Annette Damert

Party Systems in Eastern Europe – What Determines the Chances of Newcomers?

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1   Introduction

In February 2000 the EU opened accession negotiations with the last of the countries that were to become members in 2004 and 2007 (EU-10[1]). Ten years after the more or less peaceful revolutions these countries had made remarkable progress in the transformation processes towards democracy and market economy. The economies had stabilized and started to grow. In the political sphere *party systems* as a "set of parties that interact in patterned ways"[2] had developed. Despite of this apparent consolidation some of the parliamentary elections in the EU-10 in the periods 2000-2003 and 2004-2007 saw landslide victories of complete newcomers. In other cases, however, new parties remained marginal or failed to pass the representation threshold.[3]

The following paper aims at investigating why new parties were so successful in some countries/ elections, while failing in others. The background section provides an overview about the existing literature on emergence and success of new parties – in 'old' and 'new' democracies. Independent variables not yet addressed in research are identified. The second part describes frameworks for analysis and develops hypotheses. Operationalization and measurement of the variables is then followed by analysis and discussion of the results.

2   Background

2.1 New Parties in 'Old' Democracies

New party entry and success are relatively rare events in established democracies. In the period between 1945 and 1991 only one new party emerged in any given election in these countries, gathering on average 2% of the vote.[4] This is probably the reason why the issue attracted scientific attention only seldom until the mid-1980s. The available literature focuses on the conditions of *new party entry*. Factors influencing the

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[1] The EU-10 comprises Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia.
[2] Mainwaring & Torcal 2006 p. 205
[3] New parties competed in all of the elections of the respective periods - except for Hungary 2006.
[4] Hug 2001, quoted as in Tavits 2007a p. 2

success of new parties are less well understood. The study presented here will therefore start with summarizing the findings on factors influencing new party formation/ entry.

In 1985 Harmel and Robertson presented a comprehensive empirical study on new party formation. They tested hypotheses for explanatory variables organized in three broad groups of factors: social, political and structural.[5] Social factors cover the emergence of new cleavages and/ or issues. Political factors range from characteristics of the party system over features of the new party itself to the relationship between party, voter and civil society. Structural determinants are electoral rules and the electoral focus.[6] Their analysis revealed that the "socio-cultural environment" (large populations, sectionalism, heterogeneity and pluralism) has a significant influence on the emergence of new parties.[7] There was, however, no correlation between political and structural determinants and the formation of new parties.[8]

In the ensuing decade research focused on particular groups of new parties: left-libertarian and radical right wing. Kitschelt's work on both groups[9] provides evidence that societal transformations giving rise to new issues are a necessary condition for the emergence of new parties. They represent the 'demand-side'[10] and can explain "*why* there is pressure to represent [left-libertarian *(newly arising)*] interests in the political arena."[11] The emergence of new cleavages and/or issues is, however, not a sufficient condition for the emergence of new parties. It is the 'political opportunity structure' that determines *whether*, *when* and under *which label* new parties will be established.[12] One of the factors shaping opportunity structure is the configuration of and power relations in the

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[5] Harmel & Robertson 1985 p. 503; the dependent variable in the study is the number of new parties formed over a time period of 21 years (1960-1980).
[6] Presidential or parliamentary
[7] Harmel & Robertson 1985 p. 513
[8] Ibid. p. 516
[9] Kitschelt 1988 and 1995
[10] In Kitschelt's terminology; Kitschelt 1995
[11] Kitschelt 1988 p. 209; brackets and addition in italics added
[12] Kitschelt 1988 pp. 209 and 223/224; Besides the structure of party competition 'political opportunity structure' for left-libertarian parties also comprises the existence of a comprehensive welfare state, the level of corporatism and the intensity of the nuclear controversy as precipitating condition.

party system - the "structures of party competition." In the case of left-libertarian parties government participation by the left and lack of cohesiveness of the opposite political block are positively correlated with new party formation.[13] The emergence of new radical right-wing parties, on the other hand, benefits from convergence of the moderate parties towards the centre.[14] In 2001 Hug[15] presented a game theoretic approach to explain new party entry. Using this as a starting point Tavits[16] suggested a model where strategic calculations of elites take into account the cost of entry (registration costs and electoral rules), probability of electoral support (dependent on the level of crystallization of the support base of existing parties) and benefits of holding office (possibility to influence policy) when deciding whether to enter electoral competition with a new party or not. Empirical data support her model.

Taken together the conditions for the emergence of new parties and their entry into the electoral arena can be described[17] in the following way: the emergence of new cleavages/ issues creates demand and is, thus, a necessary but not sufficient condition. This demand can only be politicized through the formation of a new party if the political and structural conditions are permissive, if benefits outweigh costs and are judged as being so by the elites. Table 1 summarizes the factors characterizing the opportunity structure.

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[13] Kitschelt 1988 pp. 215-217
[14] Kitschelt 1988 and 1995
[15] Hug 2001; Hug suggests a model of strategic "interaction between established parties and groups that contemplate forming a new party" (p. 38) to explain why and how political and institutional factors influence the formation process of new parties (p. 37). Based on this model he suggests five empirical implications as having an influence on new party emergence: the importance of new issues, formation costs, the costs of fighting the new party, the benefits for the new party and the benefits for the established party resulting from an accepted high demand (p. 60).
[16] Tavits 2006
[17] Drawing on Kitschelt 1988/ 1995 and Tavits 2006

Party system variables – Probability of electoral support	**Structural variables – Entry costs**	**Political 'system' variables – benefits of holding office**
General: 'crystallization' of the support base of existing parties (Tavits 2006)	Legal environment: - registration costs - signature requirements	Degree of policy-making outside electoral channels (level of corporatism) (Kitschelt 1988 and Tavits 2006)
Radical right parties: Ideological convergence of moderate conservative and social-democratic parties (Kitschelt 1995)	Electoral system: - proportionality (Tavits 2006)	
Left-libertarian parties: Low cohesiveness of the opposite political block (Kitschelt 1988)		

Table 1   Political and structural conditions for new party formation and entry into electoral competition.

Thus, an empirically grounded and theoretically understood picture is emerging with respect to the formation of new parties. What makes a new political party successful is, however, less well understood.

Harmel and Robertson found that the nature of the electoral system with regard to its proportionality affects new parties' success. In addition political variables as the effective number of parties and the "number of effective dimensions in [the] existing party system" determine electoral support for new parties.[18]

Other studies have addressed electoral support for the newly emerging extreme right between 1970 and 1990[19] or the determinants of success of Green parties in Western Europe,[20] without however focussing on the elections in which these fielded candidates for the first time. A detailed study on new party success in Western Europe was recently presented by Quenter.[21] He provides evidence on the impact of party system fragmentation and polarization, as well as of the frequency of alternation in

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[18] Harmel & Robertson 1985 pp. 516-517
[19] Jackman & Volpert 1996
[20] Müller-Rommel 1992
[21] Quenter 2001

government on the success of new parties. Finally, a sideline of Hug's[22] investigation on the formation of new parties deals with their initial success. Overall, his evidence is mixed, giving strong support only for the notion that new parties "appear to be more successful with increasing importance of new issues."[23]

Hence, empirical evidence and especially theorizing on the initial success of new parties when fielding candidates for the first time is largely elusive. Tavits sums up two decades of research on new parties by stating that

> "So far, however, studies on new parties remain restricted to advanced democracies where new parties are less consequential to the electoral and political process. These previous studies have struggled with building strong empirical support for the theoretical models of new party entry and **we still lack a consistent explanation for the electoral support for new parties…**"[24]

2.2 New Parties in 'New' Democracies

It is due to Margit Tavits that insights into the formation and electoral success of new parties in Eastern Europe are now available. In a first step she applies her model of new party entry (see above) to Eastern Europe and can corroborate her earlier findings. That is, entry costs determined by the proportionality of the electoral system, benefits of office and the probability of electoral support are the factors entering in elite calculations whether to compete with a new party or not.[25] Tavits' analysis of variables influencing first-time electoral support for new parties[26] centres on voter disappointment and the lack of acceptable alternatives. Voter disappointment resulting from the experience of economic adversity is shown to have high explanatory capacity with respect to electoral support for new parties. In addition Tavits could show that "when the number of parties that have not been part of a governing coalition decreases, people are more willing to coordinate on a newcomer at the expense of the

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[22] Hug 2001
[23] Ibid. p. 114
[24] Tavits 2007a p. 3 (emphasis added)
[25] Tavits 2007a
[26] Ibid.

existing parties."[27] A third factor affecting new parties' success is their strategic policy choices.[28] Drawing on spatial voting theories Tavits develops a model and provides empirical evidence for the notion that strategic placement close to sizeable neighbours and emphasis of issues on which sizeable neighbours exist increases chances of electoral success.

3 Identifying 'Missing Links,' Defining Sample and Timeframe

3.1 'Missing Links'

Three determinants of new party electoral support in Eastern Europe have been addressed by Tavits: the economic situation of the voter, the exhaustion of alternatives in government, and the choices of the new party with respect to placement in ideological and issue space as well as regarding the decision which issues to emphasize. Thus, it is important where a new party places itself in inter-party competition. But are there characteristics of this competition on the side of the established parties that favour electoral support for new parties in Eastern Europe? And does the 'political space' delimitated by the established parties play a role? Characteristics of competition between the established parties have not yet been in the focus of studies on new party success – except for Mair noting in the broader context of party system change that relatively closed patterns of party competition decrease chances for new parties.[29] Evidence on the importance of 'political space' (described in terms of polarization) comes from the studies on particular groups of new parties.[30] Quenter's results, although not fully conclusive, also point in this direction.[31] Therefore, the study presented here will attempt to analyse the impact of competition patterns and distribution of parties in 'political space'.

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[27] Ibid. p. 19
[28] Tavits 2007b
[29] Mair 1997 p. 211
[30] Abedi 2002; Müller-Rommel 1992
[31] Quenter 2001

The second part will touch on the conditions under which new parties compete in electoral campaigns. The issues of party and campaign financing have been investigated in the context of new party *entry* – with contradicting results in the case of public funding.[32] There are no studies, however, addressing the possible impact of campaign regulations on initial electoral success of new parties. A comparative analysis of legal provisions for conducting electoral campaigns will therefore form the second part of the study.

3.2 Defining Sample and Timeframe

The subject of the first part of the investigation determines the time-period and sample set to be studied. To analyse competition in party systems first of all such a **system**, characterized by "patterned interaction between a set of parties," must exist. This implies that there is some regularity in interaction and a minimum of continuity with at least some of the parties having been around for some time.[33] Second, to analyse patterns the study has to take a retrospective look. From these it follows that the elections to be studied should be preceded by some years of democratic development - facilitating the establishment of a party system. Ideally they should also be preceded by at least two elections[34] / one change in government - to elucidate patterns with regard to coalition preferences in different settings. These criteria are met by starting the analysis in the year 2000 and limiting the sample set to the EU-10.

4   Frameworks and Hypotheses – Competition, Space, and Campaigning

4.1 Competition

The starting point of the analysis is the assumption that the voter as rational actor aiming at maximizing his[35] benefits will try to avoid

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[32] Tavits 2006 and 2007a; Bolin 2007
[33] Mainwaring & Torcal 2006 p. 205
[34] Excluding the founding election.
[35] Using only the male form of nouns, personal and possessive pronouns in the study presented is solely due to reasons of ease in writing and reading - the female form is implicitly included.

uncertainty. Benefits in this case are constituted by the representation of the voter's interests. They run along three dimensions. The first is how well the voter's preferences match those of the elected party. The second and third are interlinked and concern the likelihood of his interests being represented (What are the chances for the chosen party to pass the representation threshold?) and the likelihood of the represented interests to influence policy outcome (government participation). There are two dimensions of intra-party competition that can be assumed to have an impact on the uncertainty of the environment the voter faces: stability and clarity. For Mainwaring *stable* patterns of competition contribute to party system institutionalization, with a well institutionalized party system being one where "actors develop expectations and behaviour based on the premise that the fundamental contours and rules of party competition and behaviour will prevail in the foreseeable future."[36] Following Grzymala-Busse "clarity of competition entails easily identifiable and diverse camps that both voters and other parties can distinguish as opponents."[37]

How do clarity and stability of inter-party competition link up to new parties and their electoral success? In a situation where competition is clear and its patterns are stable it is relatively easy for the voter to orientate himself. Under these conditions information about policy orientation and coalition preferences is available from past experience, alternatives are clearly delineated and expectations can be built on this. Uncertainty is low and the voter is, in a sense, 'socialized' to this particular system and its constituents and will give preference to them. If, on the other hand, competition is not clear and its patterns change frequently, stable expectations about the behaviour of the existing parties cannot be built. Uncertainty is high. In such a situation the possible costs of electing a new party (resulting from increased likelihood that interests might not represented) can be assumed to come closer to those incurred when electing an established party. Hence, it is hypothesized that

H1   Unstable and unclear patterns of competition between the
         established parties increase electoral support for new parties.

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[36] Mainwaring & Torcal 2006 p. 205
[37] Grzymala-Busse 2005 p. 12

4.2 Space

Inter-party competition proceeds in a space commonly described in terms of policy dimensions. In a given system parties place themselves at distinct positions in this space. The measure most frequently used to characterize the positioning of parties in space and relative to each other is polarization. It is operationalized either as the absolute distance between the parties (at the extremes) or as variation around the mean position of the system given – weighted for vote shares or not. Investigating new parties entering outside the space delimited by the established parties Kitschelt suggests that convergence of the established moderate parties towards the centre improves the chances of these newcomers.[38] Abedi analysed the effect of party system polarization on success of anti-establishment parties and found that in systems less polarized with regard to the establishment parties electoral performance of anti-establishment parties improves.[39] Finally, Quenter extended the investigation to the entire set of new parties. In only one of his statistical models he found a correlation between low level of polarization and the electoral success of new parties.[40]

Taken together, these studies suggest that the distribution of the established parties in space has an impact on new parties' success. This is empirically well supported in cases where new parties enter 'outside' the space delimited by the established parties in established democracies. Studies addressing the issue in 'new' democracies do not exist. Therefore, the study at hand will first try to answer the question whether the inverse relationship between polarization and electoral success of new parties entering 'outside' also holds in the EU-10. In analogy to the studies quoted above it is hypothesized that

H2   electoral success of new parties entering 'outside' the established
        system increases with decreasing polarization of the system.

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[38] Kitschelt 1995
[39] Abedi 2002
[40] Quenter 2001

Where analysis is not restricted to these 'outsiders' empirical evidence becomes less convincing. A comprehensive model to investigate and possibly explain the success of new parties entering 'internally' is missing. This is especially surprising against the background of Harmel's and Robertson's earlier result that newly entering centre parties are the most successful new parties.[41] Polarization is a rather unsuitable measure here since it essentially only describes the distance between the poles and provides little information about the space in between. Therefore classical spatial voting theory[42] provides the starting point for the analysis here. It assumes that every voter has an 'ideal point' of his preferences on policy outcomes. He compares this 'ideal point' to the positions offered by the parties in the system and votes for the one that comes closest to his preferences. The more the position of the party diverges from the voter's 'ideal point', the larger his dissatisfaction. Once an alternative closer to the voter's preferences arises, he is likely to switch. For new parties in Eastern Europe Tavits has shown that positioning of a new party close to a sizeable neighbour and, thus, providing a close alternative, increases electoral support.[43] However, considering the different shapes distribution of parties in space can take, it becomes obvious that these offer different possibilities for the successful implementation of this strategy. For analytical reasons party systems will be grouped here into three broad categories. Category one is characterized by a low level of polarization and a number of parties positioned close to each other between the poles. In the second category systems are more polarized. Parties or clusters of parties form the poles and there is a 'middle party'[44] set well apart from both poles. The third category then comprises systems where the two extreme positions are wide apart and a 'middle party' is absent. For further

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[41] Harmel & Robertson 1985 p. 512
[42] Downs 1957, as summarized in Laver & Schilperoord 2007 and Tavits 2007b
[43] Tavits 2007b
[44] In the case of internal entry this paper is concerned with the positioning of parties relative to each other and not the absolute position of each single party on the left-right scale. Therefore, this paper follows Hazan and use the term 'middle party' throughout the analysis presented here. In contrast to centre parties, which are ideologically defined, Hazan defines a 'middle party' as a "spatially located party between the two opposing poles of the party system. A middle party will thus be located in between the major poles of electoral competition of a country-specific continuum, and defined only in terms of such poles existing on both right and left flanks of the middle" (Hazan 1997 p. 23).

analysis it is now necessary to introduce the notion of 'discernible alternative'. A new party positioning itself close to a sizeable neighbour on a given issue can do so only up to a certain point. If its position comes too close, it is no longer discernible from that of the established party by the voter. Given that voting for a new party is associated with a higher level of uncertainty the voter will most likely stick to the familiar and vote for the established party. This situation is exacerbated in systems of the first category: in the attempt to make its position distinguishable from that of established party A, the new party moves closer towards established party B. Since B is located very close, the likelihood that the position is not distinguishable from that of party B increases rapidly. Hence, chances of success for new parties entering 'internally' into such systems can be expected to be small. Consider now categories two and three: Intuitively one would expect the prospects for new parties to be best in category three. The new party represents the closest alternative for both poles and has therefore hypothetically access to the entire 'vote-pool'. In systems with 'middle party', on the other hand, one of the poles is 'not accessible' for the new party. However, conditions could be equally favourable in category two in case of a strong 'middle party': because of the smaller distance between middle and pole there are potentially more voters switching from these to the new entrant than in category three. As mathematically modelling the different possible settings for the last two categories exceeds the scope of the study presented the hypothesis is limited to distinguishing them from category one.

H3   New parties entering internally will be more successful in configurations where the two poles of the system are set wide apart in space – with or without a 'middle party' – than in cases with low polarization and a number of parties close to each other between the poles.

4.3 Campaigning

However, even if conditions in the party system are favourable for new parties, they still have to tackle the hurdle to make their program, candidates and position opposite other contestants known. Into this they

naturally have to put more effort than established parties whose positions are known and unlikely to undergo marked changes in the short-term. Thus, new parties are disadvantaged. In addition electoral campaigns have become increasingly costly in the last decades and the countries of the sample selected are no exception to this trend. New parties, however, are often those with only limited resources. In all of the EU-10 legal provisions governing electoral campaigns are in place. They concern the financing of the campaign and regulate access to the mass-media. The mass media are an important factor shaping the campaign environment. Although direct contact between candidates and voters still plays a role, electoral advertising in the media and the presentation of programmatic issues by candidates in radio and TV has become increasingly important - especially so for new parties whose programs and candidates are less well known. For both financing and media access it can be distinguished between enabling and constraining mechanisms.[45] Enabling mechanism improve the possibilities to contest elections. Given the disadvantaged position of new parties, their existence should improve their performance. Constraining mechanisms set limits applicable to all contestants in the same manner. They can be expected to limit the costs of campaigning and, thus, level the playground between established and new parties. It is therefore hypothesized that

H4   the existence of both enabling and constraining mechanisms
          improves the chances of electoral success for new parties.

5   Operationalization and Measurement – Competition, Space, and Campaigning

Measurement[46] covers the elections to the lower chambers of parliament in the period between 2000 and 2007 and the legislative periods leading up to these elections as specified for the respective variables. For reasons of availability of data the analysis is restricted to parliamentary parties. For the countries with mixed electoral systems (Hungary, Lithuania) only parties represented in parliament based on lists in the multi-member

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[45] Birch 2005
[46] A list of the political parties covered by this study is provided in Appendix 1.

districts will be taken into account. Parties representing ethnic minorities which, based on special provisions, enter parliament with results below the representation threshold are excluded from the analysis.

5.1 Competition

5.1.1 Operationalization

The first independent variable is the pattern of inter-party competition. It is assessed with regard to its *stability* and *clarity*. A stable pattern of competition is characterized by a constant composition and stable identity of participants in competition. To cover these two dimensions the number of splits and mergers in the legislation period preceding the election in question will be assessed. Splits as well as mergers have an impact on the identity of a party in terms of policy orientations. Two parties merging will have to integrate different positions into a new program (a new 'identity'). The split-off of a faction of a party changes the balance of power within the remaining party, most likely with consequences for its policy making. At the same time splits and mergers change the composition of the party system. The variable will be assessed for the legislation period preceding the election in question because it is assumed that this period of time has the most immediate impact on voters' perception of stable party identity.

A clear pattern of competition is characterized by unambiguously defined governing alternatives. According to Mair[47] the question of government formation is the "key defining feature" structuring inter-party competition. Governing alternatives are assessed with respect to the range of coalition partners/ composition of coalitions and the existence of parties firmly excluded from governing coalitions. A large range of coalition partners, i.e. multiparty coalitions in changing configurations blurs the distinction between possible alternatives - in such a situation competition is not clear. If a party cooperates with different partners over time these partners influence the range of policy options differently in every given

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[47] Mair 1997 p. 206

constellation, making the position of the party in competition less well recognizable. Constant coalition preferences involving a small number of parties in any given coalition, on the other hand, unambiguously define governing alternatives and, hence, make competition clear. The same applies for the firm exclusion of certain parties. The dimension of clarity is assessed retrospectively, measuring the composition of governing coalitions between 1992 and 2000. Until 1992 in many of the countries under investigation government was formed by movements not yet 'consolidated' into parties. Therefore, including the period between 1989 and 1992 doesn't make much sense in terms of determining coalition preferences.

Both dimensions – stability and clarity - will be assessed as being high, intermediate or low. In the case of stability high corresponds to zero splits/ mergers. Intermediate stability equals one to two splits/mergers. The assessments will be coded with the numerical values 3, 2 and 1. The scores on each dimension will then be added up to provide the final score for the first independent variable.

5.1.2 Measurement

The *stability of patterns of competition* is assessed in the legislative period preceding the election in question.

Legislation period 1

In the legislation period leading up to the first election in question the patterns of competition were stable in a number of countries. Splits and mergers involving parliamentary parties were absent in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Latvia and Romania. The Estonian party system experienced major fusions. Moderates (M) and Estonian United People's Party (EÜRP) merged and the People's Union (RL, also ERL) incorporated the Country People's Party (EME), Rural Union (also Country Union - EML) and the Pensioners and Families Party (EPPE).[48] In Lithuania fissions from major parties concentrated in 1999/ 2000. The Moderate Conservative Union (NKS) split from the Homeland Union/

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[48] Wikipedia: Social Democratic Party (Estonia); People's Union of Estonia

Lithuanian Conservatives (TS/LK). Modernizers from the Lithuanian Christian Democratic Party (LKDP) formed the Modern Christian Democratic Union (MKDS). Finally, a faction of the Lithuanian Social Democratic Party (LSDP) established the Social Democrats 2000.[49] The Slovenian People's Party (SLS) and the Slovenian Christian Democrats (SKD) merged in May 2000. This fusion was followed by the fission of a splinter group establishing itself under the name New Slovenia – Christian People's Party (NSi).[50]

The assessment for Poland and Slovakia presents some difficulty due to the existence of 'election parties' in these two countries. In Poland the Solidarity Electoral Action (AWS) had been formed in 1996, combining at different times up to 30 parties and organizations.[51] In the course of the legislation period more and more parties and politicians left the electoral alliance. New parties were established by prominent figures of the AWS.[52] Thus, although there haven't been formal split-offs from a political party, the Polish system can nevertheless not be considered to present a stable pattern of competition. The score is therefore 'low'. In Slovakia a 1998 amendment of the election legislation[53] resulted in the formation of the Slovak Democratic Coalition (SDK) from Democratic Party (DS), Social Democratic Party of Slovakia (SDSS), Green Party of Slovakia (SZS), Democratic Union (DU) and the Christian Democratic Movement (KDH).[54] In 2000 then Prime Minister Dzurinda launched the Slovak Democratic and Christian Union (SDKU) from this coalition. The SDK disintegrated in the course of the year 2001.[55] Because, in contrast to Poland, the constituent parties of the 'election party' evolved from it more or less unchanged and only one new party resulted, the Slovakian system scores 'intermediate'. Table 2 summarizes the findings for legislation period 1.

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[49] Clark & Prekevicius 2003 p. 554
[50] World Political Leaders, Slovenia
[51] Szczerbiak 2004 p. 62
[52] Ibid. pp. 66-67
[53] EIU 2001 p. 13
[54] World Political Leaders, Slovakia
[55] EIU 2001 pp. 13-14

Country	Mergers	Splits	stability	score
Bulgaria	0	0	high	3
Czech Republic	0	0	high	3
Estonia	2	0	intermediate	2
Hungary	0	0	high	3
Latvia	0	0	high	3
Lithuania	0	3	low	1
Poland	n.a.	n.a.	low	1
Romania	0	0	high	3
Slovakia	n.a.	n.a.	intermediate	2
Slovenia	1	1	intermediate	2

Table 2   Stability of the pattern of intra-party competition in the EU-10 in the legislation period leading up to the elections 2000-2003. n.a. – not applicable due to the existence of 'electoral parties'

In the period following the first election under investigation the party systems in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Latvia, Romania[56] and Slovenia showed a stable pattern of competition. In Bulgaria fissions from the United Democratic Forces (UDF) resulted in establishment of the Union of Free Democrats (SSD)[57] and of the Democrats for a Strong Bulgaria (DSB) in 2004. The Estonian party system saw two mergers: Centre Party (Kesk) with Pensioners Party (2005) and Pro Patria (I) with Res Publica (ResP, 2006). In Lithuania there have been major re-alignments through the fusion of LSDP and Lithuanian Democratic Labour Party (LDDP) and the formation of the (new) Lithuanian Centre Union (LCS) from LCS, Lithuanian Liberal Union (LLS) and MKDS. The latter one also led to split offs from the LLS (Liberal Democratic Party -LDP) and LCS (National Center Party - TCS).[58] The only major Polish party affected by a split was the Democratic Left Alliance (SLD). In 2004 an SLD split-off registered under the name Social Democracy of Poland (SDPL). In Slovakia two major fusions occurred. Smer merged with the Party of Democratic Left (SDL), Social Democratic Alternative (SDA) and the SDSS in 2005 and SDKU and DS united to form SDKU-DS in 2006.[59] Table 3 summarizes the results for the second legislation period.

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[56] In 2001 the Party of Social Democracy in Romania (PDSR) absorbed the Romanian Social Democratic Party (PSDR) and changed its name to Social Democratic Party (PSD). PSDR, however, had already been marginalized in the preceding years (Sum 2000). The merger is therefore not considered relevant to the stability of the pattern of competition.
[57] Spirova 2003 p. 14
[58] World Political Leaders, Lithuania and Jankauskas & Zeruolis 2004
[59] World Political Leaders, Slovakia

Country	mergers	splits	stability	score
Bulgaria	0	2	intermediate	2
Czech Republic	0	0	high	3
Estonia	2	0	intermediate	2
Hungary	0	0	high	3
Latvia	0	0	high	3
Lithuania	2	2	low	1
Poland	0	1	intermediate	2
Romania	0	0	high	3
Slovakia	2	0	intermediate	2
Slovenia	0	0	high	3

Table 3   Stability of the pattern of intra-party competition in the EU-10 in the legislative period leading up to the elections 2004-2007.

The first measure for *clarity of patterns of competition* is the numerical range of coalition partners.[60] Table 4 shows the average number of parties in governing coalitions from 1992 up to the first and second election under investigation, respectively.

	BG	CZ	EE	HU	LV	LT	POL	RO	SK	SI
→ 1st	2.0	2.25	2.75	2.67	4.78	2.0	2.0	4.0	3.0	3.75
→ 2nd	2.25	2.4	2.78	2.5	4.54	1.8	2.16	3.3	3.14	3.67

Table 4   Average number of parties in governing coalitions in the EU-10 up to the election series 1 (2000-2003) and 2 (2004-2007). The following coalitions were counted as one party: Bulgaria – UDF; Poland – AWS and Romania - Democratic Convention of Romania (CDR)

Concluding from this, clear governing alternatives (cut-off of three) should be recognizable in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania and Poland, whereas in the remaining countries alternatives are not very clear-cut. This numerical result, however, needs further qualification since it does not allow conclusions on whether there are stable coalition preferences and whether parties are firmly excluded from any coalition-building. A stable number of three parties in coalition can result from either three parties forming a coalition only with each other. On the other hand, one party could be stable with the remainder of the coalitions recruited variously from the whole spectrum of parliamentary parties. Closer scrutiny of the governing coalitions then reveals three different patterns regarding governing alternatives. Stable coalition

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[60] Data on government composition for Bulgaria and Romania were obtained from Wikipedia, Politics of Bulgaria/ Romania. The compilation provided by Gregor (2004) is used for all other countries.

preferences are to be observed in the Czech Republic and Hungary. In the Czech Republic either Civic Democratic Party (ODS) or Czech Social Democratic Party (CSSD) have formed the government with the Christian and Democratic Union – Czechoslovak People's Party (KDU-CSL) as (default) junior coalition partner. In Hungary the opposing camps are formed by the Alliance of Young Democrats (Fidesz) / Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF) and the Hungarian Socialist Party (MSZP) / Alliance of Free Democrats (SZDSZ). Lithuania displays clear governing alternatives – with TS/LK dominated coalitions versus LDDP throughout the 1990s. The entry of the New Union/ Social Liberals (NS/SL) and increasing vote share of the Lithuanian Liberal Union (LLS) in 2000, however, changed power relations in parliament and made coalitions necessary. The score is therefore 'intermediate' for the second legislation period. A similar situation is found in Bulgaria with the Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP) and UDF[61] in coalition with the Movement for Rights and Freedom (MRF) representing the alternatives up to 2001 and the National Movement Simeon II (NMS II) entering in 2001.

The second group does not display clear governing alternatives. Coalitions in Estonia, Latvia and Slovenia have included a wide range of parties in different combinations over time. For Estonia this finding is not consistent with the conclusion drawn from the comparably low average number of parties in coalition – although the government was formed by only two to three parties at a time, the combinations span nearly the entire parliamentary range. A last group is formed by Poland, Romania and Slovakia. Here one of the alternatives is consolidated – the SLD in coalition with the Polish Peasant Party (PSL) in Poland, Social Democratic Party (PDSR/ PSD) in Romania and the Movement for Democratic Slovakia (HZDS) / Slovak National Party (SNS) in Slovakia. The opposing political camp presented itself in the form of 'election parties' (Poland, Slovakia) or an electoral alliance whose constituent parties entered parliament separately (Democratic Convention of Romania - CDR in Romania) until the first election under investigation (Poland 2001; Slovakia

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[61] UDF was formally registered as a party in 1997 and the 'alternative pole' can therefore be considered consolidated – unlike in Poland, Romania and Slovakia.

2002; Romania 2000). These alliances, however, had disintegrated in the course of the legislation period. In Poland and Romania the 'consolidated pole' then came to power following the 2001/ 2000 elections, respectively. The opposition, however, now consisted of single parties with unknown coalition preferences - in Poland because two out of three were newly established (Law and Justice - PiS; League of Polish Families - LPR). In Romania the electoral defeat of the Christian Democratic National Peasants' Party (PNTCD) as the major force in the previous coalition left two smaller parties (National Liberal Party - PNL and Democratic Party - PD) neither of which had been a senior partner in a coalition before. In Slovakia the entry of two new parties after the 2002 election further fragmented parliament and opened up new coalition choices in the 'HZDS opposition camp'. Taken together, the score for these three party systems remains intermediate also for the second election period.

In Bulgaria (MRF) and Romania (Hungarian Democratic Union of Romania - UDMR) ethnically-based parties serve as 'default' junior coalition partners. Firmly excluded from coalitions are the Communist Party in the Czech Republic (KSCM) and the nationalist parties in Hungary (Hungarian Justice and Life - MIEP) and Romania (Greater Romania Party - PRM).[62] Table 5 summarizes the data on the second dimension, clarity of patterns of competition and gives the final scores for the first independent variable.

Country	Up to election series 1			Up to election series 2		
	Clarity of competition	Score	Final score	Clarity of competition	Score	Final score
Bulgaria	high	3	**6**	intermediate	2	4
Czech Republic	high	3	**6**	high	3	**6**
Estonia	low	1	3	low	1	3
Hungary	high	3	**6**	high	3	**6**
Latvia	low	1	4	low	1	4
Lithuania	high	3	4	intermediate	2	3
Poland	intermediate	2	3	intermediate	2	4
Romania	intermediate	2	**5**	intermediate	2	**5**
Slovakia	intermediate	2	4	intermediate	2	4
Slovenia	low	1	3	low	1	4

Table 5   Clarity of the pattern of intra-party competition in the EU-10 up to the first (2000-2003) and second (2004-2007) election series of the study and final scores on the first independent variable.

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[62] Enyedi 2006 p. 229

Taken together, the following picture arises in terms of patterns of competition. Up to the *first election* under investigation two groups of party systems can be distinguished: the *first group* with a combined score of five or six presents clear alternatives to the voter that are circumscribed well with regard to both the identity of the party system constituents and possible governing coalitions. To this group belong *Bulgaria*, the *Czech Republic*, *Hungary* and *Romania*. The *second group* comprises party systems in which either the identity of the constituent parties is less clear as a result of splits and mergers, and/or where governing alternatives are less clearly discernible due to frequently changing composition of governing coalitions. This group is made up of *Estonia*, *Latvia*, *Lithuania, Poland*, *Slovakia* and *Slovenia*.

Up to the *second election* in question the *first group* is then reduced to the *Czech Republic*, *Hungary* and *Romania*. The *second group* then comprises *Bulgaria*, *Estonia*, *Latvia*, *Lithuania*, *Poland*, *Slovakia* and *Slovenia*.

5.2   Space

5.2.1 Operationalization

The second independent variable is available political space. There is an ongoing discussion in political science on whether uni - or multidimensional spaces are the more appropriate tool for analytical purposes. Summarizing the different arguments Budge points out that, in the meantime, the growing consensus is "that a unidimensional left-right space is probably the best representation of party-electoral space."[63] Support for this comes from research carrying out "parallel analyses in multi-dimensional and undimensional left-right space, reaching the same broad conclusions in both, but more clearly in left-right space."[64] Therefore, the analysis presented here will be concerned with assessing positions of parties relative to each other in the unidimensional left-right space.

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[63] Budge 2006 p. 427
[64] Ibid.

As outlined above it makes sense to apply different measures depending on whether the new party enters 'internally' or 'externally'. For the first case available political space is operationalized as the polarization of the party system. Polarization is calculated according to the formula[65] $P = \sqrt{\sum v_i (x_i - x)^2}$, where v_i is the vote share of party i in the preceding election, x_i its position on the left right scale and x the mean of all parties' positions on the scale. Available political space for new parties entering 'internally' into party systems is operationalized by belonging to one of the categories of the model suggested. The results will be presented in the form of graphs and verbal descriptions. Naturally, party systems of the 'real world' do not always fit neatly into the categories. Ethnically based parties and some of the nationalist parties in the EU-10 represent a particular problem when categorizing party systems. Ethnically based parties are an electoral alternative only for a distinct part of the population. In addition, for both ethnically based and nationalist parties the positioning on the left-right scale in many cases does not mirror their orientation towards particular policy issues.[66] These parties will therefore be highlighted in the following categorization. The graphic representations should give an approximate impression on the relative strengths of the parties, are, however, not exactly drawn to scale in this respect.

Data on the positioning of parties on the left-right scale are obtained from the expert survey published by Benoit and Laver in 2006.[67] In principle the measures should be taken at the exact time point of the respective election under investigation. The expert survey, however, covers only one distinct point in time. For the EU-10 it was conducted in the election years between 2000 and 2003. The exception is Bulgaria with elections in 2001 and the survey being conducted in 2003. Using the same spatial positions for the analysis of the second series of elections is justified by the finding in spatial analyses that parties "maintain the same relative position over

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[65] Dodd 1976 as given in Robertson 1986

[66] The positioning of the parties on the three most salient policy issues (apart from EU accession) identified in the Benoit & Laver expert survey was analysed. These show a high level of conformity to the placements on the left-right scale – except for some of the nationalist and ethnically based parties (data not shown).

[67] Benoit & Laver 2006

time" at election level.[68] Where parties are missing from the survey additional sources are used to estimate placement on the twenty-unit left-right scale.

5.2.2 Measurement

The following table shows the party systems of the EU-10 ordered according to decreasing levels of polarization for both election series.

1st election	Polarization		2nd election	Polarization
Hungary	4.47		Latvia	5.1
Czech Republic	4.47		Poland	4.92
Bulgaria	4.29		Czech Republic	4.74
Slovakia	3.94		Estonia	4.16
Estonia	3.72		Slovenia	3.88
Slovenia	3.62		Slovakia	3.86
Latvia	3.62		Lithuania	3.49
Lithuania	3.3		Romania	2.97
Poland	2.94		Bulgaria	2.95
Romania	2.36			

Table 6   Party system polarization in the EU-10 prior to the elections 2000-2003 and 2004-2007. Hungary is excluded from the second series because no new party competed in the respective election.

Considering additional policy dimensions for the first series of elections polarization can be considered to be actually higher in Romania and lower in Slovenia. In Romania the Greater Romania Party (PRM) and the Hungarian Democratic Union of Romania (UDMR) represent extreme positions on decentralization and nationalism. In Slovenia all parties are closer on the three most salient policy issues than on the left-right scale.

To assess available space for new parties entering 'internally' the party systems will first be assigned to the respective categories. There is only one party system fitting the first category prior to the first election in question – Romania. Romanian parties are found close to each other on the ideological scale, the largest 'gap' existing between PSD and Humanist Party of Romania (PUR). These two, however, entered the 2000 electoral campaign as coalition. The two most salient policy issues, apart

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[68] Budge 2006 p. 426

from EU-accession, in Romania at that time point have been decentralization and nationalism. On both these issues the nationalist PRM and the 'Hungarian' UDMR represent extreme positions[69] not compatible with their moderate left-right placement.
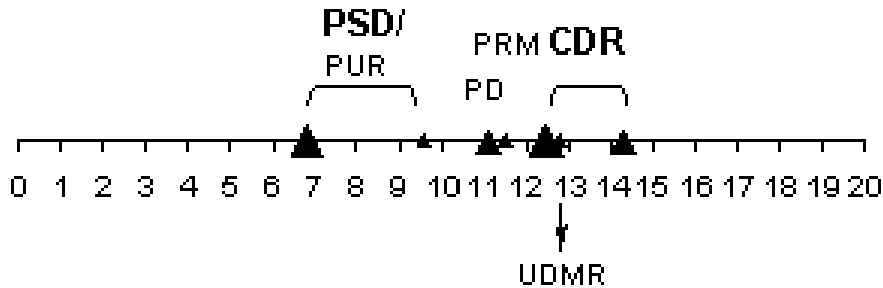

Figure 1   The Romanian party system prior to the 2000 elections. Brackets indicate electoral coalitions. The UDMR is an ethnically based party, PRM a nationalist party.

The Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia and Slovakia fit the second category – two poles and a 'middle party' – more or less well. In the Czech Republic the KSCM adds a minor pole on the left.
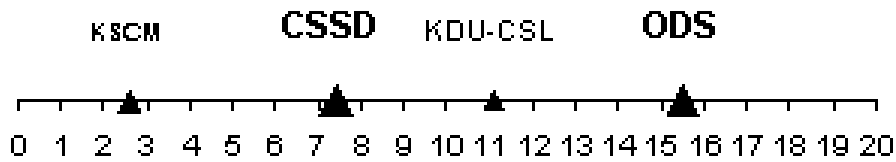

Figure 2   The Czech party system prior to the 2002 elections.

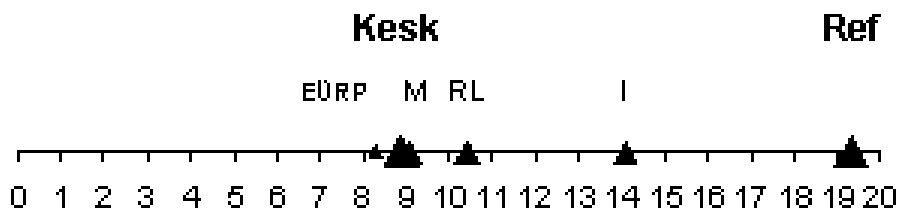Figure 3   The Estonian party system prior to the 2003 elections. Ref - Estonian Reform Party

In Latvia two parliamentary parties had disintegrated in the course of the 1998-2002 legislative period – New Era (JP) and the Latvian Social-Democratic Alliance (LSDA).[70] The remaining space is delimited by the

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[69] Benoit & Laver 2006
[70] Bochsler 2005 p. 68 and World Political Leaders, Latvia

left-wing National Harmony Party (TSP) and the right-wing People's Party (TP), with the nationalist For Fatherland and Freedom/ Latvian National Conservative Party (TB/LNNK) close by. The centre ground is occupied by Latvia's Way (LC).[71]

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              TSP            LC           TB/LNNK  TP

      ┌─┬─┬─┬─┬─┬─┬─▲─┬─┬─◆▶─┬─┬─┬─┬─┬─▲─┬─▲─┬─┬─┐
      0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20
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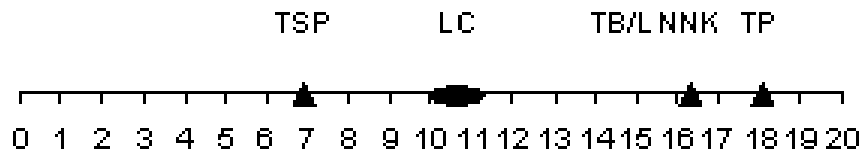
Figure 4   The Latvian party system prior to the 2002 elections. Latvia's Way (LC) is represented by a circle since it was not covered by the expert survey and its position is estimated based on its characterization as centre (right) in the literature.

The Slovakian party system is characterized by two poles (SDL and SDKU/ KDH) with a strong 'middle party'. Hungarian Coalition Party (SMK) and SNS are an ethnically based and a nationalist party, respectively.

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                                          SDKU

         SDL                 HZDS    SMK        KDH
                                         SNS

      ┌─┬─┬─┬─┬─▲─┬─┬─┬─┬─┬─▲─┬─┬─▲─┬─▲▲─┬─▲─┬─┬─┐
      0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20
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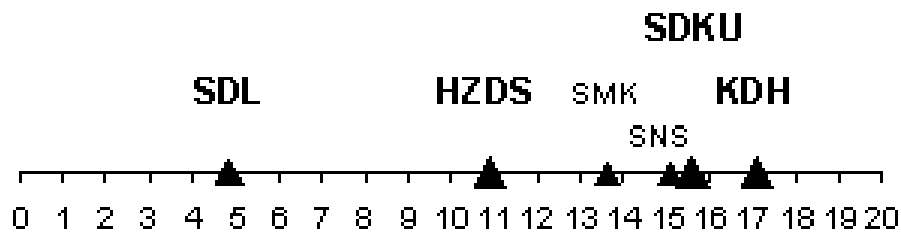
Figure 5   The Slovakian party system prior to the 2002 elections.

The third category of party systems covers Bulgaria, Hungary and Lithuania. In Bulgaria BSP and ODS (UDF) delineate the available political space. The Movement for Rights and Freedom (MRF) is an ethnically based party not representing a choice for the majority of the electorate.

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              BSP      MRF                 ODS

      ┌─┬─┬─┬─┬─┬─┬─▲─┬─┬─▴─┬─┬─┬─┬─┬─▲─┬─┬─┬─┬─┐
      0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20
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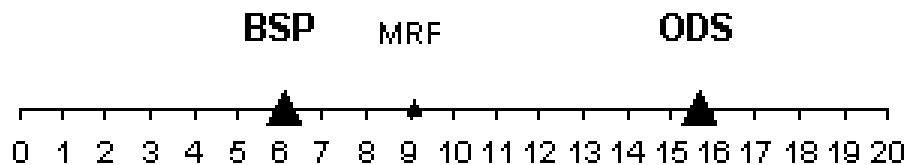
Figure 6   The Bulgarian party system prior to the 2001 elections.

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[71] Because LC was not covered by the expert survey, an approximate position was assigned to it based on centre-right placements reported in the literature. The approximate placement is indicated with a circle instead of triangle.

In Hungary the two poles are formed by MSZP/SZDSZ and FIDESZ/MDF/ Independent Party of Smallholders, Agrarian Workers and Citizens (FKGP). The MIEP is an extreme nationalist party. A 'middle party' is missing in the Hungarian system.
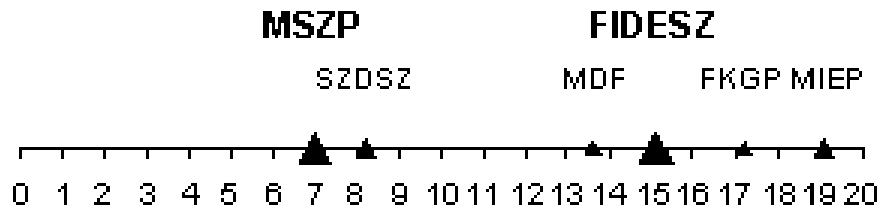

Figure 7   The Hungarian party system prior to the 2002 elections.

In Lithuania the two opposing poles are the LDDP/LSDP (in coalition) and TS/LK/ LCS/ LKDP. There is no 'middle party'.
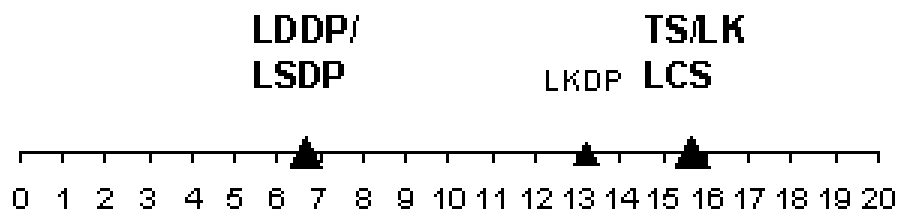
Figure 8   The Lithuanian party system prior to the 2000 elections.

Finally, there are Slovenia and Poland. Slovenia would fall into category two if United List of Social Democrats (ZLSD) / Democratic Party of Pensioners of Slovenia (DeSUS) and SLS / Social Democratic Party of Slovenia (SDS) are considered as the poles and Liberal Democracy of Slovenia (LDS) as the 'middle party'. On the other hand positions on the most salient policy issues are even closer than the left-right placement suggests. The Slovenian National Party (SNS) is a nationalist party representing extreme positions on e.g. foreign land ownership and religion. Therefore, Slovenia cannot be unambiguously sorted into one of the categories.

Figure 9   The Slovenian party system prior to the 2000 elections.

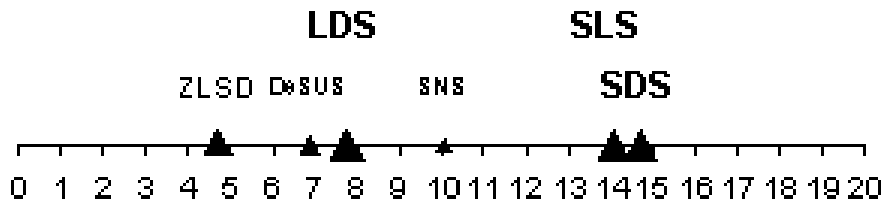Poland prior to the elections in 2001 also does not fit any of the categories. The left pole is formed by SLD and PSL. The AWS, however, had largely disintegrated in 2001[72], leaving the right part of the spectrum open.
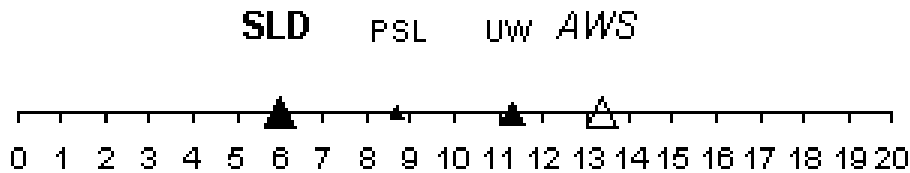
Figure 10   The Polish party system prior to the 2001 elections. Note that the AWS had largely disintegrated in 2001 (italics and open triangle).

In summary, for the first election series conditions for success of new parties entering 'internally' should be worst in Romania and best in Bulgaria, Hungary and Lithuania where no middle party is present and the poles are set wide apart. For the party systems in category two success of new parties would probably crucially depend on their placement relative to the existing parties with regard to important issues.

Through the entry of (new) parties in the first election series the space available for positioning of parties changed in some countries. Overall, the spatial patterns are less clear-cut prior to the respective second elections. The first category still comprises Romania only.

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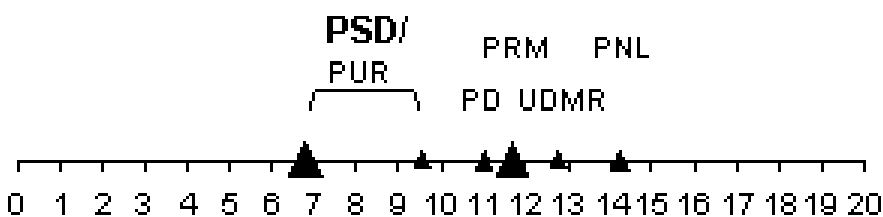
[72] Szczerbiak 2004 p. 66-67

Figure 11   The Romanian party system prior to the 2004 elections. The PSD/PUR

                 coalition is indicated by a bracket.

In the second category there are now found Bulgaria, the Czech Republic,
Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Slovakia. Latvia and Slovakia tend,
however, towards the first category.
In Latvia directly after the 2002 elections the position of For Human Rights
in a United Latvia (PCTVL) represented the most left-wing. The Union of
Greens and Farmers (ZZS) and Latvia's First Party (LPP) replaced
Latvia's Way on the centre right. Before the 2006 election, however, the
PCTVL coalition had dissolved, leaving the TSP on the left pole. Overall,
through the new entries the space between the poles has become more
'crowded'.
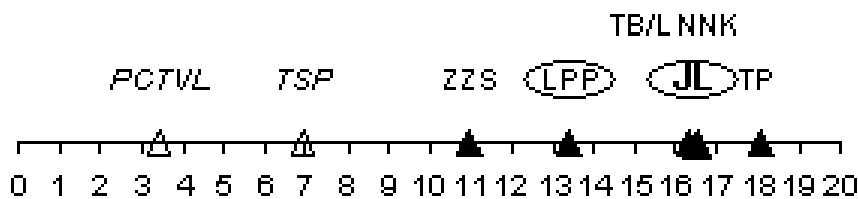
Figure 12   The Latvian party system prior to the 2006 elections. PCTVL, the left pole

                 after the 2002 elections, had dissolved and is therefore indicated in italics.

                 Out of the coalition TSP remains as the old/ new left pole. LPP and New Era

                 (JL) are new parties that had entered in 2002.

In Slovakia the main left pole has moved to the right with the entry of
Smer. Apart from the ultra-left Communist Party of Slovakia (KSS) the
main body of the party system is now less polarized and comprises one
additional party in the right cluster.
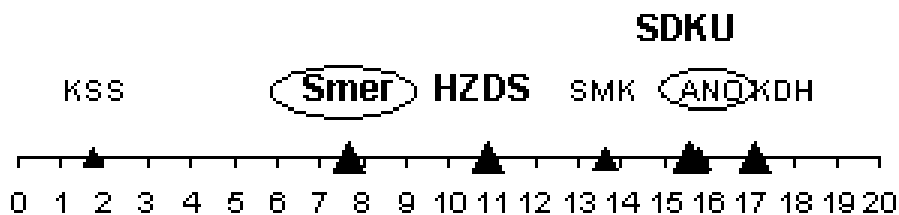
Figure 13   The Slovakian party system prior to the 2006 elections. Smer and Alliance of

                 the New Citizen (ANO), the two 2002 newcomers, are circled. The KSS does

                 not represent a new party.

In Estonia the basic arrangement of two poles and a 'middle party' remained unchanged even after the 2003 entry of Res Publica.

Kesk   (**ResP**) **Ref**

M RL   I

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20
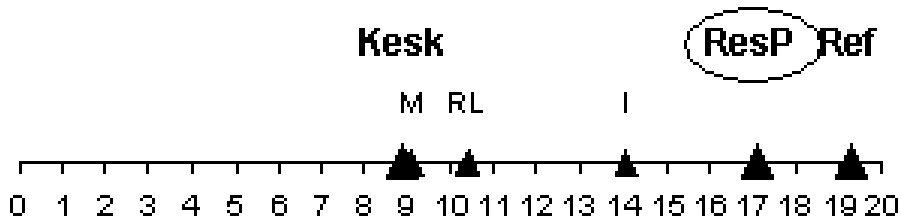
Figure 14   The Estonian party system prior to the 2007 elections. ResP as a new party
                   having entered in 2003 is circled.

Bulgaria and Lithuania are new in this category – 'middle parties' are now present with the National Movement Simeon II (NMS II) in Bulgaria and the LLS in Lithuania.

BSP   MRF (NMS II)   **ODS**

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20

LSDP (NS/SL) LLS   TS/LK

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20
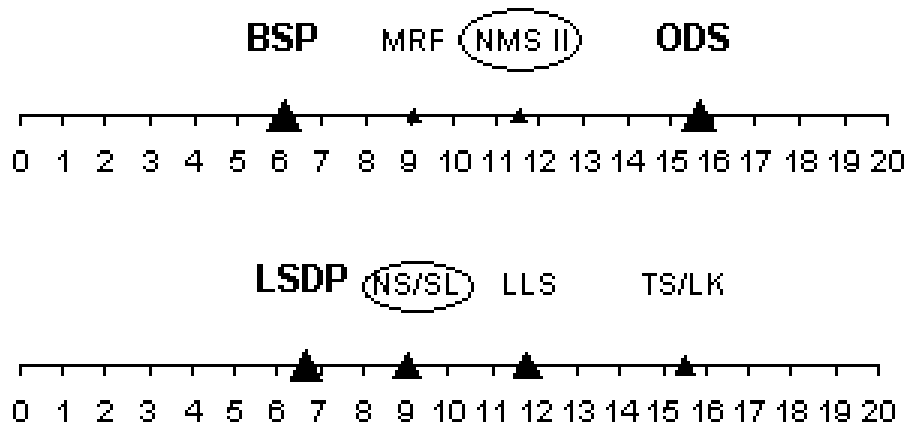
Figure 15   The Bulgarian (top) and Lithuanian (bottom) party systems prior to the 2005/
                   2004 elections. New parties are circled.

In the Czech Republic, the last member of category two, the system remained unchanged.
The third category for the second election series comprises Slovenia and Poland. In Poland the left pole is now formed by Citizen's Platform (PO), PiS and LPR. NSi has entered on the far right in Slovenia.
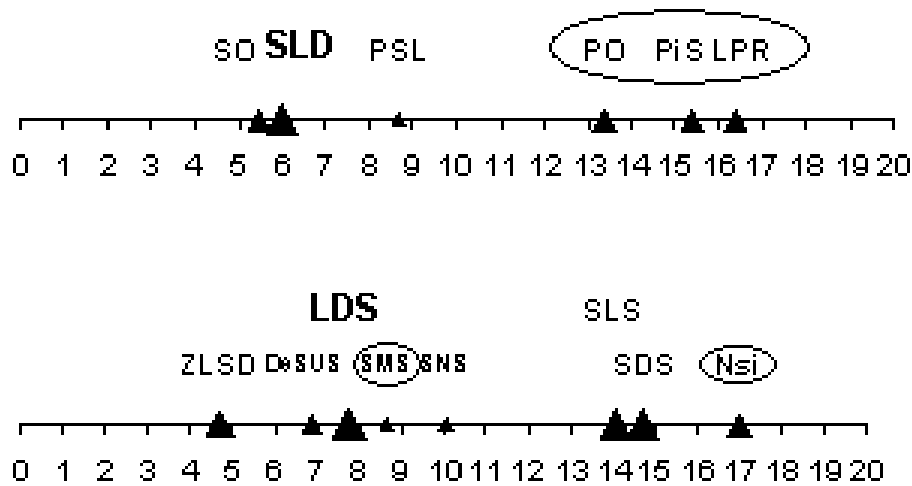
Figure 16   The Polish (top) and Slovenian (bottom) party systems prior to the 2005/ 2004 elections. New parties are circled. SO - Self-Defence of the Republic of Poland; SMS - Party of Slovenian Youth

Summing up over the categorization for the second election series the least favourable conditions for new party success when entering internally can again be expected for Romania, followed now by Slovakia and, possibly, Latvia. In general, a trend towards less polarized and internally more 'crowded' party systems is observed - possibly making internal entry of new parties more difficult. The exceptions are Poland and Slovenia where the party systems have become more polarized. With regard to the second category (poles and middle party) where issue placement and the provision of still discernible alternatives are the crucial factors, the Bulgarian and Lithuanian party systems might offer opportunities for the internal entry of new parties. The following table summarizes the assignment of the party systems to the respective categories prior to the first and second election, respectively.

	Cat. I	**Cat. II**	**Cat. III**	**ambiguous**
1st election	Romania	Czech Republic	Bulgaria	Slovenia
		Estonia	Hungary	Poland
		Latvia	Lithuania	
		Slovakia		
2nd election	Romania	Bulgaria	Slovenia	
		Czech Republic	Poland	
		Estonia		
		Latvia		
		Lithuania		
		Slovakia		

Table 7   Assignment of the party systems in the EU-10 to spatial categories prior
              to the first and second election under investigation.

5.3   Campaigning

5.3.1 Operationalization

The third independent variable is conditions of campaigning. It will be
assessed along the dimensions of enabling and constraining mechanism
of campaign financing as well as of regulations on media access. In the
case of campaign financing enabling mechanisms will be measured as the
presence or absence of state subsidies for campaigning that are
vote/representation - independent. Only these can be considered to be
favourable for a new party. Constraining mechanisms are determined as
the presence or absence of legal regulations setting limits on campaign
spending. Regulations on media access will be measured with regard to
provision of equal and free access to the media (enabling) and prohibition
of paid advertisement (constraining). Equal access means that
parliamentary parties are not advantaged. Each of the measures is
numerically coded zero or one for presence or absence of the respective
factor. The individual scores on enabling and constraining mechanisms for
campaign financing and media access are added up to provide a final
score for the dimensions.

5.3.2 Measurement [73]

Bulgaria

Vote - share - independent campaign subsidy

There is no special subsidy for election campaigns. In general state funding goes to parties that have gained at least 1% of the vote.

Spending limit

There is a spending limit for national elections.[74]

Media

Free airtime is provided by national TV and Radio. Time for debates is divided half-half between parliamentary (at least) and non-parliamentary parties. Teams, form and topics of the debates are, however, established by a committee in which parties are represented according to their seat share.

This addition was withdrawn in 2005. Paid advertising on private stations is not prohibited.[75]

Czech Republic

Vote - share - independent campaign subsidy

Campaign financial assistance is dependent on vote share.

Spending limit

There is no spending limit in place.[76]

Media

There is free broadcasting time equally distributed between all parties running in the election. There is a ban on paid advertising.

Estonia

Vote - share - independent campaign subsidy

No

Spending limit

There is no spending limit, but disclosure is required.[77]

Media

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[73] All data in this section have been obtained from primary legislation, if not otherwise indicated. Legal texts were accessed via http://www.legislationline.org on August 12th and 13th 2007, again, if not indicated otherwise. A list of the respective legal texts is given in Appendix 2.
[74] Wannat & Farnsworth 2005 p. 46
[75] Ibid.
[76] Perottino 2005 p. 20
[77] IDEA 2003 p. 205

Advertising is prohibited on public TV and Radio. Debates on public TV favour larger parties (2007). There is no ban on paid advertising on private stations but broadcasters have to grant similar opportunities for all parties.[78]

Hungary

Vote - share - independent campaign subsidy

Hungary subsidizes candidates *before* the election. In addition public premises and equipment is provided under conditions of equality.[79]

Spending limit

There is a limit on campaign expenditure.

Media

Political advertising is allowed, but equal conditions have to be ensured. At least one political announcement free of charge has to be offered by state TV. In addition there has to be one advertisement for every nominating list on the last day before the elections. Paid advertising in private media is not banned.[80]

Latvia

Vote - share - independent campaign subsidy

No

Spending limit

In 2004 the campaign expenditure limit was set at 0.2 LVL/ vote.[81]

Media

Limited amount of free airtime is granted to all contestants on equal basis. Political platforms are published free of charge.[82] There are no limits to paid advertising.[83]

Lithuania

Vote - share - independent campaign subsidy

No

Spending limit

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[78] OSCE/ODIHR 2007a p. 8
[79] Ikstens et al. 2002 p. 34
[80] OSCE/ODIHR 2002a p. 10
[81] Ikstens 2005
[82] Ikstens et al. 2002 p. 37; Auers & Ikstens 2003 p. 92
[83] OSCE/ODIHR 2007b p. 12

De jure there is no campaign expenditure limit. Parties are, however, obliged to set up a special election account that is limited in the amount that can be transferred to it. This imposes a de facto spending limit.

Media

Free airtime is granted to all participants in the election on an equal basis. There is no ban on paid advertising. Since this, however, has to be financed from the election account as well, conditions for contestants are levelled to an extent by the account limit. (score 0.5 for ban on paid advertising)

Poland

Vote - share - independent campaign subsidy

There is refunding depending on the number of seats gained.

Spending limit

There is a limit to campaign expenditure.[84]

Media

Free broadcasting time is granted on equal for all contestants. Paid advertisement is not prohibited.

Romania

Vote - share - independent campaign subsidy

No

Spending limit

2000 - There is no cap to campaign expenditure. The ceiling for donations is doubled in election years.[85]

2004 – The 2003 "Law on the financing of the activities of political parties and of election campaigns"[86] introduces a campaign spending limit.

Media

2000 – Airtime on state radio and TV is provided for parliamentary parties at a subsidized rate. All other parties profit from a prize specially set for the time of the electoral campaign. Distribution of airtime has to ensure that parliamentary parties have two times more broadcasting time at their

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[84] Ikstens et al. 2002 p. 49
[85] OSCE/ODIHR 2001 pp. 12-13
[86] Law No. 43, 21.01.2003

disposal than extra- parliamentary ones.[87] Paid advertising is not prohibited.[88]

2004 – Under the new electoral law public as well as private stations have to provide access to political parties for campaign purposes free of charge. Distribution of airtime on public radio and TV proceeds according to the number of seats in parliament. Private stations are bound to distribute 75% of their campaign airtime to parliamentary parties and 25% to non-parliamentary parties. "Any commercial publicity procedure using the print and broadcast media for electoral propaganda purposes shall be prohibited."[89]

Slovakia

Vote - share - independent campaign subsidy

There are no separate state funds for campaigning.

Spending limit

There is a limit to campaign expenditure.[90]

Media

2002 – Free airtime is granted on public TV and radio. Equal access for all election participants is ensured.[91] Advertising on private stations is "no longer expressly prohibited, however, what is permitted remains subject to controversy.[92]

2006 – The new electoral law abolishes free airtime. On state radio and TV equal access for all contestants is granted. Advertising on private stations is allowed, however, limited in time per contestant. The score on paid advertising is therefore 0.5.

Slovenia

Vote - share - independent campaign subsidy

Campaign financial assistance is dependent on vote share.

Spending limit

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[87] Law No. 68, 15.07.1992
[88] According to Ikstens et al. 2002 (p. 52) paid advertising is prohibited. The respective law does not contain any provisions to this effect.
[89] Law on the elections for the chamber of deputies and the Senate (2004) Art. 55(4)
[90] OSCE/ODIHR 2002b p. 8 and Ikstens et al. 2002 p. 59
[91] Ikstens et al. 2002 p. 58
[92] OSCE/ODIHR 2002b p. 10

There is a spending limit.[93]

Media

There is a provision for equal airtime for parliamentary parties free of charge. Non-parliamentary parties must have at least one third of the total time allocated. There is no ban on paid advertising.

A summary comparison of the campaign conditions with assigned numerical values is shown in Table 8.

	Campaign financing				Media access		
	Enabling	Constraining			Enabling	Constraining	
	State subsidies	Spending limit	Final score		Free, equal airtime	Ban on paid advertising	Final score
HU 2002	1	1	2	CZ 2002	1	1	2
BG 2001	0	1	1	SK 2002	1	0.5	1.5
LT 2000	0	1	1	LT 2000	1	0.5	1.5
PO 2001	0	1	1	HU 2002	1	0	1
SK 2002	0	1	1	LV 2002	1	0	1
SI 2000	0	1	1	PO 2001	1	0	1
CZ 2002	0	0	0	BG 2001	0.5	0	0.5
LV 2002	0	0	0	EE 2003	0	0	0
EE 2003	0	0	0	RO 2000	0	0	0
RO 2000	0	0	0	SI 2000	0	0	0
HU 2006	1	1	2	CZ 2006	1	1	2
BG 2005	0	1	1	LT 2004	1	0.5	1.5
LV 2006	0	1	1	HU 2006	1	0	1
LT 2004	0	1	1	LV 2006	1	0	1
PO 2005	0	1	1	PO 2005	1	0	1
RO 2004	0	1	1	RO 2004	0	1	1
SK 2006	0	1	1	BG 2005	0.5	0	0.5
SI 2004	0	1	1	SK 2006	0	0.5	0.5
CZ 2006	0	0	0	EE 2007	0	0	0
EE 2007	0	0	0	SI 2004	0	0	0

Table 8   Enabling and constraining mechanisms of campaign regulations in the EU-10 in the election series 2000-2003 and 2004-2007. Countries are listed in descending order of their final score on the respective dimension.

Following from this the potentially most favourable conditions for new parties should be found in Hungary (campaign financing) and the Czech Republic (media access) in both election series. In the campaign leading up to the second election there are only the Czech Republic and Estonia still without spending limit. With regard to media access the picture is largely unchanged.

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[93] OSI 2002 p. 604

6   The Dependent Variable – Success of New Parties

6.1   *Operationalization*

The dependent variable is the electoral success of new parties. Both terms of the variable require, however, some qualification. In the widest sense of the term a new party is a party that has never before occurred on the ballot in the conformation in that it contests the election in question. This includes parties resulting from fusions and splits of established parties as well as genuinely new parties. In the available literature 'new party' is operationalized differentially. Harmel and Robertson[94] list new parties by their different origins but do not differentiate them in their aggregate analysis. More recently Sikk confined his analyses to genuinely new parties defined as "the ones that are not successors of any previous parliamentary parties, have a novel name as well as structure, and do not have any important figures from past democratic politics among its major members".[95] Based on the cartel-party theory he argues that all other technically new parties "originate from the already established political circles, thus contributing to inner changes, but not altering much the conventional pattern of party politics".[96] Tavits[97] excludes only mergers from her analysis. Split-offs and genuinely new parties compete under comparable conditions. They have to recruit members, develop organizational capacity and make their political aims known. Mergers, on the other hand, "are in fact established parties that have reorganized to survive".[98] Often they have cooperated in coalitions before and the policy preferences of the merger are predictable for the voter. This paper therefore follows Tavits and defines a 'new party' as a party that

-   occurs on the ballot for the first time, and
-   has been established following split-off from an established party or is a genuinely new party.

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[94] Harmel & Robertson 1985
[95] Sikk 2003 p. 8
[96] Sikk 2005 p. 399
[97] Tavits 2006
[98] Bolin 2007 p. 8

The second question in operationalization of the dependent variable concerns the definition of electoral success. Harmel and Robertson[99] do not set a cut-off for success (percentage of vote) but statistically correlate their independent variables to increasing electoral support. Müller-Rommel[100] defines a party as electoral successful if it has gained more than 4% of the vote on average. Quenter[101] takes the passing of the threshold for parliamentary representation as the measure of success. Tavits measures success of new parties by the "vote share for all new parties in a given election".[102]

Given the fact that I don't have any statistical tools at my disposal and information about parties not clearing the representational threshold in a number of cases is impossible to obtain, this paper defines an electoral successful party here as a party that has passed the threshold for parliamentary representation.

6.2   Measurement

Measuring success of new parties presupposes that new parties have competed in the elections in question. This is the case for all elections in the EU-10 between 2000 and 2007, except for the Hungary in 2006. This election will therefore be excluded from analysis. Data for the dependent variable were obtained using the electoral database of the 'Project on Political Transformation and the Electoral Process in Post-Communist Europe' and the election sites for the respective countries on Wikipedia. In cases where data from these sources were incomplete, the homepages of the national election commissions[103] were used. Information on founding dates and origin of parties was collected from the Wikipedia English version and supplemented where necessary from the respective countries' Wikipedia editions.

The following table gives an overview on the new parties entering parliaments in the EU-10 in elections between 2000 and 2007, the

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[99] Harmel & Robertson 1985
[100] Müller-Rommel 1992 p. 192
[101] Quenter 2001 p. 27
[102] Tavits 2007a p. 12
[103] A list of web-links to national election commission is provided in the reference section.

percentage of the vote gained and the position they entered into on the left-right scale.

Country	Year	Party	Vote share	Position
Bulgaria	2001	NMS II	42.74%	Internally
	2005	DSB	6.44%	Right
Estonia	2003	Res Publica	24.62%	Internally
	2007	Green Party	7.1%	Left
Latvia	2002	New Era (JL)	23.98%	Internally
		LPP	9.57%	Internally
Lithuania[104]	2000	NS-SL	19.64%	Internally
	2004	Labour Party (DP)	28.44%	Left
Poland	2001	PO	12.68%	Right
		PiS	9.5%	Right
		LPR	7.87%	Right
Slovakia	2002	SDKU	15.04%	Right Pole
		Smer	13.46%	Left
		ANO	8.01%	Right Pole
Slovenia	2000	NSi	8.66%	Right
		SMS	4.34%	Internally

Table 9   New parties entering parliament in the EU-10 in the election series 2000-2003 and 2004-2007.

In summary the following picture arises for the first and second election in question, respectively. There were new parties in parliament after the

1st election in	2nd election in
Bulgaria	Bulgaria
Estonia	Estonia
Lithuania	Lithuania
Latvia	
Poland	
Slovakia	
Slovenia	

An additional level of analysis is introduced by looking at new parties having obtained between 1% of the vote and the respective representational threshold.

1st election	2nd election
Czech Republic	Latvia
Hungary	Poland
Romania	Slovakia
	Slovenia

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[104] Multi-member districts only

7   Results and Discussion

Comparing the groups resulting from measurement of the first independent variable with the countries where new parties entered parliament the following picture arises: For the first series of elections investigated here the party systems in **Estonia**, **Latvia**, **Lithuania, Poland**, **Slovakia** and **Slovenia** are rather unstable in terms of the identity of participants in competition and/ or do not display clear governing alternatives. In line with the hypothesis new parties gained vote shares above the representation threshold in the elections in question in these countries. In the **Czech Republic**, **Hungary** and **Romania** stable and clear competition patterns are associated with new parties failing to pass the representation threshold. This, again, is in line with the hypothesis established. Thus, in 90% of the cases low levels of stability and clarity of competition can explain the success of new parties. The exception is **Bulgaria** where a new party gained a sizeable vote share in the 2001 elections despite stable and clear competition patterns.

With respect to the second series of elections stability and clarity of competition can explain why new parties gained less than 1% of the vote in the **Czech Republic and Romania**. In the group with less stable and/or clear patterns of competition new parties could not pass the representation threshold in **Latvia, Poland, Slovakia** and **Slovenia** - contradicting the hypothesis. However, in these countries new parties gained between 1% of the vote and the respective representation threshold. Thus, they were more successful in terms of votes than in systems with stable and clear competition patterns. In **Bulgaria, Estonia** and **Lithuania** new parties passed the representation threshold.

Taken together these results suggest that the stability and clarity of patterns of competition has an influence on the success of new parties. The less stable and clear patterns of competition are, the higher the likelihood of successful new parties. The findings do, however, also show that clear patterns of competition and a stable identity of the participants need not be an obstacle to successful entry of new parties – as the case of Bulgaria (2001) shows. With regard to party system inherent variables

the exhaustion of government alternatives - shown by Tavits[105] to have high explanatory power for the success of new parties - could have played a role in this case. The two major parties, BSP and UDF, had governed alternately throughout the 1990s, without, however, being able to solve major economic and administrative problems. A 'precipitating' factor exogenous to the party system could also have been the personality of the former king as leader of the new party. Thus, although single variables may explain a majority of cases, party system development by entry of new parties is clearly contingent on a larger number of factors, both endogenous and exogenous to the party system.

Analysis of the relationship between available political space as the second independent variable and the success of new parties presents a difficulty related to the dependent variable. As outlined above the measures for available political space should be different dependent on where the new party positions itself relative to the established system. Where new parties have been successful such information is usually available. For 'unsuccessful' new parties it is in most cases impossible to obtain. Therefore the following analysis can only establish relationships for the successful new parties and cannot provide deeper insights in cases where new parties failed.

For the first election series there are only Slovakia and Slovenia where new parties entered 'outside' the established system. Poland is a more ambiguous case, since the new parties replaced the AWS. In the second election series all successful new parties entered 'outside' the established system or at the poles. Overall, there is no correlation between party system polarization and successful 'external' entry. However, due to the paucity of cases these findings have to be considered with caution.

'Internal entries' to which the proposed model might be applicable were observed only in the first election series. They are found in the third category (poles set wide apart, no 'middle party') with Bulgaria and

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[105] Tavits 2007a

Lithuania.[106] These are also the two party systems where the largest distance between neighbours can be found. Internal entries also occurred in Estonia, Latvia, Slovakia and Slovenia – party systems of my second category in which a middle party existed prior to the new entry. In both Estonia and Latvia the new parties entered between the 'middle party' and the right pole and gained around 25% of the vote. In Slovakia and Slovenia ANO and SMS, respectively entered at or close to the poles and received a lower share of the votes than the Estonian and Latvian newcomers.

Thus, a preliminary analysis using the model suggested shows that first, the hypothesis that there will be more successful 'internal' entrants in the party systems of categories two and three holds. One has, however, to bear in mind that the first category comprises Romania only, where information on the unsuccessful new parties was not available. Second, the positioning between the 'middle party' and one of the poles in Estonia and Latvia proved to be the best strategy for new parties in systems with a 'middle party'. Third, highly polarized systems of category three are prone to the successful entrance in the middle. Finally, taken in isolation the available political space is not sufficient to explain success or failure of new parties. The Czech Association of Independents (SNK), although entering at a relative position comparable to the new entrants in Latvia and Estonia, failed to pass the representation threshold. Characteristics of competition, with the middle party representing the 'default' coalition partner of the poles, may be the 'overriding' factor here.

Based on the partly inconclusive statistical results he obtained in his analyses Quenter suspects that "one might predict […] good prospects of success for new parties in countries with comparably less fragmented, but relatively highly polarized party systems, in which changes of government are more frequent".[107] These would be the party systems covered here in categories two and three. Thus, it would certainly be worthwhile to run Quenter's statistical models (a) separately for new parties entering

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[106] In addition the Hungarian Centre Party only just failed to pass the representation threshold.
[107] Quenter 2001 p. 108, author's translation

internally and (b) including the first election series in the EU-10 covered here. In addition, more precise mathematical modelling - taking into account the strength of the existing 'middle party' and the distance between parties' positions - could facilitate the establishment of the exact relationship between the 'type' of party system, the positioning of new parties and their success.

With regard to the impact of campaign financing regulations the analysis reveals that provisions that could be assumed to counteract the disadvantaged position of new parties in the election campaign do not have an influence on their success. In Hungary, supposedly providing the most favourable conditions for new parties in the first series of elections, the Centre party failed to cross the representation threshold. On the other hand, Estonia presented the formally least favourable conditions in both election series. However, new parties gained parliamentary representation in 2003 as well as in 2007. Up to date the literature provides no comparable data on the success of new parties in relationship to the campaign environment as operationalized here. In a recent study Bolin[108] has analyzed the impact of campaign financing regulations on the *entry* of new parties in electoral competition. He found that "a legal cap on campaign spending is favourable for new parties", but concedes that this result has to be treated with caution due to the paucity of cases where such regulations had been in place. A second point has to be made in order to assess the above negative result properly. In the case of a cap on campaign spending measuring the presence or absence of a legal regulation might not be sufficient to capture the actual conditions for new parties in the respective countries. Provisions on campaign spending limits have to be reasonable and enforced properly. A spending limit unreasonably low if compared to the actual campaign expenditures will most likely not be observed and, hence, cannot be expected to improve conditions for new parties. The same applies for a legal cap existing on paper only. Anecdotic evidence suggests that e.g. the spending limit for

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[108] Bolin 2007

the 2006 election Latvia[109] has been unrealistically low. Unfortunately, data on reasonability and enforcement comparable across the countries and time period of this study have not been available. An interesting approach in the assessment of the impact of money on the success of new parties has recently been taken by Sikk.[110] His model of restrictiveness of party financing regimes includes the measure of share of public funding in campaign expenditures of parliamentary parties: a decrease in the share of public funding in campaign expenditures for parliamentary parties would, according to the model, increase the chances for new parties. He can, however, provide only partial empirical support for this hypothesis.

Similarly to the campaign financing regulations, provisions that should level the playing field with regard to media access do not seem to have an impact on the success of new parties. Probably an analysis of the actual share in media presence of established and new parties during the electoral campaign could solve the discrepancy between obviously 'disadvantaging' legal provisions and the success of new parties observed in some cases.

8   Conclusion and Outlook

Analyzing two election series in the EU-10 it has been provided evidence that the stability and clarity of patterns of competition between established parties shape the environment for new parties and has an influence on their success. The determination of the effect of distribution of parties in political space on new parties' success clearly requires further investigation. Mathematical modelling of the three 'spatial types' of party systems proposed here might serve as a starting point for a static analysis. More attractive, however, would be a dynamic model taking into account the permanent changes party systems undergo in response to changing societal conditions. Laver and Schilperoord[111] recently extended their agent-based spatial model of party competition to the analysis of the "birth

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[109] OSCE/ODIHR 2007b p. 8
[110] Sikk 2006 pp. 46-47
[111] Laver & Schilperoord 2007

and death of political parties." In this model different adaptive rules for party leaders as well as updated/ cumulative citizens' dissatisfaction are considered to explain the establishment of new parties. Discussing their results the authors remark that currently accepted spatial models assume that citizens switch "to the closest party at any given instant … when their current party is no longer the closest to them."[112] Future work, in addition, has to deal with the fact that "citizens develop more long-standing party affiliations that respond only slowly to a changing configuration of party positions."[113] This, however, is exactly what mediates, as an intervening variable, the effects of stability and clarity of competition on new parties' success - the first independent variable investigated in the analysis presented here. Hence, an advanced dynamic model of the type developed by Laver and Schilperoord would also integrate this particular influence and help to answer not only the question why new parties 'are born,' but also under which conditions they are successful.

With regard to campaign conditions future analysis has to go beyond the analysis of legal regulations. It must take into account enforcement and should analyse the actual implementation of legal provisions on media access. In addition, the internet and mobile telecommunications play an increasing role in election campaigns without being, up to the present, explicitly regulated by law. Hence, these media should be included in future investigations.

Finally, the analysis presented has only dealt with two election periods still very close in time to the 'origins' of the party systems in the EU-10. To arrive at more generally applicable conclusions certainly a larger number of elections will have to be analysed and results will have to be compared to those obtained for established democracies.

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[112] Laver & Schilperoord 2007 p. 25
[113] Ibid.

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Appendix 1   *Political Parties in the EU-10*

Bulgaria

BSP	Bulgarian Socialist Party
DSB	Democrats for a Strong Bulgaria
MRF	Movement for Rights and Freedom
NMS II	National Movement Simeon II
ODS or UDF	United Democratic Forces
SSD	Union of Free Democrats

Czech Republic

CSSD	Czech Social Democratic Party
KDU-CSL	Christian and Democratic Union – Czechoslovak People's Party
KSCM	Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia
ODS	Civic Democratic Party
SNK	Association of Independents

Estonia

EER	Estonian Greens
EML	Estonian Rural Union (also Country Union)
EPPE	Estonian Pensioners and Families Party
EÜRP	Estonian United People's Party
I	Pro Patria (Isamaaliit)
M	Moderates; since 2004 Social Democratic Party – SDE
Kesk	Estonian Centre Party
Ref	Estonian Reform Party
ResP	Res Publica
RL	Estonian People's Union (previously Estonian Country People's Party – EME) also: ERL

Hungary

FIDESZ	Alliance of Young Democrats
FKGP	Independent Party of Smallholders, Agrarian Workers and Citizens
MDF	Hungarian Democratic Forum

MIEP	Hungarian Justice and Life
MSZP	Hungarian Socialist Party
SZDSZ	Alliance of Free Democrats

Latvia

JL	New Era
JP	New Era
LC	Latvia's Way
LPP	Latvia's First Party
LSDA	Latvian Social-Democratic Alliance
PCTVL	For Human Rights in a United Latvia
TB/LNNK	For Fatherland and Freedom/ Latvian National Conservative Party
TP	People's Party
TSP	National Harmony Party
ZZS	Union of Greens and Farmers

Lithuania

DP	Labour Party
LCS	Lithuanian Centre Union
LDDP	Lithuanian Democratic Labour Party
LDP	Liberal Democratic Party
LLS	Lithuanian Liberal Union
LKDP	Lithuanian Christian Democratic Party
LSDP	Lithuanian Social Democratic Party (since 2001 name of the LDDP/ LSDP fusion)
MKDS	Modern Christian Democratic Union
NKS	Moderate Conservative Union
NS/SL	New Union/ Social Liberals
TCS	National Center Party
TS/LK	Homeland Union/ Lithuanian Conservatives

Poland

AWS	Solidarity Electoral Action
LPR	League of Polish Families
PiS	Law and Justice
PO	Citizen's Platform

PSL	Polish Peasant Party
SDPL	Social Democracy of Poland
SLD	Democratic Left Alliance
SO	Self-Defence of the Republic of Poland
UW	Freedom Union

Romania

CDR	Democratic Convention of Romania
PD	Democratic Party
PNL	National Liberal Party
PNTCD	Christian Democratic National Peasants' Party
PRM	Greater Romania Party
PSD	Social Democratic Party (since 2001; before PDSR)
PSDR	Romanian Social Democratic Party (until merger with PDSR in 2001)
PUR	Humanist Party of Romania
UDMR	Hungarian Democratic Union of Romania

Slovakia

ANO	Alliance of the New Citizen
DS	Democratic Party
DU	Democratic Union
HZDS	Movement for Democratic Slovakia
KDH	Christian Democratic Movement
KSS	Communist Party of Slovakia
SDA	Social Democratic Alternative
SDK	Slovak Democratic Coalition
SDKU	Slovak Democratic and Christian Union
SDL	Party of Democratic Left
SDSS	Social Democratic Party of Slovakia
Smer	Direction
SMK	Hungarian Coalition Party
SNS	Slovak National Party
SZS	Green Party of Slovakia

Slovenia

DeSUS	Democratic Party of Pensioners of Slovenia
LDS	Liberal Democracy of Slovenia
NSi	New Slovenia – Christian People's Party
SDS	until 2003 Social Democratic Party of Slovenia; after 2003 Slovenian Democratic Party
SKD	Slovenian Christian Democrats
SLS	Slovenian People's Party
SMS	Party of Slovenian Youth
SNS	Slovenian National Party
ZLSD	United List of Social Democrats

Appendix 2   *Legal Regulations governing Campaign Financing and Media Access in the EU-10*

Bulgaria Elections of Members of Parliament Act (2001, amended 2005)

Czech Rep. Act on the Elections to the Parliament of the Czech Republic (1995)

Estonia Riigikogu Election Act (2002, amended 2006)

Hungary Act C on Electoral Procedure (1997); Law on the operation and financial functioning of political parties (1989)

Latvia Law on national election campaign (1994); Law on the financing of political organizations (1995, amended 2002)

Lithuania Law on elections to the Seimas (1992, amended 2004)

Poland Act on Elections to the Sejm of the Republic of Poland and to the Senate of the Republic of Poland (2001)

Romania Law on Political Parties (1996); Law on the elections for the chamber of deputies and the Senate (1992 and 2004)

Slovakia Act on Election of the National Council (1999); Law on Elections to the National Council of the Slovak Republic" (2004); Act on limitation of expenditures of the political parties on advertising before elections to the National Council of the Slovak Republic (1994)

Slovenia The Law on Radio and Television (amended 2001); Election Campaign Act (1994, amended 1997)