period was before the 1992 formation of the KDU-CSL; the KDS left the KDU to form an alliance with the ODS. The few voices against the leadership of the party either did not leave the party or if they deserted it was not in an organized manner. For 14 years between the 1992 and 2006 elections the KDU-CSL witnessed no splits. The inclination of the KDU-CSL to favor cooperation with one of the two large actors from the Czech party system – the ODS or the CSSD – depended mostly on the style of leadership. For example, Cyril Svoboda was a known opponent of Vaclav Klaus and during his leadership the KDU-CSL entered the coalition government led by the CSSD. Four years before, when the party was chaired by Jan Kasal, the KDU-CSL refused cooperation with the CSSD due mostly to the ideological orientation of their leader. Despite these ideological turns, the elite remained loyal and did not question publicly the leaders' decisions. The situation of 1998 was one of the best moments to do so. The party gained more votes than in 1994, but decided to stay in the opposition. However, no voices were heard within the KDU-CSL. The high renomination rates can be a reward fur such a behavior.

Third, the high coalition potential of the KDU-CSL provides confidence both to the core electorate of the party and to the elite. For citizens, it is crucial to see that their votes are not wasted. The KDU-CSL often met their expectations having only one term outside government. When it was incumbent, the party lost support only in the 2006 election. With such governing presence, the party elite has supplementary reasons to be disciplined and loyal. This may partially justify the already discussed low level of dissent.

The KDU-CSL appears to be a typical case in which elite loyalty shapes the electoral stability of the party. The loyalty of the elite provides the organizational stability, allows homogeneity of actions, and ensures continuity and professionalization of representation. All these increase voters' confidence in the potential of the party to implement its promises. They contribute to a positive image of the party in the eyes of the voters. The reaction of voters is observable in the relatively stable core of supporters. These votes allow the party to play a pivotal role in the Czech party system. The primary reward for their behavior consists of renomination. Through loyalty MPs are able to continue the political game. This holds true especially in the situation of the KDU-CSL elites who can clearly envisage the results of their behavior.

PD: Strong Factionalism and Disloyal Elite

Similarly to many Polish parties present on the political scene in the '90s, the PD has its roots in the Solidarity movement. Its history is characterized by name changes, numerous internal fights, and elite loss. Its foundation took place in 1990 under the label of Democratic Union (UD). The political party was crucial for the first years of Polish transition to democracy and market economy. It was often identified with the person of the Polish Prime Minister Tadeusz Mazoviecki and supported the economic shock therapy of Leszek Balcerowicz who proposed numerous reforms aimed to put an end to the hyperinflation occurred after the fall of communism and to balance the national budget. UD won the 1991 elections with a vote share of 12.3%, but given the failure of its leader (Bronislaw Geremek) to form a government coalition, the party got into opposition. In 1992, the SLD government led by Jan Olszewski fell and the caretaker government of Waldemar Pawlak (PSL) failed to gain a vote of confidence (Szczerbiak 2001a). Consequently, a seven party coalition led by PD supported Hanna Suchocka as prime minister. The 1993 early elections – generated by the fall of suchocka's cabinet – were won by the SLD (20.4%) and the PSL (15.4%) that formed the new government with Pawlak as prime minister. Coming after the failure to maintain a government, the UD got third in elections with 10.6% of the votes and had to move again in the opposition.

In March 1994, the UD merged with a small party called Liberal Democratic Congress (KLD) and created the Freedom Union (UW). The newly created party obtained 13.4% of the votes in the 1997 elections and joined the government coalition led by the AWS. However, the UW left the government due to the opposition of the AWS' populist wing against Balcerowicz's economic plans (Szajkowski 2005, 481). Until 2001, the UW witnessed numerous internal clashes between factions that eroded the perception of stable and enduring party with a core electorate (Millard 2004, 63). The first frictions occurred since UW's formation in 1994. The faction of Wladyslaw Frasyniuk and Zofia Kuratowska, the Democratic Forum, emerged within UW as a left wing faction. As the party statute prohibited internal factions, the UW leaders asked the executive council not to recognize the newly formed group. Such a decision found opposition even among some key leaders of the party (Geremek and Jan Lytinski) (Bugajski 2002, 177).

This first division was followed by subsequent fights for supremacy in the party as the leaders of factions took turns in leading the party. The faction led by Balcerowicz promoted a liberal socialism similar to that visible in the economic reforms proposed by him whenever in government or as President of the Polish Central Bank. When replacing Mazowiecki in 1995, Balcerowicz had the initial support of the liberal (right) wing of the party led by Jan Maria Rokita (Bugajski 2002, 176). A rupture intervened also within this initially unitary faction. In the aftermath of the 1995 presidential elections, Balcerowicz

accused Rokita of hurting Jacek Kuron's campaign – the presidential candidate of UW. Rokita was expelled from the presidium despite the fact that most leaders from the right wing faction threatened with their resignations. Following this decision, a split occurred in the party: the UW organizations from Gdansk formed a bloc with five other post-Solidarity parties to run independently in the 1997 elections (Bugajski 2002, 178).

Geremek and Mazowiecki, leaders of the party for a long time even when it was called UD, had an inclination towards Christian democracy, often promoting Catholic values in their discourses. Although not leaders of the party, Kuron and Donald Tusk (acting as a deputy chairman) had influence in the UW with their views and formed strong factions. Tusk, originating in the KLD, supported free market economy with minimal government interference. Such ideas were not supported within the UW and Tusk lost the competition for party's chairmanship against Geremek in the aftermath of the UW's departure from the government in 2000.

These internal fights, combined with the prospects of an electoral defeat for the parties in government since 1997, determined a massive exodus of the members from Tusk's faction. Tusk joined some members of the AWS to form the PO. As a result of these defections, in the 2001 general elections, the UW got 3.1% of the votes; it failed to cross the electoral threshold and thus did not gain entry to Parliament. Voters followed the well-known leaders who deserted the party and thus abandoned the UW for new offerings (Millard 2004, 101). UW did not recover since then. The immediate resignation of Geremek led to the election of Frasyniuk as chairman. Under the new rule, the UW abandoned its structuring as catch-all party (Jasiewicz 2007, 113) and continued to exist as a minor political actor outside Parliament. In 2005, it changed its name into the PD, but this did not improve its electoral result in the legislative elections from the same year (it got 2.5% of the votes). In 2007, it run into a broader coalition called Left and Democrats (LID) next to the SLD, the SDPL, and the UP.

During its existence, the PD behaved like a pragmatic party grouping people and factions of different ideological backgrounds (Bugajski 2002, 176). It managed to accommodate these internal fights for one decade. Once torn apart, the party did not recover. On the background of numerous factions, internal struggles, leadership changes, elite defections, and organizational reforms, the PD could hardly use the same candidates in consecutive elections. The apogee was reached in the 1993 elections when almost half of the MPs elected in 1991 were placed on the electoral lists for the 1993 contest. Until 1997, this proportion dropped by 10%. This percentage is somewhat impressive given the internal dynamic of the party with factionalism becoming stronger and elites leaving the party or being expelled. The term in government was not benefic to PD. On top of the negative perception held by voters on the parties

from the governing coalition, the departure of Tusk and other prominent leaders created irreversible damage. As most MPs left the party, the PD could use only 16% of its representatives when drafting the electoral lists for the upcoming elections. Following these developments, in the eve of the 2001 elections the PD remained with the hard legacy of a bad perceived government and very few known politicians to determine the voters to maintain their previous preferences. As a result, the party failed to cross the electoral threshold: the same situation was observable in the 2005 elections.

To conclude, the PD is the illustrative case of the manner in which internal struggles and deserting elites can harm a party that looked good in the mid-'90s. Its broad ideology and central position on the political spectrum had the capacity to encapsulate voter preferences on the long term. Voters did not appear to be troubled by its name changes or partial failures in government (the early '90s). The leaders of the party had the capacity to mobilize the electorate on a regular basis. However, as soon as some of these readers no longer belonged to the PD, there was a change of preferences. The increased electoral volatility (see Figure 5.4) and the low result in the 2001 elections accurately reflect this drop.

Conclusions

The findings of this chapter are threefold. First, it shows a great diversity in renominating MPs across the CEE political parties. The averages of these rates range between 25% and 67%. Most parties renominate at least one third of their MPs as candidates in the following elections. At country level, the renomination rates increase with time. Both findings illustrate strong ties between parties and their representatives. Second, there is a moderate statistical relationship between the renomination rates and electoral volatility. Its direction indicates that political parties that use more MPs on the lists of candidates are less volatile than the rest. The chapter presented three intertwined mechanisms through which this connection is achieved: instrumental, communication, and socialization. Third, the comparative case studies brought empirical evidence that illustrates the ways in which MP renominations shape electoral volatility. In substantial terms, the analysis of KDU-CSL and PD show how the loyalty of elite enforces the loyalty of the voters.

There are two major implications of these results. In theoretical terms, this analysis adds new valences for the process of candidate nomination. Earlier research focused on the process, costs, and pressures faced by political parties when nominating the candidates for elections. The advantage brought by renominations in the form of stable electorates provides a new perspective. This may contribute to the rethinking of the advantages to promote the same representatives in consecutive elections. At empirical level, the renomination rates can be considered a useful explanation for variations of electoral volatility

across parties and even party systems. The relationship is observable in different electoral settings (e.g. within the party systems). At the same time, the correlations differ across countries and this may represent a fertile soil for further investigation.

The empirical testing of the relationship between the renomination rate and electoral volatility concludes the series of bivariate correlations started with Chapter 3. This series is complemented in the following chapter by a multivariate statistical analysis that includes all components of party organization – candidate selection, membership rates, and renomination rates – in a more complex assessment of their impact on electoral volatility. Based on theoretical expectations, I control for three additional variables (see Figure 1.3) that may also influence the variation of electoral volatility.

Chapter 6 | A Multivariate Analysis of the Electoral Volatility at Party Level in CEE

Introduction

How can electoral volatility in the new European democracies be explained? This general question drives the comparative analysis of this book. The key explanatory variable is the party organization. Each of the previous three chapters analyzed on a bivariate basis the empirical relationships between the components of party organization (i.e. candidate selection, membership rates, and MPs' renomination rates) and electoral volatility at party level in CEE. This chapter complements the bivariate correlations with a multivariate statistical analysis. The components of party organization are introduced into the same model (OLS with robust standard errors) to observe their impact on volatility while other variables are held constant.

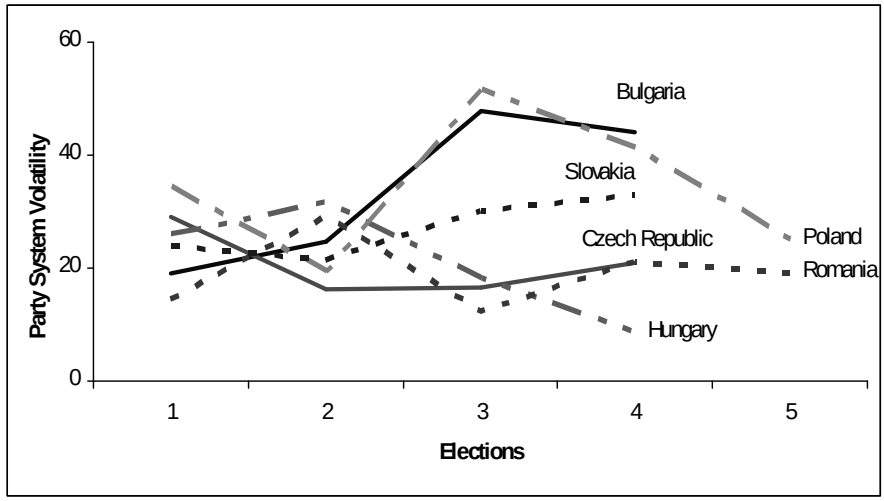
The multivariate analysis adds relevant methodological and empirical value to this study. First, it tests for causal relationships. The theoretical expectations, formulated hypotheses, and qualitative assessments pointed in the direction of causality. Second, next to the main hypothesized effects, there are theoretical reasons to control for three additional variables: party system volatility, electoral turnout, and government incumbency of the party (Figure 1.4). Political parties evolve and develop within an environment where similar actors perform comparable actions. Despite the focus of this analysis on individual parties, the possible systemic influences (i.e. party system volatility and turnout) have to be controlled for. Government incumbency, discussed also in Chapter 2, can influence the electoral volatility: elections often serve as visible milestones that reflect voters' tendencies to hold incumbents responsible for the domestic situation. The survival in office often depends on parties' performance (Przeworski et al. 1999; Gherghina 2011).

The first section includes a discussion of the systemic control variables. It includes the evolution of the party system institutionalization and electoral turnout across time and countries. The following section conducts bivariate correlations between all independent and control variables to show the existing relationships. The third section includes the results of the multivariate analysis. The findings strengthen the conclusions reached in the previous chapters: the candidate selection for the legislative elections and the renomination rates are important determinants of the electoral volatility. The evidence shows little impact of the control variables on the party level volatility.

The Evolution of the Systemic Components

The two systemic control variables – party system volatility and electoral turnout – display oscillations over time; they depict a rich picture with relevant cross-country variations. Figure 6.1 reflects the evolution of party system volatility and electoral turnout in CEE. The horizontal axis represents the elections for which the volatility can be calculated (e.g. the first number corresponds to the second election as this is the first moment in time when vote shifts can be measured). The party system volatility ranges between minimum values around 10% for the Hungarian elections in 2006 and Romania in 2000 to a maximum around 50% in the 2001 Bulgarian elections.

Figure 6.1: The Evolution of Party System Volatility in CEE

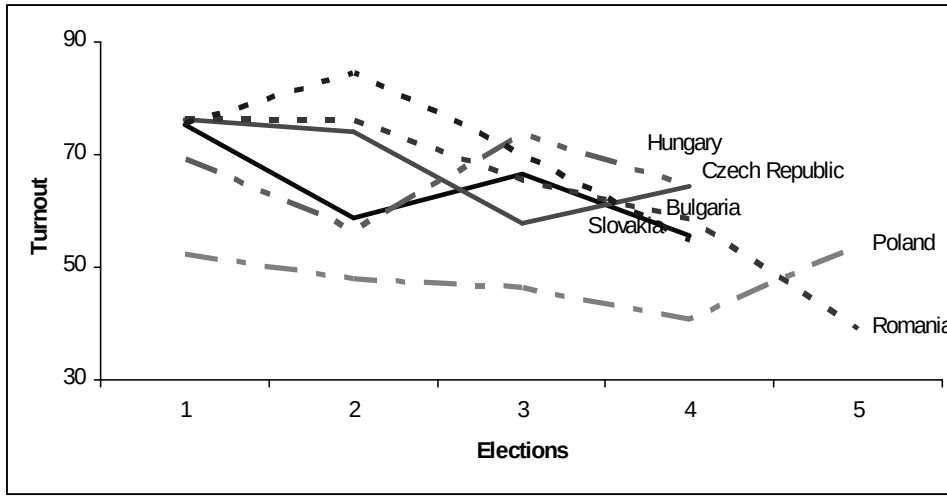


In general, this figure indicates oscillatory trends with similar levels in the first and most recent elections. Hungary displays a continuous decrease of volatility starting 1998 that coincides with the orientation of voter preferences towards two very large political parties (FIDESZ and MSZP). Slovakia registers a slow increase of the party system volatility starting with the same year, 1998 when the domination of the HZDS ended and new parties mobilizing relevant portions of the electorate emerged on the political scene (e.g. SDK in 1998, SMER in 2002). Bulgaria is the country where the level of volatility in the most recent election of 2005 is considerably higher than that of 1994 although the over-time trend is characterized by ups and downs. As a final remark, the six countries can be clustered in two groups according to the values of their volatility: Czech Republic, Hungary and Romania have visible lower levels than the rest of the countries.

Figure 6.2 depicts the longitudinal evolution of turnout levels in CEE. The electoral turnout is generally characterized by descending slopes. The

enthusiasm of voters in the aftermath of the communist breakdown was gradually reduced and most of the countries witnessed increased absenteeism. This is clearly visible in the Romanian case where the percentage of over 75% turnout in 1992 dropped to less than 40% in 2008. In a similar situation, Czech Republic and Slovakia had turnout losses of 15 to 20 percentage points between the first and the last elections in the graph. Until recently, Poland registered a similar decrease, but the electoral stake of the 2007 elections brought citizens to the polls; the turnout exceeds the previous peak – the 1993 elections. Hungary and Bulgaria are characterized by oscillatory trends in which the latter ended up with a much smaller level of turnout than in the 90s.

Figure 6.2: The Evolution of Electoral Turnout in CEE



The longitudinal development of these two systemic control variables may influence the variations of electoral volatility at party level in CEE. However, before taking a close look at their actual explanatory potential, I investigate the statistical relationships between all variables included in the multivariate analysis – the independent and control variables.

Correlations between Variables

This section explores all correlations between the independent and control variables. The correlation coefficients from Table 6.1 show the existence of generally weak linear relationships between these variables (and thus no concerns for multicolinearity). The only moderate correlation is observed between the size of membership and the variations in the size of membership. The positive coefficient (0.55), statistically significant at the 0.01 level, indicate that large member organizations have wider oscillations in terms of membership. For them it is difficult to maintain a stable organization: they

either lose or gain a lot of members. At the same time, political parties with a low number of members rarely alter dramatically the dimension of their organizations. They remain small. This observation strengthens the conclusions from Chapter 4 about the low variation in the size of most membership organizations across time.

Table 6.1: Correlations between the Variables of the Multivariate Model

	Candidate Selection	Membership Size	Variations in Membership Size	Renomination	Party System Volatility	Turnout	Incumbency
Candidate Selection	-	-0.08	-0.02	-0.14	0.22*	-0.08	-0.08
Membership Size		-	0.55**	-0.05	-0.04	0.22*	0.02
Variations in Membership Size			-	-0.08	-0.17	0.25*	0.02
Renomination				-	- 0.22*	-0.10	0.05
Party System Volatility					-	-0.35*	-0.11
Turnout						-	0.08
Incumbency							-

Notes: Reported coefficients are *Pearson's r.* N = 112.
** statistical significance at 0.01 level.
* statistical significance at 0.05 level.

The coefficients in Table 6.1 allow a few general observations. First, there is a weak negative linear correlation (without statistical significance) between the candidate selection for legislative elections and the renomination rates of the MPs. It indicates that political parties with more decentralized mechanisms of candidate selection renominate more MPs. There are three interconnected explanations for this process: the limited recruitment pool, the prominence of local leaders, and the focus of parliamentary activity. The recruitment pool of the local and territorial organizations is limited. If the local branches can renominate a person with experience, proven loyalty towards the party, or positive image acquired during the term in office, they are likely to do so. Moreover, for most CEE political parties, the leaders of the local organizations are in place for a long time. When the local organizations have a word to say in the candidate selection for the legislative elections, they are the usual suspects for nomination. If such leaders served a term in office, the likelihood of their renomination is large. Furthermore, the intensity and focus of parliamentary activity can represent another relevant explanation. The MPs belonging to

parties in which the selection process takes place mainly at regional or local level have higher incentives to allocate resources and concentrate on their constituency in the attempt to convince the local organizations to support them with future nominations.

Second, there is no relationship between the MP renomination rates and government incumbency of the party. There are theoretical reasons to expect incumbent parties to rely more on their previously successful candidates; these candidates benefit of the advantages of the term in government of their party (e.g. higher access to financial resources). Moreover, candidates of the incumbent parties can be more visible than those of the opposition and people can recognize them better. The empirical evidence from CEE suggests that no such logic is employed by the examined parties: those in government renominate their MPs on lists of candidates to a similar extent with the parties from opposition.[61] This result complements the qualitative description from Chapter 5. The analysis of renomination oscillations at party level revealed isolated cases in which government parties relied on more MPs in the subsequent elections compared to the opposition parties.

Third, there is a statistically significant relationship between the decentralization of candidate selection and party system volatility. The positive correlation indicates that the countries in which political parties have more decentralized selection of candidates are less volatile than the rest. Corroborating this result with the findings from Chapter 3, the decentralization of candidate selection for the legislative elections is related to the electoral volatility both for individual parties and party systems. As the measurement is done at different levels (i.e. the party system volatility is constant across parties in the same country at a given moment in time), the substantial conclusions to be derived from such a relationship are limited.

Fourth, there is a negative correlation between the renomination rates and party system volatility. This shows that the electorate is more stable in those systems where parties are characterized by high renomination rates. Similarly to the previous observation, this is also in line with the findings of the hypothesis testing in chapter 5. it is worth noting that the correlations between each component of party organization – candidate selection and MP renomination rates – and electoral volatility are much higher at party (Chapter 3 and Chapter 5) than at party system level.

Fifth, there is a weak positive correlation, statistically not significant, between the candidate selection and the size of membership. This indicates

[61] There is a direct link between this observation and the previous correlation. MPs do not have higher chances of renomination if their party is in government. Instead, in the context of more autonomy enjoyed by the local organizations in selecting candidates for the legislative office, the constituency service and the position within the local organization (e.g. being part of the local elite) can ensure the renomination.

that parties with more decentralized selection mechanisms have slightly larger membership organizations compared to the rest. This result is mainly driven by the successor parties that benefit of communist organizational legacies and often maintained the large membership without keeping the highly centralized decision making that characterized the communist parties. This organizational reform took place in the aftermath of regime change when most successor parties tried to persuade voters about their discontinuity with the past. The credibility of their message relied also on the intra-party formal arrangements. That is why, with the exception of the SDL in Slovakia, the successor parties decided to allow at least partial autonomy to the local branches in selecting candidates for the legislative elections.

Finally, the moderate correlation between the two control variables examined in the previous section provides useful information for the general picture of electoral volatility in CEE. The negative value of the correlation coefficient (-0.35), statistically significant at the 0.05 level, indicates that lower turnout favors increased volatility. In theoretical terms, the low turnout is an indicator of voters' protest against the representation provided by political parties. Discontent often leads to absenteeism. Under these conditions, vote shifts between the components of the system are more likely to occur when less people are present at the voting booth.

This happens for two concurrent reasons. On the one hand, those who decide to vote are willing to express their discontent on the ballot. In doing so, they do not vote with the same party as they did in the previous elections. On the other hand, if all those who vote maintain their preferences, the party and party system volatility can still change. As explained in Chapter 1, if a political party has the same voters in election t_0 and t_1, the percentage of people who vote changes the share of votes that this particular party receives. Empirically, large parties in the Czech Republic, Hungary, and more recently Romania usually mobilize large numbers of voters. Thus, small variations in turnout do not alter their support. However, small parties are the main beneficiaries or victims: when the electoral support is close to the electoral threshold, the entries and exits from the party system are partially due to the oscillations in turnout.

The statistical analysis of the relationships between the independent and control variables provided a few insights in the characteristics of the parties and their environment. The following section moves to the multivariate analysis used to explain the variation of the electoral volatility at party level in CEE.

The Multivariate Analysis

Chapter 1 and the introductory section of this chapter mention two multivariate models: one with the main effects for which I formulated hypotheses (model 1)

and one including also the control variables (model 2). A few brief methodological clarifications are necessary before conducting the analysis. The use of OLS requires the satisfaction of four model assumptions: independence, normality, homoskedasticity, and linearity. To correct for the violation of the third and third assumption, I use OLS with robust standard errors.

Table 6.2 includes the regression coefficients of the two OLS models. Model 1, including only the main effects, explains 21% of the variation in electoral volatility at party level. This percentage is not high, but it should taken into account that it is the statistical result of only two variables: the decentralization of candidate selection and the renomination rates. The other two variables – both related to the size of membership organizations – have little if any explanatory power.

Table 6.2: The Multivariate Models Explaining Electoral Volatility at Party Level in CEE

	Model 1	**Model 2**
Constant	25.74** (7.74)	27.48 (14.09)
Candidate Selection	38.84** (12.52)	33.76* (13.91)
Membership Size	-2.16 (2.29)	-1.14 (2.06)
Variations in Membership Size	-1.66 (4.30)	-0.59 (4.40)
Renomination	-43.17** (14.11)	-38.66** (13.53)
Party System Volatility		0.24 (0.23)
Turnout		-0.07 (0.17)
Government Incumbency		-9.47* (3.77)
R^2	0.21	0.28
N	101	

Note: Reported coefficients are not standardized (robust standard errors in brackets)
***** statistical significance at 0.05 level.
****** statistical significance at 0.01 level.

All hypothesized relationships are supported by empirical evidence. According to the regression coefficients[62], if we compare the political parties using the most decentralized with those parties using the most centralized candidate selection process, there is a 39 percentage points decrease of volatility. This result is generalizable with a confidence interval of 99%.

Regarding the membership organizations, the effect on electoral volatility is almost non-existent. A comparison between the political parties with the highest membership organizations and the political parties with the smallest percentage of members in the electorate, there is slightly more than 2 percentage points increase of electoral volatility. Similarly, if we compare the parties with less fluctuation in the size of membership organization with those

[62] For an easier interpretation of the regression coefficients, I standardized their values on a 0-1 scale.

parties with large variations in the percentages of members, there is almost 2 percentage points increase of volatility. The lack of statistical significance points in the same direction: the membership organizations and their fluctuations have no explanatory power for the variation of electoral volatility at party level. As illustrated in Chapter 4 the absence of an effect may be due to the low variation in terms of membership organizations across time and parties.

The MP renomination rates is next to candidate selection for the national elections the variable that influences the electoral volatility at party level to a considerable extent. The comparison between the political parties that renominate more MPs and those parties that renominate few MPs reveal a difference of 43% between the two; high renomination rates lead to less volatility (Figure 6.6). This indicates that MP renomination has a similar effect to the decentralization of candidate selection.

These results confirm the findings from the bivariate analyses regarding the strength and direction of the relationships. The effect of membership organizations (both size and variations in size) on electoral volatility is the smallest among the ones hypothesized. They are sample specific and cannot be generalized to a broader population. The effects of candidate selection and MP renomination rates have comparable effects, both being generalizable to a broader population.

The inclusion in Model 2 of the control variables does not increase its explanatory power. The model explains 28% of the variation in electoral volatility at party level in CEE. Such an increase is minimal given the fact that three new variables were introduced. At the same time, the control variables do not diminish to a relevant extent the predictive potential of candidate selection and renomination rates. With the exception of the variation in size of the membership organizations the impact of the main variables is stronger than that of the controls. The candidate selection and the renomination rates continue to explain best the variation in electoral volatility at party level. Turnout is the weakest predictor among the controls.

These findings have two implications. First, the results of the bivariate relationships are robust; they do not change when we have all variables together or when we control for the environment factors. Second, at the core of this endeavor, the party system volatility is a separate process from that of the party volatility. Although the party system represents the sum of the party level volatilities – calculated differently than the measurement employed in this book – the variation of party volatility is explained to a small extent by what happens at systemic level. Among the control variables government incumbency has the highest impact on party volatility. From a methodological perspective, this outcome is not surprising as it is the only control variable measured at party and not systemic level. From an empirical perspective, the

descriptive statistics in Chapter 2 have already pointed to a different distribution of volatility between incumbent and opposition parties. Results indicate that incumbents are more volatile than the rest of parties.

Conclusions

The evidence provided by the multivariate statistical analysis of this chapter strengthens the conclusions reached in the previous chapters. The components of party organization have a relevant effect on electoral volatility at party level. At the same time, there is a hierarchy of these effects. The most important predictors of electoral volatility are the candidate selection process and the MP renomination rates. The membership organization (both the size and the variation in size) is the variable with no effect.

Overall, the control variables have little effect on the volatility. The model that includes them does not add much explanatory power to the variation of volatility. The government incumbency is the only control variable that predicts the values of volatility. This means that there is no evidence to illustrate that any systemic factor – party system volatility or turnout – has an influence on the electoral volatility measured at party level. These empirical results strengthen the theoretical approach from Chapter 1 that clearly differentiated between factors determining volatility at multiple layers (Figure 1.1). The quantitative multivariate analysis represented the final step of this study. The concluding chapter wraps up the analysis and emphasizes the most relevant findings. It also discusses the implications of the results and indicates directions for further research.

Conclusions

The political change in post-communist Europe involved a multi-faceted transformation of the polity, society, and of the political actors engaged in the competition for representation. The re-emergence of multiparty competition generated high electoral volatility, a situation which contrasted starkly with that of Western Europe. The large number of vote shifts was not only observable at the party system level, but also amongst political parties from the same country. The main goal of this study was to explain the variations in electoral volatility at party level across Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, and Slovakia between 1990 and 2008. The analysis included political parties with a relatively continuous presence in the legislature. The main contention of my analysis has been that the organizational features of political parties can influence the extent to which parties achieve stability within the electorate. More specifically, it was argued that a decentralized process of candidate selection for national elections, the size and stability of membership organizations, and the extent to which political parties re-nominate their MPs on candidate lists have an effect on electoral volatility. These features have the capacity to ensure good communication between parties and voters, create a broader social network in support of the party, provide continuity of representation, and have a socializing effect on citizens.

Consistent with previous research focusing on the role of external factors in shaping long-term electoral preferences (e.g. the electoral system, the degree of democratization etc.), this study indicates the existence of a response from the voters to the way in which parties organize. The importance of internal settings to diminishing electoral volatility appears to hold under various circumstances. The explanations provided are not country or time specific, they do not refer to specific types of parties, nor are they limited to particular events in the political evolution of CEE. Instead, the mechanisms identified here appear to explain the broad range of electoral volatility observable for all selected parties across various elections.

The Complex Picture of Electoral Volatility

This book introduced a systematic approach to electoral volatility at the party level across several new European democracies. Volatility was measured by calculating vote gains and losses relative to the electoral support of the political parties; any bias related to the party size was thereby diminished. The empirical findings presented here add nuance to and complement the picture drawn by previous research on electoral volatility at the party system level

(Lewis 1996; 2001a; Agh 1998; Toka 1998; Krupavicius 1999; Moser 2001; van Biezen 2003; Millard 2004; Sikk 2005; Tavits 2005; Casal Bertoa and Enyedi 2011). The nuances were found when comparing the countries based on the volatility of their most relevant political parties.

The dynamic of electoral support for these political actors reveals two country-specific features: the volatility range, and the homogeneity of party distribution on this range. In four out of six countries studied, there are political parties with almost no volatility at specific moments in time. This indicates the potential of some political parties to maintain a stable core of voters in consecutive elections. Out of these four countries, Hungary and Slovakia have the broadest dispersion. They are the only countries in which political parties register values of electoral volatility above 80%. This empirical observation reveals similarities between two party systems that were often considered to fall under different categories of electoral volatility – Hungary being one of the most stable party systems in CEE, and Slovakia being one of the systems with relatively large volatility.

In Bulgaria and Poland, there are no parties close to the minimum extreme value. Moreover, these are the countries with the fewest political parties with low volatility in CEE. Conversely, the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Romania are the countries in which most political parties have low volatility in various elections. These conclusions are in line with earlier research that placed Bulgaria and Poland in the same category of volatile party systems (Szczerbiak 2001; Spirova 2007), whereas the Czech, Hungarian, and Romanian party systems are among the least volatile in CEE. The distribution of political parties across the volatility continuum allows for a deeper exploration of the cross-country similarities and differences. For example, Bulgarian and Polish parties display a similar pattern of clustering around certain values of volatility. However, there is a difference between the two countries in terms of the number of parties, the concentration, and their respective volatility values. Bulgarian political parties cluster in three groups: a small group situated around 3%, a larger group around 20%, and the largest group around 40%. Polish political parties have are clustered in reverse: most parties are positioned around the 15% value, slightly fewer around the 50% value, and the smallest cluster resides close to 65%. Furthermore, Polish parties approach the uppermost extreme of electoral volatility compared to the parties in Bulgaria.

Apart from these country-level differences, the general observation is that the vast majority of CEE political parties are dispersed across a broad range of electoral volatility. This dispersion exists irrespective of the timing and party system in which the parties compete. Although there is some concentration in the 0-20% range of volatility, the variation in electoral volatility is high. The range is broad with a minimum value of 0.11% and a maximum of 89.21%. The analysis found no effect of time on electoral volatility. A comparison of the

1990 and 2000 decades revealed no relevant differences between the volatility values and distribution of parties. The empirical evidence contradicts existing research underlining the consolidation and stabilization tendencies of the CEE party systems (Olson 1993; Agh 1998; Chan 2001). Instead of a uniform decline of electoral volatility in CEE, these results indicate that voters continue to change their electoral preferences to a similar extent across time. This is consistent with the oscillatory pattern identified by Sikk (2005) for the electoral volatility at party system level. In the context of the party level analysis conducted in this book, a specific conclusion can be drawn on the basis of these empirical observations. Even after several elections, volatility remains a salient issue for most CEE political parties.

If the time does not reduce electoral volatility, the presence in government appears to play a role. CEE incumbent parties are, on average, less volatile than opposition parties. Such findings complement the existing research from Western Europe (Muller and Strom 2000; Strom et al. 2003) pointing that incumbents are likely to display higher levels of electoral change compared to the opposition parties. Moving beyond the electoral loss or gain, this book illustrates that in CEE incumbent parties have a more stable core of voters compared to the opposition parties. This happens in the context of continuous alternations in government. However, the advantage of the term in government is not very high and is nuanced by a supplementary empirical observation. Incumbent parties do not display moderate volatility; they have either low or high levels of electoral volatility.

In addition to these general differences, there is significant variation in electoral volatility within the same party system. The variation is visible both across parties and across time for the same political party. The average volatility indicates large discrepancies between the least and the most volatile parties within a political system. Moreover, there are isolated examples of political parties that maintain a stable core of voters across several elections. Most parties do not even display a linear trend (decreasing or increasing) over the years; periods of low volatility rates are followed periods of high volatility and vice versa. In light of these empirical observations, CEE continues to represent fertile soil in which to investigate electoral volatility. In many respects, this complex picture was generally left unexplained by variables included in previous analyses. There are isolated instances in which the ethnic cleavage or the networks established by political parties with non-political organizations can explain the variation in electoral volatility at party level. However, general explanations are missing. To fill this gap, the central argument of this book was that the organizational features of political parties were likely to explain the variation in electoral volatility.

The Relevance of Candidate Selection

The way in which political parties select their candidates is relevant not only to those directly involved in the internal decision-making. So far, an extensive body of literature has focused on the implications of this process for members, leaders of local or territorial organizations, as well as the central elite of the party. There are a number of reasons for which candidate selection can influence electoral support and its long-term stability. The underlying mechanism at work here relates to the establishment of a better connection to the voter. Most political parties in CEE are hierarchical institutions with three decision-making layers: central, territorial (e.g. regional, county, or municipal), and local. Decisions made at the central office that are simply imposed on all local organizations run the risk of reflecting only the one-sided perspective of the central elite on the issue at hand. Decisions made at the highest level of interaction between most voters and the party – the local organization – are more likely to be based on citizens' priorities and needs. Local organizations can mirror citizens' day-to-day issues into policy issues, thereby demonstrating the potential for adaptation. In this way, the autonomy of local organizations in reaching relevant decisions within the party can provide the basis for a strong connection to the voters.

This general argument gets stronger when the decision making refers to candidates. Voters are more familiar with those candidates nominated at the constituency level. By providing the local organizations a voice in the process of candidate selection, political parties send a clear message: they care about voters' opinions. Moreover, a candidate selected at the local level contributes to a psychological effect within the electorate: people believe that candidate represents them. From a candidate's perspective, earlier studies have shown that politicians exhibit the greatest loyalty to the locus that influences their re-election. The selection of candidates in a decentralized manner (in territorial organizations) is therefore likely to enhance deeper connections between elected candidates and citizens.

The empirical relationship between the centralization of candidate selection and electoral volatility confirms these theoretical expectations. The statistical analysis revealed that political parties that allow the local organizations more room for maneuver in selecting candidates are less volatile than the rest. The centralization of candidate selection for national elections, measured using an index adapted to the CEE realities, reveals a diverse approach on the part of political parties towards the selection of their candidates. Most CEE political parties prefer the involvement of the central office in reaching decisions. However, this involvement takes various shapes. For more than one third of the parties, control of the central office is reactive and involves the use of the right to oppose or veto initial proposals. Selection takes place at the local or regional level and the list of candidates (as most

countries use list PR) is subject to the approval of the central organization. One fifth of the parties opt for mixed selection of candidates in which both the local and central level make proposals until a final decision is reached. A similar share of parties opts for a totally centralized decision making process in which local organizations have practically no say in the selection of candidates.

One implication of this categorization of parties according to their candidate selection procedures is empirical. It adds nuance to the conclusions drawn on the basis of previous research that dealt with the centralized character of political parties in CEE (Szczerbiak 2001a; Deegan-Krause 2006). The general tendency of centralization is visible. However, the degree to which the centre is involved in decision-making differs considerably. In many cases, the control of the centre does not limit the opportunities for involvement of the local level. In addition, centralization does not characterize the entire universe of cases. One fifth of the parties examined have decentralized selection: the local organizations have autonomy in choosing the candidates.

The fact that parties connect with their electorates through the decentralization of candidate selection for national elections has an impact on theories about voting behavior and intra-party decision making. The existence of such a relationship adds one more analytical dimension: voting can be the response to internal decisions of the political actors. So far, a large number of studies considered voting to be mostly the result of parties' activity on the political arena (see Chapter 1). However, the linkage identified in this book indicates that voters can react positively when local organizations – the primary unit of interaction between voters and parties – have a greater word to say in the selection of candidates for national elections. The recognition of candidates, the willingness to adapt to specific features of local politics, and the responsiveness to voters' priorities are among the most important messages sent by parties. Furthermore, with such effects in place, the locus of selection may influence the behavior of candidates once they reach office. Thus, this may constitute an incentive for successful candidates to push towards further decentralization of the decision making within their party.

The Limited Role of Membership

The theoretical arguments from Chapter 1 explained how membership can create social networks in society; at their turn, these networks can ensure a certain degree of voter encapsulation and allow the formation of party identity among members and their acquaintances. Moreover, communication with voters between elections gives citizens signals that their opinions are important and are being addressed as such. Members can make the process of representation more palpable. In this way, party members are able to close the gap between parties and voters that originates in the tenuous relationship between parties and society in CEE. On these grounds, the size of membership

organizations and its stability over time were expected to diminish electoral volatility.

The results indicate that the political parties with numerous members have slightly lower levels of electoral volatility than the parties with small number of members. The strength of this relationship varies across countries. Extreme values appear to be related to the share of party membership in the population. In this sense, the size of membership has the strongest influence on electoral volatility in the country with most party members (Romania) and the weakest in the country in which only very few people are registered party members (Poland). At the same time, the variations in size are not related to electoral volatility. Overall, membership appears to have a limited role in explaining electoral volatility at party level in CEE. Consequently, the enlargement of party membership can hardly represent e mechanism through which parties can stabilize their voters in CEE.

Two general observations can explain the weak relationships and can serve as bases for further research. First, the longitudinal analysis presented in this book reveals that only a small percentage of parties (14%) consistently increase their membership organizations over time. A similar percentage of parties registered a consistent loss of members. In more than two thirds of the cases, political party membership does not display a linear progression in one direction or the other; its evolution is marked by oscillations. Second, on average, the membership organizations continue to be small or extremely small both in absolute and relative terms (compared to Western European countries). Only eight parties have more than 1% members (calculated as percentage of the electorate). Of these, only two parties have more than 2%, both of which rely heavily on the organizational legacy of their communist predecessors. These low levels of membership diminish the influence that party members could have exercised on electoral volatility. Furthermore, given the oscillatory trends of most membership organizations in the region, the stability of membership rates does not influence volatility.

The Advantages of MP Renominations

MPs' activities and performance in the legislature shape the image of political parties in the eyes of the electorate. Due to their position, MPs have access to resources that can bring benefits to those who voted for their party. The period spent in office is often considered to be an indicator of professionalization and expertise. These attributes enhance the credibility of MPs when they run for re-election. MPs also have the resources (i.e. public allowances, free access to media) to interact extensively with groups or individual citizens within their constituencies. These features suggest that continuity in office may have a positive effect on electoral volatility. Political parties using the same MPs in consecutive elections are better able to establish a strong connection with the

electorate and are thus more able to influence its voting loyalty. This nexus functions on the basis of three complementary mechanisms. First, incumbent MPs play an instrumental role using their high visibility, publicity, and name recognition to their advantage. Incumbents act as recognizable elements of the party that add a personal dimension to the organizational attachment of the voters. Second, MPs are the guarantors of long-term communication between candidates and voters to their mutual benefits. Third, there is a process of voter socialization. Through their constituency service, MPs accustom voters to issue of representation and responsiveness to their needs.

Given this, it is not surprising that the average estimation of re-nomination indicates that CEE political parties use approximately one third of their MPs to fill in the candidate lists for the upcoming elections. Due to a variety of reasons ranging from floor-crossing to unwillingness of MPs to run for re-election, there is a substantial discrepancy in MP re-nomination rates across political parties. Consequently, the average re-nomination rates vary between less than a quarter of MPs (as is the case with the KDNP in Hungary) to more than two thirds (KDU-CSL in the Czech Republic). The statistical analysis shows the effect of re-nomination rates for electoral volatility. The political parties that re-nominate more MPs ensure continuity of representation. This process is reflected in the stability of electoral support: the parties with higher re-nomination rates exhibit lower electoral volatility.

These findings have an empirical implication. In the new European democracies in CEE, the nexus between parties and voters involves the legislators. They are the most visible representatives of the parties and their continuity in office can encourage the stabilization of electoral preferences. Continuity is relevant to electoral volatility without accounting for the MPs' performance. The simple fact of being present in the legislature appears to trigger more loyal voter behavior at polls.

Implications

This study revealed the importance of organizational components in shaping electoral volatility at the party level. The centralization of candidate selection and the MP re-nomination rate have a relevant effect on the stability of electoral performance. The size of membership has little impact on volatility. The multivariate statistical analysis controlled both for variables in the political environment such as party system volatility and electoral turnout as well as for government incumbency. Its results revealed that the effects of the organizational components are the strongest; their impact is not weakened by the presence of other variables.

The empirical evidence presented in this book has four major implications. First, the effect of organizational structures and procedures on the societal acceptance of parties (i.e. the stability of electoral support) has

implications for the theory of institutionalization. Previous studies (Mainwaring and Scully 1995) have considered these two components as indicators of institutionalization. The analyses from this book, however, indicate that this conclusion may be problematic. If there a cause-effect relationship between these two variables, they are no longer components of the same concept (institutionalization). Instead, as one partially explains the other, there is conceptual tautology. Consequently, a new conceptualization of institutionalization is required.

Second, these empirical results indicate the necessity to rethink the linkage between parties and their electorates. So far, existing research illustrate how parties react to existing constraints in society, to the electoral market, or to a large number of external factors (Kircheimer 1966; Rae 1971; Sartori 1997; Harmel and Janda 1982; Bartolini and Mair 1990; Mair et al. 2004; Millard 2004). Some results of the analysis conducted throughout this book indicated that political parties can be in the position to influence the institutional settings in which they operate. Thus, political parties can also be seen as agents that can structure people's choices and model, to some extent, their own electoral stability over time. The degrees of success in reaching this outcome can set the theoretical premises for new typologies of political parties in CEE.

Third, at the methodological level, this book provides a few indicators to allow the comparability of party organization and further investigation. Earlier studies provided several conceptualizations of party organization (Harmel and Janda 1982; Panebianco 1988; Mainwaring and Scully 1995; Randall and Svasand 2002; van Biezen 2003) that allow little or no replicability as they are based more on in-depth or contextual knowledge of the cases. This study provided an analytical alternative to qualitative assessment of organization components. The quantitative operationalizaton and the data provided may represent useful tools for further comparative research.

The major empirical implication of these results is that electoral volatility can have endogenous sources. This observation adds nuance to the conclusions drawn in two different streams of literature. First, many studies have focused on external determinants of volatility. The role played by the internal selection of candidates, membership rates, and MP re-nomination illustrates that this is not the case at the party level. Moreover, the prominence of endogenous explanations – when included in the same model as some exogenous explanations – strengthens these claims. Voters appear to react to the behavior of political party. For example, if the party shows willingness to respond to their demands or ensures continuity of representation, citizens do not alter their electoral preferences. Second, earlier research has discussed the adaptation of party organization to inputs received from the electorate. This book has demonstrated that this process can be reversed and the internal

organization can shape the electoral stability of the party. The process is complex and is based upon three interconnected mechanisms by which a stronger nexus with the voters is created. Further research can elaborate on the propensity of parties to choose to either adopt one of the two stances (adaptation or influence) or to combine them for political and electoral success.

Directions for Further Research

This analysis opens the floor to three main avenues for further research. First, the broad longitudinal and cross-party variation in electoral volatility may inspire the quest to find further determinants. The multivariate statistical analysis accounted for 20 to 30% of this variation. This leaves plenty of room for future research to employ new variables that may explain volatility. Among other organizational features to be considered, future studies may include leadership changes or division of funding within the party as potential explanatory variables for electoral volatility. As splits and mergers often appeared to be useful variables in explaining some organizational processes, a systematic investigation of such processes may prove valuable also, in direct relationship with electoral volatility.

Second, the candidate selection process and MP re-nomination are significant – both from a statistical and substantive perspective – determinants of electoral volatility. Further research may contribute to these findings by taking a closer look at the quality of selected candidates and the performance of representatives. The effect of these two variables may become stronger when the selected candidates are quality MPs who successfully fulfill their representation function (i.e. they perform well as MPs). With such nuanced information, government incumbency that appears to play a role in decreasing volatility may become less relevant. In that case, the emphasis of future research should be on the politics of representation and the qualities necessary to perform it in a manner that may influence volatility.

Finally, departing from these results, further research may distinguish between political parties that show general similarities in terms of organization and volatility. Differences may be assessed through process tracing at the level of each party. Organizational changes, modifications of membership rates, leadership style, or loyalty of the elite may point to differences overlooked by this study. Thus, future research may focus on further distinguishing the causal mechanisms driving the effect of organization on electoral volatility at the party level in the new European democracies observed here.

Appendix

The Electoral Volatility of Central and Eastern European Political Parties

Country	Party	Election Year	Electoral Volatility
Bulgaria	BSP	1994	3,44
		1997	39,22
		2001	21,57
		2005	42,86
	DPS	1994	16,24
		1997	1,30
		2001	1,85
		2005	42,71
	SDS	1994	17,29
		1997	25,14
		2001	47,27
		2005	34,88
Czech Republic	ODS	1996	6,74
		1998	3,28
		2002	6,26
		2006	18,23
	CSSD	1996	55,03
		1998	9,99
		2002	3,38
		2006	3,39
	KSCM	1996	0,15
		1998	3,28
		2002	25,32
		2006	18,20
	KDU-CSL	1996	14,94
		1998	5,39
		2002	12,50
		2006	1,62
Hungary	MSZP	1994	50,36
		1998	0,11
		2002	12,18
		2006	1,36
	FIDESZ	1994	12,09

		1998	61,53
		2002	8,56
		2006	2,78
	SZDSZ	1994	4,01
		1998	44,56
		2002	15,22
		2006	7,71
	MDF	1994	35,62
		1998	61,49
		2002	53,68
		2006	29,66
	FKGP	1994	14,16
		1998	19,71
		2002	89,21
		2006	3,23
	KDNP	1994	4,23
		1998	50,54
		2002	25,60
		2006	12,65
Poland	PSL	1993	27,96
		1997	35,62
		2001	11,07
		2005	13,21
	SLD	1993	25,99
		1997	14,14
		2001	17,32
		2005	54,62
	PD	1993	7,55
		1997	11,60
		2001	63,35
		2005	9,09
	PiS	2005	47,95
		2007	8,64
	PO	2005	31,34
		2007	26,52
Romania	PSD	1992	8,92
		1996	12,59
		2000	21,06
		2004	1,49
		2008	1,35
	PDL	1992	52,97
		1996	0,94

		2000	17,44
		2004	33,14
		2008	39,60
	PNL	1992	41,81
		1996	50,52
		2000	7,45
		2004	44,64
		2008	1,56
	PRM	1996	6,83
		2000	62,74
		2004	19,99
		2008	60,97
	UDMR	1992	1,57
		1996	5,82
		2000	1,19
		2004	4,62
		2008	0,24
Slovakia	HZDS	1994	6,82
		1998	9,24
		2002	16,13
		2006	37,81
	KDH	1994	6,27
		1998	11,50
		2002	1,54
		2006	0,36
	MKP	1994	15,73
		1998	5,49
		2002	10,05
		2006	2,23
	SDKU	1998	10,08
		2002	36,36
		2006	10,04
	SNS	1994	18,98
		1998	25,36
		2002	46,41
		2006	55,88
	SDL	1994	70,59
		1998	70,86
		2002	82,57

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Nederlandse samenvatting

Electorale volatiliteit in Centraal- en Oost-Europa verklaard: Een partij-organisatorische benadering

De politieke veranderingen in postcommunistisch Europa omvatten een veelzijdige transformatie van politieke stelsels, maatschappijen en politieke partijen. De terugkeer van meerpartijenstelsels is gepaard gegaan met een electorale volatiliteit die in vergelijking met West-Europa hoog is. Het komt nauwelijks voor dat dezelfde partij twee opeenvolgende periodes regeert. Daarnaast hebben van de enkele honderden partijen die in verkiezingen hebben meegedaan in de afgelopen twee decennia, minder dan een kwart continu zetels behouden in het parlement. Het grote aantal verschuivingen in het electoraat is niet alleen waarneembaar op het niveau van het partijsysteem, maar ook tussen politieke partijen in hetzelfde land.

Dit boek beoogt de verschillen in electorale volatiliteit op het niveau van partijen in zes Centraal- en Oost-Europese landen (Bulgarije, Tsjechië, Hongarije, Polen, Roemenië en Slowakije) in de afgelopen twee decennia te verklaren. De focus is gericht op partijen omdat zij als actieve spelers in het vertegenwoordigingsproces directe interactie hebben met de burgers, van wie zij weer steun verlangen, terwijl ze direct worden beïnvloed door bewegingen in het electoraat. Deze focus maakt het bovendien mogelijk om de grootschalige, onverklaarde variantie in electorale volatiliteit binnen hetzelfde partijsysteem te behandelen. Het empirisch materiaal in deze studie laat namelijk significante variantie in electorale volatiliteit binnen hetzelfde partijsysteem zien. Verschillen zijn niet alleen zichtbaar tussen partijen maar ook bij dezelfde partij door de tijd heen. De gemiddelde volatiliteitsscores laten grote verschillen tussen de partijen met de minste en de meeste electorale volatiliteit zien binnen een politiek stelsel.

Uit vorige studies komen twee groepen factoren als belangrijkste verklaringen van electorale volatiliteit naar voren. De eerste groep factoren behoort tot de politieke sociologie. Partijvorming en –competitie vinden plaats langs scheidslijnen (*cleavages*) op basis van onder meer leeftijd, onderwijs, professionele achtergrond, religie, etniciteit en sociale klasse. In postcommunistisch gebied bieden deze groep factoren een relatief beperkte verklaring voor electorale volatiliteit. De tweede groep factoren omvat de instituties die partijcompetitie bepalen alsook de rol van politieke actoren in de vorming van kiezersvoorkeuren. Mijn analyse sluit aan bij deze tweede groep. Ik presenteer een verklaring van stemkeuze in nieuwe democratieën, waarin

instituties een rol spelen. Deze verklaring laat namelijk zien dat politieke partijen de electorale omgeving waarin ze actief zijn, kunnen beïnvloeden door hun eigen partijorganisaties te veranderen.

De redenering in dit boek is als volgt: dat een partij overleeft, betekent dat een relevante groep stemmers op de partij niet van partijkeuze verandert. Partijen kunnen hun kiezers stimuleren om loyaal te blijven. De electorale situatie in Centraal- en Oost-Europese landen maakt dat geen gemakkelijke onderneming. De zwakke maatschappelijke wortels van partijen maken partijidentificatie en –binding onmogelijk. De onduidelijke patronen in de competitie tussen partijen maken beleid als basis voor partijkeuze bovendien weinig relevant. Het gebrek aan loyaliteit van elites aan hun partijen beperkt verder de continuïteit in leiderschap. Postcommunistische politieke partijen hebben niet veel instrumenten in handen om het vlottende electoraat te mobiliseren. Partijen vormen echter effectieve communicatiekanalen naar en van het electoraat, die ze kunnen gebruiken om hun kiezerssteun te stabiliseren. Daarom is de stelling die ik ga toetsen dat partijorganisatie daaraan kan bijdragen door middel van de ontwikkeling van een herkenbaar label waarmee kiezers zich kunnen identificeren op de middellange en lange termijn, aan de vorming van netwerken onder het kiezersvolk, en aan de promotie van herkenbare kandidaten waarop ze in achtereenvolgende verkiezingen kan steunen.

Drie verschillende dimensies van de partijorganisaties zijn hierbij betrokken: de besluitvorming binnen de partij, het ledenbestand, en de herbenoeming van zittende partijvertegenwoordigers. Ten eerste kan decentrale besluitvorming een partij sterker verbinden met haar kiezers. Decentrale besluitvorming versterkt namelijk het idee onder burgers dat problemen op lokaal niveau worden aangepakt en dat zij in het proces van representatie ook enige inbreng kunnen hebben. Ten tweede, een partij kan langdurige betrokkenheid kweken door het werven van leden. Leden bouwen hun eigen netwerken op en daarmee verkrijgt de partij makkelijker toegang tot bredere segmenten onder het electoraat. Ten derde, herbenoeming levert herkenbare kandidaten op, waarmee een partij twee onderling samenhangende doelen kan bereiken die belangrijk zijn in het proces van representatie: a. verspreiding van de perceptie van continuïteit onder de kiezers; en b. politiek wordt minder abstract voor gewone burgers doordat er een verband wordt gelegd tussen kandidaten en partijlabels. Kortom, de bronnen van electorale volatiliteit worden voornamelijk als institutioneel gezien. Partijorganisaties kunnen zo volatiliteit beperken en electorale stabiliteit doen toenemen.

Electorale volatiliteit wordt gemeten door verlies en winst in stemmen tussen twee verkiezingen uit te drukken als percentage van de electorale steun voor een partij. Deze maat is minder gevoelig voor afwijkingen als gevolg van

verschillen in partijgrootte. De empirische bevindingen nuanceren en complementeren het op eerdere studies gebaseerde beeld van electorale volatiliteit op het niveau van partijstelsel. De algemene waarneming in dit boek is dat politieke partijen in Centraal- en Oost-Europa een grote spreiding in electorale volatiliteit kennen. Deze spreiding is onafhankelijk van het tijdstip waarop en het partijstelsel waarin partijen met elkaar concurreren. Uit de analyse blijkt tijd ook geen effect te hebben op electorale volatiliteit. Een vergelijking tussen de jaren '90 van de vorige eeuw en het eerste decennium in deze eeuw laat geen relevante verschillen zien in de verdeling van partijen voor wat betreft volatiliteit. Er is geen sprake van een uniforme daling in electorale volatiliteit in Centraal- en Oost-Europa; kiezers blijven hun voorkeuren in dezelfde mate veranderen gedurende de gehele onderzochte periode.

Meer in het bijzonder verschaft het empirisch materiaal onderbouwing voor twee van de drie hypotheses. Dat betreft allereerst de decentralisatie van kandidaatstelling en daarnaast het percentage van herbenoemde vertegenwoordigers. Electorale volatiliteit blijkt zich minder voor te doen bij politieke partijen waarin lokale afdelingen meer ruimte hebben om kandidaten voor verkiezingen van wetgevende organen te selecteren. Kiezers zijn in hun kiesdistrict meer bekend met de genomineerde kandidaten. Politieke partijen laten duidelijk de boodschap horen dat zij zich de opinies van kiezers aantrekken door lokale afdelingen zeggenschap te verschaffen in de selectie van kandidaten. Bovendien draagt de lokale selectie van de kandidaat bij aan het psychologische effect onder het electoraat dat mensen van kandidaten geloven dat zij hen vertegenwoordigen. Eerdere studies gaven aan dat de meeste loyaliteit van politici uitgaat naar het niveau waar hun herverkiezing wordt beïnvloed. Het is daarom aannemelijk dat de decentrale selectie van kandidaten in lokale afdelingen de band tussen gekozen kandidaten en burgers versterkt.

Politieke partijen die meer parlementariërs herbenoemen verzekeren zich van continuïteit in vertegenwoordiging. Dat wordt weerspiegeld in stabiele kiezersteun. Partijen met verhoudingsgewijs meer herbenoemingen vertonen minder electorale volatiliteit. Dit verband is gebaseerd op drie elkaar aanvullende mechanismes: allereerst zijn zittende parlementariërs instrumenteel door hun grote zichtbaarheid, publiciteit en naamsherkenning. Zij vormen een herkenbaar onderdeel van de partij en voegen zo een persoonlijke dimensie toe aan de organisatorische hechting van kiezers. Daarnaast vormen parlementariërs een garantie voor communicatie op de lange termijn in de uitruil met kiezers van stemmen voor dienstbetoon. Tot slot vindt er socialisatie van kiezers plaats via het dienstbetoon van parlementariërs in hun kiesdistrict. Daardoor kunnen kiezers gewend raken aan de manier waarop het proces van vertegenwoordiging verloopt alsook de ontvankelijkheid voor hun behoeftes.

Het veronderstelde verband tussen partijlidmaatschap (grootte en variatie in grootte) en electorale volatiliteit blijkt empirisch zwak te zijn. De resultaten geven aan dat politieke partijen met een groot aantal leden iets minder electorale volatiliteit kennen dan partijen met een klein aantal leden. De kracht van dit verband varieert wel tussen de onderzochte landen. Variatie in het aantal leden van een partij over tijd houdt geen verband met de electorale volatiliteit. Al met al lijkt lidmaatschap een beperkte rol te hebben in de verklaring van electorale volatiliteit op partijniveau in nieuwe Europese democratieën.

De bevindingen in dit boek hebben theoretische, methodologische en empirische consequenties. Het feit dat organisatorische structuren en procedures effect hebben op de maatschappelijke acceptatie van partijen (i.e., de stabiliteit van electorale steun) heeft allereerst consequenties voor de institutionaliseringstheorie. Eerdere studies (Mainwaring & Scully 1995) beschouwden partijorganisatie en electorale volatiliteit als indicatoren van institutionalisering. De analyse in dit boek laat echter zien dat dit problematisch kan zijn. Als er namelijk een causaal verband is tussen deze twee variabelen, dan kunnen ze niet langer onderdeel van hetzelfde begrip (institutionalisering) zijn. Omdat de ene variabele de andere verklaart, is een nieuwe conceptualisering van het begrip institutionalisering nodig.

De bevindingen nopen ook om opnieuw de relatie tussen partijen en hun achterbannen te doordenken. Tot dusver toont onderzoek aan hoe partijen reageren op beperkingen vanuit de maatschappij, de kiezersmarkt en een groot aantal externe factoren (Kirchheimer, 1966; Rae 1971; Sartori 1997; Harmel en Janda 1982; Bartolini en Mair 1990; Mair et al. 2004; Millard 2004). Resultaten uit de analyse die in dit boek is uitgevoerd wijzen erop dat partijen in staat kunnen zijn om invloed uit te oefenen op de electorale omgeving door hun eigen partijorganisatie te veranderen. Politieke partijen kunnen dus ook actief de keuzes van mensen beïnvloeden en vormen zo, tot op zekere hoogte, hun eigen electorale stabiliteit. De mate van succes in het realiseren van stabiliteit kan de basis zijn voor een nieuwe typologie van politieke partijen in Centraal- en Oost-Europa. Tegelijkertijd heeft het feit dat partijen aansluiting vinden bij hun kiezers door de decentralisatie van kandidaatselectie voor nationale verkiezingen gevolgen voor theorieën over kiezersgedrag en besluitvorming binnen partijen. Het bestaan van bovengenoemd verband voegt een analytische dimensie toe. Stemmen kan ook een reactie zijn op de besluiten binnen politieke partijen. Tot dusver beschouwen een groot aantal studies stemmen echter vooral het resultaat van partijactiviteiten in de politieke arena.

Methodologisch gezien verschaft het boek twee valide indicatoren van partijorganisatie. Eerdere studies bevatten diverse conceptualisaties van partijorganisatie die weinig basis voor vergelijking bieden, omdat ze vooral

gebaseerd zijn op diepgaande studies van individuele gevallen (Harmel en Janda 1982; Panebianco 1988; Mainwaring en Scully 1995; Randall en Svasand 2002; Van Biezen 2003). Deze studie biedt een analytisch alternatief voor kwalitatieve beoordeling van organisatieonderdelen. De kwantitatieve operationalisering en de data kunnen bruikbare middelen voor verder vergelijkend onderzoek zijn.

De belangrijkste empirische consequentie vloeit voort uit het feit dat electorale volatiliteit endogene oorzaken kan hebben. Deze waarneming nuanceert de conclusies van twee stromingen in de literatuur. De eerste stroming betreft de vele studies die de focus richten op de exogene oorzaken van volatiliteit. Het gebleken belang van kandidaatselectie binnen de partij, de herbenoeming van parlementariërs en in mindere mate het ledenaantal laat zien dat exogene oorzaken op partijniveau minder relevant zijn. Het grotere gewicht van de endogene verklaringen in een model waarin ook exogene verklaringen zijn opgenomen, onderstreept dat. Kiezers blijken te reageren op het gedrag van politieke partijen. Als een partij bijvoorbeeld de bereidheid toont om kiezersverlangens te beantwoorden en daarnaast continuïteit in vertegenwoordiging garandeert, dan zijn burgers minder geneigd om hun electorale voorkeuren te wijzigen. De tweede stroming omvat de discussie in eerder onderzoek over de aanpassing van partijorganisaties aan de inbreng vanuit het electoraat. Dit boek toont juist aan dat het proces ook omgekeerd kan zijn. De interne partijorganisatie kan in zekere mate de electorale stabiliteit van een partij vormgeven. Dat proces is complex en gebaseerd op drie onderling samenhangende mechanismes die de band met de kiezers versterken. Nader onderzoek kan nagaan in welke mate partijen kiezen voor aanpassing dan wel beïnvloeding van kiezers of beide strategieën combineren voor hun politieke en electorale succes.

Curriculum Vitae

Sergiu GHerghina (Targu-Carbunesti, 1982) completed his university education in Political Science at Babes-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca. He holds an MA in Comparative Politics from the Department of Political Science at Central European University in Budapest (*cum laude*) and an MPhil in Institutional Analysis from the Department of Political Science, Leiden University (*cum laude*). His research interests lie in party politics in Central and Eastern Europe (party organizations and electoral volatility), legislative and voting behavior, and democratization. His authored and co-authored articles were published in *American Journal of Political Science, Comparative European Politics, Contemporary Politics, Eastern European Politics and Societies, Europe-Asia Studies, European Review, European Political Science Review, European Union Politics, International Political Science Review, Journal of Legislative Studies, Party Politics, and Problems of Post*-Communism. He has recently edited a national volume (in Romanian) about the development of political parties in post-communist Romania. Since 2011 he has been working as a Research Officer at the International Data Infrastructure, GESIS Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences Cologne.