

Vol. 4, No. 2
April 2009

CEU Political Science Journal

Department of Political Science
Central European University

CEU Political Science Journal
Department of Political Science
Central European University, Budapest
April 2009

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KEVIN07, WEB 2.0 AND YOUNG VOTERS AT THE 2007 AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL ELECTION¹

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Abstract

While Australian political parties have maintained official websites for some years, the 2007 Australian Federal election saw the first significant integration of Web 2.0 technologies into a national election campaign. The two major parties – the conservative Liberal Party and the socialist Labor Party – both embraced blogs, flash animation, online video and popular social networking sites in an attempt to win votes, particularly in the 18 to 35 year-old demographic. The Labor Party was far more successful in using Web 2.0 and their online efforts were judged to have played a large role in winning the absolute majority of voters under the age of 35 to its platform on election day in November 2007. Closer analysis of available polling data, though, suggests that the Web 2.0 campaign was largely insignificant in attracting young voters and that the notion that online campaigning will win over young Australian voters is largely misplaced.

1. Introduction

The 2007 Australian federal election was the first in which the online campaign and Web 2.0 technologies moved into the mainstream. Though not the first election campaign where political parties had maintained an internet presence, it was the first in which Facebook friends of party leaders were compared in the mainstream press, the first where YouTube videos became election issues and the first where online interactions between parties and party supporters were reported as real and breaking news. Amongst all of the online campaigning, though, it was the

1 An earlier version of this article was presented at 'Politics: Web2.0 – An International Conference' at the Royal Holloway, University of London in April 2008. The author is grateful for the comments and criticisms of participants at this conference that have improved this paper.

Australian Labor Party (ALP) that was widely recognized as presenting the best and most effective online presence. With a site that embraced social networking tools, hosted online video, included regular blog posts from leading party figures and drew on user contributions for content, the ALP's Kevin07.com.au brought the election campaign to Australia's online community in a way that was without equal in this or any previous election. The site, widely held to be aimed at drawing young people to the ALP, was judged an unqualified success in the wake of the ALP's historic November win where the party secured a significant majority of the youth vote. The role of the Kevin07.com.au site in drawing young people to the ALP is, however, open to debate. Indeed, when one considers pre-election polling data, it becomes clear that young voters had established firm voting intentions long before the ALP's online campaign was launched.

This paper is presented in four parts. The first presents a review of the increasingly important role played by the online elements of an Australian federal election campaign. Tracing an eleven year, four election period from 1996 to 2007, this section traces the growing focus of political parties, the mainstream media and voters on the online presence of campaigning parties. The second part of this paper presents the ALP's Kevin07.com.au site, the centerpiece of the ALP's online campaign for young voters. The third part of this paper offers evidence that contradicts the notion that the online campaign of the ALP was effective in winning young voters to their cause. Specifically, by considering opinion poll data from 2005 until the election in November 2007 it is clear that while there was a significant rise in support for the ALP amongst young people, this rise occurred many months before the launch of the website and can be attributed to the party's change in leadership. A discussion section follows and the paper concludes by suggesting that – for a number of reasons – the 2007 election was an anomaly in terms of the impact of the internet on the voting intentions of Australian youth and that future campaigning online may well have a measureable and significant effect in drawing young people to a political party.

2. 1996 to 2007: The Growing Significance of Campaign Websites in Australia

The Australian election campaign of the twenty-first century does, in some ways, still resemble the campaigns of the past. As Sally Young has argued, contrary to popular opinion there was never a "golden age of electioneering" where voters were targeted with densely worded factual tracts instead of the common fear-inducing advertising of today.² Indeed, campaign elements such as negative campaign commercials, comparing competitors with foreign dictators and the so-called 'Presidential style campaign' where a party leader becomes the focus of the campaign are nothing new at all in the Australian electoral experience.³ Yet one difference that has emerged in recent years is the embrace by Australian political parties of new communication technologies, in particular internet technologies, through which they can campaign for the votes of 13 million Australians enrolled to vote.⁴ As in other electoral jurisdictions worldwide, campaign websites have become essential elements of a modern electoral effort in Australia in the age of 24-hour cable news and enthusiastic bloggers and citizen journalists who demand immediate access to campaign material.

The first campaign websites in Australia emerged as a part of the 1996 federal election.⁵ Of the two major political parties in Australia, the ALP was most proactive in embracing the internet as a campaign tool. Reports Young:

The ALP's website received 11,000 hits a day during the 1996 campaign. By 1998, all ALP policies were being released on the Internet simultaneously with their release to the media and the

2 Sally Young, "A Century of Political Communication in Australia, 1901-2001," *Journal of Australian Studies* 78 (2003): 97-110.

3 Young, "A Century," 109.

4 Peter Brent and Simon Jackman state the number of enrolled voters was 13,122,006 in 2006. See Peter Brent and Simon Jackman, *A shrinking Australian electoral roll?* Canberra: Democratic Audit of Australia Discussion Paper 11/07, 2007.

5 Young, "A Century," 108.

ALP website was providing games and online chats with local MPs.⁶

Rachel Gibson and Stephen Ward agree and point to the obvious enthusiasm for internet electioneering by the centre-left party in the mid 1990's, noting that in 1996 "the ALP had already begun to use audio and interactive features on their Website as well as offering extensive policy information and negative campaigning against the Liberals".⁷ Not only was the ALP website drawing interested voters to Labor policy statements and media releases, it was also playing a part in recruiting new members for the ALP.

⁸ In a country where, according to commentator George Megalogenis, some 10 to 20% of Australians "don't care about politics", the ALP website was attracting five new financial members a day to the party proving a success not only in communicating policy but also driving activism.⁹

The 11,000 daily hits that the ALP received during the 1996 campaign would explode exponentially by the time the 1998 federal election took place. Gibson and Ward report that the ALP site "received over two million hits during the five-week campaign, a remarkable achievement given the eleven million voters in the country".¹⁰ Moving beyond merely being a source of media releases and maintaining opportunities for infrequent online chats with MPs, the 1998 federal election saw the ALP making a concerted effort to attract web-savvy voters to the cause of leader Kim Beazley. As Gibson and Ward note:

The site revealed a more concerted effort by the party to use the Internet to attract voters with multimedia games, downloadable

6 Young, "A Century," 108.

7 Rachel Gibson and Stephen Ward, "Virtual Campaigning: Australian Parties and the Impact of the Internet," *Australian Journal of Political Science* 37 (2002): 99-129.

8 Gibson and Ward, "Virtual Campaigning," 105.

9 George Megalogenis, *Nats swamped by a demographic tide*. Available at <http://tinyurl.com/3angnc>, on 11 March 2008; Gibson and Ward, "Virtual Campaigning," 104-105.

10 Gibson and Ward, "Virtual Campaigning," 105.

banners and e-postcards, an interactive tax reckoner, video political commercials, an updated campaign diary, and Webcasting of key events such as the campaign launch in Brisbane (not available in the traditional media).¹¹

Despite losing the election to the Liberal-National Coalition, the success of the ALP's internet strategy was hailed as a major breakthrough in electioneering in Australia. Bruce Hawker, a prominent Labor strategist, would remark that the ALP's online effort had "changed the face of Australian political campaigning".¹² Hawker highlighted the points of difference that the website offered users as compared to mainstream campaigning, in particular the online streaming video that allowed 100,000 users to watch the ALP campaign launch live and exclusively in the absence of a live free-to-air television broadcast.¹³

By the time of the 2001 federal election both major parties had invested significant resources into their campaign websites recognizing that the internet was allowing them to interact with interested voters. Specifically, though, the major parties recognized the opportunity that internet campaigning presented for targeting key electoral demographics, in particular, the young, internet-savvy voters who were beginning to shun old media. As Gibson and Ward argue, the youth vote was an explicit focus of both the ALP and Coalition election campaigns where a "multimedia format appears to be highly attractive to young people".¹⁴ Learning from experiences in the UK and the US, where young voters had been successfully targeted by Democratic presidential candidate Al Gore, the Australian parties "fiercely fought" an online war for the votes of young people.¹⁵ However,

11 Gibson and Ward, "Virtual Campaigning," 105.

12 Bruce Hawker, "Australia 1998: Internet Campaigning Makes a Spectacular Debut," Netpulse 3 (July 1999): 1.

13 Hawker, "Australia 1998."

14 Gibson and Ward, "Virtual Campaigning," 102.

15 On US experiences see Pippa Norris, Who Surfs? New Technology, Old Voters and Virtual Democracy in the 1996 and 1998 US Elections. Paper presented at the 'John F. Kennedy Visions of Governance for the Twenty First Century

as Edgar Crook notes, “[t]hough there was much activity on the Internet it did not have a leading role in the election battle”.¹⁶ Despite significant numbers of hits to party and campaign websites, the impact of the online campaign was hard to quantify and may have been, as Crook contends, the online campaign played a minor role in determining the eventual electoral outcome.¹⁷

The 2004 election saw a further sustained focus paid by the major parties to online campaigning. In 2006 Peter Chen, Rachel Gibson and Karin Geiselhart reported that the online campaigns of the major parties were proving successful in connecting the parties with “committed and active individuals”.¹⁸ Australian voters who visited campaign websites were twice as likely to have a tertiary education (50% compared to 25%) and be almost twice as interested in the election outcome as the average voter (56% compared to 30%).¹⁹ Significantly, however, the individuals who visited party websites were also much more likely to already hold strong party identifications or, as Chen, Gibson and Geiselhart put it, “the parties are preaching to the converted, if not members specifically”.²⁰ Whatever the audience of the campaign websites, the online presence of Australian political parties became increasingly important for, as Edgar Crook writes:

...political parties, lobby groups and official bodies such as the Australian electoral Commission were now using the Internet as the only or primary source for information on policies, candidates and general voting information.²¹

Conference’, Bretton Woods, United States of America, 19-22 July 1999; Gibson and Ward, “Virtual Campaigning,” 102.

16 Edgar Crook, *The 2007 Australian Federal Election on the Internet*. Canberra: National Library of Australia Staff Paper, 2007.

17 Crook, “The 2007 Australian Federal Election,” 1.

18 Peter Chen, Rachel Gibson and Karin Geiselhart, *Electronic Democracy? The Impact of New Communications Technologies on Australian Democracy*. Canberra: Democratic Audit of Australia Report No. 6, 2006.

19 Chen et al, “Electronic Democracy,” 23.

20 Chen et al, “Electronic Democracy,” 24.

21 Crook, “The 2007 Australian Federal Election,” 1.

Thus, from 1996 where the ALP celebrated 11,000 daily hits to 2004 where the internet had become, for some parties, the only source for policy documents and party information, the internet has moved from being an ignorable election sideshow to a key part of every federal election campaign and this trend would continue in 2007.

Crook argues:

[i]t is clear now that the 2007 federal election can safely be adjudged as the first in which the Internet became not just the repository for information, but also a tool both to communicate policies with the public and to allow potential voters to in return interact in multiple ways with the parties and their candidates.²²

The interaction between candidates, parties and voters led some commentators to label the 2007 federal poll the first Web 2.0 election. It is worthwhile, however, to be precise in defining just what is meant by the term 'Web 2.0' and to differentiate it from other notions such as 'internet' and 'Web 1.0'. Allison Orr offers a typical definition of Web 2.0 when she argues that Web 2.0 represents "the second generation of tools provided by the Internet which have interactive and participatory characteristics".²³ These tools include social networking sites, open-edit wikis, blogging and user-produced online video. Orr argues that the "principles of Web 2.0 are participation and collaboration" with sites such as Facebook, YouTube and Wordpress standing as prototypical examples of social networking, video sharing and blogging platforms in the Web 2.0 world.

As candidates embraced technologies and web services such as blogs, YouTube, Facebook, MySpace and user-driven campaign content, the online campaigns of the major parties and major lobby groups became mainstream news.²⁴ Writing in the country's only national newspaper, *The Australian*, Anne Parsons remarks on the success of the leftist lobby group GetUp.org.au in drawing

22 Crook, "The 2007 Australian Federal Election," 2.

23 Allison Orr, "Political Participation and Web 2.0," 3.

24 Orr, "Political Participation and Web 2.0," 2-3.

their issues to the attention of politicians and voters via online petition drives and fundraising for issue advertisements.²⁵ A stomach-turning YouTube video of the ALP Leader Kevin Rudd eating his own ear wax in the federal parliament was widely reported on television and in newspapers across the country and internationally, the *Herald-Sun* reporting that the video was replayed on Jay Leno's *Tonight Show* and linked on the influential *Drudge Report*.²⁶ The online and mainstream print media eagerly tracked the number of Facebook and MySpace friends that party leaders maintained and parties engaged online voters with exclusive, internet-only campaign events.²⁷ The Web 2.0 election had certainly arrived and it was the Australian Labor Party that led the political field in seeking votes through the engagement of Australia's online electorate.

3. The Kevin07 Online Campaign: Chasing the Youth Vote

Of the two major Australian political parties it was the ALP that garnered the most attention to its online campaign, so much so that the branding of the site and its URL quickly entered the Australian lexicon.²⁸ Whereas the campaign launches of the major

25 Anne Parsons, "Political methods digitally enhanced," *The Australian* (September 2007): 32.

26 John Ferguson and Peter Jean, "Rudd cops US earful," *Herald-Sun* (November 2007): 5. Other coverage of the YouTube video includes Johnathan Porter, "Why we should lend an ear to the Opposition Leader," *The Australian* (October 2007): 15; Piers Akerman, "Rudd over the wax and wane," *Daily Telegraph* (October 2007): 18; Annabel Crabb, "Suddenly squeaky clean Kevin is a bit on the nose," *Sydney Morning Herald* (November 2007): 9; Ben Quinn, "Waxing lyrical," *Newcastle Herald* (November 2007): 38.

27 See examples of 'friend tracking' in Lauren Parle, "Web 2.0 pollies: no polls, just popularity," *Crikey* (August 2007): 1; DD McNicoll, "Strewth: Too many friends to face," *The Australian* (October 2007): 18. An example of an exclusive online campaign event is chronicled in Crook, "The 2007 Australian Federal Election," 4.

28 See, for example, Mark Kenny, "Now it's Kevin07 in race for Lodge," *The Advertiser* (August 2007): 2. Note, too, that some post-election commentary now refers to PM Kevin Rudd as Kevin08. See Matthew Warren, "Reality check for Rudd's climate change plans," *The Australian* (November 2007): 40; Annabel Crabb, "Get set for Kevin08, Australia – best you look busy," *Sydney Morning*

parties in Australia tend to take place some weeks into the 'official' campaign period immediately before the election, the ALP's Kevin07.com.au site was launched months before the November 24th poll. Indeed, it was launched before the election date was even announced.²⁹ The central website brought together all of the other online elements of the ALP campaign, with particular focus given to the Web 2.0 elements of both the ALP and Kevin Rudd's new technologies approach. The site not only offered a video channel (through YouTube) and links to popular social networking sites (MySpace and Facebook) but also a campaign blog which – in a move that remains atypical for major political parties – allowed the public to respond to blog posts with comments critical of the party.³⁰ Visitors to the site could also purchase branded merchandise, including bumper stickers and t-shirts, and sign up for 'K-Mail' which would allow the user to receive regular ALP campaign updates.

The launch of the central Kevin07.com.au site was met with great media interest and all major newspapers in Australia reported the launch of the web presence.³¹ In almost all cases the mainstream media (MSM) coverage was positive with reporters and columnists commonly comparing the ALP online strategy to a relatively non-existent Coalition strategy.³² In the blogosphere, however, the reaction was more mixed. Left-leaning bloggers at *Larvatus Prodeo* (larvatusprodeo.net) welcomed the ALP's

Herald (January 2008): 1; John Lethlean, "Kevin gets a grilling – 72 hours eat, drink, cook...and be merry," The Age (January 2008): 7.

29 The election date was announced by Prime Minister John Howard on 14 October 2007. The Kevin07 site was launched on 6 August 2007.

30 See an example of a critical comment published on the Kevin07.com.au blog at Trevor Cook, Kevin07 publishes criticism. Available at <http://tinyurl.com/2k8m96> on 11 January 2008.

31 Kenny, "Now it's Kevin07," 2; Sid Marris, "ALP launches Kevin07," The Australian (August 2007): 2; Alison Rehn, "OO-Kevin: ALP taps a wired world," Daily Telegraph (August 2007): 8; Ben Packham, "Trick up sleeve," Herald-Sun (August 2007): 2; Kirsty Ross, "Ruddy complexion washes over web," MX (August 2007): 8; Misha Schubert, "New spin in politics web," The Age (August 2007): 6; Ben Doherty, "www.Kevin07.com.au: Rudd ups the ante on the cyberspace war," The Age (August 2007): 8.

32 Schubert, "New spin," 6.

strategy.³³ Other left-leaning bloggers were less impressed – Arleesher from group-blog *Stoush* reacted to receiving her first piece of K-Mail by posting, “despite my general love of pop culture hottness [sic], this actually makes me less likely to vote for Rudd”.³⁴ Elsewhere in the Australian blogosphere some concluded the newly launched site would be of great benefit to the ALP in the coming campaign, particularly in comparison to the relatively weak online campaigning of the Coalition parties. While some commentators saw the Kevin07.com.au campaign as too ‘presidential’ and too ‘American’, the online campaign was closely followed and widely reported upon during the long 2007 Federal campaign.

All commentators were in agreement, however, as to the electoral demographic that the ALP was targeting with the Kevin07.com.au strategy. The online push – and particularly its focus on social networking and user-generated content and commentary – was aimed at young voters and most MSM sources noted the deliberate push by Rudd and the ALP to attract the youth vote. *The Australian*, the country’s only national daily newspaper, noted the obvious targets of the ALP’s Web 2.0 strategy:

Labor has been courting the youth vote, upping the web war for votes by launching the Kevin07 site, where it explains its policies and provides a forum for debate. Drawing on the format of MySpace, Facebook and YouTube, the site encourages viewers to contribute their own videos, written and audio comments and to make links to their sites as part of the ALP campaign.³⁵

A specific link between Web 2.0 technologies, the youth demographic and the ALP campaign was made by Jane Bunce who noted that “Kevin Rudd's pitch to the YouTube generation”

33 Mark Bahnisch, Kevin07. Available at <http://tinyurl.com/3blbmV> on 11 January 2008.

34 Arleesher, Kevin07 Rocks Da Youf Vote. Available at <http://tinyurl.com/37fm3h> on 11 January 2008.

35 Patricia Karvelas, “Labor urges young to register,” *The Australian* (August 2007): 7.

was "paying off".³⁶ Brisbane's *Courier-Mail* went so far as to profile one of the young people that the ALP's online campaign had successfully targeted, noting that the online strategy of the party was "unashamedly coveting" the support of "2 million voters aged between 18 and 30".³⁷ With ALP policies targeted specifically at winning over the youth vote and age-specific advertising released as part of the Kevin07.com.au campaign, it appears likely that the Web 2.0 campaign had, at its heart, the aim of winning the young voters to the ALP cause.³⁸

4. The Youth Vote at the 2007 Australian Federal Election

Historically, younger voters in Australia are significantly more likely to vote for the ALP or one of the other left-leaning parties. Research conducted as part of the Australian Democrats 2007 Youth Poll suggest that left-leaning parties such as the ALP, the Democrats and the Greens were favored by 58% of young people while only 23% favored right-leaning parties such as the Liberals, the Nationals and Family First.³⁹ Of the individual parties, support amongst young people for the ALP outstrips support for the Liberal-National Coalition by more than 2 to 1 (see Figure 1).⁴⁰

Pre-election polling suggested that this disparity was even greater in 2007 with one public poll concluding that 73% of voters under the age of 29 intended to vote for the ALP, a result that was "staggering" in its implications according to one commentator.⁴¹

36 Jane Bunce, "Screaming teenagers mob Rock Star Rudd," AAP News Australia (October 2007): 1.

37 Patrick Lion, "Politics explores new frontiers to win youth vote," *Courier-Mail* (November 2007): 56.

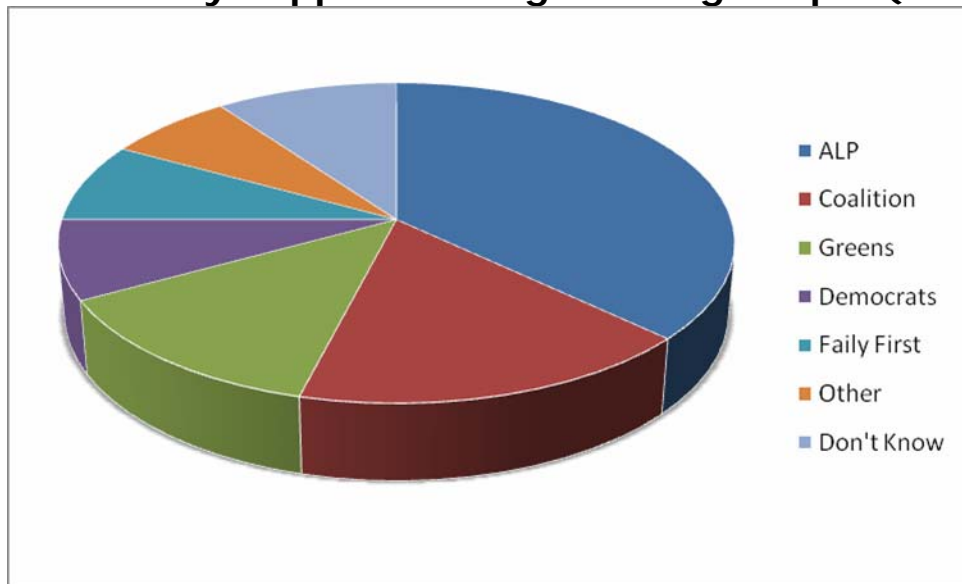
38 An example of advertising targeted specifically at young voter is the ALP's 'A Brighter Future for Young Australians'. See Young Labor, A Brighter Future for Young Australians. Available at <http://tinyurl.com/3927jf> on 13 March 2008.

39 Natasha Stott-Despoja, Federal Election Youth Poll Results. Available at <http://tinyurl.com/2txd29> on 13 March 2008.

40 Stott-Despoja, "Federal Election Youth Poll Results," 2.

41 Tony Jones, Poll shows youth vote critical in election. Available at <http://tinyurl.com/38lpp5> on 13 March 2008.

Figure 1. Party Support Amongst Young People (2007)⁴²



This massive swing in support amongst youth to the ALP – far outweighing even the historic trend amongst young people to favor the political left – has been attributed to many factors including the ALP branding of the campaign, an impression that the time had come to replace a Prime Minister approaching 70 years of age with a younger person or simply a slightly exaggerated facsimile of the national swing in support to the ALP after more than a decade of Coalition government. One factor it should *not* be attributed to, however, is the ALP’s high profile Web 2.0 campaign. Kevin07.com.au may have gained the party headlines but it did nothing to draw younger voters to the party on the 24th of November 2007.

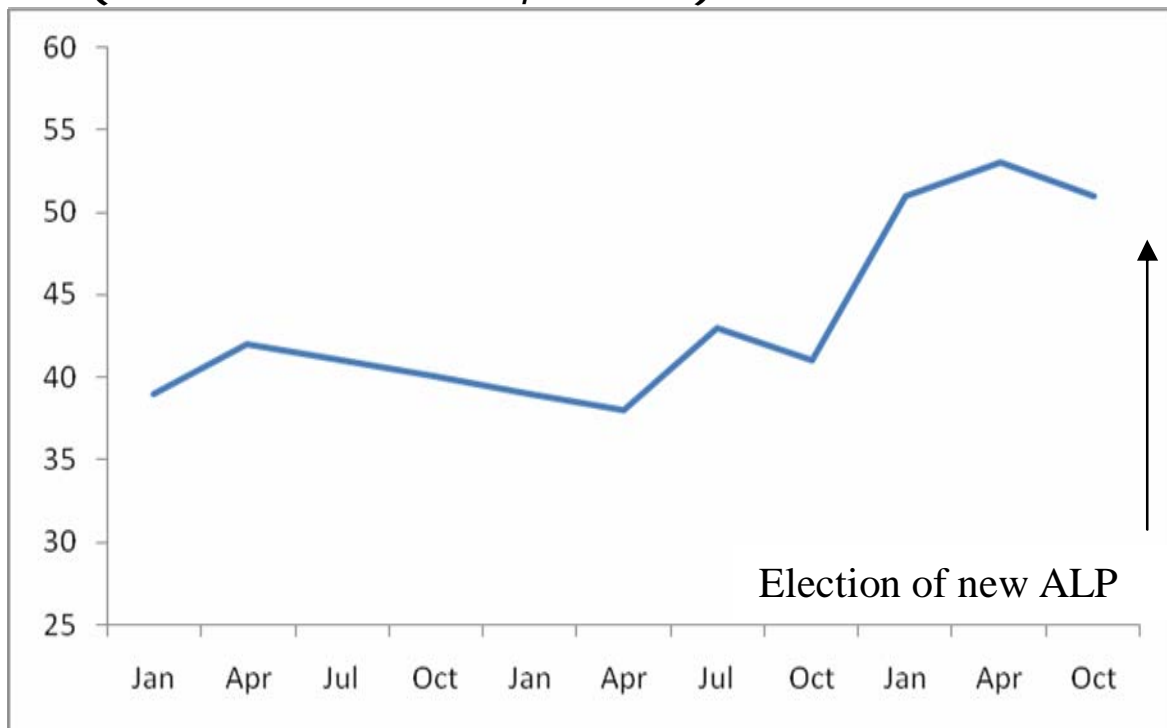
5. Tracking Youth Voting Intentions, 2004-2007

A clear change in the voting intentions of young people can be seen when voting intentions are tracked via public polling results. As shown in Figure 2 (overleaf), however, this spike in support for the ALP occurred some 8 months before the ALP launched its Web 2.0 campaign and, further, the launch of the Kevin07.com.au site

42 Data for this chart extracted from Stott-Despoja, “Federal Election Youth Poll Results,” 2.

did nothing to encourage any more young voters to pledge support to the ALP or its leader.

Figure 2. Proportion of Voters Aged 18-34 Years Favoring ALP (Jan 2005 – Oct 2007, $\pm 1.5\%$)⁴³



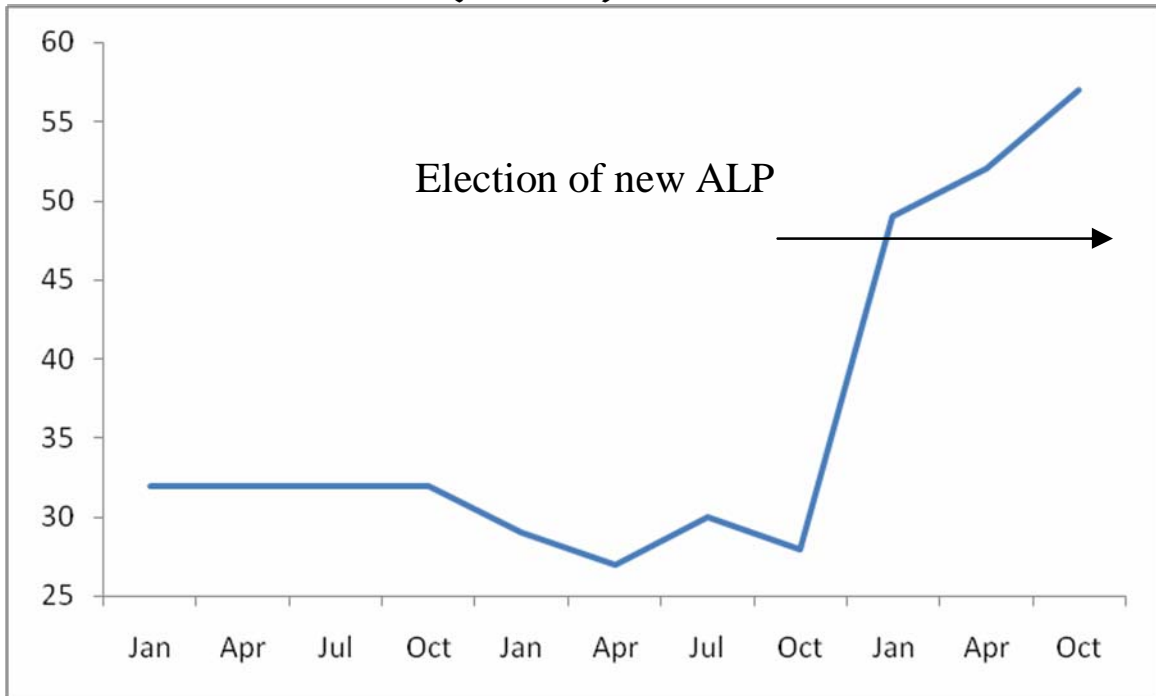
The jump in support for the ALP between the October 2006 quarter and the January 2007 quarter can be attributed to the ALP's decision on the 4th of December 2006 to replace leader Kim Beazley with Kevin Rudd. This conclusion is supported when the same January 2005 – October 2007 period is considered for another Newspoll question as to a voters preferred Prime Minister (Figure 3).

Quite clearly, the proportion of young voters who intended to vote for the ALP rose immediately as a result of Kevin Rudd's accession to the Labor Party leadership. Indeed, young voters reported that their preference for the ALP leader as PM rose from an average of 28.3% across the last three quarters of 2006 under

⁴³ Data for Figures 2, 3 and 4 is extracted from public opinion polling conducted by Newspoll and available at www.newspoll.com.au.

Beazley to an average of 52.6% across the first three quarters of 2007 under Rudd.

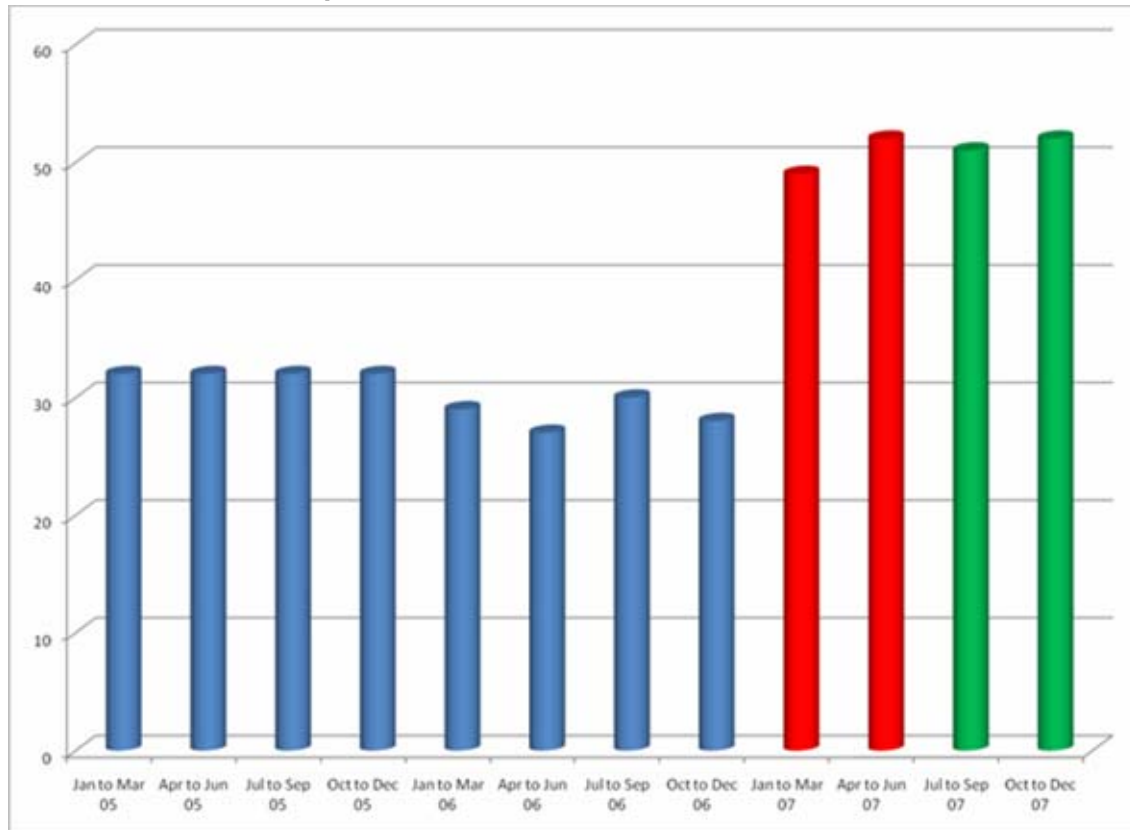
Figure 3. Proportion of Voters Aged 18-34 Years Preferring an ALP Prime Minister ($\pm 1.5\%$)



Significantly, though, the level of youth support that flowed to the ALP as a result of the leadership change was maintained in the 11 months until the election. As depicted in Figure 4 (below), the support for the ALP by young people remained around the 50% mark from January 2007 until November 2007, barely fluctuating with the launch of the Kevin07.com.au website in August.

As is clearly shown, neither the 'Presidential style' focus of the ALP campaign on leader Kevin Rudd and the branding of the Web 2.0 campaign at Kevin07.com.au had any significant effect on the electoral preferences of young voters. Indeed, Figure 4 suggests that the most effective electoral strategy employed by the ALP in attracting young voters was the replacement of one leader with another.

Figure 4: Prefer ALP Prime Minister 18-34 Year Olds, 2005-2007 (Blue bars indicate Beazley leadership, red bars Rudd leadership and green bars periods in which the Kevin07 campaign was active; $\pm 1.5\%$)



6. Discussion

Such conclusions stand somewhat in opposition to other research into the efficacy of campaign websites in attracting support and converting voters to the campaigns cause. As Rachel Gibson, Ian McAllister, Clive Bean and David Gow argued in a paper on cyber-campaigning in Australia, the impact of the internet on the public is usually more significant:

Our results reveal strong support for the proposition that a web campaign is an integral part of securing victory in an election. Net of a wide variety of other factors, including incumbency, party affiliation and political experience and support, the use of a web page delivers just under 4 percent of the House of Representatives first preference vote. This is more than all of the traditional methods of campaigning combined, and is only slightly less than incumbency, usually

considered one of the major electoral influences. The web is, then, a major vote attractor for candidates and has the potential in closely fought contests to determine the election outcome.⁴⁴

Far from an integral part of securing the youth vote, the Kevin07.com.au Web 2.0 campaign had no significant effect on drawing young voters to the ALP.

It seems possible that the particular circumstances of the 2007 Federal election played some part in the impotence of the ALP's online campaign for youth votes. With the ruling Liberal-National Coalition having held power for more than a decade and with Prime Minister Howard having held his position for all of that time, there was a generation of voters born after 1978 that has never known an election as a voter where Howard and the Coalition did not win.⁴⁵ As a result, some commentators speculate that the young voters of Australia were simply ready for a change. George Megalogenis, writing in *The Australian*, noted that a month before the election the swing of youth voters to the ALP was "paradoxical":

The group that has swung most decisively to Kevin Rudd are the 18-24 year olds...The [Coalition] Government's primary vote was up 5.4 per cent on the 2004 election. Against [former ALP leader Kim] Beazley, John Howard was seen as groovy. No wonder the Prime Minister thought he had a fifth victory in him. Then Labor changed leaders last December, and the country went to Kevin. By the end of June this year, Rudd was pulling a gen Y swing of 19.4 per cent, leaving Labor 14 per cent ahead of where it had been with this tribe at the 2004 election. It is the youth belt where the paradox of Howard's near-full employment economy is most apparent. The 18-24s have never known recession.⁴⁶

44 Rachel Gibson, Ian McAllister, Clive Bean and David Gow, Does Cyber Campaigning Win Votes? Online Communication in the 2004 Australian Election. Irvine: Center for the Study of Democracy Paper 05-09, 2005.

45 Voting in Federal elections is obligatory for all Australians aged over 18.

46 George Megalogenis, Gen Y registers Kevin's really on a roll. Available at <http://tinyurl.com/2uoj4x> on 19 March 2008.

The paradox – being that young people who had never known a recession, had every likelihood of gaining employment in their field without problems, be more highly educated and earn more in real terms than any other generation yet choose to endorse an untested leader for his new and fresh leader – was noted by other commentators, too. Just two weeks before the election Dennis Shanahan noted polling that suggested that 51% of Australians considered the Coalition better economic managers (compared to 32% for the ALP), 84% of Australians considered John Howard a strong leader and that the Coalition leader outpaced the ALP challenger almost two to one in terms of experience – and yet still favored the accepted weaker economic managers and less strong and experienced Opposition over the incumbent.⁴⁷ With economic management historically one of the most significance factors in deciding the vote of the Australian electorate, the paradox Megalogenis and Shanahan point to might suggest that this election was an anomaly as far as the youth of the country are concerned.

As well, it might also be the case that the young voters who clicked their way to the Kevin07.com.au site were likely already committed ALP voters. Besides the fact that more than half of young voters had committed to the ALP before the launch of the website in August 2007, previous research into online campaigning in Australia has suggested that it is active and already committed voters that are most likely to access campaign websites of their favored parties.⁴⁸ Considering that one of the most reported Web 2.0 elements of the 2007 campaign was a non-campaign YouTube video of ALP leader Kevin Rudd eating his own ear wax – garnering more than 900,000 views or approximately 1 view for every 15 enrolled voters – there is scope to suspect that the Web 2.0 campaign did little to influence the electoral preferences of young Australian voters. Essentially, the popularity of the ALP site may have been the result of the young people who switched allegiances to the ALP in early 2007

47 Dennis Shanahan, Howard's economic approval rating rising. Available at <http://tinyurl.com/2oyqj7> on 19 March 2008.

48 Chen et al, "Electronic Democracy".

rather than the site drawing young voters to the ALP via an interactive Web 2.0 approach.

This is not to say, however, that there is no place for Web 2.0 technologies in securing the votes of young people or, more broadly, in winning the votes of older voters active on Web 2.0 sites. As more Australians gain access to broadband internet services it seems likely that political parties will seek new ways of winning the votes of net-savvy citizens and that some of these efforts will include utilizing online video and user-created content, both examples of low-cost electioneering with a potentially high-return in terms of voter support, as highlighted by the Australian Greens social network advertising strategy.⁴⁹ In the wake of the most recent US Presidential election where Web 2.0 technologies were a high-profile and demonstrably effective electioneering tool for the Democratic party's candidate, it seems almost certain that Australian political parties will seek to win votes in the same style as their Anglophonic allies in North America. Perhaps, as Terry Flew notes, "the revolution is not being blogged...yet"; that is to say that the impact of the internet and Web 2.0 on the outcome of the election is not yet significant but, in time, this will almost surely change.⁵⁰

Finally, it is important to realize that the Australia electoral system itself may have an impact on the influence of Web 2.0 and the likelihood that votes will be won amongst young people online. Two elements of the system, in particular, seem significant in this respect: mandatory voting and a historically conservative electorate. Along with a handful of other liberal democracies, Australia requires every resident citizen over the age of 18 to vote in national and state elections with penalties in place for voters who forget or choose not to vote. This has an important ramifications for political parties seeking votes: as there is no need to 'get out the vote' – more than 90% of registered voters voted at the 2007 Federal election – the political

49 Crook, "The 2007 Australian Federal Election," 15.

50 Terry Flew, "Not Yet the Internet Election: Online Media, Political Commentary and the 2007 Australian Federal Election," *Media International Australia* 126 (2008):1-18.

parties can focus entirely on winning votes rather than mobilizing voters. This may impact the efficacy of Web 2.0 electioneering in comparison to voluntary voting systems such as the US or the UK. Secondly, the historically conservative electorate in Australia means that only a small proportion of seats in the national parliament usually change hands at any election. This is not to say that Australian voters are conservative in the conservative/liberal sense but rather that voters in most seats endorse the same party generation after generation no matter what electioneering tools are deployed. Psephologist Adam Carr, for example, categorizes only 31 of the 150 seats in the national parliament as 'very marginal' seats, that is, seats where a change in party representation at any election is probable. In contrast, more than 50% of Federal seats are categorized as 'strong' and any electoral change in one of these seats would be improbable.⁵¹ As a result of this electoral conservatism political parties tend to focus on winning votes in marginal seats and, thus, broadly focused internet campaigning may be relegated to a secondary position in a party's electoral strategy. These particularities of the Australian electoral context should be kept in mind when assessing the success or failure of the ALP's Web 2.0 strategy in winning the votes of young Australians.

7. Conclusion

The 2007 Federal election campaign was the first truly internet era campaign and, as well, the first online campaign where Web 2.0 technologies were an integral part of the campaign. The ALP site Kevin07.com.au was by far the leading campaign site in the 2007 election cycle drawing more attention, more media reports, more hits and its URL quickly entering the wider Australian lexicon. Aimed at drawing young voters to the ALP, the site was lauded in the mainstream press and by the Australian online community as a new and welcome element in modern Australian electoral battles. In the final analysis, the youth of Australia did swing to the ALP in massive numbers and the Labor Party gathered in excess of 70% of the two-party preferred vote

51 See <http://psephos.adamcarr.net/countries/a/australia/2007/pendulum2007.txt>

amongst 18-29 year old voters. Yet as polling data suggests, the launch and success of the Kevin07.com.au campaign had nothing to do with this historic support. Instead, the young people of Australia had established their preference for a revitalized ALP under the new leadership of Kevin Rudd as early as January 2007, seven months before the website was launched and 10 months before the election date was announced.

This paper has suggested that the reason that the Kevin07.com.au campaign website played no part in drawing youth support to the ALP in the manner it would be expected to (based on previous federal polls) is related to the specific circumstances of the 2007 election. A government that was incumbent for more than a decade, a Prime Minister that was perceived as too old and too conservative for a younger generation all a large group of voters who – being born after 1978 – had never known an election as a voter where the Coalition had not triumphed all contributed to a feeling of ‘it’s time’ among young people who voted the government out in spite of, not because of, the Web 2.0 efforts of the Australian Labor Party. For all the millions of dollars that the ALP spent on online advertising, managing the Kevin07.com.au site, promoting the Kevin07 brand and reaching out to young voters, the single most important step that the ALP took to securing the votes of young people was dumping the experienced but unpopular Kim Beazley in favor of the younger, less-experienced, morning TV regular Kevin Rudd. Kevin Rudd may have captured more youth votes than any Opposition Leader in a generation at the November poll but the vote that delivered them took place nearly twelve months before behind closed doors in the ALP party room.

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Appendix A: Screenshots of the Kevin07.com.au site



Homepage of Kevin07.com.au on 7 August 2007 (launch of site) (<http://pandora.nla.gov.au/pan/75521/200708071702/www.kevin07.com/>)

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Blog

08 Oct **Not just the 'baby blues' – changing the politics of postnatal depression**
Published by [The KEVIN07 Team](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#)

Each year in Australia, around 75,000 new and expectant mothers experience depression related to pregnancy and the enormous changes and challenges associated with parenting a newborn.

It's estimated that about 26,000 women each year, or one in 10 Australian mothers, experience depression in the lead up to the birth of their baby. That figure doubles after a baby is born, with around one in five women experiencing postnatal depression in the weeks and months after the birth, according to research by the national depression initiative [beyondblue](#).

» [Click here to read more and post your comment](#)

05 Oct **Speaking out, and a timely message or two from YouTube**
Published by [The KEVIN07 Team](#) | [Comments \(2\)](#)

The state of our health and hospital system was under the spotlight this week, as Kevin Rudd undertook his frontline visit to hospitals around the country.

We've known from the beginning that fixing our health system and investing in proper healthcare for Australians everywhere is key. And we've heard from you all along how important it is to get the health system in good shape for our future. So when we announced Kevin Rudd and Labor's [\\$2 billion National Health Reform Plan](#), it quickly became one of the top-commented blogs on the KEVIN07 site.

» [Click here to read more and post your comment](#)

04 Oct **Guest blog: Not just more underwear from Kmart, up close and personal with autism**
Published by [The KEVIN07 Team](#) | [Comments \(11\)](#)

It took a week to stop bawling my eyes out when breaking the news to people my son had been diagnosed with autism.

All I knew of autism before a doctor mentioned it as a possible explanation of my son's speech delay was from the movie

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Blog tab of Kevin07.com.au on 8 October 2007
(<http://pandora.nla.gov.au/pan/75521/200710081208/www.kevin07.com.au/myblog/index.html>)



Homepage of Kevin07.com.au on 24 November 2007 (Election Day)(<http://pandora.nla.gov.au/pan/75521/200711240655/www.kevin07.com.au/index.html>)

TOWARDS AN EXPLANATION OF ELECTORAL RULES CHANGE

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Abstract

Existing accounts of electoral rules change have predominantly focused on countries that have actually implemented such changes, thereby creating problems of selection bias. This paper argues that in order to explain the change of electoral rules, it is insufficient to restrict analysis to cases in which such change has occurred. Rather, variance on the dependent variable is necessary for meaningful accounts of electoral system change. Against this methodological backdrop, this paper uses data on electoral rules to assess the impact of political variables on both the probability and direction of change. Employing a Cox proportional hazard maximum likelihood estimation and a Prais-Winsten-regression model, it is shown that systems using proportional representation are less likely to effect changes than are countries utilizing a majority system. At the same time, majoritarian systems change electoral rules in the direction of more proportionality. The number of veto players has a negative impact on the probability of change, but influences the change to a less proportional direction – to the extent it is taking place at all. Finally, government polarization greatly increases the probability of electoral rules changes. These results are robust to the inclusion of country fixed-effects.

1. Introduction⁵²

52 An earlier version of this paper was presented at the ECPR Joint Sessions of Workshops, Rennes, April 11-16, 2008. I would like to thank workshop participants for their comments. I also wish to thank two anonymous reviewers for their thoughtful observations. Part of the research for this paper was carried out during my stay at Northwestern University and is partially funded by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) whose support I gratefully acknowledge.

Electoral rules have far reaching consequences for almost every aspect of political life in a democracy. Whether a country employs majority voting or uses a system of proportional representation, whether the vote threshold for parliamentary representation is 1 percent or 5 percent – provisions big and small alike impact upon political competition, partisan positioning, and political representation of minority groups, to name just a few of the issue areas that are involved when electoral rules are decided upon. Yet, while these and other “political *consequences* of electoral laws”⁵³ have attracted considerable attention, investigations into the *change and adoption* of electoral rules feature far less prominently.

A possible reason for this situation can be found in the relative rareness of changes made to electoral rules. Especially far reaching changes of electoral systems are few in number. Moreover, existing research is dominated by accounts of electoral rules changes that single out cases where such change has actually occurred. Cases are frequently selected because they are defined as positive cases by their outcome.

Of course, there is a lot to be said in favor of selecting cases on the dependent variable.⁵⁴ However, when it comes to actually *testing* causal theories, such approaches are insufficient. The reason for this is simple: Selecting cases based on their values on the outcome of interest biases results or renders causal explanations altogether impossible.⁵⁵ Pointing to the fact that electoral system change is a rare event and, therefore, researchers should focus on the few positive cases available for analysis does not rectify the situation. For the fact that there are

53 Douglas W. Rae, *The political consequences of electoral laws* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967).

54 See, for instance, Alexander L. George and Andrew Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005) or David Collier, Henry E. Brady and Jason Seawright, “Sources of leverage in causal inference: toward an alternative view of methodology,” in *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards*, ed. Henry E. Brady and David Collier (Lanham, MD: Rowman Littlefield, 2004). 229-266.

55 Barbara Geddes, “How the Cases You Choose Affect the Answers You Get: Selection Bias in Comparative Politics,” *Political Analysis* 2 (1990): 131-150.

only a few positive cases does not undermine the logic of reasoning. James Fearon summarizes this position in the following statement: "Statistical principles do not simply cease to operate when the number of actual cases dips below twenty or fifteen or ten, creating room for alternative ways of testing causal hypotheses."⁵⁶ Underlying this perspective is the methodological standpoint that causation manifests itself to the observer as regularities of the operationalized and measured theoretical concepts. This holds true, as John Gerring claims, even for manifestations of causation in which there is no possibility to actually observe such regularities: "All empirical evidence of causal relationships is covariational in nature. A purported cause and effect must be found to covary. They must appear and disappear, wax and wane, or perform some other transformation in tandem or at some regular, more or less predictable, intervals."⁵⁷

Against this backdrop, this paper uses cross sectional time series data to assess the systematic impact of a number of political variables on the probability and the direction of change of electoral rules. Rather than distinguishing between positive and negative cases, all "relevant cases"⁵⁸ are included in the statistical analysis. It is shown that political variables, namely the number of veto players and the type of voting system that was in place prior to the change has a significant impact on the probability of change. Furthermore, these variables also influence whether voting rules are changed towards more proportional provisions or rather in the opposite direction.

The remainder of this paper proceeds as follows: In the next section, I will briefly discuss existing research in electoral rules changes. After presenting some data on broad changes of

56 James D. Fearon, "Counterfactuals and Hypothesis Testing in Political Science," *World Politics* 43 (1991): 179.

57 John Gerring, "What Is a Case Study and What Is It Good for?" *American Political Science Review* 98 (2004): 342.

58 James Mahoney and Gary Goertz "The Possibility Principle: Choosing Negative Cases in Comparative Research," *American Political Science Review* 98 (2004): 653-669.

electoral systems, I will then conduct an empirical analysis of the determinants of electoral rules. A final section concludes.

2. Electoral Systems as Dependent Variable

The overwhelming majority of research that concerns itself with electoral systems treats electoral institutions as an independent variable. This type of research dates back to the work of Maurice Duverger who made a connection between electoral rules and party system outcomes: According to "Duverger's Laws", a system based on simple majority voting in single member voting districts will likely lead to a two-party system, while proportional representation favors the emergence of multi-party systems.⁵⁹ In Kenneth Benoit's view, Duverger's line of reasoning has led to the dominance of studies that investigate the consequences of electoral systems rather than their origins.⁶⁰ Yet, research into electoral systems as a *dependent* variable has recently been met with increased interest. For example, in an attempt to turn "Duverger's Laws upside down", Josep Colomer proposes and tests a theory according to which the number of parties that exist at the time an electoral system is decided upon shapes the choice of electoral systems.⁶¹ Colomer's work is in some sense a rare example because he performs the empirical tests of his propositions on an encompassing database that includes both instances of electoral system stability as well as electoral system change. In other words: Colomer considers negative cases together with cases in which the outcome of interest – electoral system change – could be observed.

Most other accounts of electoral system change choose a different research strategy. Research on electoral systems as dependent variables can be broadly grouped into three categories: Work that is concerned with a specific moment in history where far reaching and broad changes to electoral systems were effected; accounts

59 Maurice Duverger, *Political Parties: Their Organization and Activity in the Modern State* (New York: Wiley, 1951).

60 Kenneth Benoit, "Models of Electoral System Change," *Electoral Studies* 23 (2004): 364.

61 Josep M. Colomer, "It's Parties That Choose Electoral Systems (or, Duverger's Laws Upside Down)," *Political Studies* 53 (2005): 1-21.

of single cases of electoral system change; and descriptive analysis of multiple cases of electoral system change. I will briefly discuss each of these three approaches in turn.

2.1. Accounts of broad historical changes

Starting towards the end of the 19th century, almost all countries of Continental Western Europe changed their electoral systems from majority voting to some variant of proportional representation: "PR was introduced in Belgium in 1899, Finland in 1906, and Sweden in 1907. [...] By 1919 all the small European states as well as Germany and Italy had embraced PR."⁶² A first explanation for this seemingly general trend towards proportional representation (PR) was provided by Stein Rokkan who argued that introduction of PR can be explained by a logic of minimizing losses resulting from the expansion of suffrage to wide proportions of the populace: Because a majority of the new voters held left leaning preferences, universal suffrage under a majority system would most likely have resulted in Socialist government. Therefore, the established parties opted for introducing PR, thus securing at least some share in power.⁶³

There are at least two problems associated with this explanation. First, it cannot account for the fact that the introduction of universal suffrage has in some cases *not* resulted in adoption of PR. Neither New Zealand, nor Great Britain, nor Australia – all of which have experienced extension of political franchise at some point – introduced PR. Thus, expanding suffrage cannot be regarded as a sufficient condition for electoral system change towards PR. Second, Rokkan's explanation does not capture electoral system changes that are *not* accompanied by changes to the franchise – most notably exemplified by the cases France and Greece who repeatedly switched back and forth between PR and a majority voting system. Therefore, Rokkan's account cannot be viewed as providing a necessary condition for electoral system change, either.

62 Carles Boix "Setting the rules of the game: the choice of electoral systems in advanced democracies," *American Political Science Review* 93 (1999): 615.

63 Stein Rokkan, *Citizens, Elections, Parties* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1970).

To remedy this unsatisfactory situation, Carles Boix proposes a variant of Rokkan's argument that not only considers changes to the "electoral market"⁶⁴, but also the relative strengths of the parties present in the old system and the party favored by expanding the franchise. If one of the established parties enjoys a dominant position in the party spectrum, the old voting system is maintained. Likewise, if the new party is weak, no changes to the majority system are effected.

Despite its enhanced explanatory power, Boix' model is ill suited to capture electoral system change in established democracies. None of the 13 democracies that have enacted changes to their electoral rules during the time spanning from 1977-2004 (see below) had experienced an expansion of their "electoral markets". Put differently, Boix' explanation is an improvement over Rokkan's account because it can accommodate the observation that changes of the political franchise are not a sufficient condition for electoral system change. However, it does not capture the fact that electoral market changes are also not a necessary condition for electoral system change.

2.2 Single case studies of electoral system change

Electoral system change is likely to exhibit a high degree of contingency upon country specific circumstances. Furthermore, far-reaching changes of electoral rules are rare events; electoral systems tend to be stable.⁶⁵ This has led some researchers to focus on single cases of electoral rule changes or their absence. In her account of the changes that were introduced to the German voting system and became effective in the 1953 Federal elections, Kathleen Bawn argues that decisions over electoral rules can best be explained "[...] as a social choice, affected by the interests of the participants and by the institutions that

64 Boix, "Setting the rules of the game," 621.

65 See, e.g., Dieter Nohlen, "Changes and Choices in Electoral Systems," in *Choosing an Electoral System. Issues and Alternatives*, ed. Arend Lijphart and Bernard Grofman (New York: Praeger, 1984). 217-224; Pipa Norris, "The Politics of Electoral Reforms," *International Political Science Review* 16 (1995): 3-8.

structure the choice".⁶⁶ From this perspective, political actors hold preferences over policies. They bargain with each other in order to change the electoral rules in a way that will maximize the probability of their preferred policies being adopted. Existing institutions shape both the incentives and the opportunities to actually effect such changes. Preferences and institutions are thus analyzed as equilibrium configurations⁶⁷. If institutions change, the system must have come off its equilibrium path.

This last point, however, is precisely the problem with Bawn's account. The explanation for the change of electoral rules is derived from the fact that they have changed indeed. Thus, the focus on a single positive case is not only dictated by aspects like data availability or the attempt to provide an in-depth story of the event in question, but also appears as the methodological consequence of a theoretical predisposition: The explanation offered by Bawn cannot account for cases in which both incentives and opportunities for change were present but change did not occur. To be sure, her assertion that "institutional choices are political choices"⁶⁸ is immensely valuable because it sets the focus on actors' preferences and their actions derived thereof. But her approach creates too little leverage for a systematic explanation of electoral system change and electoral system stability.

It is this latter aspect of electoral system stability in which Patrick Dunleavy and Helen Margetts are interested in their study of the persistence of the British electoral system.⁶⁹ They argue that the persistence of electoral rules in Britain can be explained by the multi-dimensionality of the issue and the high transaction costs involved. Despite recurring discussions about the desirability of changing the system towards more proportionality, overlaps of

66 Kathleen Bawn, "The logic of institutional preferences: German electoral law as a social choice outcome," *American Journal of Political Science* 37 (1993): 988.

67 Bawn, "The logic of institutional preferences", 987.

68 Bawn, "The logic of institutional preferences", 986.

69 Patrick Dunleavy and Helen Margetts, "Understanding the Dynamics of Electoral Reform," *International Political Science Review* 16 (1995): 9-29.

actors' preference sets are "fragile and conjectural".⁷⁰ The emergence of a stable coalition in favor of electoral system change is thus not to be expected.

Studying a negative case is clearly the exception in accounts of electoral system change. Yet, Dunleavy and Margett's explanation for the observed outcome of non-change begs the question whether it can be fruitfully applied to positive cases as well. Ultimately, their theory must stand up to the test whether it can explain change *and* non-change. This would require a detailed analysis of preferences, positions, and transaction costs. This exercise is further complicated by the multi-dimensional nature of their argument. In order to consider all possible combinations of variables on all dimensions in a systematic way, a large number of cases is needed. Unfortunately, such data are, as yet, unavailable.

2.3 Descriptive accounts of multiple cases

Dunleavy and Margetts have called 1993-94 an "annus mirabilis in which three established liberal democracies – Italy, Japan, and New Zealand – radically changed their voting systems"⁷¹. This has led some researchers to descriptively compare those cases. Takayuki Sakamoto, for instance, accounts for the electoral system changes in the three countries by pointing to problems with the old system.⁷² In all three cases, Sakamoto identifies "system failure"⁷³ as an important determinant for setting the process of change in motion. Yet, dissatisfaction with the functioning of the old system is not sufficient for electoral system change. Rather, Sakamoto points to country specific factors that were decisive for electoral reforms taking place. Among these

70 Patrick Dunleavy and Helen Margetts, "Understanding the Dynamics of Electoral Reform," 24.

71 Patrick Dunleavy and Helen Margetts, "Understanding the Dynamics of Electoral Reform," 11.

72 Takayuki Sakamoto, "Explaining electoral reform - Japan versus Italy and New Zealand," *Party Politics* 5 (1999): 419-438.

73 Sakamoto, "Explaining electoral reform," 419.

factors he identifies the old electoral system, constitutional provisions, and, more generally, "particular circumstances"⁷⁴.

Sakamoto is aware of the problems that are associated with selecting cases on the dependent variable.⁷⁵ It comes, therefore, as a bit of a surprise that in his conclusion he points to the "limits of a general explanation for electoral reform and the need to look into country specific factors".⁷⁶ For in fact this is something that is impossible to know when only cases are selected in which electoral system change actually took place. In order to assess the explanatory power of country specific versus general explanations, an empirical model is needed that considers both negative and positive outcomes.

In the next section, I attempt to take a step towards such a model. I will empirically test a few simple propositions about the determinants of electoral system change and compare their explanatory power to that of country specific factors.

3. Towards an explanation of electoral rules changes

3.1 Theoretical background

As the discussion of the literature has shown, almost no large-N accounts of changes of electoral rules exist.⁷⁷ This is hardly surprising, given the limits to data availability and the methodological problems that arise because of the rare-event characteristic of electoral system change. Maybe more importantly, the theoretical problems that could guide such large-N research are formidable, given the multiple plausible pathways to electoral rules changes discussed in the literature.

Nevertheless, in this section, I will take some insights from the literature and try to incorporate them into a unified framework. One of the major themes running through accounts of electoral

74 Sakamoto, "Explaining electoral reform," 434.

75 Sakamoto, "Explaining electoral reform," 420.

76 Sakamoto, "Explaining electoral reform," 434.

77 With the possible exception of Josep Colomer, "It's Parties That Choose Electoral Systems".

rules and electoral system change are perceived problems with the old system, especially problems of legitimacy and representation on the one hand, and problems of governability on the other hand. Pippa Norris, in her introduction to a special issue of the *International Political Science Review* on electoral system change, describes the function of electoral reform as “completing a process of democratization which would put an end to deep-rooted failures in the political system.”⁷⁸ Norris distinguishes between short-term catalysts and long-term conditions that are critical for electoral reform taking place. Short-term catalysts are circumstances particular to a country (for instance “the policies of party factions and their legislative behaviour in government coalitions”⁷⁹), while long-term conditions comprise the described problems on the governability and legitimacy dimensions.

Against this theoretical backdrop, my empirical analysis proceeds in the following steps. I first assess the degree to which far reaching changes of an electoral system have taken place. Next, I construct an empirical model that incorporates the theoretical conditions for electoral rule changes outlined above. Finally, I assess what determines the *direction* of electoral rule changes, i.e. what influences whether a system becomes more or less proportional to the extent that it is changed at all. Note that I distinguish between change of electoral rules, which comprise minor changes as well as far reaching changes to the electoral system on the one hand, and outright electoral system changes on the other hand.

3.2 Electoral system change

Table 1 shows instances of electoral system change for the period from 1976 to 2006. The measure of electoral system change is based on data taken from the “Database of Political Institutions” (DPI)⁸⁰ in an updated version. This database captures institutional features for approximately 180 countries for the years 1970-2006. Included are two dummy variables that measure whether a

78 Norris, “Electoral Reforms,”: 7.

79 Norris, “Electoral Reforms,”: 7.

80 Beck, Thorsten et al., “New Tools in Comparative Political Economy: The Database of Political Institutions,” *The World Bank Economic Review* 15 (2001): 165-176.

country uses proportional representation ("PR"), a majority system ("PLURALTY"), or both (in the latter cases, both variables take on the value 1, and the country is deemed to employ a "mixed system" that comprises features of both proportional representation and majority voting). I have used this information to identify instances of change made to electoral systems. Electoral system change here is defined as a change to electoral rules that results in a country switching either from proportional representation to a majority system, from majority to PR, from a mixed system to either PR or a majority system, or from either a PR or a majority system to a mixed system. In other words: Table 1 captures only far reaching changes that change the rule of the electoral game. Note that in this first step, I do not distinguish between democratic and non-democratic countries. Likewise, the degree to which a democracy is established played no role in case selection. As can be seen from table 1, restricting the sample to only democracies does not alter the preliminary conclusion to be drawn from this analysis, namely the trend to electoral systems that comprise features of both PR and majority voting.

Table 1 should be read as follows: Rows indicate which system a country used prior to change, while columns signify the country's new system. The degree to which a country is democratic can be seen from the notes in parentheses behind country names. The first figure is the year in which the change was effected, the second figure is the democracy score from the POLITY database,⁸¹ while the abbreviations 'F', 'PF', and 'NF' are taken from the Freedom House democracy project⁸² and denote 'Free', 'Partially Free', and 'Not Free', respectively. If any of the two measures are missing, then no data on the democracy level of that country in the observation year was available.

Altogether, 15 instances of electoral system change could be identified. Given that the database contains information on electoral systems in 3268 country-years, this amounts to 0.46 percent of cases in which electoral system change occurred. Put differently: More than 99.5 percent of all observations in the

81 (<http://www.cidcm.umd.edu/polity/>)

82 (<http://www.freedomhouse.org/>)

complete sample are negative cases. Yet, even from this limited number of positive observations, some tentative remarks are in order: There exists a clear pattern towards more proportional systems. Only four countries have moved in the direction of less proportionality: Kyrgyzstan, Papua New Guinea, Italy, and Mexico. The remaining 11 countries enacted changes to their electoral system that made them more proportional. What is maybe most striking about table 1 is the clustering of changes that resulted in mixed systems, that is, systems combining features of majority voting and proportional representation. This trend towards mixed systems has previously been noted in the literature⁸³; it is confirmed by the analysis presented here.

3.3 Change of electoral rules

As argued above, analysis of positive cases of electoral system change does not suffice to discern causal influences. To assess the systematic reasons underlying change of electoral rules, negative cases have to be included as well. In an attempt to more fully grasp the determinants of electoral rule changes, I conduct a survival analysis of the determinants of electoral rule changes. Survival analysis techniques were developed in medicine and engineering in order to assess the influence of independent variables on the survival time of patients or technical components. Increasingly, these techniques are making their way into the social sciences.⁸⁴ They can be fruitfully applied to research questions that ask about the determinants of the time it takes until an event occurs.

In the context presented here, the event I am interested in is the change of electoral rules. To identify such events, I again turn to the DPI data, which contain a variable that captures mean district magnitudes for parliamentary elections. Mean district magnitude is used as a proxy for the degree to which the electoral system is proportional. Higher values on this variable denote more

83 Patrick Dunleavy and Helen Margetts, "Understanding the Dynamics of Electoral Reform," 9-29.

84 Janet M. Box-Steffensmeier and Bradford S. Jones, *Event History Modeling. A Guide for Social Scientists* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

Table 1. Instances of electoral system change for the period from 1976 to 2006

		New System		
		Majority System	Mixed System	Proportional Representation
Old System	Majority System		Cameroon (2005; NF) Lesotho (2003,8, F) Morocco (1998, 6, PF) New Zealand (1979, 6, F) (1993, 10, F) Tunisia (1995,-3, NF) Ukraine (1998,7, PF)	Macedonia (2003, 9, PF) Sri Lanka (1993, -7, PF) Yugoslavia (1993, -7, PF)
	Mixed System	Kyrgyzsan (2006, PF)		El Salvador (1998, 7, F) Mozambique (1995, 6, PF)
	Proportional Representation	Papua Guinea (1976,10,F)	New Italy (1994, 10, F) Mexico (1978, -3, PF)	

proportional systems. This variable is, therefore, a more precise measure of changes to electoral rules than the electoral system variable discussed above. The failure event – to use survival analysis parlance – is defined as a change in the mean district magnitude for national parliamentary elections within one country. Thus, the subjects of the survival analysis are not countries, but the electoral rules of countries. Note that this approach does not distinguish between different types of changes made to electoral institutions. For instance, there is no difference between a country that dramatically increased its mean district magnitude from 1 to 25.8 – as New Zealand did in 1993 – and a country that marginally lowered its mean district magnitude from 13.9 to 11.6 as Sweden did in 1998. Both instances are treated as change to electoral rules. Therefore, the analysis captures both electoral system change and less far reaching changes to electoral rules. Likewise, the empirical models used in table 3 do not distinguish between changes that result in more proportional

rules and changes that render a voting system less proportional. Assessing the *direction* of change is left to subsequent analysis presented in table 4. Here, I am interested in which factors influence the probability that *any* change will occur. As discussed above, electoral rules tend to be fairly stable. Additionally, as the results from table 1 show, changes to electoral rules are effected both in all types of systems and in all directions. If we are interested in a more general explanation of electoral rule changes, not restricting analysis to a certain type of change is probably the way to go.

As outlined above, one of the recurring themes in accounts of electoral rule changes are perceived problems with the governability and/or the representation dimension of the electoral rules being changed. Governability and representation within a political system are not independent from one another. Rather, they can be traded-off against each other in electoral rule choice: While plurality voting rules typically enhance governability by producing clear-cut majorities, voting systems that follow the principle of proportional representation are better in representing minority political preferences. In the empirical analysis, I therefore include two dummy variables that capture whether the system used at time t-1 was proportional representation, and whether the system used at time t-1 was a majority system. Note that this leaves "mixed systems" as the comparison category.

To this, I add two variables that capture further potential dissatisfaction with electoral rules: The total fractionalization of the legislature (defined as the chance that a random draw will produce legislators from two different parties) and the degree to which the positions of parties in government are polarized. Additionally, these variables capture aspects of the "short-term catalysts" for electoral rule change theoretically identified above: A system with low fractionalization will make it easier to achieve the consensus necessary to effect electoral rule changes. The same is true for fractionalization *within* the government.

As I have argued, a theory of electoral rule change must not only account for positive outcomes, it also has to capture instances where electoral rule change did not occur. This makes it

necessary to think about variables that have been shown to affect a political system’s capacity to effect change more generally. Prime among these variables is the number of veto players in a polity.⁸⁵ I also include the share of government seats in the legislature in my empirical model because governments who do well under the current rules (reflected in its high share of parliamentary seats) will have fewer incentives to change these rules. The theoretical rationale for the variables used in the empirical model and their expected direction of influence are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. Variables used, expected direction of influence and theoretical arguments for expectation

Variable	Expected probability of electoral rule change	Theoretical argument
Proportional representation at t-1	?	PR systems produce legislatures with a higher number of parties; more parties in the legislature make it more difficult to change the rules, especially since these were the rules under which the parties deciding upon their change made it into parliament. On the other hand, problems on the “governability” dimension brought about by a large number of parties might make change more likely.
Majority system at t-1	Higher	Majority systems tend to provide limited representation for minority groups; this can be expected to put pressure on a democracy that uses majority voting: Problems on the “representation” dimension might make change more likely
Number of veto players	Lower	Higher numbers of veto players in a political system have more ways to block change of the system. Depending on the veto player in question, the player may also have an interest in

85 Tsebelis, George, Veto players: how political institutions work (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2002).

<p>Total fractionalization ?</p>	<p>preserving the old electoral rules. High degree of legislative fractionalization could signify problems with the "governability" dimension of the system, therefore making change more likely. On the other hand, compromise necessary to change electoral rules might be harder to achieve in a highly fractionalized legislature.</p>
<p>Share of governments seats in legislature Lower</p>	<p>The larger the proportion of seats the government controls the less it will feel compelled to make changes to electoral rules that brought into its position of control in the first place</p>
<p>Government polarization ?</p>	<p>See above, "Total fractionalization".</p>

All of these variables are taken from the DPI. The DPI measures the number of veto players in a system by adding up actors who can block political decisions. This measurement is done differently for parliamentary and presidential systems. For instance, in a parliamentary system, the number of veto players is incremented by one for every party in a coalition government if that party is needed to maintain a majority in parliament. For further details see the DPI codebook.⁸⁶ Additionally, data from the Polity IV database on democracy were used. Unlike in the exploratory analysis presented in table 1, for the multivariate analysis, the sample is restricted to countries whose democracy value exceeded 8 on the 21-point "Polity2" variable, which ranges from -10 to 10. Therefore, only democracies are included in the analysis.

Table 3 shows the results of Cox proportional hazard maximum likelihood regressions. I use a Cox survival model because it does not require specification of a baseline hazard ratio. The results are denoted as coefficients rather than hazard ratios and should

86 Both the data and the codebook can be found at: <http://econ.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/EXTDEC/EXTRESEARCH/0,,contentMDK:20649465~pagePK:64214825~piPK:64214943~theSitePK:469382,00.html>

Table 3. Change of electoral rules

	Model 1:	Modell 2:	Modell 3:
Proportional representation	-1.148*	-1.132*	-12.507***
(lag 1)	(-1.80)	(-1.75)	(3.61)
Majority system (lag 1)		0.265	12.676**
		(0.31)	(2.23)
Number of veto players	-0.834**	-0.851**	-2.529**
	(-2.48)	(-2.51)	(-2.38)
Total fractionalization	5.976*	6.176*	4.208
	(1.78)	(1.83)	(0.32)
Share of governments seats in legislature	-4.151*	-4.268*	-6.989
	(-1.76)	(-1.79)	(-1.22)
Government polarization	0.335	0.344	4.356***
	(0.345)	(0.96)	(2.99)
Country dummies:	No	No	Yes
N=	815	815	815
Subjects=	66	66	66
Failures=	17	17	17
Time at risk=	1177	1177	1177

be interpreted accordingly: A negative sign means that higher levels on the independent variable lower the probability that the event will occur (earlier). In model 1, proportional representation, fractionalization of the legislature and the size of the share in legislative seats the government controls show a weakly significant effect on the probability that electoral rules will be changed. While PR and government seat share are negatively related to the probability of the failure event, fractionalization increases the probability that rules will be changed. These results should be treated with caution, however, since they only border the interpretable ranges of significance. The same is not true for the veto player variable: A high number of veto players significantly reduces the probability that electoral rules will be changed.

Turning to model 2, which also includes a variable that captured whether the system used before the electoral rule change was a majority system, we observe only minor changes. Model 3 performs estimation on the same sets of parameters as model 2. Additionally, country dummies (coefficients not reported) are included to assess the claim that change of electoral rules is

highly contingent on country specific circumstances. The results from model 3 indicate that this claim is true only to a certain extent: Even after controlling for country characteristics, we observe a number of significant and systematic influences on electoral rule durability. Proportional systems are significantly less likely to change their rules than majority systems. This result confirms the existence of a general trend towards more proportional systems. Additionally, it shows that problems on the representation dimension are much more important for effecting changes to electoral rules than problems on the dimension of governability.

The veto player variable again turns out significantly and negatively related to the probability of change. Interestingly, in the model with country dummies, government polarization has a highly significant and positive effect on the probability that electoral rules will be changed. Since this variable captures the degree to which parties in government differ in their policy position, this result could be interpreted as confirming the observation that problems with the old system are a major driving force for electoral rule changes. More generally, the results of model 3 which include country dummies, can be seen as confirmation of previous accounts of electoral rule changes, namely that a combination of country specific and systematic factors drive change of electoral rules.

So far, only the occurrence of change was analyzed. Recall that no difference was made between a country lowering its mean district magnitude and a country increasing this measure of proportionality. To assess the determinants of directed change, model 4 (table 4) estimates a Prais-Winsten-regression model with panel corrected standard errors. Prais-Winsten models can be used with panel data because they allow controlling for serial autocorrelation in the error term. Unlike simple OLS regression, the Prais-Winsten technique does not assume that multiple observations on the same subject (country) at different points in time can be treated as independent. Results of this approach tend to deliver more conservative estimates of standard errors than OLS regression if used with time series cross section data and are thus more reliable.

Table 4. Electoral rules: assessing the direction of change

	Model 1:
Proportional representation (lag 1)	-1.023 (-1.50)
Majority system (lag 1)	6.654*** (2.28)
Number of veto players	-0.094** (-2.15)
Total fractionalization	5.317*** (2.86)
Share of governments seats in legislature	2.778 (1.63)
Government polarization	-0.365* (-1.85)
Constant	-4.2233 (-0.88)
Country dummies:	Yes
N=	835
Number of countries=	50
R²=	16.11
Wald χ^2=	194.12
Dependent variable: Change of mean district magnitude	
Prais-Winsten-Regression with panel corrected standard errors and AR1-process.	
*** p<0.01, **p<0.05, p<0.01; z-statistics in parentheses	

The dependent variable is the change of mean district magnitude, independent variables are the same as in model 3 above. Results are shown in table 4. Whether a country had used proportional representation in the period prior to the observation has no significant impact on the direction and magnitude of change. Conversely, the existence of a majority system has a positive and significant influence on change of mean district magnitude. Majority systems are more likely to make their voting systems more proportional. Interestingly, the number of veto players in a system makes this system more prone to electoral rule changes that go towards *less* proportionality. To the extent that a system with a high number of veto players changes at all (cf. results from survival analysis), the changes will result in lower mean district magnitude. Fractionalization of the legislature carries a positive sign and works significantly towards more proportional

voting rules. This result probably reflects the impact of a high number of small parties: These parties will only support changes that make voting rules more proportional. Finally, the coefficient on government polarization is weakly significant and negative. The higher the degree of polarization, the more change of electoral rules will result in less proportional provisions. Note that these results are derived from a regression that – like model 3 above – includes controls for idiosyncratic features of the countries in the sample.

Summing up the results from the survival analysis and the regression results on direction of change, we observe that a high number of veto players significantly lowers the probability that a country will change its electoral rules at all. This is a highly plausible result because veto players are well known to stabilize the status quo.⁸⁷ On the other hand, a high number of veto players works towards change that renders electoral rules less proportional. Together with the results from the government polarization variable (increasing the probability of change; making rules less proportional), these observations seem to confirm the assertion that dissatisfaction and functional problems arising from the old system are important determinants of electoral rules changes. Moreover, if less proportional systems are those that exhibit fewer problems on the dimension of “governability”⁸⁸ then functional problems tend to be actually solved by electoral reform.

This result notwithstanding is the observation that systems of proportional representation tend to lower the probability that electoral rules are changed. Once country specific characteristics are controlled for, electoral rules run a far higher ‘death’ risk in countries that have employed majority voting. This confirms the general trend towards systems that are more proportional.

Maybe most importantly, the models employing country fixed-effects (models 3 and 4) show that analyzing electoral rule changes is not confined to accounts of specific circumstances in a country. There are clearly discernable, systematic effects that

87 Tsebelis, Veto players.

88 Patrick Dunleavy and Helen Margetts, “Understanding the Dynamics of Electoral Reform,” 9-29.

influence the probability and the direction of electoral rule changes.

4. Conclusion

This paper has argued that accounts of electoral system change that confine themselves to positive outcomes are insufficient to deliver a systematic explanation of this important aspect of constitutional reform. Although electoral system change is rare, some countries *did* change their electoral systems and even more changed their electoral rules. This observation calls for an analysis of the reasons underlying such changes; an analysis that is likely to be of limited explanatory power if only positive cases are used. Therefore, in this paper, I have attempted to discern systematic effects of political and institutional variables on the probability and direction of electoral rule changes. It was shown that factors like the number of veto players in a system and the type of system that was in place before the change was effected, impact on both the probability and the direction of change. Additionally, government polarization was identified as a driving force behind electoral rule change. These results confirm an important insight from earlier studies, namely that electoral rule changes are oftentimes brought about by perceived problems with the functioning of the old system. By distinguishing between the governability and the representation dimension of these functionality problems, I was able to show that problems with representation make change not only more likely but also effect change in a direction that makes voting rules more proportional. The fact that these results are robust to the inclusion of country fixed effects further confirms the notion that country specific circumstances as well as more general systematic factors influence change of electoral rules.

Of course, the results presented in this paper are only a first step towards a more general theory of electoral rule changes. It would be interesting to further disentangle the exact relationship between Pippa Norris "long-term conditions" and "short-term catalysts". The difficulty of such an endeavor are noted by

Kenneth Benoit whose model of electoral system change⁸⁹ is possibly the furthest advanced in the field: "Cross-national data will not yield a perfect picture, however, since motivations rather than actual outcomes are the key to the theory, and since it may not be possible using aggregate data to reconstruct each actor's motivations and beliefs or even to know who the sides were on each electoral change."⁹⁰

Therefore, it seems worthwhile to further investigate electoral rules change on both a theoretical and an empirical level. A more systematic account of "actor's motivations and beliefs" has the potential of greatly furthering our knowledge about the causes underlying electoral system change. At the same time, as this paper has shown, it is important to consider those cases in which changes of electoral rules did not occur. A general theory of electoral system change not only has to account for instances of change but also for the long periods of stability observed in electoral rules.

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89 Kenneth Benoit, "Models of Electoral System Change," *Electoral Studies* 23 (2004): 363-389

90 Benoit, "Models of Electoral System Change," 386.

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LEGISLATIVE RECRUITMENT AND ELECTORAL SYSTEM CHANGE: THE CASE OF ROMANIA

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Abstract¹

This paper analyzes the transformations in Romanian parties' legislative recruitment strategies that are likely to occur with the change in the electoral system, by looking at the 2008 parliamentary elections and the data gathered from questionnaires with the new MPs. The main finding is a general move towards more local patronage-oriented recruitment, determined by the importance in this process of local party officials (presidents of county councils and mayors) as well as of private sponsors. The new electoral system seems to decrease the chances of women getting elected, while parties chose to delegate much of the campaigning costs, thus favoring well-to-do candidates. Scores of decentralization and inclusiveness of selectorates are computed and the article proposes a series of explanations for the intra-party mutations since 2004, when the last empirical study was conducted on the Romanian legislative recruitment.

1. Introduction

The selection and nomination of candidates for public offices (subject or not to electoral competition) is one of the main functions of political parties and political systems as a whole. This function can be performed transparently and following inclusive procedures, or on the contrary - behind closed doors, at top levels, thus beyond the scrutiny of ordinary citizens or rank and

¹ The authors would like to thank the three anonymous reviewers for their very useful advice. We also feel indebted to Sergiu Gherghina, Levente Littvay and Valentina Dimulescu for their support.

file members of parties. It is necessary to say that political scientists have recurrently deemed the mechanisms of recruitment and their results to have influence on the legitimacy and stability of political systems, as well as on the quality of policy outcomes. These aspects represent, in Pippa Norris' terms, "normative concerns about political recruitment"² and they are constantly the subject of empirical trials, proxy measurements through which scholars assess the reality behind the expectations. Going deeper into the field, any literature review of political elite recruitment studies will certainly indicate as the most common topic the mechanisms and patterns of legislative recruitment.³ The main explanations given by scholars focusing their attention in this direction refer to the importance of parliaments for modern democracies – they embody the quintessential function of representation⁴, and refer as well as to the amplitude of this selection process.

Moreover, legislative recruitment is privileged as a useful analytical tool in understanding political parties: how decentralized, how democratic and how permeable they are to the influence of interest groups. As the radical statement of E. E. Schattschneider goes: "[H]e who can make the nominations is the owner of the party."⁵ This "owner" can be de-constructed into the so-called 'selectorate' – "party organizations, the personal cliques, the groups of dignitaries... involved in the selection of candidates and in their presentation to constituencies".⁶

2 Pippa Norris, ed., *Passages to Power: Legislative Recruitment in Advanced Democracies*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 3.

3 See for example: Robert Putnam, *The Comparative Study of Political Elites*, (Prentice Hall, 1976); Lester Seligman et al, *Patterns of Recruitment. A State Chooses its Lawmakers*, (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1974); Pippa Norris & Joni Lowenduski, *Political Recruitment – Gender, Race and Class in the British Parliament*, (Cambridge, Cambridge U. P., 1995)

4 Heinrich Best & Maurizio Cotta, eds., *Parliamentary Representatives in Europe, 1848-2000. Legislative Recruitment and Careers in Eleven European Countries*,(Oxford University Press, 2000), 7.

5 E.E. Schattschneider, *Party Government*, (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1942), 100.

6 Heinrich Best & Maurizio Cotta, *ibidem*, 11

Above were stated some of the most important arguments of those who study legislative recruitment as an independent variable for other phenomena. Subsequently it can be asked: what are the determinants of legislative recruitment (recruitment as dependent variable)? The literature emphasizes frequently four sets of factors: the legal provisions⁷, the electoral system, the party system and last but not least, the territorial organization of the state.

In the USA, Germany, Finland or Norway the legislative recruitment process is officially regulated – it must be inclusive, relatively decentralized and based on voting rather than appointment⁸. Next, the party system is considered influential for legislative recruitment because the effective numbers of parties, their size, age or ideologies⁹ are believed to affect the strategies of recruitment. For example, one could think that small/ young parties are more decentralized than large ones, or that 'extremist' parties are more "authoritarian" - leader-oriented in their selection methods. The territorial organization of the state is yet another factor taken into account when controlling for the inputs of legislative recruitment. It has been argued that federalism is related to decentralized candidate selection¹⁰.

The fourth variable mentioned regards the effects of electoral systems on legislative recruitment and it is in this direction that the present paper will focus its analysis. The assumptions generally made on this relationship acknowledge the existence of the influence but there is no agreement either on the level of its significance or on the means through which it is exerted. To make clearer the last part: some consider PR/ list systems to favor

7 Pippa Norris, 1997, 2.

8 Lars Bille, 'Democratizing a Democratic Procedure: Myth or Reality? Candidate Selection in Western European Parties, 1960-1990' in *Party Politics*, 7, no. 3, (2001): 369.

9 Krister Lundell, 'Determinants of Candidate Selection. The Degree of Centralization in Comparative Perspective', in *Party Politics*, 10, no. 1, (2004): 32-33.

10 Leon Epstein, *Political Parties in Western Democracies*, (New Brunswick: Praeger, 1980), 31; Michael Gallagher & Michael Marsh, eds., *Candidate Selection in Comparative Perspective: The Secret Garden of Politics*, (London: Sage Publications, 1988).

centralization of recruitment (damaging the intra-party democracy – nomination decided by small, national executives) as opposed to single member districts systems, where candidate selection supposedly tends to be decentralized¹¹. Other political scientists¹² deny the accuracy of the last argument, while believing that electoral systems influence only the kind of resources/ qualities, selectors are seeking. For example, in SMD's electoral systems it is very likely for parties to seek candidates with local notoriety or strong influence on the local communities.

Taking into account the above mentioned dimensions of scholarship, the aim of this paper is to compare the methods and outcomes of candidate selection of the Romanian parties for the 2008 parliamentary elections and to analyze the possible transformations in recruitment that occurred, or are likely to occur, in accordance with the change in electoral law. Besides looking if running in SMDs has produced the need for different kinds of candidates' assets, we will also attempt to assess if the move towards a candidate-oriented election has/will modify the locus of selection (decentralization), or the inclusiveness of selectorates.

Why would it be necessary or interesting to conduct an analysis on this particular topic? The answer is twofold. Firstly, the case is important because of its relative uniqueness. It is very rare for a consolidated democracy¹³ to make a shift from a PR formula to a majoritarian or mixed one: Romania is the only European post-communist case. All the other changes meant the replacement of SMD-s with mixed (Albania, Ukraine) or PR (Macedonia), or switching from mixed systems to full PR (Russia, Ukraine, Serbia,

11 Donald R. Matthews, 'Legislative Recruitment and Legislative Careers', in Gerhard Loewenberg, Samuel C. Patterson, Malcolm Jewell eds., *Handbook of Legislative Research*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985): 35-7; Moshe Czudnowski, 'Political Recruitment', in Fred I. Greenstein and Nelson Polsby, eds., *Handbook of Political Science: Volume 2, Micropolitical Theory*, (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1975): 221.

12 Michael Gallagher & Michael Marsh, o. c., 260.

13 As Romania has been considered since 1996, see: Alina Mungiu-Pippidi, 'Poland and Romania' in Larry J. Diamond & Leonardo Morlino, eds., *Assessing the Quality of Democracy*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins U.P., 2005): 217.

Bulgaria and Croatia).¹⁴ Secondly, the case deserves attention because of the fact that expectations invested in the electoral engineering (by scholars, laypersons and politicians alike) regarded directly the legislative recruitment. The change followed a longish debate about the necessity of reforming the electoral system so as to provoke a renewal of the political class. The abolition of PR was justified by the need to promote new politicians, create stronger ties between the constituencies and their representatives, and by the need to have the possibility of sanctioning compromised politicians, who perennially managed to survive by securing safe places on party lists.¹⁵

The first section of the article deals with the patterns of legislative recruitment in Romania during the PR era, with a special focus on the elections held since 2000 (the second turnover of power). The second part of the section will present an overview of the new electoral system and its possible consequences. Section II will state the hypotheses of the inquiry and will describe the paper's research design: the construction of the dataset, the variables as well as the statistical methods employed for the analyses. Section III is reserved exclusively for discussion of the findings produced by the statistical analysis and for the investigation of the additional direct information collected via questionnaires sent to MPs. Finally, the conclusions will synthesize the results of the research and provide answers for the puzzle mentioned above.

14 Sarah Birch, 'Lessons from Eastern Europe: Electoral Reform Following the Collapse of Communism', paper prepared at the conference on 'Electoral Reform in Canada: Getting Past Debates about Electoral Systems', Mount Allison University, Sackville, New Brunswick, Canada, 10-12 May, 2005, available at: http://www.mta.ca/faculty/arts/canadian_studies/archives/birch.pdf

15 The study 'Political culture in Romania' (made in October-November 2008 by the Soros Foundation Romania) showed that people hoped the change in electoral system would bring: "...the possibility for the party leaders to impose unprepared candidates will be eliminated or at least decreased, the proportion of the candidates that come from the region for which they candidate will increase, the political class will be changed...MPs will be compelled to a greater extent to keep in touch with those who voted for them." A summary of all findings is available at: http://www.soros.ro/en/comunicate_detaliu.php?comunicat=79

1.1. Patterns of Legislative Recruitment in Romania during the PR electoral system

One of the criticisms commonly made towards PR by electoral system scholars was that it makes parties 'strong' at the expense of individual politicians, who do not need to develop strong reputations, but only the right connections in the party, in order to get on the list¹⁶. This results in obscurity of the legislators or very weak ties between MPs and their constituencies. The very same argument was relentlessly repeated in the Romanian context, where the electorate voted only on closed lists, without having the possibility of expressing preferences. If someone sympathized with the party as a whole, or only with some candidates, he/she was obliged to endorse the entire list even if it only included people imposed from the centre or absolute no-names. In the following lines, we will briefly describe how the process of composing the list and establishing the order of the names usually occurred for the main parties in the PR era, with a special focus on what has happened since 2000, when the party system started to stabilize itself. The analysis will consider three dimensions: the level of decentralization (centre vs. local vs. corporate), the mechanisms deployed by the selectorate (voting vs. appointment), and (where information are accessible) the criteria for selection. The description is based on comparisons between the formal regulations present in party statutes and "de facto" selection procedures as perceived by the literature or the actors involved.

The indicators for judging the decentralization of parties' legislative recruitment were borrowed from the above cited article of Krister Lundell, who has derived - from analysis of formal statutes of Western parties and previous scholarly work - a hierarchy of selection methods going from the most decentralized to the most centralized, as follows:

16 Matthew Soberg Shugart, 'Extreme Electoral Systems and the Appeal of the Mixed Member Alternative' in Matthew S. Shugart & Martin P. Wattenberg, eds., *Mixed Member Electoral Systems - The Best of Both Worlds?*, (NY: Oxford University Press, 2003): 26.

1. Selection at local party meetings, by local selection committees or by primaries open for all party members
2. Selection at the district level by a selection committee, by the executive district organ or at a convention (congress, conference) by delegates from the local parties
3. The same as 1 or 2 but regional or national organs exercise influence over the selection process, e.g. add names to the lists or have veto power. The decision, however, is taken at the district level. Formal approval by regional or national organs without actual involvement in the process belongs to the second category
4. The same as 5, but local, district or regional organs exercise influence over the selection process, e.g. party members, the local parties or committees at the constituency or the regional level propose candidates. The decision, however, is taken at the national level
5. Selection by the party leader, by the national executive organ, by a national selection committee, or by primaries at the national level"¹⁷

Table 1. The Romanian Parliamentary Elections 2000-2008

Parties	2000 (t=65.31% ***)		2004 (t=58.93%)		2008 (t=39.26%)	
	votes	seats	votes	seats	votes	seats
Social Democratic Party *	36.85%	210	36.9%	159	33.62%	158
Humanist/ Conservative Party *		10		30		5
National Liberal Party **	7.18%	43	31.48%	93	18.65%	93
Democratic (Liberal) Party **	7.35%	44		68	32.96%	166
Greater Romania Party	20.24%	121	13.32%	69	3.36%	0
UDMR	6.85%	39	6.23%	32	6.28%	31

¹⁷ Krister Lundell, 2004, 31.

* PSD and Humanists run together in all the elections, so separate percentages of vote are not available

** NLP and PD run together in 2004 as 'Justice and Truth', their percentages being thus aggregated

*** t = Voter Turnout

According to the above criteria, the most decentralized party is The Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (UDMR). Their lists were composed and voted on by the local branches and the ordinary members had the opportunity to participate (level 1 in Lundell's scale). The National Council of the Alliance could make some recommendations, but the last word with regard to the selection decisions belonged to the territorial organizations/branches.¹⁸ The decentralization of candidate recruitment facilitates the smooth functioning of an Alliance marked by its internal pluralism: several political orientations, from liberal to social democratic have their own factions within the union. There are also criticisms addressed to this model of recruitment, the most important of which regard the degree of professionalism of selected candidates, the costs implied, the easy distortion of results and the "electioneering fatigue" of candidates and staffs¹⁹. It should be added that the majority of the MP's of the Alliance have quite a few number of mandates, so it seemed there was little room for new-comers.

The Social Democratic Party (PSD) organized internal elections for nominations, open to all members, only in 2004. Nevertheless, their results were not enforced because of the electoral alliance with the Humanist Party (later renamed, Conservative). Although the 2005 new party statute officially imposed them, under the label "preliminary elections" to be held at the district level (articles 3 and 39), there is no evidence of the provision being applied. The party statute also limited to a proportion of maximum 1/3 the number of MP candidates in a constituency that can be nominated by the national leadership (article 99). Having

18 Ionuț Ciobanu, 'Selectoratul partidelor politice romanesti' [The Selectorates of Romanian Political Parties], *Sfera Politicii*, no. 126-127, (2007): 66

19 For more details see the comments of UDMR's vice-president, Peter Kovacs available at: <http://kovacspeter.worPDress.com/2008/01/17/eficacitate-vs-populism-consideratii-privind-institutia-alegerilor-interne/>

said this, it is realistic to believe that party county organizations have an important say in the nomination decisions (even if we only consider the number of "local barons" in the party), which does not mean that the National Executive Committee does not play a significant role. The empirical research done by Laurențiu Ștefan was the first to emphasize this balance between national and local leaders of the PSD in the process of candidate selection, the author mentioning that despite "rather numerous parachutists" who needed the backing of central leadership, the proportion of 2/3 of candidatures decided at local level seemed to be a reality²⁰. Therefore, on Lundell's scale of decentralization the social democrats would be somewhere closer to '3' than to '4' (levels). The classical recruitment from the party ranks was doubled by a large share of outsiders²¹: businessmen, trade union leaders, but also public servants or (former) managers of state owned-companies (many of them members of second or third layers of the former Communist Nomenklatura).

The Democrat Party (named nowadays Democrat-Liberal after its merger with a faction from the Liberal Party) had fixed in its statute²² a mixed procedure: drawing up and voting²³ the lists of candidates at the county level, but also nominations made directly by the National Permanent Bureau (art. 148, 3-8 of the statute). In the case of deadlock between the two levels, the final decision would be taken by another national body: the National Coordination Council. Candidacy requires at least 3 years of party membership and 2 years of active involvement certified by the Secretariat for Human Resources, Militants and Career Management (art 148.1)

Going beyond the formal regulations, it was argued that the "incidence of national party leadership intervention is the lowest

20 Laurențiu Ștefan, *Patterns of Political Elite Recruitment in Post-Communist Romania*, (Bucharest: Ziu Publishing House, 2004): 185.

21 Laurențiu Ștefan, (2004): 242.

22 The paragraph discussing the selection and nomination of candidates for Parliament is identical in both the older statute of the PD and the new one of the DLP.

23 This procedure is probably dead letter, since it was never certified by an official account neither in the newspapers nor in the specialized literature.

after UDMR.”²⁴ A strong importance was given in the party’s legislative recruitment process to the position in the party hierarchy and to political experience at the local level. The rate of legislative incumbency was quite high, veteran MPs actually controlling the party until the 2001 change in leadership (when P. Roman was replaced by the future mayor of Bucharest and current President, T. Băsescu). A ‘3’ on Lundell’s scale would be appropriate.

The National Liberal Party had a recruitment process based mainly on nomination. The lists were the result of negotiations between the Territorial Permanent Delegation, the (National) Permanent Delegation and the Central Political Bureau (art. 52 and 68 of the statute). Ordinary members were not involved. Candidacy implies at least 2 years of party membership, but the Permanent Delegation can approve derogations (art. 87).

The analysis conducted by Laurențiu Ștefan pointed to a preeminent role in PNL candidate selection of the central leadership, the author assessing the autonomy of ‘local structures’ as being rather weak²⁵. However, since the first years of the new millennium, when Ștefan did his research, there has been an important mutation in the internal power division of the PNL²⁶. This concerns especially the great importance acquired by certain county branches of the party through powerful local leaders, the best examples being the Iași organization (Relu Fenechiu), Gorj (Dan Ilie Morega) or Constanța (Puiu Hasotti). The fact that this logic of decentralization affected the recruitment is demonstrated by the number of new MPs promoted by the above mentioned leaders, who had a fulminating ascension - some of them were even appointed ministers, in the last 4 years. In June 2008, the president of the party, (and Romania’s Prime-Minister at the time) Călin Popescu-Tăriceanu announced internal elections for the nomination of candidates to the November elections. This initiative was re-framed several times

24 Laurențiu Ștefan, (2004): 184.

25 Laurențiu Ștefan, (2004): 186.

26 The transformation of the PNL was only covered by the media, no scholarly work being done in this direction.

before being completely abandoned.²⁷ Given all the above different trends, it is quite hard and maybe sort of meaningless to aggregate and simply say, following Lundell's scale that the Liberals exhibit a medium centralized recruitment pattern.

On the contrary, the Greater Romania Party and the Conservative Party (formerly Humanist Party), two small parties continuously present in Parliament (in the analyzed period, 2000-2008) can be straightforwardly categorized as having a recruitment highly-centralized and leader-dominated²⁸ – values of 5 on Lundell's continuum (articles 75 and 76 of the Conservatives' statute). Besides large amounts of politicians adopted from other parties, they relied also on former Communist activists and officers of the 'Securitate', political police.²⁹

It is also important to take into account the other dimension of decentralization that is emphasized by the literature, besides the territorial one. Corporate decentralization refers to functional representation of specific groups (women, youth, trade unions etc.) through specific strategies of selection like the "reserved place mechanism" (quotas) or the "sectarian district" (selectorates and candidates come from the same sector or social

27 It is interesting that the advice for running the preliminary elections was given by the same famous Israeli political consultant, Tal Sillberstein, who promoted their introduction them in the PSD 4 years earlier. For more details see: http://www.cotidianul.ro/alegeri_interne_in_pnl_marca_silberstein-50657.html and <http://www.gandul.info/politica/alegerile-interne-din-pnl-varianta-restransa.html?3928;2763141>

28 Laurențiu Ștefan, (2004): 185-6.

29 Raluca Grosescu, 'Traiectorii de conversie politica a nomenclaturii din Romania. Spre o taxonomie a partidelor create de fostele elite comuniste' [Political Conversion Trajectories of the Romanian Nomenclatura. Towards a Taxonomy of the Political Parties created by the former Communist Elites] in *** Elite comuniste inainte si dupa 1989, [Communist Elites Before and After 1989], the Yearbook of the Institute for the Investigation of the Communist Crimes in Romania, vol. II, (Iasi: Polirom, 2007): 203-5. See also: Marius Oprea, Mostenitorii Securitatii [The Inheritors of the Securitate], (Bucharest: Humanitas, 2004); and the 'Lists of Stained / Compromised Parliamentarians', initiated by several NGOs' under the initiative, 'Coalition for a Clean Parliament', available at <http://www.catavencu.ro/lista.html>.

group)³⁰. None of the Romanian parties applied this kind of decentralization, although there were some initiatives inside the PSD about implementing specific quotas of representation for women and youth party organizations.³¹

Next, we will mention two other common patterns of selection and nomination that were emphasized to cut across partisan differences. First, an important observation regards the level of center domination, revealed by the growing number of 'parachutists' – politicians with national careers that were imposed on the parties' district lists, disregarding the will and potential of members in local branches: "Gradually, more and more constituencies are represented by politicians with... residence in Bucharest. Parliamentary activities become more and more a matter within the practical reaches of the central elite of the parties and less accessible to the genuine representatives of the constituencies."³² Second, another important factor in the legislative recruitment of new-comers was their financial background³³. Almost all parties chose to reward businessmen that contributed to electoral campaigns' costs with seats in Parliament. Both factors will be taken into account later in the analysis.

As a final remark of this part we have to say that none of the Romanian parties modified the articles of their official statutes regarding selection of candidates for Parliament, after the change in electoral system. This implies that informal practices are much more important and that is why an empirical inquiry is needed. Nevertheless, statutes cannot be altogether neglected since they set at least the general desiderata for recruitment, not to mention that they can be reactivated and used in intra-party struggles. On

30 Gideon Rahat & Reuven Y. Hazan, 'Candidate Selection Methods – An Analytical Framework' in *Party Politics*, 7, no. 3, (2001): 304.

31 In July 2004 the 'Ovidiu Șincai Institute' affiliated to the PSD proposed the project of preliminary elections, through which 25% of the candidates would have been chosen by the women organization, respectively another quarter by the youth organizations. For more details see: http://www.fisd.ro/PDF/mater_noi/Raport%20alegeri%20interne.pdf

32 Laurențiu Ștefan, (2004): 236.

33 As it results from the interviews I (Ionut Ciobanu) conducted with MPs.

the other hand, the fact that the "guidelines and rules in official party regulations tend to have de jure not de facto power"³⁴ points to the fact that the Romanian parties (with the exception of UDMR) are more inclined towards a patronage-oriented recruitment than to a 'bureaucratized' process of selection, to use the ideal types proposed by Pippa Norris.

1.2 The new electoral system and its alleged consequences

Several alternative variants of electoral system were debated by the Parliament for many months, varying from the German MMP, proposed by an NGO (Pro-Democracy Association) to the French run-off system. In addition to this institutional debate, the President called for a referendum in November 2007 whereby the people were asked if they want a two round-majoritarian system. Although more than 80% agreed, the referendum was invalidated by the participation of only 26% of the voters³⁵. A compromise was finally reached on the variant proposed by the Liberal minority government and Pro-Democracy Association. The new electoral law adopted by the Romanian parliament on March 4th 2008 brought to an end the Proportional Representation system used for 5 electoral cycles since 1990. There are 43 constituencies (for the 41 counties, Bucharest and Diaspora) with Single Member Districts for each seat in Parliament (330 deputies and 135 senators). The citizens have two votes (one per chamber); the mandates are attributed in three stages:

1. The candidates with a share of votes of at least 50% + 1 win directly a seat in the new legislative. The parties that did not manage to surpass the national threshold (5% of the total number of votes) can enter via the alternative threshold (6 districts won in the Chambers of Deputies + 3 in the Senate). Independent candidates can make it into parliament only in this stage – they are excluded from redistributions.

34 Pippa Norris, 'Legislative Recruitment' in Lawrence Leduc, Richard G. Niemi, Pippa Norris, eds., *Comparing Democracies, Elections and Voting in Global Perspective*, (London: Sage Pub., 1996): 203.

35 The 2000 referendum law specifies the validation threshold at 50% + 1 of the persons entitled to vote.

2. All the votes won by the candidates of a party in a constituency are added and the number is divided by the electoral coefficient (ratio between the total votes cast in that constituency and the number of seats allocated for that constituency). In this way is computed the number of seats that each party (above the national thresholds) is entitled to receive. After subtracting the number of seats won directly by the candidates of that party, the remaining mandates are given to those candidates of the party that received the largest share of votes. If a party wins more mandates than it is proportionally entitled to, the seats are kept and the size of the Parliament increases.³⁶

3. If there are still mandates to be allocated, they are redistributed according to the national coefficients of parties to the best situated candidates of those parties, in the same constituency.

The new electoral system proposed a combination in which although running in SMDs, candidates are - if they do not get absolute majority - still dependent on the performance of their party colleagues in the other SMDs of the county, and subsequently their chances are increased/ decreased by the party's national performance. Another important feature of the new electoral formula is that it keeps a low level of accountability - voters can be only partially effective in sanctioning candidates, by not voting for them, because candidates can win the seat from the second or third place (after redistributions). Thus, the system favors strategic choice of SMDs.

The change from voting a party list to voting a person made the parties face many dilemmas in what regards the selection of candidates. The first dilemma would regard the question where to find the candidates (excluding from the discussion the incumbents)? An option given the personalization of the vote was to look outside the party and invite local notables to run that enjoyed high popularity and/or influence: from physicians to businessmen or singers. The opposite option was to appoint local,

36 This is what actually happened: 4 more seats were allocated in the Chamber of Deputies, and 2 in the Senate.

loyal “party soldiers”³⁷ (politicians holding local offices, or simply activists) so as to reward them and at the same time retain a strong party discipline within the parliamentary group, a discipline that could be endangered if too many former apolitical figures were co-opted.

Table 2. Incumbency rates 2008

	PNL	PDL	PSD	UDMR
MPs elected in 2004	93	68	159	32
MPs running again in 2008	70	74*	123	17
Re-elected	32	40	71	16
Percentage of re-election	45.71	54.05%	57.72%	94%

*The difference appears from the merger with the PNL faction

** We did not take into account the candidates that had previous mandates in the Parliament but were not present in 2004-8

A second dilemma refers to the decision of delegating the costs of campaigning: since the PR unique party campaign was history and each candidate had to have a separate campaign with prints, clips, blogs or other personalized advertising materials, the parties could choose to put the expenses on the accounts of those running: either by nominating affluent candidates or requiring candidates themselves to find sources of financing. But this move could, in turn, produce again too much independence, and weaken the party control over its MPs.

Next, for the very fact that the new electoral system is a middle-of-the-road solution between a constituency-oriented candidacy and the desire of the parties to keep control over the candidates, it was quite unclear to whom the new MPs would be responsive. On the one hand, all the MPs face the problem of identification with a particular constituency, which triggers the ‘delegate’ logic

37 Ioan Mircea Paşcu, ‘Uninominalul’, Q Magazine (August, 31st 2008), available at: <http://www.qmagazine.ro/articole/595/Uninominalul.html>

of representation³⁸. On the other, the MPs could be perceived as “trustees”, since for many the locus of loyalty is represented by the party selectorates - especially in the cases where the candidates were allocated safe seats or where they got their places due to redistributions based on party performance. A third, alternative explanation makes the MPs responsive neither to the citizens in their constituency nor to the parties, but to the interests of those wealthy persons that sponsored their campaigns.

2.1 Hypotheses

There are two sets of hypotheses we tested, corresponding to the two different research strategies adopted (see the explanations below).

A

H. 1: Given the characteristics of the new electoral system, the more political experience at the local/county level, the more likely the newcomer is to be elected.

H. 2: The replacement of the PR system should have a negative effect on women’s chances to be elected

H. 3: Running in a SMD part of a county governed by a politician from his/ her party should significantly increase the odds of a newcomer being elected.

H. 4: The more important the party office occupied by the first-time candidate, the larger his/her chances of winning the seat.

B

H. 1: Under the new electoral system, a significant number of candidates are likely to choose or need to finance their campaign themselves.

H. 2: There should be variation of selection methods within parties, based on different degrees of autonomy that certain organizations enjoy, due to previous electoral performances or power of county leaders.

38 J. Mansbridge, “Rethinking Representation”, *American Political Science Review*, no. 97, (2003): 515–528.

Research strategies

Before describing the research strategies it is necessary to say that the study was uniquely focused on first-time elected MPs, because the incumbents (in Romanian parties as in many other European parties) have generally the possibility of running again without passing a new selection process.

The first strategy meant a quantitative analysis of the electoral results (which had the determinants of recruitment as independent variables) because we believed that by looking at the elected candidates we will have a valuable proxy measurement of the different recruitment processes. We argue this by showing that 30.46% (79 persons) of the MPs in our sample got their seats after being on the 2nd, 3rd or 4th place – thus the sample contains not only the novices with the perceived greatest chance of winning but also the more marginal figures produced by different recruitment strategies. Furthermore, this kind of analysis is valuable not only with respect to the assessment of the assets that parties took into account when nominating candidates, but also for the feedback given by the electorate, which can in turn provoke subsequent changes in the selection practices.

Second, in order to have direct information about the recruitment, we also sent questionnaires to all newly elected MPs. We sought to obtain data about selectorates, campaign financing, perceived decentralization and inclusiveness in the candidate's party, but also to re-test some of the findings of the previous statistical analysis. The rate of response was a little bit more than 10%, in line with other research on elites, thus making the generalization of findings partially limited.

2.2 Variables

Our dataset consists of all MPs elected for the first time on November 30th 2008*, which resulted in a sample size of N=243 (out of 471)³⁹. The data were taken from the official websites of

39 We did not include in our database the 18 deputies of the national minorities because their places are guaranteed by the electoral law, irrespective of the

the parties and their local branches, from websites of candidates, but also from newspapers and campaign blogs. For the variable 'institutional experience' the information provided by candidates or by news regarding them, was verified on the official websites of those institutions. The availability of information differed from party to party, and also varied regionally, and with the degree of development of local media. Despite these nuances, we have to say that generally the proportion of missing data is very low: we found no data on the party careers of 8 MPs and on the profession of 2.

Regarding the questionnaires, they were sent to all MPs in the sample, on their official electronic mail addresses from the Parliament as well as on many of their private accounts. We received 26 responses - at little bit more than 10% (the largest percentage being 13% for PNL), but, at least the number of questionnaires is almost perfectly proportional with the shares of new-comers corresponding to each party. There is no regional bias concerning the provenience of respondents (they come from 21 counties, from all the regions in Romania, only 4 pairs of respondents having the same residence). Only 1 of the 14 UDMR MPs in our sample responded, despite the fact that we sent them questionnaires in both Hungarian and Romanian. Variables included in the analysis:

Dependent variable:

1. How the new (first time) MP got elected: 'being in first place' (winning the majority or plurality of votes) versus 'not winning' - MP's which got the seat after redistribution, coming from the 2nd, 3rd or even 4th place. The variable measures the degree of success of the candidate and, indirectly, the success of parties' recruitment strategies.

Independent Variables:

number of votes received, and they do not need to compete with other candidates. We did include the 4 of the MPs elected for the first time by the Romanians in Diaspora. The possibility of having in parliament representatives of those living abroad was introduced by the new electoral law.

1. Experience in political institutions – is generally considered to be an important asset for candidates, in Western European settings⁴⁰ and for Romanian parties as well⁴¹. The corresponding hypothesis tests for a preeminence of local political experience - which implies that being mayor of a small town should have been more important than having an important function in a governmental agency. In other words, local notability and local political influence ought to represent strong assets for a successful recruitment. It was coded: 0 = no experience/ 1= local council, / 2=mayor /3= decentralized, local governmental agencies/ 4= county council,/ 5= national political institutions/ 6 = experience at both local and national levels/ 7 = Member of the European Parliament

2. Party Career – Next to political experience, a position in the party's (different levels of) leadership is one of the most salient determinants of recruitment as results from the ample comparative study edited by Heinrich Best and Maurizio Cotta: 'Generally more than 30% of MPs (up to around 80% in some countries) can be seen to have held a leading party position at a local or national level before their first election to Parliament.'⁴² The variable was coded as follows: 0 = no office/ 1= member of the party's local branch leadership/ 2 = member of party's county branch leadership / 3= office in the national organs of the party.

3. Influence of the County Leader: because many Romanian political scientists and journalists have signaled the great power enjoyed by the heads of county (districts) councils- many of them labeled as 'local barons', we decided to introduce a dummy variable to control for the effects of running in a constituency part of the county governed by a politician coming from the same party or from a rival one. The presidents of county councils distribute the funds for all the city halls and issue development plans that shape the economy of the entire county. Many of them managed to keep the office for several terms, thus creating strong clientelistic networks. The decision for their impeachment

40 Michael Gallagher & Michael Marsh, eds., (1988): 248.

41 Laurențiu Ștefan, (2004): 151-156.

42 Heinrich Best & Maurizio Cotta, eds., (2000): 505.

is almost impossible to obtain. From June 2008 they are elected in a FPTP contest, which is supposed to give them the legitimacy they lacked until now – they were elected by the other councilors.

Control variables:

Profession – having the categories: ‘professional politician’, ‘civil servant’, ‘trade union leader’, ‘engineer’⁴³, businessman, ‘media and showbiz’ and ‘other’.

Age - We recoded it as ‘age group’ comprising three categories: 1st: 25-40, 2nd: 41-56 and 3rd: 57-72.

Gender – the sample included 27 women and 216 men.

2.3 Methods

A. First, the Chi Squares Test of Independence was used – mainly because the dataset includes only categorical data (except the ‘age’ variable). In this manner we were able to tell if the distributions of ‘winners’ and ‘lucky redistributed’ were related or not with the above mentioned independent variables. We believed our sample is large enough (N=243) to use the Chi Squares Test of Independence and avoid Type II errors. We thought the cells’ size would be appropriate, and thus the analysis would not run into small frequencies problems (cells that violate the rule of minimum 5 observations expected for each cell)⁴⁴. Since the chi squares show only if the hypothesis of independence between the two variables is rejected, but not the direction of the association, or how strong this is, we also reported and analyzed the values of Cramer’s V and Phi for each statistically significant relationship.

43 The Romanian Communists’ fetish for the engineering industry, resulted in the largest number per capita of engineers in the whole world. The engineers ‘dominated’ Romanian politics even after 1989! For this see also, Irina Culic, ‘Social Actors in a Political Game. The Romanian Political Elite and Democratization, 1989-2000’, The Romanian Journal of Political Science, no. 1 (2005).

44 We made this assumption by using the rule of dividing the number of the population in my sample to the number obtained by multiplying the number of levels/categories of the dependent and independent variables for each case. The results were for each case well above five - as the rule suggested.

B. After the chi squares tests we decided to apply also Logistic Regression⁴⁵ inferential statistics, in order to assess better how much the variables proposed influence the odds of a recruited candidate being elected. The results confirmed the most important findings of the chi squares tests.

C. Because the information we got from the questionnaires came from a small number of cases it was analyzed only through descriptive statistics.

3.1 Candidates' assets or party support?

The distribution of new-comers and their degrees of electoral success within parties is relevant in making the whole picture clearer. Table 3 below confirms the expectations one could have

Table 3. Party Identity of newcomers and electoral results

N=243	National Liberal Party	Liberal-Democratic Party	Social Democratic Party	Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania	Totals
Winning the 1st place	20	81	53	10	164 (69.54%)
Being on the 2nd, 3rd or 4th position	32	25	18	4	79 (30.46%)
Total	52	106	71	14	
% newcomers in the parliamentary group	55.9%	64.6%	44.9%	45.1%	

after the recruitment processes and electoral campaigns. Firstly, one half of the newcomers are members of the Liberal Democratic Party, the presidential party, and a party of mayors/local notables which had an electoral boom (mainly because of the President's

45 Although some political scientists would deem 243 cases too few for a regression, we considered the number appropriate since the research is focused on elites.

popularity and his anti-corrupt system discourse). The second largest percentage belongs to PNL (the minority-governing party), which recruited recently a significant number of persons with high visibility, not involved before in politics⁴⁶.

Experience in political institutions

Despite the fact that the differences on this feature between winning MPs and lucky MPs proved not to be statistically significant, the variable institutional experience remains important for explaining the sociological characteristics of the new-comers. Accordingly, the hypothesis regarding the importance of local political experience was validated since 65.1% of the first time elected MP's hold experience in local/county administration, as opposed to 27.2 %, who have no political experience and the remainder, 7.7%, who have participated mainly in national politics.

Laurențiu Ștefan considers experience in public institutions to be a sign of parties giving their members the chance of apprenticeship before recruiting them as MP candidates. We would rather follow the interpretation given by another political scientist, Cristian Preda, who considers the fact that the same people are repeatedly running for local councils, district councils, city halls and parliament to be a proof of parties' paucity in human resources.⁴⁷ On the other hand, the local politics expertise can also be interpreted as favoring the "delegate" logic of representation, since it means that the MPs have significant knowledge about the problems of the communities they represent.

Party Career

46 They are well-know actors like Mircea Diaconu and Florin Calinescu, singers (Mihai Pocorschi, Dida Dragan, Nicolae Furdui-Iancu) or journalists (Cristian Topescu).

47 Argument from a public debate quoted by Razvan Braileanu, 'Nu trageți in pianist, votati-!!' ('Don't shoot the pianist, vote for him!') Revista 22, no. 968, (September 2008).

The results of the chi square test for party career showed a level of significance of $p=.17$ at a $df=3$, having only one cell which violated the small frequencies rule⁴⁸. Because of these indicators we can say that generally the relationship remained statistically insignificant. The absence of statistically high significant differences between the above mentioned categories of MP's can be partially explained by the fact that more than 2/3 of them (75.8%) are members of the local and county leadership of the party branches where they run for a constituency. Moreover, it could be argued that there is a preeminence of the county level of the party over the others in the selection and promotion of new candidates: 54% of the new MPs come only from the ranks of parties' county leaderships.

Influence of the County Leader

For the 'county leader's influence' variable we had to exclude the results registered for Bucharest (because the president of the General Council of the Municipality does not enjoy even by far the same influence of a County Council president) and for the Diaspora (where parties have no local branches, and there are no county leaders). All the cells had at least 5 observations and displayed a Pearson chi squares of 51^{***} , $df=1$.⁴⁹ The result (see Table 4) seems actually very convincing of the importance of this variable since only 5 candidates enjoying the support of the president of the county council did not manage to win a plurality/majority. The Cramer's V and Phi indicated both a level of strength for this relationship of .480 at *** significance, which points to a rather moderate correlation of the relationship.

Profession

Although there were no significant differences between the winners and the "lucky redistributed" new MPs, it is worth mentioning some of the frequencies – they partially confirm the

48 The Phi and Cramer's V values show a very weak correlation, .145 at a dubious level of significance, $p=.174$

49 The likelihood ratio was 59.48, significant at $P<.001$, while the Fisher exact test indicated the same highly relevance in terms of statistical significance

Table 4. Effects of county leader support on the place obtained in the college

N=222, all being valid cases.	Running against the 'system'	Having the support of the 'county leader'	Total
Winning the 1st place	Observed= 64 Expected=88.5	O= 86 E= 61.5	140
Being on the 2nd, 3rd or 4th position	O= 67 E= 42.5	O= 5 E= 29.5	72

older recruitment patterns. So, the second largest percentage is represented by businessmen– 19.1% - a fact which comes to corroborate our hypothesis of the importance of self-financing the campaign. Almost 14% are professional politicians, 11% engineers and almost 9% are civil servants. The other categories mentioned in the literature (trade union leaders, media and showbiz) are included too, but with shares smaller than 3%. Nevertheless, the surprise comes from liberal professions (most of them lawyers and physicians) which had the largest percentage, 39.1%.

Age

The chi square test failed to reject the null hypothesis: $p=.48$ at $df=2$. We have to say that, as expected, the new-comers are generally younger than their more experienced colleagues: the mean being 45.49 years (the average age taking into account all Parliamentarians is 48.5⁵⁰).

Gender

There were almost perfectly identical distributions of males and females, since $p=.92$, $df=1$. The female newcomers represent almost 2/3 of the total number of women MP elected: 27 out of

50 Dan Arsenie, 'Parlamentarul Tipic: 48 de ani, inginer sau jurist' [The typical MP: 48, engineer or jurist] in Evenimentul Zilei, (December 5th 2008)

42⁵¹. It seems the change in electoral system did affect slightly the chances of women to be recruited and elected – there were 50 women MPs elected in 2004, and 49 in 2000. This finding validates the gender-related hypothesis and corroborates the assumptions for which the literature considers disadvantageous for women to run in SMDs as opposed to PR systems.⁵² More research should be done to see if also the number of women candidates was lower under the new electoral system.

3.2 The odds of being a successful newcomer

The analysis emphasized the great relevance of the 'county president influence' variable: the Exponential B of this variable was 17.82. Thus it can be said that if a candidate runs in a SMD part of a county governed by a baron from his/her party, then he/she is approximately 17 times more likely to win than otherwise (see table 5 below). Nevertheless there are a number of possible objections that can be addressed to this finding. Firstly, it can be argued that not the presence of a county council president from the same party as the candidate is "a ticket to success". Those officials have been recently elected by the same population of the county that votes for the MPs. Such correlation, if valid, would only mean that preferences of the electorate have not changed since the local elections. Therefore, the correlation could be considered spurious.

We agree partially with the above contention but only for those counties where the president of the county council has not cumulated several mandates and is not acknowledged as a 'local baron' using his clientelistic networks to mobilize voters, either for him or for his party. At least 11 (25%) of the actual presidents of county councils were identified as 'local barons' by the inquiries mainly based on policy and local media monitoring, of several NGOs, under the initiative, 'Clean Government

51 There were in each legislative 2 women elected as deputies representing minorities – they were excluded from the counting

52 Steven Saxonberg, 'Women in East European Parliaments', *Journal of Democracy*, 11, no: 2, (April 2000): 147-148; Pippa Norris, 'Choosing Electoral Systems: Proportional, Majoritarian and Mixed Systems', *International Political Science Review*, 18, no. 3, (July 1997): 306-309.

Coalition'. Those politicians were involved in corruption acts (falsified auctions, public contracts for the clients' firms etc.) and are now serving for the second or third mandate⁵³.

A second objection refers to the case in which more local barons can be identified in the same county – besides the presidents of county councils there are also mayors who have built in several mandates, similar, though smaller power networks based on the same recipe of corruption and clientelism. Indeed, this is a very complex situation which cannot be covered without an in depth knowledge of local affairs. What can be said is that because of the de facto "power vertical"⁵⁴ (presidents of county councils distributing funds and issuing development plans that affect all city halls), the presidents of county councils have the capacity to coerce mayors, and thus their influence is greater. Nevertheless, the importance of mayors is crucial since the electoral districts are, in the majority of cases, designed so as to coincide with towns or communes, and especially in poorer and rural areas this gives mayors even more incentives to mobilize the electorate in one direction or another. Thus, it is not surprising that with the new electoral system dozens of incumbent mayors have been elected as MPs (observation which applies best to the PDL). We tried to find an answer to the antinomy of influences (presidents of counties vs. mayors) by putting in the questionnaire an item related to the support given to the candidate by the party officials.

To continue, it is important to emphasize that the logistic regression confirmed the value of the variable institutional experience, recoded here so as to contain 4 categories ('experience at local level', 'no experience', 'experience in national political institutions' and 'experience at both, national and local levels'). The significance acquired was $p=.08$, while the Exponential B was 1.56.

53 See further information at www.romaniacurata.ro

54 To paraphrase the concept associated with Vladimir Putin's strengthening of the central power vis-à-vis the leaders of the regions – see Richard Sakwa, *Putin: Russia's choice*, (London: Routledge, 2004): 159.

Table 5. Effects of institutional experience, party career and county leader support

Variables	B(Estimate)	Standard Error	Exponential B	Significance	Wald Test	% correctly estimated: 71.5
Institutional Experience	.44	.26	1.56	.08	2.97	Pseudo R Square: 0.348
Party Career	.12	.24	1.13	.60	.27	-
Influence of the County Leader	2.88	.49	17.82	***	33.43	2Loglikelihood: 208.96 Chi Squares: 61.57*** df=3
Constant	-.653	.38	0.52	.08	2.90	Hosmer and Lemeshow Test: 3.23, df=6, P=.779

N=243, df=1

3.4 What do MP's think about recruitment?

Selectorates and intra-party variations of selection procedures

90% of all the respondents to the questionnaires say that they were nominated as candidates in the county organization of the party. But there are important nuances about selectorates at this level.

With only one exception all the respondents from the PSD have been nominated by the county leadership of the party: the executive bureau – this explains probably why the selection is not perceived as very inclusive. None of the PSD respondents mentioned anything about their nomination being validated through vote in the organization.

In contrast with the above described situation, a respondent from the PNL argues that her nomination has been established by voting (10 persons applied for candidature to the county's 5 SMDs) held in the county delegation of the party. The amount of votes received by the first 4 candidates allowed them to choose

the SMD in which to run, the 5th remaining with the last constituency. This is quite an important finding because it shows a variation of selection methods within the PNL, since it is the first and only evidence of legislative recruitment through voting.

In the same category of variation of selection procedures within parties we can put the information given by a PDL respondent who said that the nominations in his county were made after surveys over possible candidates' popularity had been conducted in each electoral district. This sort of polling seems to have been used also by some of the organizations from the PNL⁵⁵. Only 2 respondents (1 from PDL and the other from the PSD) say that they had been nominated by the local organizations of the party, which shows that decentralization is rarely applied fully – to the last tier.

Support from party officials

Because the previous statistical analysis (of the electoral results of the new comers) showed that running in a constituency part of a county governed by a person from the same party has an important positive effect on chances of being elected, we re-tested the assumption through question 6. The results confirmed partially the analysis, while suggesting another important factor – the support of mayors from the same party. Only 10% of all the respondents declared that they were not supported by officials from their party. 27% of all the respondents declared that they were supported by presidents of county councils.

Half of the PSD respondents have acknowledged the support coming from president of the county council while 3 others have pointed to the help given by mayors from the party. The situation is reversed in the case of PDL, where 80% of the respondents acknowledged the support given by local authorities that are party members. This is not counter-intuitive at all since PDL is mostly a party of mayors. For the PNL, the support from officials

55 Alexandra Ionaşcu, 'Les candidats aux élections parlementaires en Roumanie', CEVIPOL, available at:
http://dev.ulb.ac.be/cevipol/dossiers_fichiers/candidats.pdf

goes more or less in the same way as for the PDL (70% acknowledging support from mayors and local councilors). One factor explaining the situation would be the fact that the party has very few presidents of county councils.

Financing the campaign

The overall mean of self-financing of the campaigns was 74.35%. Only three respondents acknowledged that they did not contribute at all or very little to their campaign financing. The party that seems to have asked the most substantial contributions from its candidates is the PNL. Among the respondents from this party, 70% of them have covered entirely the costs of their campaign while the rest have contributed with percentages starting from 85%.

As regards the PSD, half of the respondents have covered 100% of their campaign finances while the others have contributed with 90%, 80%, 60% and respectively 50%. From the PDL we had the following answers: 1 full contribution, 3 almost nothing, 2 – 50% and other 2 with 75% and 80% (other two respondents did not answer this question).

This transfer of the financial burden on candidates can be explained partially by the fact that the general party campaigns from the PR era, conducted with unique political advertising materials for all the candidates present on the party list, have been now replaced by personalized campaigns. In line with this assumption, it was not surprising to find that 50% of the respondents have used the services of political communication advisers (the percentage being roughly the same within parties).

Decentralization and inclusiveness of recruitment

The MPs were asked to give their general perception about how decentralized and how democratic/inclusive the candidate selection process is in their party. We will not repeat all the categories of answer (the appendix contains the questionnaire), it suffices to say that the MPs had 5 options for each scale (1-being most inclusive/ decentralized).

We computed the scores for each party by averaging the responses given. The question about decentralization produced the following results: PDL = 1.55, PNL = 2, PSD= 2.25, UDMR=2

For inclusiveness the scores are: PSD = 1.87, PDL = 1.88, PNL = 2.42, UDMR=1

The scores should be taken with certain reservation, given the natural tendency of new successful MPs to project a positive light on the process that had, as one of the outcomes, their election.

The fact that the PNL exhibits quite a good score on decentralization confirms our expectation about the internal power mutation towards a greater importance of the county branches of the party. In addition to that, the relatively high score received for the second question – score which means low inclusiveness, points to the importance of local party leaders who dominate the organizations, not allowing for too much participation in the selection of candidates. Here we have an important outlier – mentioned above – the case of nomination through voting. Nevertheless, given all the other cases, it seems that the PNL is closer to the type of 'local patronage'⁵⁶ recruitment, as defined by Pippa Norris.

The scores confirmed the opinions that UDMR and PDL have the leading positions in what concerns decentralization of legislative recruitment among Romanian parties. On the other hand, it seems there are important influences of the centre in the selection made in the PSD, quite a few of the respondents classifying the process as being rather mixed. The graphs in the appendix should be read while keeping in mind that a lower value represents more decentralization/inclusiveness of recruitment.

Length of party membership

Seniority in the party is commonly perceived by the literature as one of the assets of potential candidates. That is why we included a question regarding the length of the membership in the party.

⁵⁶ Pippa Norris, (1996): 205.

All the respondents from the PNL claim to have more than 4 years of party membership. However, the average is much higher: 9 years. One third of the respondents from the PDL have less than 1 year of membership. This figure emphasizes the PDL campaign of recruiting candidates from outside the party, but can be also interpreted conversely as a result of the increased popularity of the party, attracting opportunists. Nevertheless, the average is 5.9 years of membership. The PSD respondents have the highest average of years of party membership, 12.25. The lowest reported membership was 7 years. The fact that generally most of the respondents had more than 5 years of party membership can be interpreted both as a proof of apprenticeship in the party before nomination for an important office, and as a safety measure through which the party leaders make sure that the new MPs are faithful 'soldiers' of the party, who then are rewarded for their loyalty.

4. Conclusions

The present article is the only empirical piece published on legislative recruitment in Romania in the last 5 years. However, its primary relevance resides with its focus: analyzing the consequences which a unique transformation of electoral system might produce on the candidate selection strategies of the Romanian parties. Because of the lack of official information, previous works regarding legislative recruitment in Romania failed to give exact figures of legislative turnover. Nowadays, the website of the Chamber of Deputies offers the complete lists of MPs since 1990. Based on them, we could calculate the percentage of new-comers⁵⁷ in the last 4 legislatures: 1996 - 75.58%, 2000 - 33.88%, 2004 - 49.63%, 2008 - 54.12%. Given this very high percentage of newcomers in almost each legislative one cannot claim that the transformation of electoral system produced a structurally fundamental change in recruitment patterns. However, important changes are present and they will be emphasized in the following lines.

57 We systematically excluded from these figures the 12 MP's representing minorities because of the reasons already mentioned.

The first significant finding, not considered previously⁵⁸, refers to the correlation level⁵⁹ acquired by the variable 'county leader's influence' and especially to the degree of probability indicated by the logistic regression of it: it is 17 times more likely for a newcomer to win when running in the right fief. This could be taken as the basis of a new study going deeper into the logic of the relation between the power of county councils' heads and the election of MP's in that particular administrative region. Of course, not all heads of county councils are 'local barons' but the specific context of Romanian elections points to their importance in the contests for SMDs. Thus, the heads of county councils dispose of such mechanisms as mobilizing mayors to campaign for a certain candidate or arranging deals even with local authorities coming from other parties. They can also use their clientelistic networks to urge businessmen to engage in campaign donations or directly, 'electoral bribes'⁶⁰. We acknowledged that the above mentioned finding has several limitations, the most important being the existence of other 'local barons' in the same county: 'everlasting' mayors, who applied the same recipe of clientelism and corruption to build personalized power networks. The influence exerted by these mayors seems indeed to be translated into vote mobilization, and case-studies of small towns and impoverished rural areas could produce valuable information

58 A partial exception might be represented again by Laurențiu Ștefan, 'Career Patterns and Career Preferences of Romanian MP's' in Z. Mansfeldova, D.M. Olson, P. Rakusanova, eds., *Central European Parliaments. First Decade of Democratic Experience and Future Prospective*, Institute of Sociology, Academy of Science of the Czech Republic, (Prague: 2004): 194. The author's point is that many MPs would rather prefer a career as county leader thanks to the great influence provided by such an office. However, he indicates that there are instances where there is a direct connection between these two 'offices' – his example was that of Nicolae Mischie (famous Gorj Baron of PSD), who ran in 2000 for Parliament only to act as a locomotive for the party list.

59 The level of correlation was .480, at *** significance.

60 Buying people's votes (for sums that vary from some dozens to some hundreds of euros) seems to be quite an increasing phenomenon – reported by the press and NGOs. In the local elections held in June 2008, the results from a locality near Bucharest were nullified due to obvious electoral bribes, but the practice has survived.

about a type of voting behavior which is overly-assumed but under-studied.

The second most important finding refers to the extent to which the candidates either chose to or have to finance their campaigns: the overall mean of financial contributions was 74.35% (in the sample of 26 questionnaires received). The delegation of costs, operated by parties can be partially explained by the personalization of campaigns produced through the abolishment of list voting. On the other hand, the move does not mean only that there is a shift in recruitment towards financially potent candidates but also it could bring too much independence vis-à-vis the parties, i.e., weaken the discipline within parties' parliamentary groups. The first signs of the transformation towards the 'delegate logic of representation' were visible in the recent debates on the annual budget: almost every MP had a financial amendment trying to direct funds towards his/her constituency. This is a consistent behavior since many of them, profiting of people's ignorance, had made mayor-like promises in the campaign (building a bridge, repairing the church, more green space for the neighborhood) and now they are trying to show they are really striving to fulfill them. Unfortunately, there is no in-depth study concerning the legislative behavior in Romania, thus any future inquiry will be unable to meaningfully compare past levels of party discipline and the possible transformations.

Another important facet regards the decrease in the percentage of women MPs as compared to the previous 2 legislatures – with 15-16% (although the absolute number of mandates was increased). After the supreme minimum record in 1996 – 20 women elected, their number was constantly increasing on the lists of candidates and in the parliamentary benches. It seems this trend has now come to an end.

The questionnaires also showed that there are important intra-party variations with respect to the methods of candidate selection. The most salient examples came from a PNL MP who argued that her nomination had been established by voting in the county party organization, and from a PDL county organization

that has conducted popularity polls before nominating its candidates. Probably there are more instances in which these different practices are being applied in the same party, and this, we believe, correlates with the increasing degree of autonomy enjoyed by certain local organizations.

Next, the party career continues to be a salient factor in recruitment. The novelty refers to the level of these careers: 75.8% of the newcomers are members of the local and county leadership. Moreover, there is a preeminence of the county level of the party over the others in the nomination of new candidates (more than half).

The importance of party identity is yet another meaningful finding since it shows that the common claimed commitment for the renewal of the political class was largely implemented only by certain parties, while others preferred to rely more on the veterans. In this respect one can distinguish between parties like PDL & PNL and the PSD & UDMR, the difference in percentages of newcomers being more than 10%. All other things being equal, the party identity is a sine qua non for successful candidacy since there is an absolute party dominance of the parliament: not even one independent managed to enter.

Even after the abolishment of the party lists more or less decided by the centre, a significant number of candidates running for the first time for seats (present in this sample) were not residents of that constituency: 20. One could say that generally, the electorate did not perceive their nomination as an abuse, since almost half of them (7) received the largest shares in their constituency, 4 managing even to win more than 50%, and thus, winning directly the seat.

Laurențiu Ștefan takes the experience in public institutions to be a sign of parties giving their members the chance of apprenticeship before recruiting them as MP candidates. We would rather follow the interpretation given by another political scientist, Cristian Preda, who considers the fact that the same people are repeatedly running for local councils, district councils, city halls and Parliament to be a proof of parties' paucity in

human resources. It seems also necessary to say that since the winners of the constituencies and the lucky losers (benefiting from redistribution) were not significantly different on important variables like institutional experience, party career or profession, the media-created hysteria around the redistributions in favor of candidates in 3rd or 4th place is not that justifiable. Maybe people are forgetting too easily the other "anomalies"⁶¹ created by the PR electoral system.

A final conclusion to be made based on all the above factors is that the new electoral system is likely to strengthen the patronage-oriented recruitment, giving at the same time a premium to local political and economic elites acting as selectorates.

Appendix

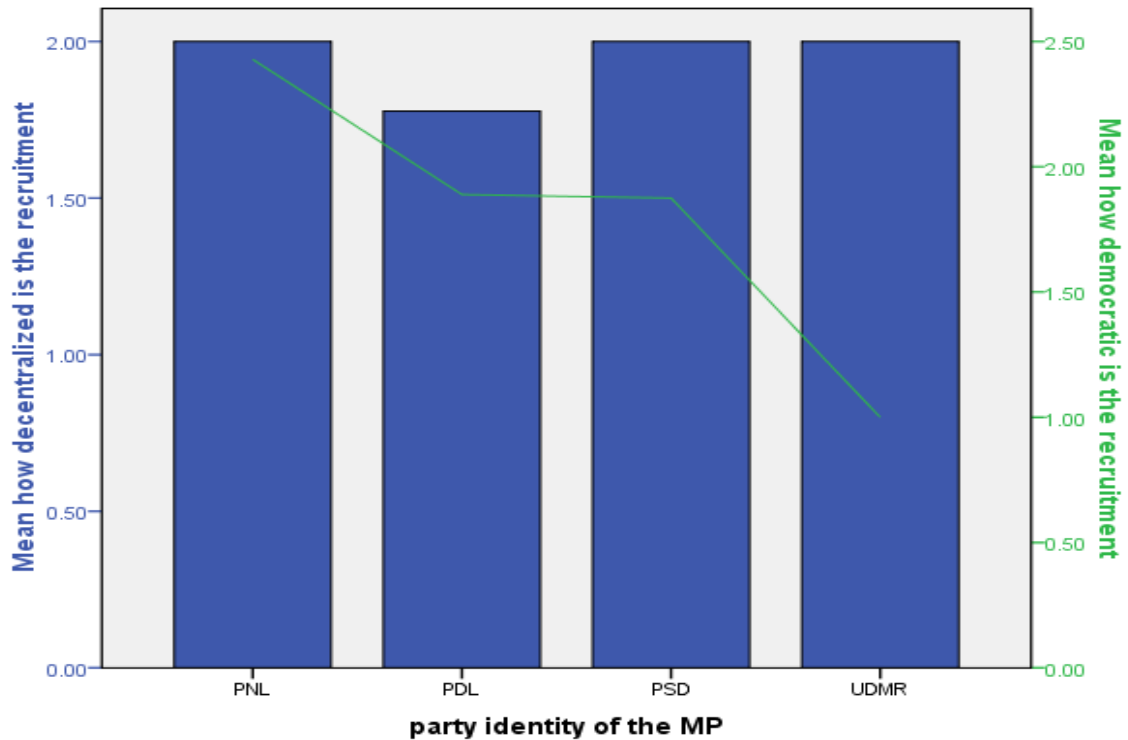
Here are the questions addressed by the questionnaire:

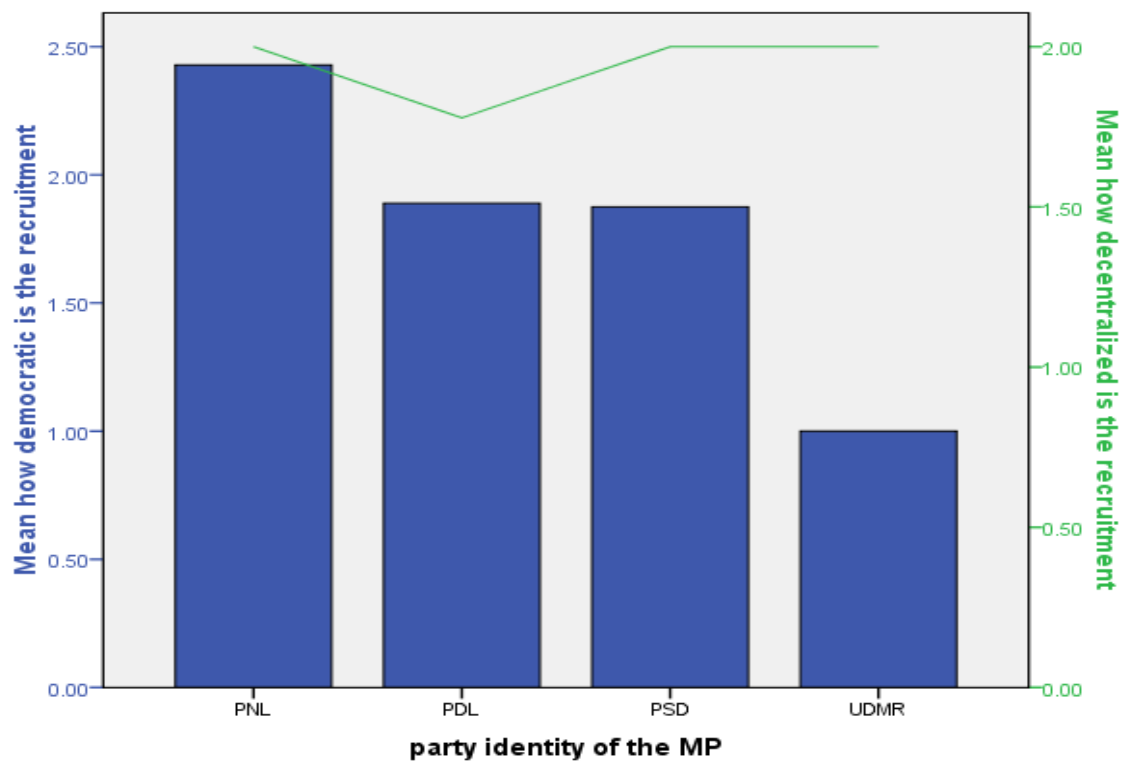
- A. For how long have you been a member of the party?
- B. Do you hold any office in the party? If yes, specify it.
- C. To what organization/branch of the party do you belong?
- D. What personal assets do you consider have determined your selection for candidacy?
- E. What is the percentage of your contribution in financing your personal campaign?
- F. Have you been supported in the campaign by officials (mayors, county councilors, presidents of county councils) from your party? If yes, name the function of the person?
- G. Did you use in the campaign the help of political communication advisers/ specialized firms?
- H. Who nominated you as a candidate?
- I. On a scale from 1 to 5 how democratic/ inclusive is the candidate selection in your party? (1 – the majority of members participate/ even by voting, 2 - appointment by not

61 A good example would be the so called "Giurgiu paradox" (borrowed from professor Florin Feşnic) - in 1996, in that constituency, PDSR won a seat (46,810 votes); UDMR won the second seat (with 269 votes – due to redistribution), although the Democratic Convention won more than 100 times more votes (39,672)

such an inclusive selectorate, 3 - rather mixed, 4 - appointment by a small selectorate, 5- recruitment controlled by the party national leaders)

- J. On a scale from 1 to 5, how decentralized is the candidate selection in your party?
(1 - selection at local level, 2 - selection at county level, 3 - mixed, 4 - mixed with the preponderance of the centre, 5- selection made at the national level)





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www.senat.ro – Senate

www.pnl.ro – National Liberal Party

www.pd.ro – Liberal-Democratic Party

www.psd.ro – Social-Democratic Party

www.udmr.ro – Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania

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recruitment:

www.alegeriparlamentare2008.ro

www.alegeri.tv

www.alegeri-2008.ro

www.infoalegeri.ro

www.stirilocale.ro

www.1001politicieni.ro

www.thinkopolis.eu

www.catavencu.ro

www.fisd.ro

www.romaniacurata.ro

<http://kovacspeter.wordpress.com>

*We did not include all the sites (of county councils, city halls or
other central or local institutions) or blogs of politicians which
have been used, but they can be offered upon request

AUTHORITARIANISM IN THE MAKING? THE ROLE OF POLITICAL CULTURE AND INSTITUTIONS IN THE ALBANIAN CONTEXT

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Abstract

Elections are a prime concern for democracy. The study of elections and electoral systems becomes important in understanding how a political system will function. On the other hand, an anti-democratic political culture can distort democratic institutions. Thus one might wonder whether it really matters more which electoral system a country adopts or what political culture there is in that country. We argue that beside the constitutional arrangements and reformulating its electoral system and mechanism, an un-democratic culture of authoritarianism has underpinned much of Albanian political activity lately. The latter has been the prime cause of the lack of consolidation of Albanian democracy and not its institutions. Two empirical snapshots of the most important Albanian recent political events are delineated in order to understand the intricate mechanisms of institutions and political culture in shaping and re-shaping the political system.

1. Introduction¹

The process of democratization became one of the most central political questions of the post-transition period in Central Eastern European countries. The main challenge towards democratization of the region was the creation of new institutions to guarantee the separation of the state from party control. Other fundamental reforms and new legal and administrative practices had to be

¹The authors are grateful to the two anonymous reviewers of this journal for their useful comments and suggestions.

introduced, in order to break up with the institutional legacies of communism. Although the region faced common challenges, the developments of the democratization process in Central Eastern Europe were diverse. Studies have shown very different patterns of progress toward establishing a democratic regime where the Central European region is given as a picture of successful transition to democracy while the Balkans portrait is characterized by a number of setbacks.² Moreover, even among the Balkan countries, there are peculiarities and particularities of the democratization process. For example Albania is often regarded as a "most difficult case of democratisation or usually treated as an outlier compared to other post-communist experiences of regime change."³ What makes the Albanian case even more puzzling is the fact that it has not experienced the ethnic strife and the long and hazardous process of nation-building that was the case elsewhere in the Western Balkans region. Thus, it had fewer predispositions to falling behind in the democratization process, which is becoming a marathon even by regional standards. For this purpose it is relevant and important to study the often overlooked case of Albania and analyze what makes this country a rather hard case for successful democracy transitioning. The insights that will derive from such analysis can be telling for similar cases, as well as provide explanations for transitioning difficulties in the Western Balkans, the 'back door' of European Union.

This paper identifies the kind of democracy Albania experiences, with reference not only to political institutions but also to political culture. What we suggest here is that beside the constitutional

2 On the different patterns of progress toward democratization in Eastern Europe see Frank Schimmelfennig, "European Regional Organizations, Political Conditionality, and Democratic Transformation in Eastern Europe", *East European Politics and Societies* 21(1) (2007): 126-141. For a ten-year assessment of the transition process and a comparison between the Balkans and the Central European countries see: Jacques Rupnik, "Eastern Europe: the International Context", *Journal of Democracy* 11(2) (2000): 115-129.

3Arolda Elbasani, "EU Enlargement and State Institutions after Communism – Reforming Public Administration in Albania ", *L'Europe en Formation: Revue d'études sur la construction européenne et le fédéralisme / Journal of Studies on European Integration and Federalism* 349-350 (2008): 125.

arrangements and reformulating its electoral system and mechanism, an un-democratic culture of authoritarianism has underpinned much of Albanian political activity. The latter has been the primary cause of the unconsolidated Albanian democracy and not its institutions. The paper covers these issues by firstly bringing up theoretical considerations on the consolidation of democracy. Then, two empirical snapshots of two of the most important Albanian recent political events are delineated in order to understand the intricate mechanisms of institutions and political culture in shaping and re-shaping the political system. The methodology focuses on discourse analysis and an epistemological and ontological treatment of primary and secondary sources to study how this 'new' culture of authoritarianism has pervaded the democracy transitioning process and what it has to say about the role and functioning of the institutions.

2. Democratization, 'Transitology' and Countries (Caught) in Between

The process of democratization and the transition experienced in between is by no means a *sui generis* process in which Albania finds itself as an island. Quite on the contrary, in many regards Albania faces the same obstacles, and as well as 'stalled' progress experienced in most of the region. Below we refer to a conceptual apparatus offered in the form of a critique by Thomas Carothers in a seminal article of his, when criticizing the long- dominating 'transitologists', such as Schmitter and O`Donnell. The 'End of Transition Paradigm' takes into analyses the transition paradigm that came to dominate the democratization school from the early 1990s, with Huntington's thesis of a 'third wave' of democracy. The so-called 'transitology' school was particularly influenced by the work of O`Donnell and Schmitter who essentially coined the term and prescribed a set of core assumptions that are generally supposed to hold when a country is transiting from an autocratic rule toward a democratic form of regime.⁴ A critique of this

⁴Guillermo O`Donnell and Philippe Schmitter, *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Tentative Conclusions About Uncertain Democracies* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1986). The five core assumptions that have served to

“three-part process of democratization consisting of opening, break-through, and consolidation” that never runs so smooth in reality has emerged in an influential piece by Carothers,⁵ where he addresses the shortcomings that most transition countries experience in the long and hazardous road to democracy.

What Carothers duly observes is that most transitory countries in today’s world do not fit in this black and white picture because they are caught somewhere in the middle. This fact, according to the author, is often overlooked by most indicators serving as measurements of the level of democracy in the world, in compatibility with the criteria established by the above set of assumptions. In order to address what he believes is the end of the transition paradigm because it has outlasted its ‘theoretical life’, Carothers proposes a new assumption that refers to the middle-ground between ‘full-fledged democracies and outright dictatorships’ and which “is actually the most common political condition today of countries in the developing world and the post communist world.”⁶ The overall scholarly discussion on the post-transition period in Eastern Europe is going beyond the old dichotomy of democratic and authoritarian classification. Many scholarly attempts have been put forward in order to search for more accurate and descriptive concepts which can be referred to as “democracy with adjectives”.⁷ Different qualifier adjectives have been added to the term democracy, trying to describe such unconsolidated regimes as ‘illiberal’, ‘near polyarchies’, ‘semi-democratic’ or more generally, ‘hybrid’ regimes. Aside from the

define the transition paradigm range from automaticity of the process of transformation itself; countries that are transiting usually follow a “three-part process of democratization consisting of opening, break-through, and consolidation”; free election will intrinsically guarantee greater participation and accountability; political elites` will and determination prevail over the `underlying economic, social, and institutional conditions and legacies,” which have little effect over their way of thinking and that state-building is an epiphenomenon to democracy-building and “largely compatible with it.”

5Thomas Carothers, “The End of the Transition Paradigm.” *Journal of Democracy* 13(1) (2002): 17.

6 *Ibid.*, 18

7David Collier and Steven Levitsky “Democracy with Adjectives: Conceptual Innovation in Comparative Research,” *World Politics* 49(3) (1997): 430-451.

many labels, their point is that such regimes are caught in between as they share both democratic and authoritarian elements simultaneously.

Our opinion is that the substantive argument of regimes caught in between democracy and authoritarianism put forward by scholars, besides its multiple labels, is strongly convincing and in addition, matches the political reality of Albania. The underlying idea of this argument is that although democratic institutions may be in place, there is a lack of democratic behaviour.

3. Democratization: A Question of Political Culture or Political Institutions?

Democratization in the post communist countries required first of all the creation of new democratic institutions to guarantee the separation of the state from party control. Furthermore, other fundamental reforms and new legal and administrative practices had to be introduced, in order to break with the institutional legacies of communism. In such an institutionalist perspective, the emphasis is put on the formal aspects of democracy, where the existence of formally democratic political institutions is very important for the development of democracy. According to supporters of political institutionalism it is enough that the democratic institutions and the set of rules are in place. It is especially in societies that demonstrate a great plurality of political interest and views, where the institutions become essential. In order to reflect such plurality of interests and better represent them, a proper set of rules are needed. The mechanism of how the votes will be translated into seats in the assembly becomes crucial. From such an institutionalist point of view, elections and their set of rules become main concerns of democracy. Studying elections and electoral systems becomes important in understanding how the political system will function. But is this enough to let us grasp the whole picture? Tagapeera notices that: “[e]lectoral systems affect politics, but they are also products of politics”⁸ and as such, an anti-democratic political

⁸Rein Taagepera “How electoral systems matter for democratization”, *Democratization* 5(3) (1998): 7.

culture can distort a democratic institution. This happens mostly in countries that previously have had severe totalitarian regimes (as in the case of communist Albania was), who may find it difficult to set up a legitimate democratic system, since changing their traditions and political culture takes longer than changing institutions. Thus one might wonder whether it really matters so much which electoral system a country adopts or what political culture exists in the country.

We would like to turn now to the empirics, and through snapshots that look at two important events in Albanian politics, we investigate where the current Albanian political system stands with reference to the two above mentioned pillars (political institutions and political culture) and how this influences the democratization process. In other words, what is the role of the Albanian political class and how are institutions and political culture are playing each other out? Which of the two has the upper hand in the political game and how it is it demonstrated in political outcomes, such as elections and electoral reforms?

Many Albanian political events could be used as illustrative examples of the democratization processes, but as space does not allow us to discuss each of them in-depth, we would like to focus our analysis on two important cases: the election of the new president and the reform of the electoral system. These two cases will be treated in detail, although other cases may also be used as examples of the growing authoritarianism in the country. The same can be said about the judiciary system, given the appointment of a new prosecutor-general affiliated with the ruling party or dubious appointments to the highest legal body, the Supreme Justice Council, which is in charge of the appointments of judges. All these have made both the civil society and opposition suspicious of a growing authoritarianism.

4. First Snapshot: Election of the new President

Not long ago, instead of a former consensual president, elected by bi-partisan agreement in the Parliament of 2002, the new president was until recently the vice-chairman of the ruling party. Apart from being seen as threatening to the general democratic

standards of the country by the opposition much of the civil society and media, the election of the vice-chairman of the biggest party (that already controlled the other important institutions as well)⁹ to the post of President of Republic, it also endangers the bi-partisan consensual mood that is needed to push forward with 'big' reforms, such as that of judiciary, electoral code, propriety rights and so on. The former president was elected as a result of a general agreement between the former Socialist government and the Democratic Party, which then constituted the opposition. The deal was brokered by OSCE and other international institutions (notably European Commission delegation in Albania and the US Embassy), which were interested mostly in preserving the stability and reducing the political fragmentation, rather than emphasizing the democratic credentials of such consensual bargaining. Naturally, the Socialists, now in opposition, expected the same 'courtesy' gesture by the Democrats and probably were hoping for a timely intervention of international bodies to help reach a new agreement. But the situation was not the same as in 2001, and this time through a series of shady mechanisms and through methods of co-optation of some unsatisfied members of the opposition, the majority (which is constituted by the Democratic Party and its allies), succeeded in electing the new president from their own ranks.¹⁰ This had three prime consequences.

9As a footnote of clarification here, the problem with this election laid especially in the opposition's growing fear that the majority with this move secured the 'trinity' of the most important institutions, that of prime minister, head of parliament and the president. This not only changed the 'rules of the game' agreed to only four year prior, under the supervision of international actors, but moreover increased the power of the Democratic Party to easily replace the heads of other (state) institutions with members affiliated either directly or indirectly with this party. Since the law for civil officials is rarely enforced in Albanian politics, the coming to power of one political force implies the hiring of its militants in place of the existing ones. Seen in this light, the fears of opposition were not entirely unfounded.

10There were several suspicions that made the round of press (mostly raised by the Socialist Party members) that some opposition members of parliament were bribed or co-opted in other forms to suddenly switch their position and vote with the majority for the new non-consensual president. In light of some circumstanced evidence, such suspicions had some valid basis.

First, it further alienated the opposition and 'froze' the 'big' reforms for an indefinite time, because most of these reforms require a 3/5 quorum, which was impossible to reach without the opposition. Second, all calls for a referendum in electing the new president were ridiculed and there was very little transparency in the election of the new president. This disappointed a large part of the population, which as several polls indicated, were deeply dissatisfied by the whole process, although generally the new president, Bamir Topi, was well liked and respected as a moderate and one of the most voted-for and popular politicians in the country.¹¹ The problem laid in the way that he was elected. Third, all calls for a popular referendum were ignored and moreover, the citizens were deprived of any kind of resolution that would have solved the impasse and at the same time allow for a degree of peoples' participation. However, yet another problem laid with the moment of election itself.

As soon as the new president was elected, the international institutions that had so far opposed any kind of resolution that would not involve the opposition rushed to congratulate the new president and offered no criticism at all of the highly suspicious process. Furthermore, the new political developments had undermined the previous precedent of bi-partisan consensus for the election of the president, while not offering any other (democratic) alternatives. Even more surprising is that after the *decision* was reached and the country had now a new president-elect, which paraphrasing Derrida is the climax of 'the political', a period of de-politicization soon followed, with most of the salient political issues being sidelined. These issues were the reform amendments that previously were discussed to be included in a common package with the election of the president. That was to be the big compromise, but with the presidential election of President already *fait accompli*, the government lost its incentive and saw cooperation with the opposition as redundant. Seen in this light, the 'political' becomes the moment that de-politicizes

11Several polls, published in the Albanian press at the time in fact indicated that Mr. Topi was the most favored candidate for the post of president and if an election would have taken place, he was favored to win by a landslide.

and moves away from public discourse, the contestation of salient political issues. International actors had undoubtedly played a great role in the process, albeit mostly by default, given their prominent position as arbiter in the process and the legacy of past intervention. Their failure to prevent a unilateral move that threatened the political willingness of the opposition and alienated large parts of civil society and the press guaranteed short-term stability, but threatened the processes of further democratization, by ignoring the 'fair play' rules which they themselves had helped broker. This undermined their legitimacy, as well as the legitimacy of the Albanian political class and led to a growing alienation of the public, making the public more willing to withdraw from political participation.¹²

5. The Second Snapshot: Re-reforming the Electoral System

One of the hottest recent debates boils around the necessary reform of the electoral code, which has been a controversial issue in the Albanian political sphere for most of its transition period. Some background information is needed here to better understand the current political debate around the issue of which electoral system would better represent the interests of Albanian citizens and increase representation, while reducing irregularities in (general) elections.

Most of the Albanian post-communist elections (except the 1991-1992), have been characterized as having irregularities ranging from neglect to outright theft of votes. International observers, especially the ones from OSCE, have always rated Albanian elections as problematic, partially free or generally regular and

12As the election for the deputy seat to fill President Topi's parliamentary seat, less than 40 percent of citizens of that Tirana district actually voted, although it was one of the most important electoral zones in the country and the political parties campaigned hard for that seat. In the long run, we fear that an even larger number of people would simply refrain from voting, let alone other (more active) forms of political participation, as a general distrust with behind-the-door bureaucratized politics that rely mostly on having their actions approved by internationals rather than their own constituencies.

free, but with minor problems.¹³ But even when international observers have accepted elections as generally in line with democratic standards, such as the general elections of 1996, the opposition has protested the results. Such was the case in the general elections of 1996, when the Democratic Party, headed by former President and current Prime Minister Sali Berisha, rejected the results outright and protested massively in defiance of the rigged results.¹⁴ In 1997 it was Berisha's turn to denounce the Socialist Party for rigging the votes outright. But, at least until 2001, the debate was primarily focused on questions of the legitimacy of elections, lack of security and rigged results. In 2001, however, the debate shifted somewhat, for the first time revolving primarily around the questions of loopholes in the electorate code that allowed for deformed results. The reason was that since the electorate code followed closely the German system, which is 'corrected majoritarian,' it meant that 100 deputies out of 140 would be elected directly, while the other forty through proportional lists. The Socialist Party which had secured a small but necessary majority already, in the second round,¹⁵ urged its potential voters to vote for coalition parties, which secured enough percentage to be represented in the 140 seats parliament and to artificially increase the weight of the governing bloc vis-à-vis opposition.

13See for example the OSCE report of 1997 that qualifies the 1997 elections as 'admissible for the moment.' Raporti i OSBE-ODIHR per zgjedhjet e 29 qershorit 1997" [The OSCE-ODIHR report for 29 July, 1997 elections], cited in Henri Cili, "Nderkombetaret si Pala e Trete: Nje Udhetim Bashke me Nderkombetaret neper Trazicionin Shqiptar 1990-2002" (The international actors as a third party: A trip with the internationals in the Albanian transition 1990-2002). Polis 4 (2007): 51.

14The Democratic Party won 122 seats in a 140 members' parliament and nobody could doubt the scale of irregularities, except the OSCE or EU observers, who due to political considerations, closed an eye and declared the elections as generally free, with few misconducts and irregularities.

15There was only one round of elections, but in some villages and towns the elections took place later than scheduled due to administrative issues. As an anecdotal note, the small village of Dushku became the most famous Albanian village ever, because it 'produced' several deputies, due to the fact the Socialists urged their voters to vote for coalition parties that needed only a few percentage points to reach the quorum and be represented in the parliament.

In the 2005 general elections, the same story was repeated in even a larger scale, with the Democratic Party this time performing better, due to better organizational skills and use of the system. However, the third biggest party, the Socialist Party for Integration, headed by former prime minister, Ilir Meta, strongly contested the results, which he (as well as foreign observers and international organizations, such as OSCE), declared did not represent the will of the Albanian people. Moreover, the composition of the new parliament was really paradoxical, with parties that before had barely reached the threshold, now having ten or eleven deputies. On the other hand, the deputies that were elected directly represented only one of the two biggest parties (Democratic or Socialist Party) and were often perceived as shady businessmen who had either bought the votes outright or outspent their opponents by means of personal investment in their own campaigns. Together these factors led to a rising number of calls from international bodies (such as US Department of State, OSCE or EU), as well as some political parties and segments of civil society, to amend the electoral system in order to have a fairer representation of popular vote and democratic will.

After many *ad hominem* attacks and counter-attacks between the two main political parties, in a seemingly abrupt move they agreed to move forward with a new proposal that would drastically change the current electoral system. They have even appointed an electoral commission, headed by two high officials of their respective parties, and are in the final phase of reaching a deal to the detriment and fury of small parties in either camp. The proposed electoral code suits the so-called 'Spanish system,' which basically means a 'regional proportional' system. Without going into technicalities, or why the small parties are deeply dissatisfied with this plan that threatens their existence, I want to shortly present why this new system threatens a growing depoliticization of the public sphere and how international factors, notably OSCE, are involved in the process.

After the fall of communism, Albania adopted a mix electoral system.¹⁶ As one author put it, Albania has copy/pasted the German variation of a mixed system.¹⁷ In April 2008 the new law passed in parliament by the rare consensus of the Democratic and Socialist Parties with 115 votes pro (requiring at least 94 votes in the 140-seat parliament). The new voting rules made possible the constitutional amendments. Under such changes the majority to elect the president was notably reduced. Now, Albania's president, instead of its previous minimum of 3/5 (83) of the deputies, can be elected by a simple majority (only 50%+1, 71 votes) in the fourth round of voting.¹⁸

While regarding the electoral system the law gives voting system greater proportional representation. Albania has passed from the mix (a partial majority) system in favor of a regional proportional representation (fashioned around the Spanish system), within each of Albania's 12 administrative regions. All 140 members of parliament will in the future be elected by regional proportional representation from party lists. Most European countries have their electoral systems based on Proportional Representation where the seats in a constituency are divided according to the number of votes cast for party lists.

In the Albanian case, under the new electoral engineering the party lists will be open and the ranking subsequently cannot be changed in principle. Nevertheless, the critics point out the fact that it empowers political leaders' grip on their respective parties, since they are the highest authority in deciding who is included in

16For a review of previous electoral system changes in post-communist Albania see Arolda Elbasani, "Mixed Member Electoral Systems in Transition Contexts: How Has the System Worked in Albania?" CEU Political Science Journal 3(1) 2008: 79-82.

17Ibid., 73.

18Other changes included limiting the prosecutor general's term to five years, forcing an early election in the case of a no-confidence vote and reducing the majority required to elect the president from three-fifths to half the MPs. Also, Albania's prosecutor general will have a fixed five-year term instead of an unlimited one; and parliament will automatically be dissolved and early elections declared if the government loses a confidence vote.

these lists. One of the under-publicized elements of this new proposed deal is that it plans a 'closed lists' system, which means that the public can vote only for the party, without having any choice in electing their favorite candidate. The candidates are ranked beforehand by the respective leaders in these closed lists and they will take their seats according to the percentage of votes that each party receives in general elections. This allows the heads of the two biggest parties to give primacy to their clear favorites and to rid the party of any opposition, constructive or otherwise. Any dissenters would risk outright expulsion from the party list. This would increase the unity of the party around the leader, but on the other hand would increase the general public's dissatisfaction, as the lists do not offer any choice. We fear that this would lead to a further de-politicization and withdrawal of citizens from public sphere.¹⁹

On top of this, international actors are viewed as independent fair players neither by the Albanian political class, nor by different societal segments. The OSCE has not been seen as an impartial arbiter of this process by various media, civil society or small political parties. In a declaration for the media, the spokesperson of the Socialist Party, Mimi Kodheli, declared that the Socialist Party's stance is compatible 100 percent with that of OSCE in both opposing the open lists that would allow for public scrutiny and choice among the candidates.²⁰ One can do little but wonder why OSCE officially backs a plan proposed by one of the two biggest parties and supported by the other, but that largely ignores the will of the public, civil society actors and small parties? One suggestion offered for public consumption by the media that a popular referendum should decide upon this matter, has been largely opposed by the two biggest parties and OSCE. This partiality noticed in OSCE official stances has made the organization especially suspect in the eyes of the small parties. Some of these parties, notably the Democratic Alliance (a centre-right party) and the Social-Democratic Party (a left-centered)

19Irir Kalemaj, "Reforma Zgjedhore dhe Depolitizimi" (The electoral reform and depoliticization). Standard daily. March 16, 2008.

20Balkanweb, Raporti i OSBE. "PS: Kundërshtojme listat e hapura," (OSCE Report. "SP: We Oppose the Open Lists) Balkanweb, 02 March, 2008.

have publicly called for an end of the mission of OSCE in the country.²¹

This second snapshot is clearly telling in regard to the ineffectiveness of the institutions, such as electoral reform and electoral codes, which when left in the ultimate discretion of the main political players can inhibit democracy and democratic transition.

6. Additional Factors Needed for Democratization

In Albania the democratic system and the desirability of democracy is not disputed. The problem does not rest much on the electoral system *per se* but rather on the way in which politics is conducted. In Albania, limited rather than fully pluralist competition can be noticed, while elections are often marred by intimidation and corruption. If we refer to Freedom House surveys Albania can be classified as having, at best, partially free and democratic elections.²²

Almost two decade after the collapse of communism there are still authoritarian tendencies in terms of political behaviour. It is the party in power (or more often, the individual politicians) who takes over the political process and ignores the legislative. The country used to go into institutional or political crisis not because of lacking institutions (or improper electoral system), but mostly because of non-democratic behaviours from the party (or individuals) in power. All these disturbances limit the ability of the democratic system to function properly.

21The head of the Democratic Alliance, Dr. Neritan Ceka stated during a television appearance (Opinion Show, December 2007), that the country had already reached its political maturity and did not need to be babysat by organizations such as OSCE.

22Albania's Electoral Process rating remains 3.75 with the worst score 4.50 in 1998. Nations in Transit ratings are based on a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 representing the highest level and 7 representing the lowest level of democratic development. For more see: Freedom House "Freedom in the World: Aggregate Scores" access at

<<http://www.freedomhouse.org>>

The parties' political culture is still archaic, with little or no respect at all for the rule of law.²³ Manipulation of elections has become the norm and the unwritten law of the Albanian electoral system. With the exception of the 1992 parliamentary elections, all the other elections have been strongly contested by the losing party and the international community as well. In their reports we usually read that the elections in Albania "complied only *partially* with ... international standards for democratic elections."²⁴ Such evaluations leave Albania far from having a consolidated democracy on the base of fair competition and free elections. An alternation in power was hardly accepted by the governing party in the latest 2005 elections. The rotation of power took almost three months, creating an institutional vacuum for Albania.

Contested or fragile constitutional arrangements have been key features of the Albanian political landscape. The post-communist Albanian state had to reformulate its electoral system and mechanisms in April 2008. But besides re-adopting such democratic institutions, the main challenge is that of getting rid of the pervasive un-democratic culture of authoritarianism which has underpinned much political activity and which has resulted in a weakness in applying the rule of law. Albania has experienced difficulty developing a political culture where competition should govern all aspects of political life. Even where new laws and new mechanisms have been adopted, their implementation remains very weak.

7. Concluding Remarks

23For more on the implications of parties and party system in Albanian democratic development see: Dorian Jano, "On Parties and Party System in Albania: What Implications for Democracy", in *Central European Case Studies*, eds. Gergely Karácsony and Péter Smuk, (Universitas-Győr Nonprofit Kft.: Győr, 2008), 85-103.

24On the latest election of 2005 see: OSCE/ODIHR, Press release "Competitive Albanian elections weakened by insufficient political will and system open to abuse", Tirana, 4 July 2005.

Albania is still beset by a confrontational political culture where a tendency of confrontation and crisis has become the norms of Albanian political life. Such a mismatch of authoritarian political culture with democratic institutions has raised doubts and concerns about the quality of democracy in the country. Having the most effective electoral system is not everything, since democracy is not simply a machine that once set up, functions by itself. It depends on the elite and their political culture which should conform to the rules of democratic institutions. As it has been discussed so far with reference to the electoral system and its reforms, it can be said that it is not so much the (democratic) institutions who have framed political elites' behaviour, but rather the opposite. The authoritarian political culture of the Albanian political elites has distorted the democratic institutions. As such, Albania cannot be considered a consolidated (liberal) democracy. Rather it can be argued to be more of a 'hybrid' type of democracy with democratic institutions but still autocratic political behaviour. The latest report of Freedom House also favours such an argument, ranking Albania in the 'hybrid democracies' category. Albania is far from the only former communist country placed in this category, but it is an outlier in Central and Eastern Europe, being one of the hardest cases of democratization.

This paper sought to understand the deeper context in which political activity is embedded and pinpoint the absence of a consolidated political culture and institutional framework that could duly juxtapose any growing authoritarianism tendencies by political actors. After carefully thinking along Carothers' lines of discussing the features of these two systems that in fact are not too far apart from each other,²⁵ we would situate the Albanian case mostly at the 'feckless-pluralist' side, since it conforms to many of its features, like political freedom, regular elections and alternation of power. Or to put it differently, it subscribes to most

25Carothers (2002) distinguishes further between hybrid regimes. He labels 'feckless populism' regimes that have considerable pluralism and competitive electoral processes but still shallow and troublesome democracy and 'dominant-power politics' regimes that although they have some space for political competition, are still dominated by one grouping leaving little prospect for a real alternation of power.

of Dahl's seven characteristics of 'polyarchy.'²⁶ The real political participation nevertheless extends little beyond voting and there is not a true representation of various strata of population in policy-making. On the other hand, lately Albania has also seen some disturbing signs of moving toward a 'dominant-power' system, where the lines between the state and the ruling party are becoming blurry.

While the institutional architecture of a country can be changed relatively quickly through amending the constitution or adopting a new one, political behavior is difficult to change and takes time. It may take many years to build a democratic political culture. That institutions matter in a democracy is not to be denied but the question remains how much do they matter and in what context they are set. "There is a consensus in this literature that no 'perfect' bespoke electoral system fits every democracy. Instead, arrangements have to be tailored to each particular context; and choices involve trade-offs".²⁷ The complex picture of the Albanian political reality needs to consider both political institutionalism and political cultures.

For the consolidation of democracy "institutions should be congruent with political culture".²⁸ Democratisation therefore involves not only reforming the electoral system but also making the electoral process more democratic (competitive and depersonalised). Albania urgently needs to guarantee fully functioning democratic institutions and foster a more democratic political culture. It is not much the relevance of the electoral system choices that matter but rather the democratic context

26These characteristics, according to Dahl are: "elected officials, free and fair elections, inclusive suffrage, and the right to run for office, freedom of expression, alternative information and associational autonomy" Robert Dahl, *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition* (Yale: Yale University Press, 1972) 221.

27Pippa Norris "Ballots not Bullets: Testing Consociational Theories of Ethnic Conflict, Electoral Systems, and Democratization", in *The Architecture of Democracy: Constitutional Design, Conflict Management and Democracy*, Andrew Reynolds (ed.), (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002) 209.

28 Harry Eckstein cited in Rein Taagepera "How electoral systems matter for democratization" 5(3) (1998): 68.

elections are developing. In speaking about democratization one has to take into considerable account not only on the presence and level of democratic institutions but also on the way in which politics is conducted there. Consolidated democracies need not only democratic institutions; above all they need democratic culture.

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THE STRATEGY OF DOMINANT-PARTY POLITICS: ELECTORAL INSTITUTIONS AND ELECTION OUTCOMES IN AFRICA

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Abstract

The electoral rules under which African countries hold elections are different. For example, Botswana and Zimbabwe conduct elections under first-past-the-post plurality systems while Namibia and Burkina Faso use list PR systems. Despite these institutional differences, the outcomes of legislative elections in Africa are nonetheless similar in that almost all legislative elections there result in some form of dominant party system. This is true for those where dominance is sustained by authoritarian politics as well as those where transitions to democracy have occurred, and we explain this pattern of single-party dominance as the product of ruling party strategy. Specifically, we focus on how different electoral systems are used by ruling parties to divide different electorates in ways that achieve and sustain their electoral dominance. In this paper, we map these patterns and illustrate the dynamics of this process using Afro Barometer data.

1. Introduction

An ongoing problem in the study of African politics is why legislative elections there, whether democratic or semi-authoritarian, tend to produce party systems of the dominant or predominant variety.¹ Table 1 contains data on recent elections in a cross-section of African nations,² and the data show that the

1 On the difference, see Sartori (1976).

2 The countries in the table were selected because they represent a cross-section of the different types of electoral systems that are employed in Africa. In

nations of Africa employ a distinct variety of electoral rules in their respective legislative elections. Despite this variety of electoral rules, we also see from the table that election outcomes tend to be similar with respect to the effective number of electoral and parliamentary parties they produce.³

The two narrow columns in the middle of Table 1 contain measures of the Effective Number of Electoral Parties (ENEP) and the Effective Number of Parliamentary Parties (ENPP), and while they appear to involve lower ENP values in the countries employing SMD plurality rules, these differences are overstated.⁴ Differences across FTFP, Plurality and List PR systems on these two indicators are due to a single outlier, Benin, which registered very high values on its effective number of parties indicators.⁵ When values for this country were eliminated and the averages recalculated, the results were nearly identical, where SMD Plurality systems had values of 2.49 and 1.96 (ENEP and ENPP respectively) and the PR systems had values of 2.51 and 2.06.⁶

These similarities are also revealed in data contained in the last column of Table 1, which contains the name of the largest vote

other words, they have been selected for the purposes of illustration only and are not meant to represent a randomly drawn sample of cases.

3 The former refers to the numbers of parties (electoral and parliamentary) while the latter refers to the fact that most party systems are of the dominant/predominant variety. On the effective number of parties, see Laakso and Taagepera (1979). On why electoral institutions do not work in Africa as they do in the advanced electoral democracies, see Golder and Wantchekon (2004) and Mozaffar (2003).

4 Values were calculated using data provided in Mozaffar, Scarritt, and Galaich (2003) from which we calculated the average ENP values for SMD plurality systems and for those countries using some form of PR. The values for the PR nations were 4.05 and 2.93 and, for the SMD Plurality nations, 2.49 and 1.96 respectively for the Effective Number of Electoral Parties and the Effective Number of Parliamentary Parties.

5 Comoros was also an outlier for countries employing SMD Plurality rules with an ENEP of 14.9 and an ENPP of 5.28. This outlier was not included in our calculations.

6 These results concur with the data presented in and conclusions offered by Golder and Wantchekon (2004).

getter in the elections listed in the first column as well as the percentages of votes and seats each obtained in the reported elections. As the data show, single party dominance is the prevailing pattern in these countries, and this is true regardless of whether single-party dominance is measured in terms of vote or seat shares. There are exceptions to be sure,⁷ but what makes this pattern interesting is that it exists in spite of the fact that the nations of Africa employed different electoral formulas.

Table 1. Party Systems and Election Systems in Selected African Countries (Recent Elections)

Country/ Elec. Year	Election System	ENEP	NP	PP	Dominant Party	Vote/Seat %	Party
Botswana							
1999					Dem.Pty. ¹	54%/68%	
	SMD, Plu.	2.7	1.4		Dem.Pty. ¹	52%/77%	
2002	SMD, Plu.	2.8	1.6				
Burkina Faso							
1997	List, PR	3.6	1.8		CDP ²	69%/87%	
					CDP ²	50%/52%	
2002	List, PR	3.8	3.3				
Cameroon							
1997	MMD/Plu.	2.9	2.6		CPDM ³	NA/61%	
	MMD/Plu.				CPDM ³		
2002		3.3	2.2		NA/83%		
Lesotho							
1998	SMD, Plu.	2.2	1.0		L. C. Dem. ⁴	61%/98%	
	MMP, PR				L. C. Dem. ⁴	55%/65%	
2002		2.6	2.2				
Malawi							
1994	SMD, Plu.	2.7	2.7		UDF		
	SMD, Plu.				NA/48%		
1999		2.8	2.7		UDF	47%/48%	

⁷ Perhaps the most notable exception is the 2001 election in Zambia where the largest party, the Movement for Multi-Party Democracy, received only 28% of the vote but 46% of the seats. While this vote share is lower than what we typically associate with a dominant party system, the seat share is comparable to what we witness in the predominant party, minority government systems of Scandinavia.

Mali					
1997	Majority		2.4	Alliance ³ H 2002	NA/87%
2002	Majority		1.3	NA/49%	
Namibia					
1994	List, PR	1.7	1.7	SWAPO ⁵	74%/74%
1999	List, PR	1.7	1.7	SWAPO ⁵	76%/76%
Nigeria					
1999				PDP ⁶	56%/59%
	SMD, Plu.	2.3	2.3	PDP ⁶	55%/62%
2003	SMD, Plu.				
		2.6	2.2		
Senegal					
1998	Mixed	2.4	1.8	Socialist SOPI	50%/66%
					50%/74%
2001	Mixed	3.2	2.1		
Tanzania					
1995	SMD, Plu.	2.2	1.5	CCM ⁷	60%/81%
	SMD, Plu.			CCM ⁷	NA/91%
2000					
Zambia					
1996	SMD, Plu.	2.4	1.3	MMPD ⁸	49%/52%
	SMD, Plu.			MMPD ⁸	28%/46%
2001		5.6	3.0		
Zimbabwe					
2000	SMD, Plu.	2.2	2.0	ZANU-PF ⁹	49%/52%
	SMD, Plu.			ZANU-PF ⁹	60%/65%
2005		2.0	1.9		
1 Botswana Democratic Party					
2 Congress for Democracy and Progress					
3 Cameroon People's Democratic Movement					
3 Alliance for Democracy in Mali					
4 Lesotho Congress for Democracy					
5 South West Africa People's Organization					
6 People's Democratic Party					
7 Chama Cha Mapinduzi					
8 Movement for Multi-Party Democracy					
9 Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front					

Source: Calculated by the Authors from IFES

The literature on electoral rules and party systems tells us that SMD plurality rules are associated with two large parties, while rules that involve some version of PR tend toward multiple electoral and parliamentary parties.⁸ The electoral data in Table 1, however, tell us that something other than Duvergerian imperatives are at work in the party systems of Africa. While some of the countries that use SMD Plurality rules, as well as those which have PR Systems, tend toward the expected number of aggregate parties, most countries reveal a stronger tendency toward dominant-party politics.⁹ This is not to suggest that electoral rules are irrelevant in Africa or operate there in a completely unexpected manner, because this is not the case. Indeed, the changes in the effective numbers of electoral and parliamentary parties that accompanied the electoral system change made in Lesotho provide evidence for this. Rather, the point is that because single party dominance that is prevalent pattern there, regardless of type of electoral system in use, there must be other factors at work in these party systems.

Our purpose in this research is to identify these factors, illustrate how they work, and ultimately answer the question of how it is that different electoral rules produced relatively similar patterns of single-party dominance in the nations of Africa. While past scholarship has attempted to answer this question, most of it has done so only indirectly, that is, in the context of evaluating whether or not various African nations have crossed the threshold of democracy in their electoral politics. Given the authoritarian past of African nations, this is a reasonable approach to the problem of elections and party politics in these nations.¹⁰ Nonetheless, it has contributed to us still being without a more

8 These are referred to as Duverger's Law (SMD Plurality Systems) and Duverger's Proposition (PR Systems). For elaborations on these relationships, see e.g., Lijphart (1997) and Taagepera and Shugart (1989).

9 SMD Plurality system countries like Botswana, Mali, and Tanzania are much more dominant-party than two-party systems, while PR Systems like Namibia and Burkina Faso in 1997 are less multi-party than dominant-party systems.

10 There are scholarly investigations that focus specifically on Africa's pattern of dominant party politics, and we discuss these in more detail below. But for discussions of African electoral politics in the context of democratization, see e.g., Bratton and vande Walle (1994) and Golder and Wantchekon (2004).

focused explanation for why single-party dominance in the prevailing pattern in Africa.

Our approach to this problem is direct and begins with the fact that, to be the dominant actor in a nation's legislature, a party must obtain support from a majority of its voting population. How dominant parties accomplish this, however, will vary depending on two factors. First, it will vary depending on the characteristics of the nation's population, that is, whether it is relatively homogeneous or segmented and divided in terms of such features as ethnicity, language, culture, religion, and geography. In a homogeneous society, a dominant party simply has to obtain and keep the support of most voting members of a uniform society. In the case of a heterogeneous society, the dominant party can seek majority support in the same way, namely across all groups at the same rate, or it can achieve its dominance by seeking the support of some groups at the expense of others.

Second, the manner in which electoral dominance is achieved will vary depending on a nation's electoral rules, that is, whether candidates stand for office in single-member, plurality district systems or multi-member districts where winners are determined by some version of proportional representation. In each case, a dominant party has to be the largest holder of legislative seats, but it will approach this problem differently depending on how candidates stand for office and electors cast their ballots.

What is important about these two sets of factors is that they allow us to profile countries in terms of politically relevant groups and electoral institutions. Characterizing countries in terms of these two factors is useful for determining how dominant parties achieve their exalted status, because the bases on which single-party dominance rests vary depending on how countries are defined in terms of both politically relevant groups and electoral institutions. This is because different combinations of these two factors lead dominant parties to employ different strategies to achieve that status, and, to show how this occurs, we examine available data in the Afro Barometer surveys.¹¹ These data allow

¹¹The following surveys have been made available for secondary analysis and, thus, are the ones we use in this research. Specifically, they are as follows:

us to characterize the countries of Africa in terms of the nature and distribution of politically relevant groups which we can then combine with the electoral rules they use.

Our efforts to address this problem will proceed as follows. We first review explanations for dominant party politics in Africa, revealing how they inadequately address the possibility that the sources of single party dominance may be different across the nations of the continent based on how those countries are defined in terms of electoral institutions and socio-political factors. We also use the existing literature to generate a set of hypotheses about how different electoral rules and political conditions lead us to expect the support bases for Africa's dominant parties to be different. After this, we then begin to map how the sources of single-party dominance are indeed different across the different nations. This mapping will begin with the extent to which voters in the countries we examine are supporters of a political party, after which we then categorize nations by electoral institutions and politically relevant groups. We then map the different bases of dominant-party support to determine if party support patterns across each nation's regions, ethno-linguistic groups, and other socio-political divisions correspond to our expectations.

2. Single Party Dominance in Africa: Explanations

In earlier analyses of single-party dominance in Africa,¹² the emphasis was on cultural and historical factors, especially as they relate to the level of a nation's political development.¹³ In more recent studies conducted in the African multi-party elections period, the emphasis has been on political and institutional factors, specifically, how electoral institutions and ethno-linguistic and other socio-economic divisions within in a country are exploited by the ruling government elites to maintain their

Botswana (1999), Cape Verde (2002), Ghana (1999 and 2002), Lesotho (2000), Malawi (2000), Mali (2001), Mozambique (2002), Namibia (2000 and 2001), Nigeria (2000 and 2001), Tanzania (2001), Uganda (2000 and 2002), Zambia (1999), and Zimbabwe (1999). We are grateful to those who made these data available and note that all interpretations of the data are our own.

¹²The reference here is to the early post- independence years.

¹³See e.g., Almond and Coleman (1960) and LaPalombara and Weiner (1966).

dominant electoral statuses. Moreover, in more recent analyses, scholars have typically explored the operation of political and institutional factors in two different ways. They have either looked at such factors through case work, that is, by examining the results of single elections in specific countries,¹⁴ or they have defined measures of these factors, constructing large-N aggregate data sets and then estimated the impact of the factors they deemed important.¹⁵

We have learned much from these two types of studies, but there are certain limitations with existing studies that behoove us to proceed in a different direction. In the single-election, single-country studies, we have learned about why election outcomes turned out the way they did in selected cases. For example, we learned that it was the manner in which Lesotho's SMD plurality system advantaged the Lesotho Congress of Democrats (LCD) that led it to obtaining 79 of 80 available legislative seats in the 1998 election. Indeed, compared to the parties of the opposition, the LCD possessed a generally large support base across the all of the nation's regions, allowing it to win against a fragmented opposition in virtually of the nation's single-member districts.¹⁶ In the case of the 1995 legislative election in Tanzania, we see a different set of factors operating. Specifically, the overwhelming victory for the ruling CCM Party (Chama Cha Mapinduzi) was explained by the advantages that party enjoyed by virtue of its having been in the governing position going into the election.¹⁷

While these explanations are well done and offer insight into why the results of these two contests turned out the way they did, they are not generalizable across the entire set of elections that

14See e.g., Southall and Fox (1999) on the 1998 legislative election in Lesotho, and the essays in Cowen and Laakso (2002). See Mozaffar (1997) for a comparative discussion of election system choice in Senegal. For a more recent study of the problem of transition in dominant-party systems, see Freidman and Wong (2008).

15The best examples of this kind of study is found in Mozaffar (2002) and Mozaffar, Scaritt, and Galaich (2003).

16 Again, see Southall and Fox (1999).

17 See e.g., van Cranenburgh (1996).

we need to understand if we are to explain why elections in Africa have so often produced single-party dominance. This is not a criticism of the work provided by the authors of these and similar studies, because they were not intended to show how the results of specific elections explain the phenomenon of single-party dominance across the African cases in which it exists. This may suggest that the large-N, aggregate data analysis of Mozaffar et. al. (2003) offers a better, more general explanation for single-party dominance in Africa. To be sure, the Mozaffar et. al. (2003) analysis is general and offers many insights—insights that will guide the analyses we offer below, but it alone does not adequately answer the question of whether or not dominant party politics is the same across the nations of the African continent.

There are essentially two reasons for this, and the first, to be completely fair, concerns the fact that this research was not designed to address the question as we have posed it here, that is, whether or not the sources of single party dominance are the same across the nations of Africa. Mozaffar et. al. (2003) use aggregate data which tell us about the political, institutional, and social characteristics of the nations they examine, but to determine if variation in these factors is related to different electoral strategies on the part of dominant parties requires additional data. Specifically, since different strategies should manifest themselves in different patterns of support across politically relevant groups, it is necessary that the aggregate data of the kind used in Mozaffar et. al. (2003) be combined with individual-level data like those found in the Afro Barometer surveys. Another limitation of the Mozaffar et. al. (2003) analysis for our purposes concerns the dependent variable, the Effective Number of Parties—both electoral and parliamentary. While the effective number of parties has become the standard way to calibrate the number of relevant political parties in a political system, it is not well suited to capturing single-party dominance in Africa. Again, consider the data presented in Table 1 and the discussion we provided above about the phenomenon of single-party dominance in Africa. While the Effective Number of Parties measure indicates the presence of a dominant party in some

countries, it does not in others.¹⁸ For example, the dominant party of Botswana (BDP) increased its seat share between the 1999 and 2002 legislative elections, but the ENPP measure suggested that the party system in Botswana moved closer to a two-party format.

Overall, these issues suggest that, to answer the question of why elections in Africa tend to produce single-party dominance, even across different institutional formats, we need to combine individual-level and aggregate data. This is because only with both levels of data will we be able to determine whether or not the bases of single-party dominance are the same or different across the party systems of Africa. This process begins with examining countries' electoral institutions to assess how they are related to the politically relevant groups in that country that are then used by dominant parties to achieve and maintain their electoral dominance. Mozaffar et. al. (2003) have argued that, for most African nations, exclusive support from a single group alone is not sufficient to guarantee the electoral success of a dominant party. This means that group fragmentation alone "has no significant effect on the structure of party systems in Africa's emerging democracies,"¹⁹ and that, to understand why dominant parties exist, we must also examine how countries are divided regionally and how electoral institutions aggregate politically relevant divisions.

In light of this, the persistence of dominant party systems in Africa can be understood only as the result of the individual and joint action of two variables, namely politically relevant groups and the country's electoral institutions. With respect to the former, what is important is not simply mapping the size and fragmentation of politically relevant groups but also how geographically concentrated or dispersed they are throughout a country. These characteristics will help dictate what a ruling party has to do to capture a level of support sufficient to allow it to maintain its status as dominant party. Concerning the latter,

18 See especially Bogaards (2004) for an in-depth discussion of this issue and alternative measures of single-party dominance.

19 Mozaffar, et. al., (2003) p. 384.

electoral rules are the primary institutions through which votes from a country's politically relevant groups are aggregated and translated into legislative seats.

In his discussion of the origin of the electoral rules used by the nations of Africa, Mozaffar (2004) has isolated five institutional patterns.²⁰ The first two institutional patterns include countries that employ SMD plurality rules and those that employ some form of majority runoff. The second two institutional patterns include different versions of proportional representation, while the final institutional pattern includes countries with mixed systems. The important question for our purposes is why these different institutional patterns exist, that is, what is the political significance of the patterns we witness, and the answer rests with the manner in which a country's politically relevant groups are defined and distributed.

The answer to this question constitutes the variable we are to explain, that is, how do Africa's ruling parties achieve their electoral dominance. To answer this question, we need to test the hypothesis of whether or not, to achieve a majority of votes and seats sufficient to dominate a country's legislature, a ruling party devises an electoral strategy that depends on the size, fragmentation, and geographic concentration of its country's politically relevant groups. In other words, do such parties choose electoral institutions that best assist it in its strategy to achieve and maintain their electoral dominance. This means dividing its support among groups and aggregating the votes of its supporters in a way that leads to its candidates obtaining the dominant share of electoral seats.

To test this hypothesis, we assume that the variety of electoral institutions we see in Africa were put into place because they constituted the rules best suited to assist ruling parties in their strategies to maintain electoral dominance in light of the characteristics of their respective country's politically relevant groups. This means that, while we see different patterns of dominant party politics in Africa, countries employing certain

20 The discussion that follows is taken from Mozaffar (2004), pp. 420-426. See especially Table 24.1.

electoral institutions should be characterized by similar patterns of politically relevant groups. This is because, to maintain electoral dominance, they need to divide group support and aggregate supporters' votes in ways that correspond to group characteristics. To show this, we begin by mapping the countries of Africa in terms of basic party support patterns and then seeing if these basic patterns differ by the type of electoral rule used for legislative elections.

3. Party Support, Electoral Institutions, Opposition Strength

The data in Table 2. are taken from recent Afro Barometer surveys and include surveys for seventeen elections in thirteen countries. The data reveal that an average of 57% of respondents stated that they supported a political party. The lowest party support rate was found in the 2000 Uganda election where only 24% of those polled indicated that they had a party they supported, while the highest was found in Malawi, where those supporting a party comprised nearly 81% of the sample. If the understanding of single-party dominance in Africa we have discussed above is correct, these are dramatic differences in party support should be related to the type of electoral system being employed in a country.

Table 2. Party Supporters and Non-Supporters in Selected African Countries

Country	Survey Year	Percent Affiliated	Percent Not Affiliated
Botswana	1999	73.3%	16.8%
Cape Verde	2002	47.6%	47.8%
Ghana	1999	67.3%	32.7%
	2002	62.3%	32.7%
Lesotho	2000	51.3%	42.1%
Malawi	2000	80.9%	17.8%
Mali	2001	56.1%	42.3%

Mozambique	2002	59.5%	33.5%
Namibia	2000	71.0%	29.0%
	2001	77.3%	22.7%
Nigeria	2000	36.8%	63.2%
	2001	42.4%	53.9%
Tanzania	2001	79.2%	20.8%
Uganda	2000	24.3%	69.5%
	2002	48.0%	51.3%
Zambia	1999	36.4%	62.6%
Zimbabwe	1999	39.6%	55.7%

Source: Compiled by the authors from the Afro Barometer Surveys.

While party support is a complicated phenomenon that is explained by a number of individual and institutional factors, our expectation is that party support rates should be generally higher in countries that employ some form of proportional representation rule.²¹ Dividing the sample into nations that employ majority/plurality rules and those that use some form of PR and recalculating mean party support rates confirmed this. Average party support rates for the PR systems was nearly ten percentage points higher than those nations that used plurality/majority rules.²² Moreover, as expected, for those countries where support rates were below 45%, none employed a proportional representation rule. On the other hand, a number of countries

21 This is because under PR rules, small electoral parties have a higher chance of achieving parliamentary representation than in SMD plurality systems, keeping supporters from abandoning their first choice as readily as they would.

22 The average support rate for the PR countries was 64% while the average party support rate in the Plurality/Majority countries was 55%., but a difference of means test showed that the difference was not statistically significant. This was most likely due to the small number of cases (N=4) for the PR systems in the sample. When the difference of means test is recalculated using the same parameters but with a larger number of cases in simulated data, the difference is statistically significant.

where support rates were high employed plurality/majority rules. This tells us that while party support is certainly connected to electoral institutions, it is also related to something else, namely the characteristics of politically relevant groups in the society and how they are connected to ruling parties.

In addition to differences in rates of party support, the nations in the table can also be distinguished in terms of the electoral strength of the political parties that oppose those that are in the governing position. To capture this difference, we calculated how much larger the governing party's support level was compared to its strongest challenger.²³ These calculations produced three categories of countries with the first group defining countries where opposition parties were fairly strong relative to their governing counterparts. This group includes Ghana where the governing party was 1.5 times larger than its largest challenger, Malawi where the ruling party was 1.9 times larger, and Botswana where the governing party is 2.0 times larger than the strongest challenger. On the other extreme, there were several countries where the governing party was substantially stronger than its strongest challenger. These include Mozambique where the governing party had 17.8 times more support than its strongest challenger, and Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia where governing parties enjoyed nearly ten times more support than their strongest challengers.

With these data we can construct a classification of African countries that distinguishes them based on their overall levels of party support and the electoral strength of the largest opposition party. This classification scheme is presented in Figure 1, and it includes only those countries where differences on the two dimensions were clearly different. In the upper left quadrant are Ghana, Malawi, and Botswana, countries where party support levels are high and the largest opposition party is strong relative to each nation's governing party. In the lower right quadrant are Uganda and Zambia, countries where party support levels are rather low and opposition strength relative to each nation's governing party is weak. On the off diagonal are three other countries. In the lower-left quadrant of the figure is Nigeria where

23 These calculations were made using data from the Afro Barometers.

party support is low but where the opposition is relatively strong. In the upper-right quadrant are Tanzania and Mozambique where party support levels are relatively high but opposition strength is rather low.

With the exception of Mozambique, all countries in Figure 1 use SMD plurality rules in their respective legislative elections. This is important with respect to the strategies political parties follow to achieve electoral dominance. In SMD Plurality systems, for a political party to achieve electoral dominance it is necessary that it receive votes sufficient to have its respective candidates win a majority of districts. In a PR system, on the other hand, a political party must be sure that it is not only the largest vote getter but also that its support rate is sufficient to give it sufficient seats to be the dominant parliamentary party. While these differences in election institutions encourage somewhat different strategies to achieve electoral dominance, exactly what these differences are will depend on the electoral strength of the opposition and how politically relevant groups are characterized and distributed throughout a country.

Figure 1. Classification of African Party Systems by Party Support and Opposition Strength

		Opposition Strength	
		Strong	Weak
Party Support	High	Ghana Malawi Botswana	Tanzania Mozambique
	Low	Nigeria	Uganda Zambia

Concerning the former, when parties of the opposition are strong and represent a realistic governing alternative, the dominant party must maintain all the support it can get which means that it can ill afford to alienate large numbers of politically relevant groups, especially if they are well represented in the nation's

population. This is a particularly acute problem when elections are held under SMD Plurality rules where electoral institutions encourage opposition groups to amalgamate into large unified opposition parties to avoid the Duvergerian problem and challenge large governing parties.

With such cooperation, strong opposition candidates can become direct challengers to candidates from the dominant party, which makes it imperative that dominant parties go to great lengths not to alienate many politically relevant groups. Naturally, this problem is directly proportional to the electoral strength and unity of the opposition. Electorally weaker opposition parties allow dominant parties to be somewhat more exclusive in their respective strategies in the sense that the loss of some small number politically relevant groups is not as problematic as when the opposition is electorally strong. While an electorally strong and unified opposition is a concern, even when PR rules are used, it is somewhat less of a concern in SMD Plurality systems. This is because, being kinder to smaller parties, PR systems can often keep oppositions more fragmented by encouraging smaller electorally relevant groups to put up their own party lists and eschew electoral cooperation.

Given that the nations in Figure 1 are different on these party support and opposition strength characteristics, we would also expect that they will be different in terms of the nature of group support for their respective dominant parties. While the nations under consideration are not uniform in terms of how politically relevant groups are defined and distributed,²⁴ we still have certain expectations about how the above-defined differences will influence patterns of dominant party support. On the one hand, in nations with high levels of overall party support and strong oppositions, we would expect dominant party support to be more uniform across politically relevant groups. On the other hand, as opposition strength wanes and overall levels of party support decline, we expect that this uniformity of dominant party support across groups to diminish and a more distinctive group basis of party support to emerge.

24 See e.g., Scarritt and Mozafer (1999) and Mozaffer, Scarritt, and Galaich (2003).

Using data from the available Afro Barometer surveys mentioned above, we turn to this mapping in the next section. The Afro Barometer surveys allow us to produce such a dominant party support mapping because these surveys all contain questions that allow us to divide respondents into groups distinguished by region or district of the country in which they live, ethno-linguistic characteristics, and party support.²⁵

4. Dominant Party Support: Ethno-linguistic and Regional Characteristics

Our mapping of dominant party support in Africa begins with those countries where overall levels of party support were high and support for the opposition was also high, Botswana, Ghana, and Malawi.²⁶ We see from the data in Table 3 that these three countries are different in terms of the level support the dominant party in each received in the Afro Barometer surveys we examined. Botswana's and Malawi's parties each were about ten percentage points stronger than was Ghana's which tells us that the electoral strategy followed by the former two was superior to that followed by Ghana. To distinguish the strategy followed by each party, we analyze more closely how the support characteristics of each can be distinguished in terms of the groups that support each country's dominant party and the regional/district distribution of governing party support.

We first examined the extent to which ethno-linguistic and regional differences explained support levels for each country's dominant party. This was accomplished by crosstabulating the regional and ethno-linguistic variables with the party support variable and then producing correlations and tests of statistical

25 There are certainly other ways to categorize respondents into politically relevant groups. Such categorizations include most notably religion, occupation, and gender. Because of their strong relationship to each other, this study focuses on ethno-linguistic divisions and regional or district differences.

26 The average percentage of party supporters across the three countries was 71%. We defined an opposition as being electorally strong as long as the dominant party possessed no more than two times as many supporters in the Afro Barometer surveys.

significance. Given that the ethno-linguistic and regional differences are essentially categorical variables, the lambda coefficient was used as the correlation coefficient while the chi square was used to determine statistical significance. In the third column of Table 3, we see that region and ethno-linguistic group are statistically significant explanations for differences in support for dominant parties but that the level of association with respect to these categorical variables is generally weak. This is true for all three countries, but it was least true for Malawi where the lambda coefficients were highest.

While these measures tell us something about how these three countries are different with respect to the ethno-linguistic and regional basis of support for each's dominant party, they do not tell us if the dominant party in each country followed a different electoral strategy. To make this determination, different measures are necessary, and these are contained in the last two columns of the table. The first measure is what we refer to as the average deviation measure, which was created by subtracting the national support rate for each country's dominant party from the rate at which various ethno-linguistic and regional groups supported the dominant party. We see that Botswana and Ghana are similar in that there is more variation across regional groups than there is across each country's ethno-linguistic groups. Malawi, on the other hand, is different in that there was much substantial variation across both regional and ethno-linguistic groups.

These differences are interesting but they still do not tell us enough about the different electoral strategies dominant parties pursued. To determine just how different electoral strategies were, we need another measure. This measure is found in the last column of the table and involves determining whether the dominant parties under consideration here focused on a few regional or ethno-linguistic groups or sought electoral support more broadly. To develop such a measure, we first had to determine whether a group's dominant party support rate was above or below the national support rate. Groups that were above the dominant party's national support rate were classified as supporters and those below that rate were classified as non-supporters. We then took all support groups and non-support

groups and calculated their average size in the sample. In other words, we averaged the sample proportions of all support and non-support groups, and produced these averages for both ethno-linguistic and regional groups. The results show that dominant parties in each of our three countries followed different electoral strategies.

Table 3. Dominant Party Support in Countries with Strong Oppositions

	Dominant Party Support Level	Basis of Party Support Lambda Chi ²	Average Deviation From National Support Rate*	Average Sample Size Political Groups** Supt./ ~ Supt.
High Party Supt. Levels				
Botswana	49.3%			
Group		.031 p<.001	6.1%	15.6%/ 10.1%
Region		.012 p<.000	13.2%	22.3%/ 6.1%
Ghana	38.3%			
Group		.039 p<.000	8.4%	4.2%/ 30.9%
Region		.079 p<.000	13.1%	7.9%/ 14.5%
Malawi	46.1%			
Group		.116 p<.001	24.6%	26.2%/ 5.2%
Region		.143 p<.000	27.8%	6.6%/ 6.7%
Low Party Support Levels				
Nigeria	23.6%			
Group		.061 p<.000	7.6%	9.6%/ 11.9%
Region		.029 p<.000	11.6%	2.2%/ 3.1%

*This is Calculated by subtracting the national support rate for the dominant party from the group or region support rate.
** This is calculated by taking the average size of groups (percentage of respondents in the sample) for those groups who are above and those who are below the national support rates.

Source: Compiled by the Authors from various Afro Barometers

The most notable contrast rests between Botswana and Ghana. In the case of the former, we see that dominant party supporters in that country tended to come from the more populous politically relevant groups. This is true for the country's ethno-linguistic groups, but it was even more notable for the country's regional groups. Specifically, while the Botswana Democratic Party tended to rely on somewhat larger ethno-linguistic groups, it was much stronger in the regions of the country that are more populous.²⁷ Data for Ghana, on the other hand, revealed a dominant party following a very different strategy. Specifically, the dominant party there tended to have the support of ethno-linguistic and regional groups that were smaller than those that support the opposition.²⁸ Non-supporter regional groups tended to be about twice as large as supporter groups, but non-supporter ethno-linguistic groups were more than seven times larger. These observations leave us with the conclusion that the strategy followed by the Botswana Democratic Party, one that relies on groups that are more populous in the country overall, is more electorally effective.

What is interesting about Malawi, on the other hand, is that it is different from both Botswana and Ghana. It is different from Botswana in that the regional groups are nearly identical in terms of party supporters and non-supporters while, in terms of ethno-linguistic groups, supporters were far more represented in the country's larger groups. This is what we would expect because, in Malawi, the Chewa group is more than seven times larger than any other ethno-linguistic group, and it would be difficult to be a

27 An electoral strategy that relies on fewer but larger groups is referred to as a size strategy.

28 An electoral strategy that relies on more but smaller groups is referred to as a quantity strategy.

dominant party without support from a significant proportion of members of this group. In this sense, the United Democratic Front of Malawi followed a limited size strategy.

The remaining country in the lower portion of Table 3 is Nigeria which is different from the previous three countries because party support levels there are lower overall. This is witnessed in the fact that the nation's dominant party, the People's Democratic Party, received support from less than 25% of the survey's respondents, but it is also different in that, while Nigeria's opposition is categorized as being strong, it is the weakest of the four dominant parties in the two left quadrants of Figure 1.²⁹ This suggests to us that the dominant party of Nigeria is under less pressure to build a strategy of electoral dominance than its counterparts in Botswana, Ghana, and Malawi. The data in the Table 3 indicate that ethno-linguistic and regional groups are statistically significant factors explaining party support, but they also tell us that these groups are only weakly correlated with differences in dominant party support levels. On the other measures that we created to map electoral strategies, we see in the data that there is less deviation in terms of dominant party support levels across Nigeria's ethno-linguistic and regional groups. This is also reflected in the fact that differences in the size of groups that dominant party supporters and non-supporters rely on are fairly close.

These patterns lead us to conclude that perhaps lower overall party support levels and a somewhat weaker opposition mean that dominant parties can rest more solidly on such differences. In other words, lower levels of party support overall and a weaker opposition means that the dominant party has some advantages that do not require it to be as concerned as dominant parties in the other countries that we examined above to build a winning strategy. However, to examine this idea more thoroughly, we turn next to dominant parties in countries where the opposition is clearly weak, and the data for this analysis are presented in Table 4. This analysis begins with the two countries

29 The People's Democratic Party is nearly three times as large as the next largest opposition party.

in the lower right hand quadrant of Figure 1, namely countries with low levels of party support overall and weak oppositions.

Data on these two countries, Tanzania and Mozambique, are contained in the upper portion of Table 4 and reveal immediate differences and similarities with the countries already examined. Concerning the former, we notice that support for Tanzania's and Mozambique's dominant parties are the highest of any in our analysis. Support for the dominant party of Tanzania is nearly 2/3 of the sample and, for the Frelimo of Mozambique, nearly 60%. In spite of this dramatic difference, we notice that the relationship between ethno-linguistic and regional groups and support for these two countries' dominant parties is similar to that found in the other countries that have already been examined. Specifically, while ethno-linguistic and regional groups are related to differences in support for dominant parties in these two countries, the relationship is weak when measured in terms of correlation coefficients. As in the previous cases, the principal reason for this is the fact that both countries are highly fragmented in terms of politically relevant ethno-linguistic and regional groups.

These two countries are quite similar in terms of the extent to which regional groups vary from their respective national dominant party support rates, but they are quite different in terms of this variation across ethno-linguistic groups. Such ethno-linguistic group variation is much higher in Mozambique than it is in Tanzania. Moreover, the dominant parties of these two countries seem to have followed slightly different strategies in order to maintain their respective levels of electoral dominance. In Mozambique, the dominant party relies overall on ethno-linguistic and regional groups that are on average larger than those on which their opponents rely. Having said this, it is important to note that, while larger, support groups for Mozambique's dominant party are not substantially larger than groups which support the opposition, but this is not threatening to the governing party of Mozambique because it is significantly larger than the largest opposition challenger. The same is true for the dominant party of Tanzania, which is nearly ten times larger than its most significant challenger. Consequently, it is for these

reasons that the party is not threatened by relying on generally smaller ethno-linguistic groups than its challengers.

Table 4. Dominant Party Support in Countries with Weak Oppositions

	Dominant Party Support Level	Basis of Party Support Lambda Chi²	Average Deviation From National Support Rate*	Average Sample Size Political Groups** Supt./ ~Supt.
High Party Support Levels				
Tanzania	63.1%			
Group		.001 p<.000	6.1%	5.4%/ 12.8%
Region		.028 p<.000	8.2%	5.1%/ 5.2 %
Mozambique	58.8%			
Group		.017 p<.000	12.1%	7.9%/ 5.3 % 10.1%/ 8.5%
Region		.042 p<.000	8.8%	
Low Party Support Levels				
Uganda	19.6%			
Group		.020 p<.000	5.7%	7.7%/ 6.6%
Region		.026 p<.000	10.1%	3.2%/ 3.8%
Zambia	30.7			
Group		.017 p<.000	3.5%	15.2%/ 0.5%
Region		.017 p<.000	6.3%	7.9%/ 11.3%

* This is Calculated by subtracting the national support rate for the dominant party from the group or region support rate.
 ** This is calculated by taking the average size of groups (percentage of respondents in the sample) for those groups who are above and those who are below the national support rates.

Source: Compiled by the Authors from various Afro Barometers

Finally, what is immediately noticeable about the remaining two parties in the table is that, while they are in countries with dominant party systems, they are supported by much lower proportions of respondents according to the samples we have used here. Despite this difference, we see that ethno-linguistic and regional groups are statistically significant factors explaining differences dominant party support rates, but, like the other countries that have been examined, the correlations between groups and dominant party support are weak. We also notice from the data in Table 4 that group support rates for dominant parties vary much less from national support rates than the other countries examined thus far. We see that, for Uganda which has the lowest dominant party support rate of any country examined here, differences in average group size between dominant party supporters and non-supporters are negligible. This is not unexpected given that the ruling party has nearly ten times more support than its strongest challenger. In the case of Zambia, the situation is somewhat different in that the ethno-linguistic groups that support the dominant Movement for Multi-party Democracy are larger than those that support the opposition, but, at the same time, the regional groups that support the dominant party are smaller than those that support the opposition. Again, given the dominance that the ruling party has over its strongest challenger, this is not unexpected.

This paper has shown that ruling parties in Africa rely on different strategies to achieve their electoral dominance and that electoral institutions and the characteristics of politically relevant groups in the country help explain these differences. While this kind of mapping has not been provided in the existing literature, there are still a number of questions that remain unanswered. These include the connection of other groups, like occupational and religious groups, to dominant party support which were not assessed in this paper. Also, a deeper explanation for why different countries rely on different groups for their electoral dominance is necessary as is an evaluation of the effectiveness of the different group strategies. This paper's use of Afro Barometer data has provided an initial foray into these questions about why dominant party politics is so prevalent in Africa. These Afro Barometer data can be used to answer other important questions regarding the patterns of party politics that define the nations of

Africa, but these efforts will have to be the subject of future research.

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ELECTORAL REFORMS AND DEMOCRATIC CONSOLIDATION IN NIGERIA: THE ELECTORAL ACT 2006

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Abstract

Periodic free and fair elections are central to democratic consolidation in Nigeria as in other parts of the world. Electoral laws provide the legal basis for the conduct of such elections, and the reform of these laws is a part and parcel of the efforts geared towards consolidating the country's nascent democracy. The paper situates the Electoral Act 2006 within the specific historical experiences of Nigeria in the conduct of elections. It focuses on the remedial provisions of the act that are designed to address specific maladies of the Nigerian electoral system. It notes areas of continuity and change, highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of the act in addressing the critical issues involved. The paper concludes that while law remains important, and indeed indispensable, in electoral politics, a reform of the electoral laws has to be backed by structural changes in other spheres of the socio-political relations, in order to advance the course of sustainable democracy in Nigeria.

1. Introduction

Elections are a very important component of the democratic process in any country. They are no less important in a developing polity plagued by instability and succession crises attendant to flawed electoral processes. While the elective principle was introduced in Nigeria almost a century ago, the country is not known to have conducted elections devoid of acrimony, rancor and controversies. Indeed, disputes pertaining to electoral systems and processes have truncated the democratic process thrice in the less than half-a-century of Nigeria's existence as an independent state. The return to civil rule after a long period of military interregnum was expected to usher in an enduring democracy in the wake of the worldwide waves of

democratization. Yet the 1999 and 2003 elections were as flawed as the previous elections, heightening calls for a reform of the electoral laws. The idea was to strengthen the system's capacity to conduct free and fair elections that could serve as a basis for orderly transfer of political power and a building block of democratic consolidation.

It is against this background that the Electoral Act 2006 was promulgated as a 'comprehensive' reaction to the myriads of electoral problems that have plagued the Nigerian state for decades. It is a law designed to harmonize all the previous laws with a view to streamlining the legal framework of electoral systems and processes in Nigeria. Yet, the 2007 general and other subsequent elections conducted within the framework of the new electoral laws and regulations were not better, and were indeed rated by some international observer missions as worse, than any previous elections. What went wrong with the law?

Until recently, elections had been infrequently held in post-independence Nigeria, with the attendant dearth of scholarly work on the subject. More specifically, the centrality of law in the country's program of electoral reform has not been brought to the forefront of scholarly analysis. The paper, therefore, directs attention to the role and limits of law in Nigeria's electoral reform agenda. It x-rays the key provisions of the Electoral Act 2006, highlighting the unique features of the new electoral regime in relation to the main electoral problems of a nation in search of an enduring democracy. It reviews the electoral laws in the light of the country's historical experiences and contemporary developments. It pays particular attention to those aspects of the new law that are designed to address the several challenges of managing elections in Nigeria, noting areas of strengths and weaknesses while making suggestions for further reforms. It directs attention to the need to situate electoral laws within the context of the wider society if they must address the several challenges of conducting *democratic* elections in Nigeria. To do this, the paper is arranged in five sections. The section that follows the introduction represents a theoretical brief on the inextricable link between democracy and elections. The paper then takes an historical overview of the electoral problems of Nigeria to serve as a background for review of the key provisions

of the Electoral Act 2006. This is followed by an extensive discourse on the act, noting areas of continuity and change as well as strengths and weaknesses. The concluding remarks are anchored on the need to deepen the electoral reforms beyond mere tinkering with rules, suggesting that such reforms must be backed by concomitant changes in other aspects of societal life in order to strengthen the democratic process in Nigeria.

2. Democracy and Elections

There is an inextricable link between elections and democracy. Although only a part of a wider process, elections are, no doubt "a critical part of the democratic process".¹ Indeed, all other variables of democracy "revolve around elections".² For Bratton, elections are "a necessary requisite for broader democratic consolidation".³ Where a country, such as Nigeria, has been unable to conduct successive and successful elections, its democratic credentials, therefore, cannot but be subjected to serious qualifications.

Elections do serve many useful purposes for democratic transition and consolidation. Generally, elections give the mass of the people opportunities to have a say in *who* (personnel) governs them and *how* (policies) they are governed. As means of giving accountability to citizens,⁴ elections are a constant reminder to public office holders of the limited nature of modern government. Arguably, elections serve as the most legitimate means of resolving intra-elite conflicts and facilitating "circulation of elites... via the ballot box".⁵ In an increasingly globalized world, elections facilitate orderly and smooth transfer of power with minimum

1 Peter Woll, ed., *American Government: Readings and Cases*, 6th ed. (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1978), 26.

2 Gabriel A. Almond, G. Bingham Powell, Jr, Kaare Strom, and Russell J. Dalton, eds., *Comparative Politics Today: A World View*. 8th ed. (New York: Pearson/Longman, 2004), 63

3 M. Bratton, "Second Elections in Africa," *Journal of Democracy*, 9:3 (July 1998), 52

4 Howard Handelman, *The Challenge of Third World Development*. 3rd ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc. 2003), 11

5 Naomi Chazan, et.al., *Politics and Society in Contemporary Africa*. 3rd ed. (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers 1999), 203

disturbance for system persistence and maintenance. More than any other factor, perhaps, elections enhance participatory democracy and contribute to the effectiveness of the political system in attaining societal goals and objectives.

Elections may produce some negative consequences in some political systems, however. In their dysfunctional role, elections, particularly in pluralist, heterogeneous and highly segmented societies, may hasten the dissolution of primary ties and reinforce centripetal forces rather than serve as a factor for cohesion and harmony. In fact, empirical studies have found no consistent policy consequences of democracy in general or of democratic elections in particular.⁶

Elections are primarily a contest among groups, mainly political parties.⁷ It is the existence of such groups, organized and operated along democratic traditions, that gives meaning to the electoral process as the cornerstone of democratic politics. Electoral and party systems are, hence, necessarily intertwined as both are designed to facilitate peaceful and orderly transfer of political power.⁸ Party politics within a democratic setting are, indeed, "intrinsically electoral politics".⁹ Developments affecting the electoral system of any country are therefore bound to reflect one way or the other on the party system, and vice versa. For a

6 David A. Lake and Matthew A. Baum, "The Invisible Hand of Democracy", in *Essential Readings in Comparative Politics*, ed. Patrick O'Neil and Ronald Rogowski (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2004), 415; Carlene J. Edie, *Politics in Africa: A New Beginning?* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning); Monte Palmer, *Comparative Politics*. 2nd ed. (Itasca, IL: F. E. Peacock Publishers, Inc., 2001), 380-383, 347-348, 445-467. See also Arend Lijphart. *Electoral Systems and Party Systems: A Study of Twenty-Seven Democracies, 1945-1990*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994)

7 Leon D. Epstein, Epstein, "Political Parties in Western Democracies", in *Political Parties, Contemporary Trends and Ideas*, ed. Roy C. Macridis (New York: Harper and Row, 1967)

8 Richard J. Payne and Jamal R. Nassar, *Politics and Culture in the Developing World: The Impact of Globalization*. 2nd ed. (New York: Pearson/Longman, 2006), 211

9 L. Adele Jinadu, "Competitive Elections and the Multi-Party Systems in Nigeria", *Democratization in Africa: Nigerian Perspectives*, ed. Omo Omoruyi, et. Al. (Benin City: Hima and Hima Ltd., 1994), 247

party system to further the goal of democratic consolidation through free and fair elections, it must be conducive to the promotion of democratic culture among the leading gladiators. Accordingly, any program of electoral reform designed to further the goal of democratic transition or consolidation must take cognizance of the significant role of these key participants in the democratic process. This often requires a level of control by some form of rules and regulations defining the framework of permissible behavior as far as elections are concerned. This is important since the activities of such parties, the rules and patterns of their engagement of government, as well as their relationships and behavior do have significant consequences for the electoral system in particular and the political system in general.¹⁰

Political parties are indispensable players in the democratic process, notwithstanding some doubts expressed by Duverger about their democratic character.¹¹ In particular cases of the emerging democracies, Nigeria inclusive, the general oligarchic tendencies in party organization and operation are coupled with weak internal structure, lack of programmed ideological orientations, regional/sectional origins and loyalties, and lack of adequate resource base.¹² Accordingly, they, unlike their counterparts of the advanced democracies, are yet to transform into veritable instruments for the conduct of credible inter-party electoral contests.¹³

10 See, generally, Larry Diamond and Richard Gunther, *Political Parties and Democracy* (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins, 2001)

11 Maurice Duverger, *Political Parties, Their Organization and Activity in the Modern State*. 2nd ed. transl. Robert North and Barbara North. (London: Methuen, 1961)

12 R. A. Akindele and S.N. Varma, "The Problems and Prospects of National Parties in Nigeria," *The African Review*, IV:3 (1974); Ayodele Aderinwale and Niyi Alabi, eds. *Democratization of African Parliaments and Political Parties Proceedings of an International Conference Organized by the Africa Leadership Forum, 13-15 July, Gaborone, Botswana*. (Washington: World Bank Institute, 1998)

13 For a recent overview of the development of political parties in Nigeria, see P. F. Adebayo "Political Parties: Formation, Development, Performance and Prospects", in *Challenges of Sustainable Democracy in Nigeria*, ed. Emmanuel O. Ojo (Ibadan: John Archers Ltd., 2006), 63-71

In the same vein, elections in the new or emerging democracies of Africa have not produced, in a uniform manner, outcomes that are exact replica of the experiences of the developed western democracies. This brings into focus the significance of contextual characteristics of the environment as critical factors in the design and reform of electoral systems. Accordingly, in the study of elections, as in the study of other aspects of politics generally, attention is paid to some ecological factors that shape electoral politics.¹⁴ These factors, including the social, economic, cultural, psychological, and, indeed, the legal regimes, shape and are shaped by the patterns and outcomes of electoral politics. These historical conditions, mainly structural, institutional or legal, may assist in explaining the wide gulf in outcomes produced by “democratic” elections in different settings. In the specific situation of Nigeria, such contextual issues that underlie the inability to conduct successful elections include, but are not limited to, ethnic and religious intolerance and suspicions, undue militarization of (transition) politics, lack of independence of the electoral umpire, parochial foundations of political parties and their lack of distinct ideological orientations, monetization of politics amidst mass poverty, widespread illiteracy among the voting population, unemployment particularly among the youths, and violence.

3. Historical Context

The challenges of electoral competition in Nigeria cannot be fully grasped without situating them in the context of the country’s historical experiences. Such an approach helps to put in perspective the situations and circumstances that inform the key provisions of the Electoral Act as well as the challenges of electoral competition that the law is designed to address. Although the elective principle had been introduced in 1922, it wasn’t until after World II that elections became regular features of politics in Nigeria. However, the dusts raised by the first general elections in December 1959 had hardly settled when the subsequent federal elections in 1964 and regional elections in the

14 Kelvin Cox, “Geography, Social Context and Voting Behavior in Wales, 1861-1951”, in *Mass Politics*, ed. E. Allardt and Stein Rokkan (New York: Free Press, 1970), 117-120

West in 1965 ignited a chain of events that culminated in a coup d'état, which brought civil rule to an abrupt end barely five years after independence. Since then, general elections have been held in 1979 and 1983 during the Second Republic, in the period of 1991-1993 when the military regime organized staggered elections in a diarchic experiment that culminated in the annulled June 12, 1993 presidential elections, and in 1999, 2003 and 2007. There is a wide consensus, in popular discourses and scholarly writings, that elections in Nigeria have lacked the minimum standards of free, fair and credible democratic elections. The electoral laws have often not been conformed to, while openness and transparency in a manner as to give equal chances to all the contesting parties have been lacking at every stage of the electoral process. Yet, the electoral laws require "substantial compliance" with every stage (identified as 13 by a former Chief Electoral Officer¹⁵) of the process. Unfortunately, the conduct of these elections had been marred by irregularities and malpractices. General elections were particularly characterized by violence, rigging and official manipulation in favor of the parties in power.

The factors that undermine the conduct of free and fair elections in Nigeria are multifaceted and occur at various stages of the electoral process. Following observable trends and evidence, including those revealed by the Babalakin Report¹⁶ and those catalogued by the *Nigerian Tribune*,¹⁷ among other scholarly and commissioned works,¹⁸ these factors can be classified as those that precede election days, those that occur during the actual voting/casting of ballots, and post-election problems associated with counting of votes, announcement of results, declaration of the winners, and election petitions. The problems are visible, in various magnitudes and dimensions, in virtually all elections

15Amadu Kurfi, *Election Contest: Candidate's Companion* (Ibadan: Spectrum Books Ltd., 1989), viii

16 Jubrin Ibrahim, "Legislation and the Electoral Process: The Third Term Agenda and the Future of Democracy," *Constitution*, 6:2 (June, 2006), 59-60

17Nigerian Tribune Newspaper, 14 October 1992

18Transition Monitoring Group, *Do Voters Count: Final Report of the 2003 General Elections in Nigeria* (Abuja: Transition Monitoring Group, 2003)

conducted since the 1960's to date, particularly those of 1964, 1983, 2003 and 2007.

A variety of malpractices that surrounded the 1983 elections were catalogued in the Report of the Babalakin judicial commission of enquiry set up by the military regime of Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida. They included: (1) compilation of fictitious names on voter registers; (2) illegal compilation of separate voter lists; (3) abuse of the voter registration exercise; (4) illegal printing of voter cards; (5) illegal possession of ballots boxes; (6) stuffing of ballots boxes with ballots papers; (7) falsification of election results; (8) illegal thumb printing of ballot papers; (9) voting by under-aged children; (10) printing of forms used for collation and declaration of election results; (11) deliberate refusal to supply electoral materials to certain areas; (12) announcement of results in places where no elections were held; (13) unauthorized announcement of election results; (14) harassment of candidates, agents and voters; (15) change of lists of electoral officials; and (16) box switching and inflation. Ibrahim¹⁹ also documented other forms of electoral malpractices, including such election-day rigging as corruption of agents and officials, late/non-supply of election materials to opposition strongholds, delay in opening polling units located in opposition strongholds, stuffing of ballot boxes, multiple voting, inducement of voters with food and money, and threatening voters with the use of violence. Post election rigging had included refusal to count ballots from opposition strongholds, changing of results between voting centers and collation centers, declaration of false results, annulment of results, and manipulation of the election petition proces.²⁰

Dimensions of electoral malpractices and irregularities in Nigeria have widened, rather than reduced, over time. While the Babalakin Commission identified the problems of election more

19Ibrahim , "Legislation and the Electoral Process,"

20 Olawale Oshun, *Clapping With One Hand: June 12 and Crisis of a State Nation* (London: Josel Publishers 1999); Omo Omoruyi, et.al. eds., *Democratization in Africa: Nigerian Perspectives* (Benin City: Hima and Hima Ltd., 1994); Aliyu Umaru, *June 12 and the Cultured North: Some Aspects of Nigeria's Politics in Perspective* (Kaduna: Axis Research Agency, 2000)

than two decades ago, various forms of electoral malpractices, in more dangerous and sophisticated dimensions, were repeated during the 1999, 2003 and 2007 elections as if nothing could be learnt from the lessons of the past. The magnitude of the malpractices that attended the 2003 elections caused the Transition Monitoring Group, a non-governmental organization, to wonder whether any election actually took place in Nigeria in that year. In fact, the 2003 elections seemed to have been designed to fail right from the start. The delay in releasing funds to the electoral umpire, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), affected the preparation for and actual conduct of the elections. Thus, INEC failed to display the voter register for 60 days before the elections as required by the Electoral Act,²¹ electoral cards were not made available within the deadline provided by the electoral law,²² and the final list of contestants were not available for display up to the date of election. For instance, PDP candidates (including House of Assembly aspirants in my own constituency in Ejigbo Local Government Area of Osun State) were still fighting over nominations after the election results had been announced.

The election-day malpractices and post-election manipulation of the electoral process, repeated during the 2003 and 2007 elections, were no less significant than the experience of the past. This time around, the manipulation reached such a feverish stage that it became commonplace and was done with impunity. Although an all-party affair, the party in power at the federal level deployed the state apparatus, including the security forces, to ensure the victory of its preferred candidates. There was open intimidation of opponents and voters with guns, cudgels, cutlasses and other dangerous weapons while the armed security forces stood by helplessly. Such practices of the past as "political intimidation...coercion...arrest and imprisonment of opposition leaders"²³ continued unabated, especially in strongholds of the respective political parties. Other malpractices, identified by the European Union Election Observation Mission in Nigeria (EU

21 The News Magazine, 12 May 2003

22 Tell Magazine, 31 March 2003 and 14 April 2003

23J. Bayo Adekanye, "Elections in Nigeria: Problems, Strategies and Options," Nigeria Journal of Electoral and Political Behavior. 1:1 (1990), 2

EOM), included unlawful behavior by party agents and alleged domestic observers, party agents creating atmosphere of intimidation and interference in the electoral process, absence of ballot papers, under-aged voting, stuffing of ballot boxes, forgery of results, falsification of result sheets, ballot box snatching, "improbable turnout figures, up to 100 percent", and a variety of other means of rigging which were "by no means exhaustive". The elections, the observers note, were marred "by serious irregularities...and fraud", insisting that the electoral regulations were not complied with throughout the country.²⁴ More damaging reports were produced in respect of the 2007 elections.²⁵ These were the serious ills of the electoral system in Nigeria for which the Electoral Act of 2006 was designed to provide some remedial solutions.

4. Electoral Act 2006²⁶

The Electoral Act 2006 was designed to address the several problems of the Nigerian electoral system identified in the preceding section. The act is not the first of its kind in the electoral history of Nigeria. It, however, represents a major attempt to confront the problems which seem to have defied solutions. To do this, it repeals and consolidates all the previous electoral laws with significant changes expected to enhance the system. With 166 sections arranged in ten parts, it was set out as the most comprehensive legal instrument in the annals of electoral systems in Nigeria. Its provisions cover the conduct of all elections – federal, state and local as well as regulation of activities of political parties. It creates electoral offences and prescribes punishments for violations of the law. It also defines the powers and functions of the electoral regulatory body, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). The main

24 The News, 05/05/03

25 Jubrin Ibrahim, "Nigeria's 2007 Elections: The Fitful Path to Democratic Citizenship," Special Report, (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, Jan 2007). See also the Network Of Mobile Election Monitors (NMEM), Election Monitoring Report Compiled ...on the Nigerian Presidential Elections Held on April 21st 2007; available at http://www.kiwanja.net/miscellaneous/NMEM_Election_Report.pdf

26 Act No. 2 of 2006

innovation of the act in this regard is the vesting in the Commission of the power to “conduct voter and civic education” and “promote knowledge of sound democratic election processes” (s.2). Moreover, efforts are made under the act to guarantee the independence of the INEC by making the tenure of its commissioners as secured as those of high court judges.²⁷

Like the previous electoral law, however, the new act did not go far in insulating the commission from manipulation by the government or party in power. Apart from the addition of the word “Independent” to its name, the commission enjoys no guarantee of autonomy more than that of its predecessors - the Federal Electoral Commission (FEDECO) and the National Electoral Commission (NEC). Its funds remain tied to the Federal Government. Although the act seeks to permit the commission some measure of independence in expenditure of its funds (s.4), its budget proposals are subject to approval of the Ministry of Finance while its funds are not charged upon the Consolidated Revenue Fund. This necessarily ties the commission to the goodwill of the Federal Government.²⁸ Moreover, the commission enjoys little safeguards for autonomy under a military-inspired constitution that creates it as an “executive” body whose membership are appointed and removed at the whims of the president, as long as the latter enjoys considerable support in the National Assembly.²⁹ The independence of the INEC is also questioned to the extent that some of its commissioners are card-carrying members and/or sympathizers of the ruling party. This is so because neither the act nor the constitution precludes such membership. In fact, constitutional provisions (ss.65 & 156) exist to justify such membership, with serious implications for popular perception of the independence and integrity of the electoral umpire.

27 The provision of s.7(3) of the Electoral Act 2006 is in pari materia with that of s.292(1) of the 1999 Constitution

28 Delayed release of funds to the Commission prior to the 2003 and 2007 elections generated considerable controversies and public outcry. See: The Punch, 23/08/06

29 ss. 153,154 & 157 of the 1999 Constitution

Another important aspect of the electoral system, to which the entirety of Part III of the Electoral Act is devoted, is registration of voters. The commission is empowered to “compile, maintain, and update on a continuous basis, a National Register of Voters.”³⁰ One novelty of the act in this respect is the continuous nature of the registration/revision exercise. Another one is that the act, unlike the previous electoral laws,³¹ does not make the exercise dependent on the conduct of a national head count. The removal of such an encumbrance is welcome in view of the political intrigues that have surrounded the conduct of census in Nigeria.³² This does not, however, totally erase the possibility of producing an inflated register that could form the bedrock of massive rigging as has happened in the past.³³ The massive irregularities that attended the use of Direct Data Capturing Machine during the registration exercise conducted in October 2006 through February 2007 exposed the limitations inherent in seeking to use e-registration as an antidote to inflation of voters’ register where the electoral commission is dependent on the government in power for procurement of basic needs, including registration/election materials.

More germane to the electoral process is the provision of s.10(5) of the act which makes it mandatory for registration/revision of voters’ register to be concluded no later than 120 days (reduced to 60 days under a new amendment) before the elections. This is intended, perhaps, to prevent massive disenfranchisement and other electoral problems attendant to non-availability of voters’ cards during the 2003 and other previous elections. The fact that “temporary” cards are immediately issued for use pending the release of the cards may, perhaps, moderate this problem. Also, the new cards, with embossed photographs and biometric features, may help to reduce the phenomena of multiple voting and impersonation.

30 s. 10(1)) of the Electoral Act 2006 (emphasis mine)

31 e.g., s. 7 of the Electoral Act 1982

32 See Femi N. O. Mimiko, “Census in Nigeria: The Politics and the Imperative of Depoliticization for Sustainable Democracy, in Challenges of Sustainable Democracy, 95-101

33 Ben O. Nwabueze, *Nigeria’s Presidential Constitution: The Second Experiment in Constitutional Democracy* (London: Longman, 1985), 387

Timing is as crucial as the actual conduct of elections in democratic politics. The order in which the various elections are conducted has become a sensitive issue in Nigeria since the timing of the presidential elections produced the "bandwagon effect" that facilitated rigging of the 1983 general elections and subsequent collapse of the Second Republic.³⁴ Nonetheless, the Electoral Act 2006 retained in the electoral commission the power to fix the dates and make other regulations to guide the conduct of elections. To make for neutrality, however, the act precludes INEC staff, both permanent and *ad hoc*, from membership of or support for any political party (ss.12,30), with the novel provision of requiring all such staff taking part in the conduct of elections to affirm or swear to the oath of loyalty and neutrality. Subsequent developments and revelations at the election petitions tribunals point to the fact that many of the staff of INEC did not live up to these oaths.³⁵ To prevent the ugly situation of candidates being unknown up to the eve of elections, as happened during the previous (particularly the 2003) elections, the act requires the commission to give at least five months notice of any election, while adhering strictly to the other statutory notices and deadlines contained in the act and its own guidelines in respect of close of nominations (ss.32 & 35), place of election, and display of the particulars of contestants.

One provision of the Election Act which raises serious question of security of polls is section 46(2) which excludes a contestant from the list of persons banned from acting as polling agents. While the proviso to section 46(1) seeks to exclude political intimidation of opponents by public officers using the paraphernalia of office, section 46(2) makes nonsense of the safeguard contained in section 46(1). The unbridled manner in which political office

34 See Toyin Falola and Julius O. Ihonvbere, *The Rise and Fall of Nigeria's Second Republic, 1979-84* (London: Zed, 1985); Richard A. Joseph, *Democracy and Prebendal Politics in Nigeria: The Rise and Fall of the Second Republic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986); Victor Ayeni and Kayode Soremekun, eds. *Nigeria's Second Republic: Presidentialism, Politics, and Administration in a Developing State* (Lagos: Daily Times Publications, 1988)

35 See, for example, "Edo State Election: Court of Appeal Judgment," *Constitution* 8:4 (December 2008): 87-140

holders have pursued the issue of second term has left no one in doubt that many are desperate to cling to power at all costs. To allow such an office holder in the guise of being a contestant the luxury of using the paraphernalia of office, including a retinue of security details and aides, thugs, gun-trotting policemen, etc. to visit polling stations beyond merely casting the vote is to give unfettered access to the use of state power of incumbency to intimidate opposition candidates, voters and electoral officials. In fact, the advantage of previous experience should have taught the lawmakers to put a provision specifically barring the use of siren, excessively large entourage, instruments of state coercion, etc., by political office holders seeking re-election in the guise of monitoring elections on polling days.

The Electoral Act 2006 in section 53(2) specifically outlaws the use of electronic voting machines "for the time being". This paper does not intend to recapitulate the pros and cons of e-voting in a largely illiterate society. The global trend in the acquisition and use of digital equipment for e-governance would necessarily require a re-visit of the debate. The experimentation with computerization of the registration exercise (October 2006-February 2007) is, however, a pointer to the kind of problems that are likely to be encountered with the adoption of electronic voting system at this stage of the country's development.³⁶ Its adoption would require adequate preparation and additional confidence-building measures capable of strengthening the open ballot system retained by virtue of section 53(1) of in the act.

The procedures for the actual conduct of elections, counting of votes and announcement of results are largely the same as in the previous electoral laws, and therefore merit no specific restatement in this paper. Its needs to be stressed, however, that the safeguards contained in section 69 of the act with regard to sanctity of election results as announced by the returning officer should be extended to declaration of results at the polling stations

36 Registration machines were reportedly found in the private residences of notable leaders of the party in power. See: www.nairaland.com/nigeria/topic-37172.0.html, www.allafrica.com/stories/200701240018.html www.sunnewsonline.com/webpages/columnists/flipside/2007/flipside-january-26-2007.htm

to prevent variations between results announced at the polling centers and those officially declared, as has happened in some previous elections. Announcement and sanctification (in writing or by other digital/electronic devices) of election results at all levels of collation would render open and transparent the formal returns of candidates currently centralized in the electoral commission. Happily, section 76(2) of the act permits a court to issue an order for swearing in where the commission has failed, refused and/or neglected to issue a certificate of return as required by law.

A "truly liberalized political space"³⁷ is necessary for consolidating Nigeria's nascent democracy. Part V of the act seeks to do this by relaxing the hitherto stringent conditions for registration of political parties. By the new provisions, bolstered by the decision of the Supreme Court in the case of *INEC V Musa*,³⁸ the number of registered political parties has jumped from three in 1999 to 52.³⁹ This liberalized political space is potentially good for political mobilization and participation. It may, however, turn counter-productive in view of educational backwardness and high level of illiteracy among the voting population. The registration of all these parties and their symbols necessarily increases the size and cumbersomeness of the ballot paper, making proper electoral decisions tasking for millions who could neither read nor write and several literate voters who may thereby get confused. More important for the emerging democratization process is that the large number of political parties has retarded the growth of a virile opposition politics. The situation is further compounded by the commission's penchant for using its regulatory powers to unsettle leading opposition political parties.

Non-compliance with electoral laws, rules and regulations has been at the roots of election crises in Nigeria. To redress the situation, the act retains previous provisions on electoral offences (ss.124-139). It, however, prescribes more stringent penalties, on the logic, perhaps, that introduction of stiffer penalties could serve as a deterrent to rigging and other electoral malpractices.

37 Aderinwale and Alabi, , Democratization of African Parliaments, 3

38(2003) 3 Nigeria Weekly Law Reports (NWLR) Part 806, 72; (2003) 10 Weekly Reports of Nigeria (WRN) 1

39[data base online]; available at <http://www.inecnigeria.org>

Even, then, previous experiences have shown that the political will to prosecute is more crucial than quantum of punishment as a deterrent factor.⁴⁰ Moreover, because of the political nature of the cases, prosecution for electoral offences is often difficult. Failure of the police to prosecute top leaders of the ruling party found to be in unlawful possession of registration machines during the 2006-2007 voters' registration exercise is a ready example. In fact, no one has ever been prosecuted successfully for electoral offences in Nigeria.⁴¹ Moreover, such penal sanctions are largely irrelevant since they do not have any material effect on the outcomes of an election which could be validated as long as there is *substantial compliance* with the provisions of the electoral laws.⁴²

Another issue that has generated much popular interest in Nigeria particularly since the election of Dr. Chris Ngige (Anambra State) was voided by the Election Tribunal and the Court of Appeal is the duration of election petitions. The conclusion of the petition in that case two years after the returned candidates had been sworn into office is a clear case of justice delayed, justice denied. This anomaly is sought to be corrected under the new act by requiring that election petition tribunals be constituted two clear weeks before elections (s.140). It is also noteworthy that the act (s.148) grants accelerated hearing of election petitions over other cases before a court or tribunal. The extent to which the new provisions could assist in speeding up election petition cases in the absence of wider reform of the procedural and evidential rules of the court

40 Nwabueze, Nigeria's Presidential Constitution, 403-410

41 Dare Babarinsa, House of War (Lagos: Spectrum Books Ltd/Tell Communications Ltd. 2003), 274

42 After describing the proof of an election petition as "a difficult, though not impossible task", a majority (4 - 3) decision of the Supreme Court validated the election of President Umaru Yar'Adua on the basis that the irregularities complained of were not substantial enough to invalidate the election. The judgment was delivered on 12 December, 2008. For an online review of the judgment, see Adewale Donald Ologbon, "The Supreme Court Judgment," <http://www.nigerianmuse.com/20090107090134zg/articles/the-supreme-court-judgment>. See also the case Buhari v Obasanjo (2005) 13 Nigeria Weekly Law Reports (NWLR) Pt 941 page 1

system in general is difficult to predict.⁴³ Recent developments dim any prospects in this regard.⁴⁴

It is instructive to note that judicial proceedings cannot be hastened beyond the limit permitted under section 294(1) of the 1999 Constitution. By that section, court judgments could be reserved for upward of three months. This brings to the fore the issue of the timing of elections. The electoral commission, which is empowered to fix the dates of elections, ought to ensure adequate interval between election and swearing in dates to accommodate election petitions. It is unrealistic for the INEC to allow only five weeks between the date of the presidential election and the date of swearing in the declared winner. Experience has shown that election petitions could not be disposed of within such a short period. Even then, the Attorney-General of the Federation has a duty to ensure that his office is not used to deny successful candidates the fruits of their elections through frivolous litigations and/or adjournments that are clearly at variance with the norms of sound judicial culture.

On the whole, the provisions of the Electoral Act 2006 are designed to provide remedial solutions to the identified maladies of electoral competition in Nigeria. As borne out by the preceding discussions and illustrated in the table below, the act is not in short of provisions specifically targeted at correcting some ills of the Nigerian electoral system. Some of the provisions are not new, having been lifted from the previous electoral laws. Others are, however, uniquely inserted in response of observed trends. While some are far-reaching, others merely glossed over the main issues that have constituted serious challenges to the conduct of free and fair elections in the country. The impetus for further reform cannot, therefore, be ignored without serious consequences for sustainable democracy in Nigeria.⁴⁵

43 See the author's "Justice Denied': Problems and Prospects of Decongesting the Supreme Court of Nigeria," *Nigerian Bar Journal*, 3:2, (April, 2005), 51-68.

44 *The Punch Newspaper*, 25 February 2008, 58; *The Punch Newspaper*, 27 February 2008, 2; *The Guardian Newspaper*, 26 February 2008, 1

45 The government has recently set up an electoral reform committee, the report of which the government claimed is going review before being officially published.

Table: Electoral Maladies and Associated Remedies under the Electoral Act 2006

S/NELECTORAL MALADIES	SECTIONS	ASSOCIATED REMEDIES
1. Abuse of voters' registration exercise/illegal compilation of voters' register/voting by under-aged and unregistered voters	10(1) & 11(1) 10(5) 10(6) 11(3) & 16 20 25, 124	Continuous registration/updating of voters' register on continuous basis Updating to stop 120 days to any election Registration centers to be designated and notified to the public Release of certified voters' register to political parties/individuals on request Display of voters' registers for claims & objections 5-14 days before election Registration offences created and penalized
2. Pre-election violence	96, 97 & 98 126	Police security at & prohibition of offensive weapons/missiles, slanderous/abusive language, etc., or the use of force, at political rallies & processions Prosecution for disorderly behavior, incitement, possession of offensive weapons/missiles
3. Non/late supply of election materials to opponents' strongholds/illegal possession/snatching of ballot boxes	44(3)	Presence of polling agents at the distribution of election materials from INEC office to the polling booth.
4. Violence & harassment of opposition candidates, agents & voters/inducement/ corruption of polling officials, agents & voters	46(1) 93 & 94 128 130 & 131	Preclusion of public office holders from appointment as party agents Limitation on election expenses of candidates and political parties Criminal prosecution for improper use of public vehicles during registration/voting

5.	Illegal printing/thumb-printing of voters' cards/ multiple voting/stuffing of ballot boxes with ballot papers	17(2) 24 & 127 45(2) 46 49(1) & (2) 53(1) 54(1) 67(1) 133-139	Corruption, bribery, conspiracy, dereliction of duty, etc criminalized Possession of more than one voters' card criminalized Buying, selling and improper use of voter's cards criminalized Ballot papers bound in booklets and serially numbered Appointment of polling agents by political parties and their presence at polling booths Open display of ballot boxes throughout the duration of the poll Conduct of poll by open secret ballot Cancellation of election for over-voting Rejection of ballot paper without official mark All improper behaviors relating to voting criminalized Counting and announcements of results <i>in situ</i> , counter-signing of results form by candidates/agents, and retention of copies of result sheets by election officers, agents and police officers present Stamping, signing and counter-signing and retention of copies of result forms at all collation centers Posting of results on Commission's notice boards and website Commission to keep custody of election documents (ballot papers & results) Constitution of Election Tribunals at least 14 days
6.	Illegal printing of results collation/declaration forms & forgery/falsification of election results/ballot switching and inflation / unauthorized announcements of election results	64 75 72	Counting and announcements of results <i>in situ</i> , counter-signing of results form by candidates/agents, and retention of copies of result sheets by election officers, agents and police officers present Stamping, signing and counter-signing and retention of copies of result forms at all collation centers Posting of results on Commission's notice boards and website Commission to keep custody of election documents (ballot papers & results) Constitution of Election Tribunals at least 14 days
7.	Manipulation of election petition process	73 140(3) 148	Commission to keep custody of election documents (ballot papers & results) Constitution of Election Tribunals at least 14 days

		before the date of election Accelerated hearing of election petitions
8.	Lack of Independence of the Electoral Commission	4 6 7(3) 12, 30(1) & 152 29(1)
		Maintenance of separate fund by the Commission into which payments due to it are made by the Federal Government Control of annual estimates by Ministry of Finance Security of the tenure of Resident Electoral Commissioners Registration/electoral officers not to belong to any political party or openly express support for any candidate Oaths of neutrality to be sworn by election officers
9.	Regulation of political parties, Manipulation of political parties/ registration	79 81, 87, 101(2) 85, 86, 101(1) 104(1) & 105 88 & 89 92, 94 & 95
		Decisions of Commission on registration of political parties subject to judicial review Political parties liable for prosecution for electoral & related offences Commission to monitor activities of political parties & regulate campaigns/broadcast Annual statements & those relating to election expenses for submission to Commission by political parties Limits on individual/group contributions to political parties, limitation on election expenses, and disclosure of all contributions
10.	Others	31 47 35 53(1) 53(3)
		150 days notice of election 14 days notice of polls (venue, timing, etc.) Display of lists of nominated candidates 30 days before election Voting by open secret ballot Use of Electronic Voting Machine prohibited

5. Conclusion

Although comprehensive and seemingly all-embracing, the Electoral Act 2006 is inadequate as a magic wand solution to the several maladies of the Nigerian electoral system. The identified loop-holes are capable of being exploited to subvert popular will by any government that is bent on manipulating the electoral process. The experiences of the 2007 elections seem to suggest a more fundamental overhaul of the entire electoral systems as a looming imperative if Nigeria must consolidate its nascent democracy. Reform of the electoral laws is, no doubt, an indispensable part of the process. At times, however, provisions of the electoral laws may look like treating the symptoms rather than the causes of the diseases. More studies are needed to explore the factors that have rendered the laws largely ineffective.

The independence and integrity of the electoral umpire is crucial for effective implementation of electoral reforms in Nigeria. Any positive step along this line may require an amendment to the constitution itself. Beyond constitutional amendment, however, gladiators of the political system must be prepared to commit themselves to the democratic ethos. Whatever the remedial changes, electoral laws, rules and regulations are not self-executed. The effectiveness of laws in moderating the challenges of electoral competition requires the cooperation and alertness of all the stakeholders – the government, the electoral commission, the political parties, the candidates, the electorate, the civil society and the press, each of which must cultivate the right attitudes to make democracy work by ensuring that the game of politics is played according to the rules.

The call for the right attitude towards politics brings to the fore the role of the human factor in the electoral system. The crucial issue here is the attitudes and perceptions of the individual towards elections in particular and politics in general. Future research work should seek an understanding of the attitudinal factors that shape electoral behavior in particular and political behavior in general. Further reflections on the impact of the social, economic, geographical, political and cultural factors on individual perceptions of and attitudes towards elections may help

explain voting behavior. The impact of other critical variables, such as party platforms and personal idiosyncrasies of contestants, on voting patterns and their significance for post-election developments are additional issue-areas for further research. Empirical investigations in this regard may, however, suffer some initial setbacks, due to unreliability of Nigeria's electoral figures for analytical purposes. Nonetheless, this and other hindrances to robust intellectual engagements would hopefully give way as the country marches steadily, even if slowly, towards the consolidation of its nascent, and perhaps fragile, democracy.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Sergei Prozorov, 2006, *Understanding Conflict Between Russia and the EU: The Limits of Integration*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 210 pp., £52.00, ISBN 140399689X

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Giving no illusions of resolving the conflicting dispositions of Russia and the EU, the author is clear from the beginning that this book of seven short chapters is about understanding EU-Russian relations, which must precede any attempt of their conflict resolution. He hopes for the book to serve as a background to policy-oriented studies on preventing and resolving EU-Russian conflict in concrete areas. In the first chapter Prozorov provides a short chronological overview of the dynamics of these relations since the late 1980's and addresses the main conflicts that have arisen since then. He gives a critical analysis of the existing approaches to the subject and frames them within transitional and traditional discourses, arguing that traditionalism is the last resort of the disappointed liberal transitionalists.

The subsequent two chapters analyze the structure of the EU-Russian conflict discourse, the problem of Russia's exclusion from the EU, in connection with EU enlargement, and how this is contradictory to the EU's policy on Russia, which emphasizes integration. It is in this context that Prozorov analyses the problem of Russia's self-exclusion from European integration and the reaffirmation of its state sovereignty, as a result of the lack of its recognition as a legitimate political subject. He argues that it is the paradoxical combination of sovereignty and integration, their radical difference in logic, as well as their interdependence in both parties' policies that has intensified conflicts between the EU and Russia.

Prozorov proposes four possible pathways within which EU-Russian relations can move; the convergence of sovereignty on both sides results in consensual "mutual delimitation", while the opposite scenario, of both parties' emphasis on integrationist logic, opens possibilities towards transnationalism. The

controversial ones are the remaining two pathways in which the actions of the parties conflict with each other, either through the EU's sovereign logic clashing with Russia's integrationist tendencies, resulting in Russia's exclusion from the EU, or through the EU's integrationist logic failing to produce "good governance" in Russia, and thereby resulting in Russia's reaffirmation of its sovereignty, followed by its self-exclusion. The author shows that the EU-Russian conflicts do not arise from the a priori conflicting positions, as the traditional discourse of the IR theory presupposes with its emphasis on the Russian "otherness", but rather that they appear in concrete conditions within one of these pathways. In his words, Russia's self-exclusion is "not a discourse of isolation, as what Russia excludes itself from are not relations with the EU *per se*, but a very specific, asymmetric arrangement", unfavorable to Russia (p.125). In the final chapter of the book, the author proposes a return to plurality of sovereignty and advocates an "interaction without integration" approach as more adequate path of the EU-Russian relations, and instead of European integration, he suggests a "common European pluralism".

The book's value lies in several aspects. For one, it shows that European integration is indeed an asymmetric process. Prozorov proves this by combining a theoretical and empirical approach, providing several examples among which is the rigid Schengen visa regime that takes the same strong standpoint towards Russia as it does to all the other non-EU states, and thus hampers the cooperation programmes such as Euregio Karelia. Yet it is clear that Russia cannot be treated as just another European state. It will not agree to a position of an object passively obeying the requirements imposed upon it by a geographically much smaller political subject, such as the EU. Especially not while it is becoming clear that the EU has yet to solve its own institutional and organizational problems and is at the moment undergoing a crisis of its own. Having said this, it should be noted that the book gives an insight to the view of the EU taken from a standpoint of a big political actor, in this case Russia, and puts it fairly into its place on the world political scene, which is not so often the case.

Another contribution of the book is that it challenges the stereotypical image of Russia as being the one in EU-Russian relations who is insisting on modern sovereign ideals, while the EU acts within the post-modern transcending sovereignty discourse. The visa regime is again a good example from which Prozorov proves that sovereign logic is at work not only in the policies of Russia but also of the EU, and that the EU is indeed exercising its sovereignty towards Russia.

Perhaps the biggest achievement of the book is the refreshing view of the notion of integration that it brings, in a time when we are used to thinking of it in exclusively positive terms. It shows that despite the initial vision of integration as a peaceful, conflict-preventing project, integration can also cause conflicts. Along with mainstream IR theory's idea of integration as "settling differences", European integration is at the same time erasing them, and thereby acting opposite to plurality of Europe. It is this "world unity", which is inevitably constituted out of the "integrator" and the "integrated", and towards which integration is to lead if successful, that is a part of the conflict that stands in the way of EU-Russian relations. This suggests that the problem does not lie only in the fact that each of the parties is looking after its own interest, but also that it lies in the fundamentally different understanding of Europe and what its future should look like. Having this in mind, one cannot help but think that not much has changed over the past twenty years, and that the ideological differences of the East and West remain.

The downside of the author's critique is that when analyzing European integration, he does so with the concept of integration as a whole and leaves a question open as to whether state sovereignty should be deployed in the rest of the European states as well, especially having in mind all the benefits that integration brought to the East-Central European states.

Another question that inevitably comes to mind concerns the proposed solution, "interaction without integration", and it is whether state sovereignty should be respected also at the expense of human rights? The author doesn't address the possibility that the EU-Russian communication might function better, regardless of their differences over integration, if a true

commitment towards respect of human rights, freedom of speech and independency of legal institutions were recognized in Russia, in accordance to its declarative policy. The Kosovo intervention is mentioned in the book as a turning point of EU-Russian relations, and as a betrayal of the political ideal of state sovereignty, where Russia's non-intervention policy clashed with EU's advocating human rights. Perhaps a more adequate term for Prozorov solution would be "interaction without intervention", because it is precisely this question that remains and is the core problem of the concept of sovereignty. Should a state be allowed to exercise power on its own sovereign territory at the expense of human rights, or have we transcended this? This and similar questions are left open for further debate and together with the book they will be of interest mainly to scholars and students, but also to international political actors, foreign policy decision makers, as well as journalists interested in a better understanding of Europe today.

Balmaceda, Margarita M., 2008, *Energy Dependency, Politics and Corruption in the Former Soviet Union: Russia's Power, Oligarch's Profits and Ukraine's Missing Energy Policy, 1995-2006*. London: Routledge, , 222 pp; includes tables, maps, ISBN: 9780415437790

Orbán, Anita, 2008, *Power, Energy, and the New Russian Imperialism*. Praeger Security International, 264 pp, includes tables, maps, chronological timeline, ISBN: 9780313352224

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The year 2009, unsurprisingly, started with a traditional gas row between Ukraine and Russia. What was surprising, however, was that it was not only a mild nuisance as in prior years. This year, for the first time in the 40-years history of gas trade between Russia and Europe, there was *no* gas coming from Russia through Ukraine. As a result of dependence on the single supplier, and the single supply route, for the first time in history two EU member states, Bulgaria and Slovakia, were on the brink of a comprehensive blackout. Politicians in the affected countries were

competing in blaming either Ukraine or Russia, or those more diplomatic blamed them both. Blame helps no one's understanding of the problem, and it always takes two to tango, not only in the Russian-Ukrainian energy relations, but also in the wider post-socialist-bloc energy dependence. Students of Central Europe who want to understand how Russia and her former vassals in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) have been dancing now have a unique opportunity to find answers to these questions in two books published last year.

Two knowledgeable experts on the CEE region, Margarita Balmaceda, associate professor of International Relations and Diplomacy at Seton Hall University, and an Associate of the Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute and of the Davis Center for Russian Studies at Harvard University (PhD from Princeton University); and Anita Orbán, director of Constellation Energy Institute in Budapest, (PhD from Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University in Boston), in their books provide complementary views on the underlying aspects of energy policy in the region. These two books are excellent guides not only for students of international relations or transition studies wanting to understand energy policy in CEE region, but also for policymakers, journalists, or practitioners in the energy business and PR companies.

There are two major questions to the post-socialist tango. First, how is it possible that these countries, which share part of their history, large sections of energy infrastructure, and set out on the path of transition at around same time, differ so much in how they manage their energy dependency? Why some are very picky about dancing with Russia, while others dance just like Russia wants them to? Second, why is it that Russia has been more assertive in this dependence tango at some times and not others? At times being very pushy about dancing in Central Europe, while at others minding just its own business? Answers to these questions are not only relevant to understanding relations between Russia and Ukraine, which is the focus of Balmaceda's book; or relations between Russia and Poland, Slovakia and Hungary, analysis of which is offered by Orbán. Answers to these questions can help us not only for better understanding of post-cold-war (some say resurgent) Russia, but these answers help us

also to understand the broader intricacies of post-socialist transition east of Berlin.

The presented books, despite using different cases and different theoretical approaches are exceptionally complementary in tackling these questions. Orbán on the case of economic relations between Russia on the one side and Slovakia, Hungary, and Poland on the other, focuses on the reasons why Russia, through its energy companies, succeeded in moving into Central Europe in certain times, while not in others. Since she argues that for Russia today the primary means to achieve power in international relations is through its energy companies, this perspective focuses primarily on explaining the conditions for the outcome of Russian foreign policy through economic means. She thus provides analytical means for understanding temporal variation in the relation of dependency in the theoretical context of neoclassical realism.

Balmaceda, on the other hand, using a modified institutional approach, analyzes effects of the domestic political circumstances on the management of Ukraine's energy dependencies on Russia. The puzzle that she researched evolves around "domestic factors that stand behind Ukraine's continued energy dependency on Russia and its apparent inability to escape it." Balmaceda criticizes the state-as-actor perspective, which is traditional to realism, (and is modified by Orbán to include perception of elites), and offers an incentive to rethink both interest representation and policy-making in the post-soviet transition. Balmaceda points out that it is not sufficient to look at policy-making only in terms of 'state' vs. 'private' but the role of specific interests and actors should be analyzed especially in the post-soviet transition.

Orbán looks at states as influence maximizers, guided by the *perceptions* of their elites. Balmaceda does not question the final outcome that Orbán offers, but goes deeper and opens up the black-box-of-state for further analysis through focusing on the internal *interest* formation, and cross-border elite collusion, which is unthinkable in the classical realism school. While Orbán's perspective explains well the perspective of Russia's foreign policy goals and its variation on the side of Russia, it does not aim to

explain the responses of target countries. Therefore, reader might be wondering, why is it that Russia's foreign policy outcome in, for example Slovakia, was 1 out of 2 times Russia-friendly, even if the government was "Russia-skeptical" and the outcome was not necessarily in the interest of influence maximization for the Slovak state? The analysis offered by Balmaceda in the case of Ukraine offers a good explanation of why Ukraine was unable to rid itself of this dependency. Through extrapolation, this analysis also offers an opportunity to understand why ridding of Russian influence in the energy sector was such a rare incidence among former socialist countries.

According to Orbán's argument, Russian energy companies expand in Central Europe, *if* and *when* Russian elites perceive Russian influence in the world as being low – giving them the will to act – and the Russian state has enough power to mobilize the necessary resources, thus providing Russia with the ability to act. Orbán tests this hypothesis during six periods, between 1991 and 2008. In the three empirical chapters, she walks the reader through six periods of Russian activity in three countries – offering together 15 events, which form the core cases. Balmaceda's argument, on the other hand, is that the domestic political system of Ukraine created certain "windows of opportunity" for access to energy rents, which created also incentive for the involved actors to preempt changes in the system of existing suboptimal institutions that were intertwined with rents distribution. The central role in the interest formation in Ukraine, according to Balmaceda, was played by competition, struggle and accommodation between intra- as well as inter-state economic groups. This happened in the context of conflict and reintegration-attempts with Russia, over access to energy markets, supplies, transit and distribution of economic rents. The surprising conclusion that Balmaceda offers is collusion between the Russian and Ukrainian elites, which explains why Ukraine was unable to form independent energy policy, and set out on a genuine reform path. Her detailed account of the 2006 gas row sheds strong light also on the Orange-revolutionaries. After reading the accounts of gas trade and allegations of involvement of the highest political leaders, (which have also partly reemerged in the context of the 2009 gas row) the sweet ideals of the anti-corruption ticket of the pro-western Orange revolution have a

somewhat bitter aftertaste. It is nonetheless important to note that author is cautious and presents publicly available allegations and supports the claims with many references to original sources in Ukrainian media or publicly made proclamations.

The research design Orbán employs is simple yet robust. The effects of the independent variable of relative distribution of power in the international system are catalyzed by two intervening variables. The domestic perception of the international system, measured through the analysis of a wide-array of media sources, and interviews; and the level of state power available for the country's leaders, operationalized as state's ability to collect recurring revenues, as second. She chooses to use share of tax revenues on total GDP to measure this variable. The dependent variable of the book is foreign political outcome, which is operationalized as the behavior of Russian energy companies in Central Europe. The Russian strategy, as Orbán argues, was in securing the monopoly position in the energy supply; this by first entrenching in the role of the monopoly supplier, and second by preventing diversification attempts. Russian companies were trying to gain leverage over the whole value chain through controlling companies with import rights, transmission owners, and wholesale companies, or refineries in the case of oil.

When summarizing Orbán's results, Poland can be portrayed as Russia's 'bad neighbor' with only 50% of Russian attempts to gain stronghold in its energy sector succeeding, followed by a 75% success rate in Slovakia and Hungary. Orbán further differentiates the results according to the stance of the domestic government. Thus, if a Russia-skeptical government is ruling the country, Russia still had 50% chance of getting its goals in Slovakia, while it had nil chance in Hungary, and only one out of three attempts could succeed in Poland. What is lacking in Orbán's book, and the theoretical school that she is embedded in, is the explanation of the internal mechanics of the domestic receptiveness towards Russia. This is precisely where Balmaceda fills the gap.

Balmaceda operationalizes her variables carefully, offering a precise working definition of energy dependency (p. 16) as well as management of it, which she conceptualizes as way of

handling energy supply diversification, organization of energy trade with main supplier, and energy-policy-making. The primary interest aggregators that she works with are the "Business-Administrative Groups" (BAGs, sometimes referred as 'clans'). Balmaceda's analysis is organized into three parts. In the first part, she sets the context and frame of reference of the interest formation, focusing on the role of energy in the relations of Ukraine with the main international partners, including EU and Russia, and provides the historical evidence for her argument. In the second part of her book, she further analyzes president Kuchma's period and introduces the reader to the intricacies of the energy dependency rent system from 1995-2004. In the third part of the book, Balmaceda looks at energy policy and energy dependency after the Orange revolution. In the final chapter she focuses on an in-depth analysis of energy policy during Yuschenko's rule.

An important policy conclusion that Balmaceda comes to is that the international community should not look at the problem in terms of Ukraine vs. Russia, but rather as a problem of corruption and lack of transparency. As a way out Balmaceda suggests eliminating innate features of the post-soviet energy market, such as lack of transparency, attractive arbitrage opportunities, difference between near-abroad export prices and lack of liberalization of domestic markets. She further notes Russia's refusal to ratify the Energy Charter Treaty and her control over the exports of energy among additional problems. Finally, (p. 143) she puts energy in the context of transition, pointing out that raising energy prices and the pressure on the reform of the energy-inefficient economy could be a blessing in disguise. The feasibility of this is, nonetheless, even more questionable in the current economic situation in Ukraine.

The conclusion offered by Orbán is somewhat more alarming and sobering. She vividly demonstrates the relationship between the Russian corporate activity and the Kremlin's foreign policy. In addition to Moscow's already observed attempts to build-up a neo-mercantilist empire in the so called near-abroad, as recently demonstrated also by the adventure in Georgia, she presents persuasive evidence of similar strategies pursued in the eastern part of the EU and NATO.

Both books are quite 'readable,' with sufficient theoretical basis, but not too much to 'put-off' the less theory-informed policy practitioners. In order to keep the depth of theoretical discussion, Orbán even offers an extension of it via 43 pages of endnotes. Both books are well illustrated with a number of lucid maps to walk even an untrained eye through potentially confusing meshwork of pipelines crossing the region. The annex of Orbán's book also includes chronologies for her case countries, listing the most important political, and economic milestones. What might be surprising is that 68 pages of endnotes accompany Balmaceda's book, which is all together 145 pages long. This only further exemplifies the level of detail with which she researched her case.

There are only few, forgivable beauty spots that one can notice. In Orbán's book, due to perhaps a typographic mistake, the introduction of the main argument confuses reader, when in the introductory chapter (p. 5) the main hypothesis is introduced reversely from what she later illustrates in a table (p. 32), and what she proceeds with testing, and concluding. It is also regretful that many of the hyperlinks listed in Balmaceda's endnotes do not work, which might be partly because they are 'dynamic', stretching over many lines, and thus more susceptible to typographic errors. The solution, useful also for other authors wishing to list the complete uniform resource locator (URL) to the electronic source they are citing, could be in using 'URL shortening services'.

Overall, both books are well-researched works, enriching not only understanding of energy policymaking in CEE, relations between Russia and its western neighbors, but also transition studies in general. Both books significantly contribute to their respective theoretical schools, while also generating new research avenues to be followed. Either on the side of neoclassical realism, where Orbán's research design could be replicated in the so-called near abroad, and tested on the case of Ukraine, or Balmaceda's research design which could be tested on the cases of Poland, Slovakia and Hungary.

It is also pleasantly surprising for a well-informed student of CEE region to find two books presented in English that master the

local cross-country context and empirical evidence with such a high level of detail and insight. Both of these books not only offer ready-to-use policy advice for the governments of the case-study countries, EU as well as USA, they also stand as an excellent reference for journalists covering Central and Eastern Europe, and Russia. Finally, thanks to their academic rigor, well-grasped theoretical context, and empirical richness, they are an indispensable resource for students and researchers of economic relations in the CEE region during the first two decades of transition.

Edward Lucas, 2008, *The New Cold War: Putin's Russia and the threat to the West*. Palgrave Macmillan, 258 pp. + index, ISBN -10 / ASIN: 0230606121, ISBN-13 / EAN: 9780230606128

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In 1989, the 45-year period of the Cold War characterized as a "contest" between the West and the Soviet Union, which never turned into a military confrontation, came to an end. The marking event was the dissolution of the Soviet Union, in the *funeral* of which Lucas claims to have taken part, as the only western newspaper man living in the ex-communist region. This is the starting point of what Edward Lucas, The Economist twenty year time correspondent for Eastern Europe and an inside observer of the events that have taken place in Russia, intends to present to readers. His goal is to inform everyone about the NEW COLD WAR which -as far as Lucas states-, is the term used for the new area of an uneasy confrontation between the West and the Kremlin and in the center of which is this tense relationship going on from the end of the "old" Cold War. Edward Lucas has structured his book in such a way as to better fit his final goal that of awakening the West of the possible threats coming from Putin's foreign policy to his own citizens, to its neighbors, and to the whole world.

This New Cold War area that the author deals with, through his genuine style, varying from a comprehensive analysis to clear, direct, and simple understandable statement, constitutes an

interesting period of the New Russia. With the approach of a political, economic and military analysis of Putin's national and international policy, the author reveals a clear picture of what now constitutes the Russian reality and its intentions vis-à-vis the West. Starting from how the ex-KGB has occupied the Kremlin and all state and economic institutions since Putin's rise to power, continuing with Putin's "sovereign democracy" where no law rules as long as punishing dissidents, rigged elections, and censored media exist, is what he presents as the Russia of today. Or at least this is what his facts prove.

However, according to Lucas, there is another side of Russia's reality - the current situation of how Putin's Russia is challenging the world politics. Being a great -mostly economic rather than military- power (as the later from author's point of view is not seen as a menace), relying on its natural gas and oil resources, Russia has the most potent weapon: energy to compete with and even menace the West. Precisely, the latter is Lucas' focus of his scope of writing: mostly giving western politicians recommendations of how to interact with this rich, financially wealthy, nuclear-armed adversary. That is the reason why the arguments expressed in the book are relevant to all western people. The generous representation of the most disturbing facts of Russia's reality makes it very interesting to read for anyone: analysts, researchers, and, above all, politicians. This is due to the fact that western policymakers are being alerted, warned, and advised on how to succeed in dealing with Putin's foreign policy and strategies and, at the same time, with New Russia arising as an economic, military, and political power.

Whether this well-informed journalist succeeded in his challenging enterprise of telling the truth or not is up to the target group to determine, and the author states in advance that he takes responsibility for his work. What cannot be denied or disputed, however, is that the facts are being revealed and sustained. Moreover, his investigative methodology -in a book which is quite informative in its content- of approaching step by step Russia's internal policy, to the political and economic affairs of the elite, and to the international foreign policy as well, is innovated with some other interesting matters, including: How Russia's energy policy due to its monopoly on oil and gas pipelines makes Russia an eligible international actor to dictate the western customers

and rather claim strategic assets in Europe; or how Russia's military and security dimensions and its imperialistic intentions are creating a kind of new Soviet Union but this time through building other strategic ties with China and the Islamic world. These facts build up important parts of the history and according to Edward Lucas, he achieved his goal of revealing his truth through covering widely and thoroughly Russia's reality. Why?

Because it is difficult to find any gap in the author's style of covering the arguments he provides us with, when there exists a complete observation of every aspect of Kremlin's exercise of power, Lucas enters the very details of this regime when he speaks about dissidents and journalist being imprisoned, forced to take psychiatric medication, and killed; when he continues with Putin's policy toward the ex-communist eastern European states, Russia's present energy, arms sales and security building strategy vis-à-vis the West; and, when he finalizes with the explanation of how the West can win the New Cold War. This continuation of thoughts and ideas through a strict cohesion that the author tends to maintain from the introduction to final conclusions as well as Lucas critical attitude toward Putin's domestic and foreign policy, his deep, thoughtful researching and direct, analytical involvement in the content of these two decades, offers an attractive point of view of the reality.

The ideas expressed by him can be deduced by some statements from the book. Russia, Lucas writes, is too weak to have a truly effective independent foreign policy, but it is too disgruntled and neurotic to have a sensible and constructive one. This implicates the present foreign policy toward the West. While the statement that: "President Putin calls the collapse of the Soviet Union the "greatest geopolitical catastrophe" of the 20th century, and the suggestion is that everything that has happened since 1991, or even 1989, should now be reversed", shows the imperialistic intentions of the growing power of Russia. And, last but not least, is what the author characterizes the energy dialogue between Russia and the West, which "resembles a battle-hardened chess grand master playing against a bunch of inattentive and squabbling amateurs". These points intelligently observed by the author describe the real situation -Russia's power; the threat posing to the West; and the latter becoming vigilant.

The New Cold War of Edward Lucas is another contribution to the contemporary literature field of current Russian policy, but it brings innovation in expressing the ideas simply, clearly, and informatively, which on the other hand excludes it, to a certain extent, from being an academic book, but worth reading nonetheless for anyone interested in understanding the ongoing situations. Lucas has the merit of sending a clear message and objectively presenting Russian reality; but at the same time the situation that he depicts, builds up some grave implications concerning Russian internal and external policy. The fact that his statements are based mostly on Russian sources makes its truth somewhat undisputable and even if it fits clearly the western purposes, this book is not what Russian public opinion would agree with as the image of the New Russia is being quite negatively disputed in every sense. Anyway, the strength remains in everything it is transmitted in the form of knowledge to the readers in order to not underestimate the current threats.

Pervaiz Musharraf, 2006, *In the Line of Fire*. New York: Free Press, pp. 368, ISBN: 9780743283441

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The title of the book refers to the Clint Eastwood Hollywood film about a US secret service agent taking a bullet in the chest to save the president. The book includes the memoirs of Pakistan's former President General Pervaiz Musharraf. Nothing surprising about this book: one would expect a defense of his government and policies during 1999-2008. The author has sketched himself as the best hope for democracy in Pakistan, a moderate Muslim who went against extremists and fundamentalists, instead led Pakistan to internal uncertainty. The book critically examines the political history of Pakistan and blames the former democratic governments and prime ministers, who never put the country first, for corruption and self centeredness. The author gives negative comments about the former political elites, particularly Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Benazir Bhutto, and Mian Nawaz Sharif.

Musharraf structures his volume on key points of his life: school days in Turkey, the Pakistan Military Academy, career in the

army, counter-coup 1999, the incident of 9/11, decentralization and women empowerment in Pakistan, and his policies to boost up the economy. Throughout the book he devotes many pages to his vision of a modern Pakistan, his army career, his disillusionment with corrupt civilian leaders, his efforts to seek peace with India and his contributions to the war on terrorism. He targets the former democratic leaders for massive corruption and holds Zulfikar Ali Bhutto responsible for the partition of Pakistan. He further argues that Bhutto "did more damage to Pakistan than anyone else, damage from which we have still not fully recovered." He holds Nawaz Sharif responsible for the Kargill war in 1999.

The author emphasizes especially his efforts in the global war on terror. He holds Osama bin Laden and Mullah Omar as the most hated persons in the world today. He uses the word "them" for the Taliban: distancing and hiding Pakistan's support towards them. He makes humor upon hearing that Mullah Omar, the leader of the Taliban had escaped. On the other hand, the book overemphasizes the role of the Inter-Services of Pakistan (ISI) and appreciates its role in capturing 672 "terrorists". It explains Pakistan's support for US in the war on terror as a need, while underestimating the threats from the US to bomb Pakistan into the Stone Age. In fact, after the incident of 9/11, the United States gave an ultimatum to Pakistan either to be an ally with the US or be ready to be crushed along with the Taliban.

The book certainly has some merits as Musharraf was the first head of government in Pakistan who addressed the real causes of the failure of democracy and came out with an influential plan to cope with those failures. Even though he failed to bring any positive changes to the democratic structures in Pakistan, in several passages Musharraf talks about strengthening democratic institutions, the economy and to making it possible for women to prosper politically, socially and economically in a male-dominated society. In addition, the world witnesses his true efforts to resolve the Kashmir and Palestinian problem. The book received some notoriety in the Western world, as it explains US and Pakistani efforts to topple Al-Qaida and the Taliban and also the operations against the extremist's elements inside the country.

The subjectivity of the book is obvious, being more an instrument of propaganda. It neglects that Musharraf's government failed to take solid stands on internal issues. People believe that Musharraf failed to cope with the issue of nationalist unrest in Baluchistan, the country's most neglected province, which, with more than 40 percent of the country's land mass, accounts for only 6 percent of its population. This issue does not receive any attention in the book. Moreover, the book neglects the failures of policies that led to Pakistan instability (i.e. increase in poverty, domestic unrest, corruption, inter-provincial grievances, and price-hikes).

By having little merits in addressing the real causes of failure of democracy, plans for economic, and women development in the country, the book mostly exaggerates the efforts taken on account of the war on terror and extremism. The book fails to highlight the events and failure of policies that put the country in a bloody mass. The book is not recommended reading for true believers in democracy, being only an advocacy of the US foreign policy interests in Pakistan.

Byford, Jovan, 2008, *Denial And Repression Of Antisemitism: Post-Communist Remembrance Of The Serbian Bishop Nikolaj Velimirović*. Budapest: CEU Press, 269 pp., ISBN 9789639776319

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This book investigates the life and ideas of bishop Nikolaj Velimirović (1881 – 1956), one of the most significant religious figures in Serbia in the 20th century, canonized as a saint in 2003. He wrote a lot on the Orthodox Christian dogmas, on the organization of the Church life. In some of his works we can find clear links between religion and politics or just pure political ideas. He is also known for the controversial political ideas in these works. The aim of this study is "to explore the dynamics of repression and denial constitutive of the rehabilitation of Bishop Nikolaj Velimirović" in the last two decades (p. 231). The disagreement over the memory of Bishop Nikolaj is, according to the author, a dispute over whether Velimirović should be

remembered as 'the greatest Serbian religious persona' since the medieval times, or as a thinker whose status in the Serbian history 'is compromised by a radical nationalist outlook rooted in the ideological context of the 1930s, and by the presence, in his writing, of an unpardonable contempt for Jews' (p. 6). This book examines the impact of denial of Velimirović's anti-Semitism on the collective memory over him.

Being divided in six parts plus the conclusion, this book is copious with different details rooted in politics, history and religion. It is aimed at political and social scientists, researchers of Serbian Orthodox Culture, historians of the Church and other readers interested in the life and work of Bishop Nikolaj, as well as in the controversy that surrounds him. After an exhaustive Introduction in which the author explains his methods (interviews and content analysis of papers written by Bishop himself, or by others on him) and gives short descriptions of his correspondents (twelve of them), the second chapter provides an outline of Velimirović's biography, focusing on the controversy of his life and work. Here the author depicts Bishop Nikolaj's early years, studies in Western Europe and in Russia, his professional work as a bishop of the Serbian Orthodox Church during the inter-war period and the communist campaign against him, after World War II. The author also quotes some parts of Velimirović's controversial works in this Chapter. The third chapter explores the dynamic of forgetting and the rehabilitation of Bishop Nikolaj, especially in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The next two chapters (four and five) focus on the strategies of denial of anti-Semitism in the memory of Nikolaj Velimirović. The last, sixth chapter, examines the campaign for Velimirović's canonization. At the end, in the conclusion (eight pages), the author determines the 'remembrance of Nikolaj Velimirović and his uncritical reverence are the most powerful ideological sources of anti-Jewish prejudice in [contemporary] Serbian culture' (p. 235).

Taking a look in the original works of Bishop Nikolaj, as well as in the parts quoted in this book, anti-Semitism in some of his ideas becomes obvious. But its denial in the author's interviews with correspondents who have been studying Bishop Nikolaj's life and work is obvious, too. They deny it by linking it to biblical anti-Semitism or by transforming it to anti-Judaism which they then

present as acceptable ideological concepts. The author explains this `transformation of ideas` very well and presents lots of details to support his explanations, analyzing sentences of his correspondents, sometimes even single phrases.

At the same time, there are several shortcomings in this book with regards to its methodology. The author does not pay much attention to the circumstances under which Velimirović`s works were written. *Words to the Serbian People Through the Dungeon Window*, Velimirović`s most controversial work towards Jews, was written during Velimirović`s captivity in the concentration camp of Dachau where Velimirović stayed for about two months. There is no doubt that some of Velimirović`s ideas in the paper written in Dachau are anti-Semitic. But the place and time were quite weird. Consequently, it should be made clear to readers why the work with such ideas was written during Bishop Nikolaj`s imprisonment in Dachau, and not earlier or later. Although in this study we will find the general description of the conditions as well as Bishop Nikolaj`s treatment in the camp, we will not find any effort to explain the connection between Velimirović`s incarceration there and his ideas.

Furthermore, the author does not provide any other interpretation of Velimirović`s anti-Semitism, if not political. It is true that correspondents in their interviews try to present all of Bishop`s anti-Semitic ideas as religious, biblical concepts; the anti-Semitism that the author is speaking about, for them does not exist in Bishop Velimirović`s works. They hold up the real-life examples (when Velimirović helped some Jews or saved them during the war) to support their assumptions and denial of his anti-Semitism. But the author does not accept either one of the answers offered or at least, he quotes some parts of interviews without giving any kind of explanation or conclusion. Thus, this gives the impression that the discussion is not necessary, that the answer has been given even before the opposite side could bring forward their arguments.

In the fifth chapter, the author depicts more in-depth the frame of the Orthodox and Christian tradition towards Jews. He also tries to illustrate the distinction between anti-Judaism and anti-Semitism, `which is constitutive of denial of prejudice, rests on the assumption that the former one is acceptable ideological

position` (p. 175). But it seems that the author rubs in a tendency of accusing the whole Christianity as being anti-Semitic, just by being Christian. When Bishop Nikolaj in one of the interviews was compared with Origen, St John Chrysostom, and the Blessed Augustine, the main conclusion the author provides us is that all of them `are known for their anti-Semitic views'(p. 180). In the second part of this chapter the author questions the boundaries between anti-Judaism and anti-Semitism. Not disclaiming that this can also be arguable (if Christianity itself is anti-Semitic and not just anti-Judaic, or if there is any real difference between anti-Semitism and anti-Judaism), the complexity of this question requires another, detailed study; it should not be this chapter that gives an answer.

Bishop Nikolaj is known as an author of hundreds of published books, letters and different religious texts. But in this study we are acquainted with only a few controversial excerpts of his work. Although they are the most significant for the purpose of this study, we still know very little about other aspects of his ideas or concepts divergent to those studied in this book. And this knowledge would certainly help us to gain a more expansive and objective picture of his work.

Nonetheless, this book is well written and its style arouses the attention of the reader. The controversy of this topic, the wide spectrum of arguments (which sometimes might not be equilibrated), as well as his success in the initiative aim of the book, to locate and explain the links between the denial of anti-Semitism in the works of Bishop Nikolaj Velimirović and his rehabilitation, are the best arguments for reading this book.

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