



# The Electoral Connection and Democratic Consolidation

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Political parties are accorded an important role in the historical development of democratic institutions. This article explores the contribution of political parties to the consolidation of the democratic process in the recent post-communist regimes. Three general perspectives on how parties might affect the democratization process are evaluated. One argument is that there is an absence of "civil society" in these countries and hence cleavages or group identifications have little relevance for party preferences. A second argument is that party preferences in these post-communist democracies are based on opposition to democratic or market institutions and hence pose a threat to the democratic consolidation. I argue that the party issue space in post-communist regimes tends to be multidimensional reflecting a variety of different salient cleavages and that opposition to the institutions of democratic capitalism are either inconsequential or counterbalanced by a number of other salient socio-political cleavages. The analysis is based on survey data from the Times–Mirror surveys conducted in Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia during 1990 and 1991. © 1998 Elsevier Science Ltd. All rights reserved

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## Introduction

Political parties are accorded an important role in the historical development of democratic institutions. One of the important ways in which parties contributed to the transition to democracy in European countries was by effectively representing or mobilizing the interests of specific segments of society when the franchise was expanded (Lipset, 1960; Lipset and Rokkan, 1967; Franklin *et al.*, 1992). A critical feature of the development of European democracies is political parties responding to what Kitschelt (1994) labelled 'clusters' of preferences in their efforts to build electoral coalitions. The recent transition of the former communist regimes

to democracy offers an opportunity to explore the contribution of political parties to the consolidation of the democratic process.

There are three general perspectives on the relevance of parties that will be evaluated in this essay. First, some argue that these new democracies are not 'civil societies' (Gellner, 1994), and hence citizens are not accustomed to identifying common interests with other individuals in society. Thus, cleavages or group identifications have little relevance for party preferences in these new societies. This is destabilizing for new democracies because it makes for volatile voting behavior and unstable governing coalitions (Huntington, 1968; Powell, 1982; Diamond, 1994). A second argument, which has similarly negative implications for democratic consolidation, is that party preferences in these post-communist democracies are based on opposition to democratic or market institutions. I argue that neither of these characterizations is correct. I propose a third model for the post-communist democracies, in which the party issue space tends to be multidimensional reflecting a variety of different salient cleavages. Moreover, these dimensions of party conflict tend to be uncorrelated with each other, suggesting that party competition will not be dominated solely by issues concerning the new democratic and free market institutions. In addition, I argue that political parties bear the brunt of popular economic dissatisfaction but it tends to be direct, as is the case in the mature democracies, as opposed to mediated by attitudes towards democratic capitalism.

Survey data for this analysis are from the Times–Mirror surveys conducted in Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia during 1990 and 1991.

### **Models of Party Competition in Post-Communist Democracies**

Once even rudimentary democratic structures are in place political parties become the key actors in shaping the process of democratic consolidation (Duch, 1994). This essay explores three different models of the structure of party cleavages in post-communist democracies.

One model of the transition from communism to democracy suggests that mass support for political parties is not strongly linked to the issue positions adopted by parties. This argument implies that citizens' party preferences are in considerable flux, not deeply anchored to particular party organizations and hence are subject to considerable volatility. Many see these weak linkages between social groups and parties as representing a potential threat to the emergence of stable democratic institutions (Pridham, 1990). This weak linkage is a threat because it undermines citizens' perceptions that their preferences are being articulated and it promotes unstable legislative coalitions because political parties have no real electoral constraints on the positions they can assume in coalition negotiations.

The threat to democracy of weak party–group linkages is considered particularly acute when there are multiple parties, which clearly has been the case in the post-communist democracies. In his analysis of new democracies, Huntington (1968) has questioned whether successful democratization is compatible with weak party cleavages in a multiparty system. Hence the concern among students of the post-communist political systems that multipartism along with weak ties between social groups and political parties would threaten the consolidation of democratic reforms.

One explanation for the weak ties between social groups and parties is the underdevelopment in post-communist societies of what many call 'civil society' (Diamond, 1994; Gellner, 1994; Rose, 1993, 1994; Wolchik, 1995). This argument implies that under communism independent and pluralist organizations atrophied considerably.<sup>1</sup> Unlike liberal democracies that maintain the "primacy and autonomy of civil society in relation with the State, in communist nations

the interests of civil society were subsumed to those of the State” (Seligman, 1992, 7). Hence, there is no tradition of autonomous, self-interested ties to organizations, such as political parties, independent unions, and advocacy groups. According to this argument, under communism citizens were discouraged from identifying their self-interest with particular groups or organizations. Thus, this perspective rejects the notion that individuals have identifiable social or group interests and that they can identify political parties that champion these interests.

Another explanation for the weakness of group ties to political parties builds on the growing irrelevance of party organizations in modern societies, where the average citizen is much better equipped to make *independent* political judgements. This is a feature of modern European political systems, where higher levels of education and widespread access to multimedia have undermined the mobilization role of traditional party organizations (Inglehart, 1990). In political systems where the mobilization role of the party is less important, the strong ties between social groups and political parties decline (Dalton *et al.*, 1984). Because political parties (and other types of political organizations) in these settings are able to mount effective appeals to the mass public without extensive party organizations, this should promote the emergence of more narrowly focused issue-based political parties that do not depend upon strong links with particular social groups.

In new democracies where entry barriers for new parties are relatively low, weak ties to political parties should be particularly noticeable. There is some evidence that this is the case. For example, Barnes *et al.* (1985) find surprisingly weak attachments to political parties in the post-Franco Spanish democracy. Shin (1994) finds similar weak attachments between the mass public and political parties in the new South Korean democracy. Others have argued that the plethora of salient issues in the period following the end of communism overwhelmed the party system and resulted in weak links between issue preferences on the part of voters and political parties (Sakwa, 1993). Schmitter (1992, 160) suggests that citizens in these new democracies “... have quite different organizational skills, are less likely to identify so closely with partisan symbols or ideologies, and defend a much more variegated set of interests”. Hence, there is some reason to believe that identifiable group ties to political parties (or party–group linkages) will be very weak in the post-communist democracies.

A second model suggests that parties can be distinguished by policy cleavages, but that these cleavages focus on institutional issues that are potentially very destabilizing. Kitschelt (1992) argues that in many of the post-communist nations, the main axis of party competition is along an essentially single authoritarian/non-market and libertarian/pro-market continuum. Moreover, he suggests that those “who expect to become winners of the market system are likely to endorse libertarian/pro-market policies and parties” (Kitschelt, 1992, 26; see also McAllister and White, 1995). Hence, there is support for the notion that the institutional issues that dominate the transition—democratic reform and free markets—become the primary cleavages that distinguish parties and hence shape voters’ party preferences.

This poses a problem for democratic consolidation because successful democratization is often threatened in societies where the primary basis for party conflict concerns basic institutional issues (Powell, 1982; Huntington, 1991; Diamond, 1994). In such a setting, parties cannot agree on the basic rules of the political game and view the rules proposed by their opposition as illegitimate. Normal politics is untenable in such a situation, which does not bode well for the successful consolidation of these new democracies.

Much of the theoretical literature on democratic consolidation assumes that these two institutional issues are salient, and that party proximity to voters in this issue space has an important impact on which party receives the voter’s support. Przeworski (1991) makes this very assump-

tion explicit in his characterization of the threats to democracy of simultaneously introducing market and democratic reforms.<sup>2</sup> There is also a significant body of research that explores citizen preferences on these two institutional issues (for example, Finifter and Mickiewicz, 1992; Duch, 1993; Gibson and Duch, 1993; Miller *et al.*, 1994). The assumption of virtually all of this work is that citizens' preferences on these issues are important for political behavior, such as voting. These works suggest that if citizens become disenchanted with these institutions this could represent a threat to democratic consolidation, but it is important to recognize that it is not sufficient for citizens to become disgruntled with these new institutions. Citizens must also consider this two-dimensional institutional issue space to be sufficiently important that their vote is determined by where political parties position themselves in this issue space.

There is a second aspect of this argument concerning the impact of institutional cleavages on democratization. It has been widely argued that these institutional cleavages become more salient when the economy deteriorates which has been one of the consequences of free market reforms. The presence of such an electoral threat to democratization is one of the prevailing themes of commentary on the recent transition of former communist regimes. Many have argued that unhappiness with these institutional reforms plays into the hands of extreme parties with ties to non-democratic and anti-market ideologies (Przeworski, 1991). In order for this to be a threat to the consolidation of democratic capitalism three conditions must be met. First, parties need to establish distinctive positions regarding these two policy issues. Second, the issue dimensions must have political saliency for the average voter and hence represent an important factor in determining the voter's party preferences. Finally a third, often ignored, assumption is that economic evaluations have an independent impact on voters' positions on these institutional issues, which would in turn impact their evaluations of the political parties.

It is important to be clear on the causal reasoning associated with this argument. Economic evaluations, according to this argument, affect voters' party preferences indirectly through their attitudes towards institutional issues (democracy and capitalism in this case). The direct impact of economic assessments on evaluations of incumbent parties is a relationship that has been well established in mature democracies (Kinder and Kiewiet, 1979; Lewis-Beck, 1988) and thus is not particularly threatening to democracy. It is the indirect relationship, via institutional preferences, that is considered threatening. The reasoning is that economic dissatisfaction leads citizens to abandon democratic and capitalist institutions, and in turn vote for parties that champion these anti-democratic or anti-capitalist positions. In order properly to evaluate whether this is in fact a threat to democratization, we need to test empirically this specific chain of causal relationships.

This second model implies the following hypotheses:

- (1) Institutional issues are the predominant cleavages that affect voter behavior and party conflict;
- (2) Voters and parties tend to assume positions on a single dimension (pro-market/pro-democratic reform versus anti-market/anti-democratic reform) that runs through this two-dimensional issue space;
- (3) Economic perceptions affect party preferences primarily via preferences for institutional arrangements.

*Alternative Perspectives on Parties and Democratic Consolidation in Post-Communist Society*

The two models of party cleavages outlined above suggest, for different reasons, that post-communist societies are likely to develop dysfunctional party systems. These arguments are premised on assumptions that I believe are problematic.

The first model described above considers these new democracies to have seriously underdeveloped civic norms. Because much of the literature on the transition from communism is heavily influenced by culturalist arguments, there is this assumption that 50 years of totalitarian rule shaped a decidedly anti-democratic political culture. According to this perspective civic norms, typically associated with successful Western democracies (see Almond and Verba, 1963; Inglehart, 1990; Putnam, 1993), are too stunted in post-communist countries to support strong ties between self-interested groups and political parties.

There are a number of reasons to reject this conceptualization. First, some argue that these former communist regimes had certain traditions that facilitated the transition to democratic capitalism. During the communist regimes citizens in some of the former communist countries had opportunities to participate in certain free market activities (Kitschelt, 1992, 25). Many argue that there existed participatory activities in these regimes that had strong parallels to democratic participation (Hough, 1976; Hahn, 1988; Duch and Gibson, 1992).

Another reason to reject the first model of post-Communist Party cleavages is because the citizenry in these countries is, relatively speaking, highly educated and also has considerable exposure to Western media and publications. I believe both of these factors ensured that civil society would quickly take root in post-communist countries (Mueller, 1995a).<sup>3</sup> Moreover, individual-level analysis of former communist public opinion suggests that education and exposure to Western media are strongly correlated with both democratic attitudes (Gibson and Duch, 1993) and with democratic participation (Duch and Gibson, 1992). And Miller *et al.* (1995) find that attitude consistency, a measure of political sophistication, among the mass public of post-communist nations is surprisingly high compared with the mature democracies. Finally, as Mueller (1995b) argues the post-communist period in east and central Europe has been marked by a proliferation of political interest groups and media outlets (see also Malova, 1994; *RFE/RL Daily Report*, 5 April 1994). Thus, there is no reason to believe that post-communist citizens would be unable to differentiate the political parties and their platforms, and identify with those parties most likely to champion their individual self-interest. At the same time political parties in the post-communist countries have the same opportunities and incentives, as is the case with mature democracies, to supply citizens with cues that would promote the development of ties between self-interested groups and particular political parties.

Finally, a number of scholars have recently questioned the causal priority of 'civil society'. For example, Muller and Seligson (1994) have provided evidence suggesting that civic culture may be the product rather than the cause of the longevity of democratic institutions. The implication here is that citizens in new democracies will have little problem adapting to new political institutions, such as the party system, even if they have not developed well-honed civic norms.

In summary, the cultural traditions of communist regimes were not entirely antithetical to democratic capitalism; education levels in these countries probably facilitated a rapid adjustment to democratic norms; and the causal priority of civic society has been called into question.

Hence, I question the absence of ‘civil society’ in post-communist societies which, it is argued, undermines party–group linkages.

This still leaves open the possibility, articulated in the second model above, that party competition is dominated by issues linked to the legitimacy of democratic capitalist structures. There are a number of reasons for questioning whether these two issues actually shape voting decisions, and hence whether disenchantment represents a threat to the consolidation of democratic capitalism. For a variety of reasons, I believe the saliency of institutional issues in these new democracies has been over-stated. First, there is relatively strong support for democratic capitalism (particularly democracy) and hence parties can expect little payoffs from adopting anti-democratic or anti-capitalist issue positions (Duch, 1993, 1994, 1995).

Secondly, there are a variety of other salient issues and political parties that have every incentive to champion them in their competition for political power. The societies that emerged after communist dictatorship were not a *tabula rasa*, with no civic norms or well-developed group interests. In fact, citizens in these societies had group ties, some dating back to the pre-communist period and some based on economic and social differentiations that emerged during the communist regime. It is these group interests that would form the basis for issue competition among the political parties.

Finally, citizens’ party preferences are shaped by evaluations of the incumbent government’s overall performance (which includes the economy, crime, social welfare, and unemployment). Regardless of where the incumbent locates itself in this democratic capitalism issue space, if it is perceived as performing poorly it will be rejected in favor of other parties (Duch, 1995). Because post-communist parties are often one of the few larger parties untainted by participation in governing coalitions, they can benefit from a voter rejection of ‘incumbent’ parties (Krol, 1994). Thus voters may become discontented with economic performance and this might color their evaluation of democratic capitalism, but from an electoral perspective this disenchantment primarily gets targeted at incumbents (Barany, 1995). Discontent with democratic capitalism does not necessarily lead voters to search for parties with anti-democratic or anti-capitalist issue positions.<sup>4</sup>

What then are these cleavages shaping party competition in post-communist societies? Institutional issues represent one set of cleavages that probably divide political parties—specifically conflicts over the democratic and free market reforms. Somewhat related to this are party disagreements over the treatment of officials from the communist regime, what some have labelled retrospective justice (Scarrow and Stein, 1994). As Scarrow and Stein (1994) point out, east and central European parties have assumed distinctive positions on how senior officials from the communist regime should be held accountable in the courts for their implementation of State policies.

Traditional cleavages are an important dimension, along which parties in the post-communist period distinguish themselves to the electorate. In many of these countries ethnic and nationalist cleavages emerged early to shape voter preferences. Rural–urban, religious, and generational conflicts are some of the other traditional cleavages that have played an important role in the early elections of east and central Europe.

Another set of potentially salient issues are what I have labelled post-modern issues. These include many of the ‘life-style’ issues, such as ecology, homosexuality, and family values that have assumed increased importance recently in the mature democracies (Dalton, 1984; Inglehart, 1990). Finally, mass attitudes towards political parties are also shaped by economic evaluations (in the European context see Lewis-Beck, 1988). In particular, we expect incumbent parties to be penalized for poor economic performance.

Even if we establish that there are other non-institutional dimensions to the party issue space, this does not necessarily challenge the arguments developed in the second model described above. Party competition might incorporate a second dimension such as environmentalism, nationalism, or, more ominously, the retrospective justice issue. If the institutional and non-institutional policy dimensions are highly correlated, this in effect reduces party competition to a single dimension. If the two dimensions are perfectly correlated then we can exactly predict a parties position on one dimension with their position on the other, reducing the effective dimensionality to one (see Laver and Hunt, 1992, chapter 1). The importance of the institutional cleavage—and the potential instability associated with its saliency—is not reduced by the presence of another issue dimension. In this case, the strong correlation between the two reinforces the potentially destabilizing implications of political conflict centered around institutional issues.

The third model that I propose here argues for a truly multidimensional issue space in the post-communist democracies. Not only are there non-institutional issues that are salient, but these non-institutional issue dimensions are also uncorrelated or orthogonal to the salient institutional dimensions in the party issue space. The explanation for this multidimensional party issue space relates to the relatively unique characteristics associated with the emergence of party systems in post-communist democracies. Three factors in particular contributed to a truly multidimensional party space. First, the countries of east and central Europe had relatively modern stratified economies when the communist regimes fell. Hence there were at least objective economic differences on which political parties could build electoral coalitions. Second, entry barriers to new parties were very low, thereby promoting a proliferation of political parties catering to relatively narrow issue preferences. Third, technological advances such as widespread access to television and facsimile machines greatly facilitated the ability of new parties to reach voters. Hence the costs associated with attracting supporters were relatively low, further promoting the entry of new political parties.

The expectation is that: (1) the party issue space will be truly multidimensional; (2) even if institutional issues make up one issue dimension there will be other issue cleavages shaping party preferences and competition; and (3) party positions on these issue dimensions will not be correlated.

This third model of the post-Communist Party systems has important implications for the successful consolidation of democracy. First, it challenges the notion that these countries are underdeveloped civil societies and it rejects the portrait of citizens unprepared to engage in autonomous associational or communitarian activities. It argues that citizens from these relatively developed and educated societies in fact quickly adapt to a pluralistic environment in which the State is no longer omnipotent. The third model also rejects the unidimensional characterization of these post-Communist Party systems. Rather, post-Communist Party systems are truly multidimensional with party positions on one issue uncorrelated with their positions on other issue dimensions. Hence, there is little likelihood of polarized conflict with parties organizing themselves along a unidimensional issue continuum.

I have presented three different models of the party system in post-communist democracies. One model questions the existence of civil society and hence party–group linkages in these new democracies. A second model suggests that parties will be organized along a fairly unidimensional and potentially polarized continuum with parties supporting democratic capitalism at one extreme and those antagonistic to democratic capitalism at the other. A third model that I propose here argues for the existence of salient party cleavages and also rejects the unidimensional characterization in favor of a truly multidimensional party issue space.

## Results

### *The Data*

The first part of the analysis is based on a survey of Hungary, the Czech and Slovak Republics and Poland, conducted in 1991 by the Times Mirror Center for the People and the Press. The dependent variable is the respondents' evaluations of each of the major political parties in the sample country.<sup>5</sup>

Five blocks of independent variables are included in the analysis. One set of variables measures the saliency of institutional issues. Support for democratic reform is based on how strongly respondents approve the transition to a multiparty system. Rejection of multiparty democracy is highest in the Slovak Republic where 23 per cent of the respondents opposed multiparty elections. The Czech Republic registers the strongest support with 80 per cent endorsing the multiparty system. Support for capitalism is measured by the degree to which respondents indicated that they approve attempts to implement a free market. In all of the countries, except the Slovak Republic, over 80 per cent of the respondents indicated that they supported free markets. Less than 70 per cent of the Slovak respondents indicated that they support free market institutions.

In 1991 a very salient issue in many of the former communist regimes concerned the appropriate treatment of officials from the former regime. The issue of retrospective justice is measured by whether respondents thought that the heads of state entities, appointed by the previous regime, should all be replaced.<sup>6</sup>

The third block of variables measures traditional cleavages. I have defined these traditional cleavages fairly broadly to include the following socioeconomic characteristics: religiosity, community size as a measure of rural–urban cleavages, age as a measure of generational differences; nationalism; and education as a proxy for social status (which in these post-communist societies is difficult to capture with income or occupational categories). Post-modern cleavages are the non-traditional issues that many argue shape current party conflict (for example Dalton, 1984; Inglehart, 1990). Three of these potentially salient issues are included in the analysis. The concept of family values is measured by responses to two questions: tolerance of sexually explicit entertainment and support for traditional values about family and marriage.<sup>7</sup> A second variable in this set is respondents' attitudes towards homosexuals, measured by whether they think homosexuals should be allowed to teach in schools and a second question concerning AIDS.<sup>8</sup> The third component of the post-modern cleavages is attitudes towards ecological issues. Two questions are employed to tap support for environmental policies.<sup>9</sup> In the case of each of these three sets of variables, a composite measure is created that is simply the sum of the responses to each of the two questions.

A set of variables tapping general satisfaction are included in the model as proxies for economic voting. Three variables in the equations measure general assessments of the individual's life situation in the past (retrospective pocketbook), now (contemporaneous pocketbook), and in the future (prospective pocketbook). Similarly, three variables measure the respondent's assessment of the country's overall situation (retrospective, contemporaneous and prospective sociotropic). Three other economic variables were also included in the model: concern with meeting expenses; general satisfaction with financial circumstances; and employment status (employed versus unemployed).<sup>10</sup>



*Regression Results*

Results of my preliminary assessment of Hungary's emerging party system are presented in Table 1. Two of the hypotheses considered earlier can be dismissed, at least in the Hungarian case. First, the notion that party preferences are dominated by institution building issues is clearly not supported. Support for multiparty elections, my measure for attitudes towards democratic institutions, is unrelated to the respondents' party choice. The free market variable is only weakly significant (0.05 level) in one equation (the 0.08 coefficient for the Democratic Forum). Second, the data undermine the argument that there is an absence of group linkages to party support. What I labelled as traditional cleavages clearly matter. Religion is statistically significant in three of the party equations; negative, as would be expected, in the case of the Socialists (former communists) and positive in the case of Democratic Forum and the Small Holders Party. Nationalist orientation is correlated with evaluations of the Small Holders Party. Education has a coefficient of  $-0.14$  in the Small Holders equation and age has a significant coefficient of  $0.01$  in the Free Democrats equation. The retrospective justice issue, how former

Table 1. Hungary party evaluation regression results, 1991

	Democratic Forum	Small Holders	Free Democratic	Socialists
Multi-party elections	- 0.01 (0.03)	0.02 (0.03)	0.04 (0.03)	- 0.01 (0.03)
Free markets	0.08* (0.04)	0.05 (0.04)	- 0.01 (0.03)	0.00 (0.03)
Religion	0.11** (0.03)	0.06* (0.03)	0.02 (0.03)	- 0.09** (0.03)
Nationalism	0.05 (0.03)	0.08** (0.03)	- 0.01 (0.02)	- 0.04 (0.03)
Education	- 0.06 (0.04)	- 0.14** (0.04)	- 0.06 (0.03)	0.02 (0.03)
Age	- 0.00 (0.00)	- 0.00 (0.00)	- 0.01** (0.00)	- 0.00 (0.00)
Community size	0.01 (0.01)	- 0.02 (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)	- 0.02 (0.01)
Retrospective justice	- 0.04 (0.08)	- 0.20** (0.08)	0.09 (0.08)	0.28** (0.08)
Retrospective life satisfaction	- 0.00 (0.02)	- 0.02 (0.02)	- 0.02 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)
Current life satisfaction	0.00 (0.02)	0.02 (0.02)	0.02 (0.02)	- 0.03 (0.02)
Prospective life satisfaction	- 0.00 (0.01)	- 0.01 (0.02)	- 0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)
Retrospective country satisfaction	- 0.03 (0.02)	- 0.01 (0.02)	- 0.02 (0.02)	0.04** (0.02)
Current country satisfaction	0.04 (0.02)	0.02 (0.02)	- 0.01 (0.02)	- 0.003 (0.02)
Prospective country satisfaction	0.07** (0.02)	0.06** (0.02)	0.02 (0.02)	- 0.02 (0.02)
Satisfied with finances	- 0.09** (0.03)	- 0.07 (0.04)	- 0.02 (0.03)	- 0.09** (0.03)
Money	0.02 (0.03)	- 0.02 (0.03)	0.04 (0.03)	0.03 (0.03)
Employment	0.01 (0.07)	- 0.08 (0.07)	- 0.03 (0.06)	0.09 (0.06)
Family values	0.06* (0.02)	0.07** (0.02)	0.00 (0.00)	- 0.01 (0.02)
Ecology	0.08** (0.02)	0.02 (0.02)	0.02 (0.02)	0.04* (0.02)
Homosexuals	- 0.06** (0.02)	- 0.02 (0.02)	0.04* (0.02)	0.01 (0.02)
Constant	1.16** (0.39)	2.16** (0.41)	1.86** (0.36)	2.42** (0.37)
Adjusted $R^2$	0.15	0.11	0.03	0.06
Number of cases	848	837	828	836

Note: \* $P < 0.05$ , \*\* $P < 0.01$ .

Unstandardized regression coefficients are reported with standard errors in parentheses.

communists should be treated, is strongly correlated with party support in the Socialists and Small Holders equations.

In addition to traditional cleavages, evaluations of the economy are an important factor in party choice. Positive prospective evaluations of the country's fortunes translate into support for the Democratic Forum and Small Holders parties (coefficients of 0.07 and 0.06, respectively). Satisfaction with current personal finances has a significant coefficient of  $-0.09$  in the Democratic Forum and Socialist equations, suggesting that both the present and the former governing parties are penalized by those experiencing personal financial difficulties. Finally, there is some evidence here that post-modern values have an impact on party choice. Those supporting the ecology tend to favor the Democratic Forum and the Socialists; those favorable to the Democratic Forum and the Small Holders Party tend to support traditional family values; and homosexuality is looked upon negatively by those favoring the Democratic Forum, but is looked upon favorably by those sympathetic to the Free Democrats.

The Czech results in Table 2 are similar to those reported for Hungary. The most important difference is that support for free markets is significantly correlated with the evaluation of all four parties, but the democracy variable, support for multiparty elections, is significant in none

Table 2. Czech party regression results

	Civic Democratic	Civic Movement	Communist Party	People's Party
Multi-party elections	- 0.02 (0.03)	- 0.01 (0.03)	0.00 (0.03)	0.03 (0.03)
Free markets	0.13** (0.04)	0.13** (0.04)	- 0.11** (0.04)	0.09** (0.04)
Religion	0.02 (0.03)	0.03 (0.03)	- 0.09** (0.03)	- 0.02 (0.03)
Nationalism	- 0.04 (0.02)	- 0.05* (0.02)	0.05 (0.03)	- 0.06** (0.02)
Education	0.06 (0.03)	0.04 (0.03)	0.01 (0.04)	0.04 (0.03)
Age	- 0.01** (0.00)	- 0.00 (0.00)	- 0.00 (0.00)	- 0.00 (0.00)
Community size	- 0.05** (0.02)	- 0.07** (0.02)	- 0.02 (0.02)	- 0.02 (0.02)
Retrospective justice	- 0.12** (0.06)	- 0.05 (0.06)	0.39** (0.06)	0.01 (0.05)
Retrospective life satisfaction	- 0.03* (0.01)	- 0.00 (0.02)	0.03 (0.02)	- 0.02 (0.01)
Current life satisfaction	- 0.01 (0.02)	0.00 (0.02)	- 0.02 (0.02)	- 0.04** (0.02)
Prospective life satisfaction	0.02 (0.02)	0.01 (0.02)	0.00 (0.02)	0.04* (0.02)
Retrospective country satisfaction	- 0.06** (0.02)	- 0.03 (0.02)	0.09** (0.02)	0.01 (0.02)
Current country satisfaction	0.05* (0.02)	0.05** (0.02)	- 0.02 (0.02)	0.03 (0.02)
Prospective country satisfaction	0.06** (0.02)	0.06** (0.02)	- 0.01 (0.02)	0.04** (0.02)
Satisfied with finances	- 0.03 (0.03)	- 0.05 (0.03)	- 0.01 (0.04)	- 0.02 (0.03)
Money	0.02 (0.03)	- 0.01 (0.03)	- 0.02 (0.04)	0.04 (0.03)
Employment	0.05 (0.06)	0.04 (0.06)	- 0.05 (0.07)	0.02 (0.06)
Family values	- 0.01 (0.03)	- 0.01 (0.03)	0.00 (0.01)	0.01 (0.03)
Ecology	0.06 (0.02)	0.02 (0.02)	- 0.04 (0.03)	0.01 (0.02)
Homosexuals	- 0.01 (0.02)	- 0.02 (0.02)	0.01 (0.02)	- 0.01 (0.02)
Constant	2.52** (0.39)	2.03** (0.39)	1.71** (0.44)	1.80** (0.38)
Adjusted $R^2$	0.24	0.19	0.21	0.11
Number of cases	568	581	585	537

Note: \* $P < 0.05$ , \*\* $P < 0.01$ .

Unstandardized regression coefficients are reported with standard errors in parentheses.

of the equations. As might be expected, those demanding retrospective justice have positive evaluations of the Civic Democratic Party and those opposed to retrospective justice have strong positive evaluations of the communists. Traditional cleavage variables, in different combinations, are moderately significant for all four party equations. As we would expect, those who embrace religion have negative evaluations of the Communist Party. Respondents with nationalist sentiments tend to have lower evaluations of the People's Party and the Civic Movement.

Rural respondents are more supportive of the Civic Movement and the Civic Democratic Party. Family values, tolerance of homosexuality and ecology stances are not correlated with party preferences. Thus, party preferences seem to be grounded in certain of the traditional social cleavages, but not the post-modern cleavages.

Finally, citizens' assessment of economic performance shapes their evaluations of the parties in the manner we would expect. The incumbent Civic Democratic Party benefits from negative evaluations of past economic performance (retrospective evaluations of both the country and the respondent's personal situation) and are penalized by those who expect the future economy to perform poorly (future country variable). Respondents that view the past economic situation in the country positively favor the Communist Party.

The Polish results in Table 3 confirm the pattern established in the other two countries. As was the case in the Czech Republic, preferences regarding free market reforms are correlated with evaluations of all three parties, but the democracy variable (multiparty elections) is only

Table 3. Poland party evaluation regression results, 1991

	Democratic Union	Central Alliance	Solidarity
Multi-party elections	0.00 (0.02)	- 0.04* (0.02)	- 0.02 (0.02)
Free markets	0.06** (0.02)	0.06** (0.02)	0.05** (0.02)
Religion	0.02 (0.02)	0.08** (0.02)	0.05** (0.02)
Nationalism	- 0.01 (0.02)	0.03 (0.02)	0.02 (0.02)
Education	0.02** (0.01)	- 0.02** (0.01)	- 0.01 (0.01)
Age	- 0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)
Community size	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	- 0.01 (0.01)
Retrospective justice	0.11* (0.05)	- 0.02 (0.06)	0.01 (0.05)
Retrospective life satisfaction	0.01 (0.01)	- 0.00 (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)
Current life satisfaction	- 0.01 (0.01)	- 0.00 (0.01)	- 0.01 (0.01)
Prospective life satisfaction	0.02 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)
Retrospective country satisfaction	0.00 (0.01)	- 0.01 (0.01)	0.02 (0.01)
Current country satisfaction	0.01 (0.01)	0.03* (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)
Prospective country satisfaction	0.01 (0.01)	0.02 (0.01)	0.02 (0.01)
Satisfied with finances	- 0.03 (0.02)	- 0.05 (0.03)	0.02 (0.02)
Money	0.01 (0.02)	- 0.03 (0.03)	- 0.01 (0.02)
Employment	0.01 (0.04)	- 0.02 (0.04)	0.03 (0.04)
Family values	0.02 (0.02)	0.05* (0.02)	0.02 (0.02)
Ecology	0.02 (0.01)	0.01 (0.02)	0.05** (0.02)
Homosexuals	0.00 (0.01)	- 0.03* (0.01)	- 0.04** (0.01)
Constant	1.61** (0.24)	1.85** (0.29)	1.82** (0.26)
Adjusted $R^2$	0.05	0.08	0.04
Number of cases	1143	1135	1241

Note: \* $P < 0.05$ , \*\* $P < 0.01$ .

Unstandardized regression coefficients are reported with standard errors in parentheses.

weakly significant in the Central Alliance equation. Retrospective justice seems to be of only marginal importance; the variable is weakly correlated with evaluations of the Democratic Union. Traditional cleavages are clearly important in the Polish case. Given the important role of the Catholic Church in Poland, the strong correlation between religion and party preferences is of no surprise. Religious respondents are more likely to give positive evaluations of the Central Alliance and Solidarity parties. Central Alliance is more favored by the less educated while the better educated favor the Democratic Union. Unlike the other countries, nationalist sentiment is not at all important in the assessment of Polish political parties. Post-modern values are important. Tolerance of homosexuality undermines evaluations of Central Alliance and Solidarity. Those supporting family values are more favorable towards the Central Alliance Party. Finally, Solidarity benefits from the support of ecologists. Hence, both traditional post-modern cleavages represent important criteria for evaluating political parties. Rather surprisingly, economic evaluations do not seem to enter into citizens' evaluations of the political parties; only one economic variable is weakly correlated with evaluations of the Central Alliance.

Table 4 presents the results for the Slovak Republic. Once again, there is no support here for the notion that institutional issues shape party evaluations. Neither of the institutional measures are significant in these equations. There is some support for the notion that political parties are mobilizing support around traditional or modern cleavages. Christian Democrats are favored by the less religious and more urban respondents. The Slovak National Party is positively evaluated by nationalists and those responding positively to the homosexual items. Those answering positively to the nationalist and homosexual items and those opposed to the ecology movement tend to favor the Communist Party. The economic variables tend to be either insignificant or only weakly correlated with party evaluations: current sociotropic assessments in the Christian Democratic equation, retrospective sociotropic assessments in the communist equation and concern with meeting expenses (money) in the VPN and Slovak National equations. While the results here indicate that traditional and post-modern cleavages are important for party evaluations, the correlations are generally weak. This suggests that of all four countries, the Slovak Republic has the least well-defined cleavage structures.<sup>11</sup>

Three different models of the party issue space in new democracies were proposed earlier. The regression analysis of individual level evaluations of political parties in these new democracies allows for some tentative conclusions. Table 5 summarizes these regression results. For each block of variables, it simulates the impact on mean party evaluations of a one standard deviation shift in the value of significant variables in the appropriate block. In addition, F-statistics for the blocks of variables are included in parentheses in the table. These F-statistic values test the null hypothesis that the incremental contribution to explained variance by the particular block of variables is not statistically significant. We can reject the notion, developed in the first model described above, that because these countries have a poorly defined party issue space, issue cleavages do not shape party conflict. In the case of Hungary, institutional cleavages are not statistically significant; post-modern and traditional cleavages have a significant impact on party evaluations; and economic voting is particularly significant in the case of the major incumbent party. Institutional cleavages are clearly important in Poland but so are traditional and post-modern cleavages. In the Czech Republic, institutional and traditional cleavages are important, as is retrospective justice and particularly economic voting.<sup>12</sup> Finally, in the Slovak Republic institutional cleavages are not statistically significant while traditional cleavages and economic voting have a significant impact. Thus, in all these countries, party

Table 4. Slovak party regression results

	Christian Democratic	VPN for Democratic Slovakia	Slovak National	Communist Party
Multi-party elections	0.01 (0.05)	0.02 (0.05)	- 0.05 (0.05)	- 0.002 (0.04)
Free markets	0.09 (0.06)	- 0.10 (0.06)	0.03 (0.06)	- 0.09 (0.05)
Religion	- 0.20** (0.05)	0.02 (0.05)	- 0.05 (0.05)	0.06 (0.04)
Nationalism	0.10 (0.06)	0.08 (0.06)	0.14* (0.06)	0.10* (0.05)
Education	- 0.06 (0.07)	- 0.06 (0.07)	- 0.04 (0.07)	0.003 (0.06)
Age	- 0.003 (0.004)	- 0.01 (0.003)	- 0.002 (0.004)	- 0.002 (0.003)
Community size	0.11* (0.05)	- 0.01 (0.05)	0.08 (0.05)	- 0.03 (0.04)
Retrospective justice	0.06 (0.12)	0.05 (0.12)	0.11 (0.13)	0.53** (0.10)
Retrospective life satisfaction	- 0.02 (0.03)	0.05 (0.03)	- 0.05 (0.03)	- 0.02 (0.03)
Current life satisfaction	0.004 (0.04)	- 0.02 (0.04)	0.08 (0.04)	- 0.02 (0.03)
Prospective life satisfaction	0.002 (0.03)	0.05 (0.03)	- 0.01 (0.03)	0.001 (0.03)
Retrospective country satisfaction	- 0.01 (0.03)	- 0.02 (0.03)	0.06 (0.03)	0.06* (0.03)
Current country satisfaction	0.10* (0.04)	- 0.06 (0.04)	- 0.07 (0.04)	- 0.01 (0.03)
Prospective country satisfaction	0.03 (0.03)	0.03 (0.03)	0.06 (0.03)	- 0.03 (0.03)
Satisfied with finances	0.04 (0.08)	0.02 (0.08)	- 0.10 (0.08)	- 0.01 (0.07)
Money	0.02 (0.06)	- 0.16* (0.06)	- 0.17* (0.07)	- 0.06 (0.05)
Employment	0.20 (0.12)	- 0.05 (0.12)	- 0.01 (0.12)	0.17 (0.10)
Family values	- 0.01 (0.06)	- 0.01 (0.06)	0.01 (0.06)	- 0.07 (0.05)
Ecology	0.06 (0.05)	0.01 (0.05)	0.03 (0.05)	- 0.10* (0.04)
Homosexuals	- 0.07 (0.04)	0.03 (0.04)	0.09* (0.04)	0.14** (0.03)
Constant	1.39 (0.84)	3.40** (0.84)	1.98* (0.87)	1.89** (0.72)
Adjusted $R^2$	0.19	0.02	0.05	0.30
Number of cases	251	250	246	250

Note: \* $P < 0.05$ , \*\* $P < 0.01$ .

Unstandardized regression coefficients are reported with standard errors in parentheses.

preference appears to be at least partially a function of where political parties locate themselves on a range of issue dimensions.

The second model outlined earlier hypothesized that only institutional issue dimensions were salient, posing a challenge to a stable democratic transition. This argument also seems inconsistent with the regression findings summarized in Table 5. First, in only one of the equations is the democratic institution variable significant. Moreover, the free market cleavage is either not significant (which is essentially the case in Hungary and the Slovak Republic) or it is counterbalanced by other cleavages that seem to organize party conflict.

The strength of the relationships and the variance explained in these regressions is not particularly high. Hence, I would not conclude from the results that these new democracies have well-established cleavages that structure party competition. They do, however, suggest that party conflict is structured by multiple, if somewhat embryonic, issue dimensions. The institutional cleavage that is potentially destabilizing—support for free markets—is balanced

Table 5. Simulation election results east and central Europe, 1991

Country/party	Mean support	Mean evaluation of party after change in independent variables				Economic voting
		Institutions	Retrospective justice	Traditional cleavages	Post-modern cleavage	
Hungary						
Democratic Forum	2.36	2.29 (2.72)	2.36 (0.23)	2.24 (6.55**)	2.08 (31.99**)	2.14 (6.57**)
Small Holders	2.15	2.15 (1.56)	2.08 (5.44*)	2.13 (9.73**)	2.06 (29.45**)	2.03 (3.61**)
Free Democrats	2.57	2.57 (1.02)	2.57 (1.53)	2.40 (3.13**)	2.51 (23.28**)	2.57 (2.20*)
Socialist	2.44	2.44 (0.29)	2.34 (13.2**)	2.34 (5.67**)	2.39 (30.18**)	2.29 (4.01**)
Poland						
Democratic Union	2.65	2.59 (5.94**)	2.61 (5.95*)	2.60 (4.65**)	2.65 (46.26**)	2.65 (2.29*)
Central Alliance	2.48	2.38 (4.68**)	2.48 (0.14)	2.36 (7.31**)	2.38 (45.84**)	2.43 (4.63**)
Solidarity	2.65	2.60 (3.58*)	2.65 (0.02)	2.60 (5.15**)	2.53 (71.50**)	2.65 (1.45)
Czech Republic						
Civic Democratic	2.71	2.58 (6.41**)	2.65 (4.50*)	2.49 (4.57**)	2.71 (12.61**)	2.25 (9.47**)
Civic Movement	2.60	2.47 (7.49**)	2.60 (0.95)	2.45 (5.82**)	2.60 (14.37**)	2.40 (6.55**)
Communist	1.65	1.54 (3.75**)	1.47 (38.79**)	1.55 (5.19**)	1.65 (16.06**)	1.47 (5.06**)
People's Party	2.52	2.43 (5.57**)	2.52 (0.01)	2.45 (4.75**)	2.52 (11.23**)	2.28 (4.63**)
Slovak Republic						
Christian	2.30	2.30 (1.29)	2.30 (0.23)	1.91 (5.65**)	2.30 (11.07**)	2.15 (2.09*)
Democratic VPN	2.96	2.96 (0.51)	2.96 (0.72)	2.96 (3.48**)	2.96 (10.41**)	2.82 (2.04*)
Slovak National	2.70	2.70 (1.43)	2.70 (0.14)	2.56 (2.16)	2.57 (8.58**)	2.55 (1.71)
Communist	2.43	2.43 (1.57)	2.20 (25.45**)	2.33(4.31**)	2.11 (14.97**)	2.31 (1.51)

Note: The number within the parentheses is the value of F statistics assessing the incremental change between the constrained and unconstrained model. The number is generated by the equation:  $F_{T-k}^{\Delta} = \{(e'e_1 - e'e_2)/k\} / \{e'e_2/(T - K)\}$  (where  $k$  is the number of coefficients added in the unconstrained model;  $T$  is the number of cases;  $K$  is the total number of coefficients in the unconstrained model).

\* $P < 0.05$ ; \*\* $P < 0.01$ .

by other issues that are much less fundamental in nature and hence less threatening to institutional stability.

*The Dimensionality of the Issue Space*

The regression results summarized in Table 5 suggest a multidimensional party issue space but hardly represent definitive support for the multidimensional argument. Factor analysis of these data provide further insight into (1) the dimensionality of the issue space and (2) whether these dimensions are highly correlated, possibly effectively reducing to a single dimension. In order to evaluate where the parties organize themselves in this issue space, I first conduct a principal component factor analysis of the major 'cleavage-related' variables that were significant in the evaluation regression equations. Economic voting variables were not included because they are not the basis for long-term cleavages, rather they represent shifting evaluations of incumbent performance and perceptions of party competence in managing the economy.

Table 6 presents the results of the factor analysis for each of the three countries. For Hungary, the issues reduce to two factors. Most of the traditional and post-modern cleavages, in addition to the retrospective justice variable, load significantly on the first factor. Hence one of the significant issue dimensions in Hungarian politics seems to be grounded in issues that span both the traditional and post-modern. At one end of the issue dimension are the young, non-believers, those opposed to nationalism, the highly educated, those who do not embrace traditional family values, and those supporting homosexual rights. Note, however, that there is a second significant factor that captures the free market reform dimension of political conflict. Somewhat surprisingly attitudes towards ecological issues also load on this second dimension. The interesting point here is that the issue space does not appear to be dominated by a single institutional issue (free markets). On the contrary, the principal dimension is dominated by traditional and post-modern issues. Thus, there is evidence that a two-dimensional issue space seems to shape voter's evaluations of the Hungarian parties.

The Polish results indicate that the free market issue loads significantly on the first dimension along with the retrospective justice variable and traditional and post-modern issues. Note, however, that the loadings of the free market variable on both factors are very similar suggesting

Table 6. Factor loadings east and central Europe, 1991

Variables	Hungary		Poland		Czech Republic		
	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
Support for freemarket	0.43	0.50	0.51	0.47	0.34	0.75	-0.04
Retrospective justice	0.40	-0.27	0.22	-0.14	0.45	-0.38	0.55
Religion	-0.52	0.30	-0.53	0.27	-0.65	0.36	-0.06
Nationalism	-0.39	0.37			-0.31	0.02	0.69
Age	0.63	0.11			0.65	-0.12	-0.34
Size					0.42	0.54	0.37
Education	0.62	0.21	0.69	0.16			
Family values	-0.55	-0.01	-0.58	0.36			
Ecology	0.17	0.74	0.34	0.71			
Homosexuals	0.59	-0.21	0.57	-0.37			
Eigenvalue	2.25	1.19	1.83	1.10	1.43	1.13	1.04
% of variance explained	25.0	13.3	26.2	15.7	23.9	18.9	17.3

that the dimensions are only weakly distinguished in terms of the free market issue. The only variable that loads significantly on the second dimension is the ecology issue. Hence, there is some multidimensionality to the Polish issue space, but free market issues are not as distinct from the other cleavages as was the case in Hungary.

In the Czech case, the factor analysis results in three significant dimensions. Loading significantly on the first factor are religion and age—young non-believers versus older believers. The free market issue and the rural–urban cleavage (size) define the second dimension. And finally, retrospective justice and nationalism load significantly on the third dimension. Once again, the Czech results clearly challenge any notion that the policy issue space in these new democracies is dominated by a single or dominating institutional cleavage.

We can take this analysis one step further and estimate where the political parties might locate themselves in this multidimensional issue space.<sup>13</sup> Having located the parties in the countries' respective issue spaces, I evaluate whether the dimensions of the party issue space are highly correlated and whether the two dimensions can be effectively reduced to one. In order to locate parties in the two-dimensional issue space, I assume that the party locations in the issue space reflect the issue positions of their voters. Hence, party positions in the issue space are determined by the mean value, on each dimension, of those indicating that they would vote for the particular party. I then estimate a simple bivariate regression of the first dimension on the second one. If the party issue space could be reduced to a single dimension then we would expect the parties to organize themselves along a narrow range of points and that the positions on one dimension would predict with considerable accuracy the position assumed on the other dimension (see Laver and Hunt, 1992; Kitschelt, 1994). The regression results in Poland and the Czech Republic suggest no relationship at all between the party's positions on the two dimensions. In Hungary the  $R^2$  is 0.11 suggesting only a weak relationship between locations on the two dimensions (note that the regression coefficient in the equation is not statistically significant).<sup>14</sup>

The factor analysis reported in Table 6 reinforces the earlier conclusions regarding the party issue space in the new democracies. First, the argument that political parties are not anchored in a well-defined issue space is not supported by the results. In at least three of the countries (Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic), there is some evidence of structure to the mass evaluations of the political parties. Traditional and post-modern cleavages seem to play an important role in how the average citizen evaluates the political parties. Second, the party issue space is not dominated by institutional issues—the free market issue clearly defines one dimension of the issue space in two countries but the multiple dimensions are not highly correlated, suggesting electoral opportunities for parties that emphasize issues other than those related to the transition to free markets.

#### *Free Market Reforms, Economic Voting and Political Party Fortunes*

The economic voting argument, frequently applied to these new post-communist regimes, is that economic dislocation undermines support for free market reforms, which in turn affects the popularity of incumbent governments that have been implementing these programmes. The saliency of the free market issue for political choice is considered destabilizing because it is a proxy for economic dissatisfaction. In other words, the free market issue is salient because those who are suffering economic dislocation resulting from market reforms are punishing pro-market parties and rewarding those less enthusiastic about the free market. The implication of this argument is that rising economic dislocation for the average citizen will work to the



advantage of anti-free market parties. If this is in fact the reasoning of the average voter, then political parties are unlikely to remain committed to free market reforms or if they do, they are unlikely to be very successful. The regression results reported in Tables 1–4 leave little doubt that prospective evaluations of the economy affect party evaluations and that incumbent parties such as the Democratic Forum, Central Alliance and the Civic Democratic Party were penalized by those expecting the economy to deteriorate. These results also indicate that incumbent governments are unpopular with those who oppose free market reforms.

I would argue, however, that these simple regression results do not necessarily support the causal argument described in the previous paragraph. As was pointed out earlier, the notion that economic chaos is a threat to free market reforms implies that those unhappy with the economy develop anti-market preferences and then search out parties advocating those positions. This implies that the impact of economic dissatisfaction is mediated by attitudes towards free market reform. It also implies that much of the variance in support of free market reforms can be explained by evaluations of economic performance. An alternative perspective is that citizens' dissatisfaction with the economy directly affects their evaluations of political parties, particularly the incumbent party. Thus, the coefficients in Tables 1–4 simply reflect the impact of economic evaluations on party support that we typically see in the mature democracies.

In order to evaluate these two different arguments we need to understand the causal structure of the relationships among these variables. To accomplish this I estimate two simultaneous equations:

$$\text{Incumbent support} = \text{support for free markets} + \text{economic evaluations} + \text{socioeconomic indicators}$$

$$\text{Support for free markets} = \text{economic evaluations} + \text{socioeconomic indicators}$$

Of particular interest is the path through which economic evaluations affect support for incumbent political parties. The first hypothesis I described above suggests (1) that much of the variation in support for the free market is attributed to economic evaluations, and (2) that much of the economic impact on party support can be attributed to the indirect path that goes from economic evaluations to free market support and subsequently to incumbent party support. Hence the coefficient for the support for free markets variable in the first equation should capture much of the 'indirect' impact of economic evaluations. The second alternative hypothesis suggests that (1) only a limited amount of the variation in free market support is caused by fluctuations in economic evaluations, and (2) the economic impact on incumbent party support is direct, which tends to be the case in the mature democracies. This suggests that the coefficient on the economic evaluations variables will capture much of the 'economic' effect, and the coefficient on the free market evaluation variable (which captures the indirect effect) will be relatively small or insignificant.

Table 7 presents the Hungarian, Polish and Czech two-stage least squares regression results for the simultaneous equations outlined above. For each of the three countries these tables present the results for the free market and the incumbent party evaluation equations. Education is clearly the socioeconomic cleavage that best distinguishes free market enthusiasts from the unenthusiastic. In all three countries, size of community is positively related to support for free market reform, which again is consistent with the argument that rural areas tend to be slower to accept change. There are no significant age differences in any of the three countries, which is surprising given that age effects have proved important in other democratizing contexts (the former Soviet Union for example; see Duch, 1993; Gibson and Duch, 1993).

Most important for our discussion here is the fact that the free market equations include

Table 7. Two-stage least squares estimates for Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic, 1991

	Hungary		Poland		Czech Republic	
	Evaluation of incumbent	Support for markets	Evaluation of incumbent	Support for markets	Evaluation of incumbent	Support for markets
Free markets	- 0.08 (0.15)		- 0.38** (0.10)		0.44** (0.14)	
Religion	- 0.08 (0.15)		- 0.08** (0.02)			
Nationalism	- 0.11** (0.03)		- 0.05** (0.02)			
Community size		0.03** (0.01)		0.04** (0.02)		0.08** (0.03)
Age	- 0.002 (0.002)	0.003 (0.002)			- 0.07* (0.03)	
Education		0.22** (0.03)	- 0.04** (0.01)	0.09** (0.01)	0.07 (0.06)	0.26** (0.04)
Family values	0.05* (0.02)		0.05** (0.02)			
Ecology	0.10** (0.02)					
Homosexuals	- 0.04* (0.02)		- 0.04** (0.02)			
Retrospective Pocketbook					- 0.04** (0.01)	
Prospective Sociotropic	0.08** (0.02)	0.05** (0.01)		0.07** (0.01)	0.04 (0.02)	- 0.13* (0.02)
Retrospective Sociotropic		- 0.04** (0.02)	-	- 0.07** (0.01)	- 0.04 (0.02)	- 0.10** (0.02)
Current Sociotropic		0.03* (0.01)		0.04 (0.02)		0.13** (0.02)
Satisfaction with Finances	- 0.11** (0.03)	30.04** (0.15)				
Constant	1.63** (0.52)	3.04** (0.15)	0.48 (0.39)	3.37** (0.09)	1.53** (0.43)	2.76** (0.19)
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.14	0.11	0.06	0.12	0.22	0.24
SEE	0.79	0.83	0.68	0.91	0.62	0.85
Number of observations	853	990	1284	1487	613	638

Note: \*  $P < 0.1$ , \*  $P < 0.05$ , \*\*  $P < 0.01$ .

Unstandardized regression coefficients are reported with standard errors in parentheses.

significant economic evaluation variables. In all three cases, the prospective sociotropic variable is positively related to support for free market reforms, suggesting that those who expect the economy to do poorly in the future will be less likely to support these reforms. In all three of the countries the retrospective sociotropic variable is significantly negative, suggesting that those who were dissatisfied with the economy in the past are more likely to support free market reforms. Hence in all of these countries support for free markets is contingent to some degree on how individuals expect the economy to perform in the future. Since in two of the countries the free market variable is significant in the party evaluation equation, this suggests that economic shocks indeed affect support for free market reforms, which in turn shape party support in the post-communist democracies. It is, however, important to note that there remains a direct impact of economic assessments on party evaluations indicated by the significant economic variables in the evaluation equation. Thus, economic fluctuations affect party fortunes not only directly as they do in the mature democracies but also indirectly because they shape citizens' attitudes towards economic reform. The relative importance of the direct versus indirect impact of economic evaluations is important here because I have hypothesized that much of the impact is direct as opposed to indirect.

Fig. 1 puts these results in perspective by modelling the impact of standard deviation shifts in the groups of significant variables from the equations in Table 7. We can see here that the indirect impact of economic assessments—presumably the most problematic ones from the perspective of successful democratization—is hardly overwhelming in these three cases. First, this path has no impact in the Hungarian case, but even in the Czech case its impact is balanced out equally by the impact of traditional and post-modern cleavages. In Poland the indirect impact of economic assessments is not much larger than the direct impact of economic evalu-

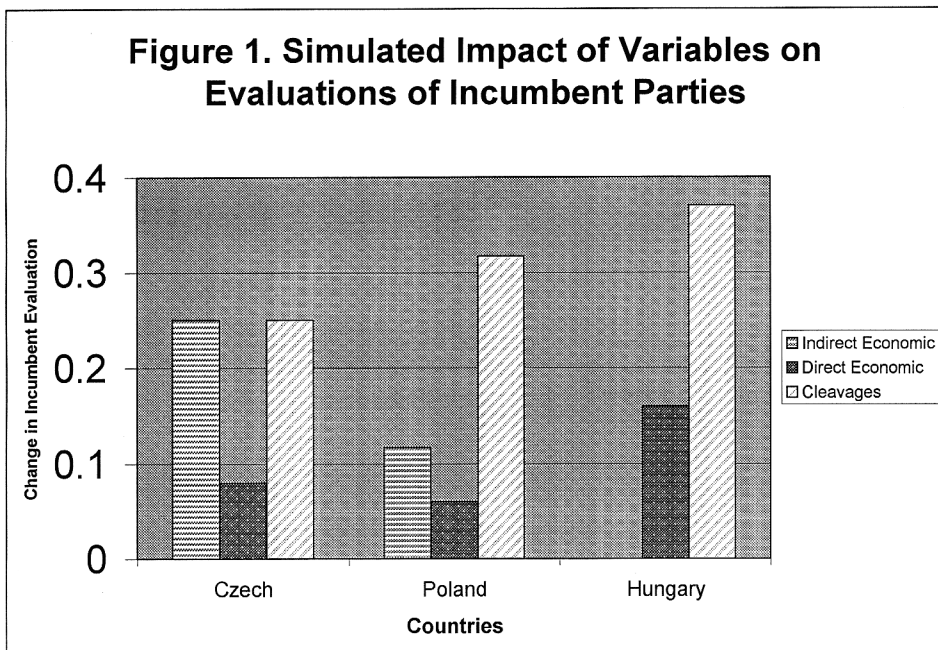


Fig. 1. Simulated impact of variables on evaluations of incumbent parties.

ations, and is much smaller than the impact of traditional and post-modern cleavages. In short, voters' dissatisfaction with the economy does not appear to be creating a free market cleavage that dominates party preferences.

### *Summary*

Let's take stock of the empirical findings presented above. First, in the earlier period of transition to democracy there are well-defined issues that differentiate party supporters. The notion that parties in these new democracies failed to articulate distinctive policy identities is probably incorrect. Moreover, the notion that party issue positions matter little for citizen voting choices is called into question by these data. Thus, parties were not irrelevant to politics in the earlier period of democratic transition—they seemed to have played an important role in articulating the issues associated with important political cleavages.

Second, claims that nascent democratic and free market institutions are subject to political challenges in the early part of the democratization process seem exaggerated. Citizens do not develop party preferences based on the parties' positions regarding democratic institutions. This is a consistent finding across all the four countries examined. On the other hand, party positions on free market reforms seem to influence citizens' party preferences. In two of the four countries, Poland and the Czech Republic, the free market issue is clearly a salient issue differentiating political parties. In Hungary the free market is at best of marginal importance, and is not at all relevant to party evaluations in the Slovak Republic. Hence, in some of the post-communist nations the free market issue is of importance to party conflict.

The potentially destabilizing impact of this issue dimension is, however, moderated by the importance of other cleavages that shape party conflict. Just as traditional cleavages have persisted in the mature democracies (Lipset and Rokkan, 1967), they have also emerged as important dimensions of party conflict in the post-communist democracies. Moreover, these traditional cleavages have been supplemented by what I label post-modern issues that also seem to shape party conflict. Finally, as is the case in the developed democracies, citizens' assessments of economic performance affect their evaluations of political parties, in particular their assessment of political parties in the governing coalition. Thus, the impact of institutional issues are counterbalanced by issue cleavages and economic voting that shape party evaluations.

Of particular interest here are the multidimensional as opposed to unidimensional tendencies in the party issue space. As I pointed out earlier, evidence from the mature democracies suggests a tendency for unidimensionality in the party issue space. Kitschelt (1994), for example, conducts analyses, similar to those presented above, of Western European parties and finds that the two dimensions he employs to characterize European party issue spaces are highly correlated. The difference between the mature and the new democracies is that the party issue space in the latter is better characterized as multidimensional; there is little evidence of a tendency towards unidimensionality. In three of the post-communist democracies, party conflict can be summarized in two or three issue dimensions. In Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic the free market issue loads significantly on one of the dimensions, but in these countries, a second dimension is dominated by both traditional and post-modern cleavages. Thus parties range from being enthusiastic to less enthusiastic regarding free market reforms on one dimension, and range from religious, rural and nationalist to secular, urban and non-nationalist on the other dimension. In addition, there is no evidence that the location of parties on one dimension is correlated with their location on the second issue dimension. Hence, what distinguishes

these new democracies from the mature ones is not the absence of cleavages or the dominance of institutional issues (such as market reforms), but rather the multidimensionality of the party issue space.

The significance of the market reform issues for party evaluations adds credibility to the notion that economic dislocation will benefit parties opposed to these institutional changes. This line of reasoning suggests that a deteriorating economy moves individuals to abandon their support for free market reform and search for parties opposing these reforms. According to this argument, the impact of economic performance on party is indirect via the loss of faith in free market reforms, but the evidence suggests that this indirect effect of economic performance is not overwhelming. It is strongest in the Czech Republic, weak in Poland, and non-existent in Hungary and the Slovak Republic. In only one of the four countries, the Czech Republic, does the indirect effect of economic dislocation, via its impact on support for market reform, match the importance of other factors in shaping party evaluations. Moreover, as we would expect in any democracy, evaluation of economic performance has a direct impact on party support—i.e. citizens punish incumbent parties that are responsible for a poorly performing economy.

### Discussion

When the communist regimes fell in 1989 many of us had uncertain expectations regarding the transition of these countries to democracy. Much of this uncertainty concerned our expectations about how party systems would develop in these countries and how citizens would respond to competitive political parties. We were inclined to draw sharp distinctions between post-communist societies and the mature democracies. This essay explored some of the elements of post-Communist Party systems that were expected to hamper the transition to democracy. Overall, I conclude that certainly three of the four post-Communist Party systems (Slovakia being the exception) in this study were not terribly distinct from those found in the more mature democracies. Both citizens and political parties seem to behave in a manner consistent with findings from developed democracies.

One issue raised by these findings concerns the prerequisites for the development of salient cleavages or what some might label party–group linkages. Most definitions of a functioning democratic party system presume that individuals have policy preferences and that political parties position themselves on issues in such a fashion so as to enhance their chances for electoral success. Given that most of the east and central European countries exhibit relatively high levels of education these would not seem to be unreasonable prerequisites. Moreover, it is not unreasonable to believe that even in these post-communist societies there would be sufficient dissemination of information so that both citizens and political parties could make informed decisions.

Why were we inclined to believe otherwise? The answer lies with the strong tradition of political culture that is prevalent in the study of comparative politics. As I point out above, culturalist studies emphasize the negative impact that communism had on what is often referred to as civil society. Because of the hypothesized absence of cultural norms that are conducive to community or group activism and the articulation of group interests, many questioned whether cleavage-based politics and party–group linkages would emerge as they have in the mature democracies. As the data here suggest, however, fairly distinct cleavages seem to be emerging quickly in the post-communist countries. Given that these countries had reached relatively high levels of economic development and had an educated citizenry these findings should not be

surprising. This is not to deny that culturalist perspectives are useful, but this seems to be an area where such models are not very successful.

Political culture perspectives have also led us to view the transition to democracy as requiring a fairly traumatic shift in mass attitudes, one that would result in resistance on the part of large segments of the population (particularly older cohorts that were more thoroughly socialized in non-democratic norms). This generated two sets of expectations regarding the party system: (1) institutional issues (democratic capitalism) would be very salient among the mass public; and (2) these issues would dominate the party issue space. Particularly in the period immediately following the demise of the communist regime, we are inclined to believe that the 'important' debates over democracy and free markets would capture the imagination and attention of the average voter. Given a Downsian view of parties we expect them to reflect these preferences in the positions they adopt regarding democratic capitalism. Hence, we expect fluctuations in mass preferences regarding democratic capitalism to be translated into electoral outcomes. At the outset I raised the possibility that these potentially divisive issues were not the basis on which citizens actually made voting choices, and hence that fluctuations in voter preferences regarding democratic capitalism would not necessarily be translated into policy positions adopted by political parties or governing coalitions.

In none of the analyses reported here does democracy emerge as a salient issue for the average voter. The average voter may be a strong or weak supporter of democracy but this does not seem to be relevant to how he or she formulates preferences for particular political parties. This finding leads us to reject the notion that fluctuations in mass preferences for democracy could provide attractive opportunities for political parties advocating anti-democratic policies. Support for capitalism is a somewhat different story. Evidence regarding the saliency of free market issues is mixed. In some of the countries, the regression analysis produced support for the notion that party evaluations were affected by citizens' issue positions on democratic capitalist institutions. Overall, the evidence indicates at best a moderate saliency of free market issues for voting decisions.

In fact, in the immediate period following the regime change, institutional issues were not strongly dividing either the citizenry or the political parties. Certainly some of these institution building issues were salient, but they were balanced by the saliency of a number of other traditional and 'post-modern' cleavages. Thus, relatively early in the transition to democracy these post-Communist Party systems could be characterized as having a multidimensional issue space that were not dominated by institutional issues.

Finally, part of our culturalist perspectives is the notion that the complexities of democracy must be learned through socialization. The implication of this is that citizens in new democracies are not particularly sophisticated regarding the nuances of democratic processes. As a result, there is an expectation that, in the face of national economic diversity, citizens in these new democracies will reward parties opposed to democratic capitalist institutions. We typically do not expect this to take place in the mature democracies because citizens are better socialized, some might say that they have internalized 'diffuse support' for the system. We expect them to react to economic downturns simply by punishing incumbents. Once again the analysis here argues against such dramatic contrasts between the mature and post-communist democracies. For the most part, those citizens in our post-communist samples that became critical of capitalist institutions in the face of economic diversity do not search for political parties that advocate abandoning these institutional reforms. Dissatisfied citizens in the post-communist democracies rewarded credible alternatives to the incumbent parties. It so happens that in a number of the

post-communist countries, the most credible alternatives have been former communist parties. Thus, we should interpret the success of former communist parties as part of normal politics.

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### Notes

1. For a discussion of how this continues to be a barrier to democratization in east and central Europe, see Millar and Wolchik, 1994; Wolchik, 1995.
2. Kitschelt (1992) and Klingemann (1992) have mapped the position of east and central European parties in this two-dimensional issue space, and by implication assume its importance in shaping voter choices. Although Kitschelt (1992) is careful to point out that he does not believe that these first wave of elections are very informative because they were primarily a plebiscite regarding the former communist regime.
3. For a discussion of the relatively high levels of education in former communist nations see, for example, Inglehart and Siemienka (1990); Gibson and Duch (1993).
4. The democratic consolidation process is a dynamic one, however, and as Przeworski (1991) and others have pointed out, dissatisfaction can build as expectations are unfulfilled and painful economic measures are implemented. This implies that the saliency of these issue dimensions increases over the course of the consolidation process, and therefore the distance between citizen and party in this two-dimensional issue space becomes increasingly important in determining party preferences. Over time, with added information and greater dissatisfaction, the saliency of the democratic capitalist issue space increases, and the position of parties in that issue space could become more important for the vote. Hence this may become a more powerful predictor of vote choice in later stages of the consolidation process.
5. Respondents were asked the following question: "Now I'd like your opinion about some people and other things using this card. As I read from a list tell me which category best describes your overall opinion of the person, place or thing that I mention." The response set was very favorable, mostly favorable, mostly unfavorable, very unfavorable, and never heard of. Never heard of was coded as a middle category between mostly favorable and very unfavorable. This question was not asked of all political parties, which explains the reduced number of party equations for each of the countries.
6. The exact wording of the retrospective justice question is as follows: "Which position generally comes closer to your position? In general, at state enterprises and agencies do you think that top-level people from the old regime should be replaced, even if they are doing a good job?"
7. The exact wording of the questions is as follows: "Here are some statements on different topics. Please tell me how much you agree or disagree with each of these different statements: (1) Nude magazines and sexually explicit movies provide harmless adult entertainment for those who enjoy it; (2) I have traditional values about family and marriage." The response set was as follows: completely agree, mostly agree, mostly disagree, completely disagree. 'Don't know' was coded as a middle category between mostly agree and mostly disagree.

8. The exact wording of the questions is as follows: "Here are some statements on different topics. Please tell me how much you agree or disagree with each of these different statements: (1) Homosexuals should not be permitted to teach in school; (2) AIDS might be God's punishment for immoral sexual behavior." The response set was as follows: completely agree, mostly agree, mostly disagree, completely disagree. 'Don't know' was coded as a middle category between mostly agree and mostly disagree.
9. The exact wording of the questions is as follows: "Here are some statements on different topics. Please tell me how much you agree or disagree with each of these different statements: (1) There should be stricter laws and regulations to protect the environment; (2) People should be willing to pay higher prices in order to protect the environment." The response set was as follows: completely agree, mostly agree, mostly disagree, completely disagree. 'Don't know' was coded as a middle category between mostly agree and mostly disagree.
10. The two subjective questions concerning personal financial conditions read as follows: "I often don't have enough money to pay my usual expenses." "I'm pretty well satisfied with the way things are going for me financially." The response set was as follows: completely agree, mostly agree, mostly disagree, completely disagree. The employment question read as follows: "Are you currently employed outside your home?"
11. Because of the small numbers of variables that are significant in the Slovak equations and because of their weak correlations with the dependent variables, I do not include the Slovak Republic in the subsequent issue space analyses.
12. Note that in the Czech Republic, the F-statistics for the three post-modern variables are actually quite significant while the individual *t*-statistics for the variables are not statistically significant. The explanation for the anomaly lies in the multicollinearity among the variables which inflates their standard errors. Hence, I have been somewhat conservative in not including the simulated impact of the post-modern values for the Czech Republic (in fact this conservatism is relevant to all of the non-significant post-modern variables in the other country equations).
13. Note that in order to facilitate the bivariate regression I have re-run the factor analysis for the Czech republic and constrained the results to two factors. This facilitates the comparison of the three country analyses.
14. The  $R^2$  for the Czech Republic and for Poland is essentially 0.

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