IT'S BEEN MOSTLY ABOUT MONEY!

A MULTI-METHOD RESEARCH APPROACH TO THE SOURCES OF INSTITUTIONALIZATION IN POST-COMMUNIST PARTY SYSTEMS

Although much has been written about the process of party system institutionalization (PSI) in different regions: e.g. Latin America (Mainwaring and Scully, 1995), Africa (Lindberg, 2007), East Asia (Stockton, 2001), Southern Europe (Morlino, 1998) or Eastern Europe (Bielasiak, 2002), and its extreme significance for the consolidation and healthy quality of democracy (Mainwaring, 1999; Morlino, 1998); the reasons why some party systems institutionalize while others do not still remain a mystery.

Studies trying to discover the sources of such systemic institutionalization tend to adopt either a quantitative (e.g. Roberts and Wibbels, 1999; Tavits, 2005) or a qualitative character (e.g. Johnson, 2002; Meleshevich, 2007) and, consequently, face the following dilemma: either they identify a certain number of conditions affecting PSI in general (condition-centered designs), without specifying if they all apply to the different countries included in the analysis in the same manner, or they exclude from scratch certain conditions and focus on the causal chain connecting certain "pre-conceived" factors with the outcome in a limited number of cases (mechanism-centered designs).[1]

Seeking to resolve the above-cited quandary, and combining both types of research design (i.e. condition-/mechanism-centered), this article constitutes a first attempt to answer simultaneously all the following questions: (1) what specific factors help party systems to institutionalize (or not)?; (2) what are the links (in terms of time and degree) as well as the causal mechanisms behind such relationships?; and (3) how do they affect a particular party system?

In order to answer all these questions, and using a multi-method research (MMR) approach, the current article focuses on the study of party system development and institutionalization in 13 post-communist democracies since 1990. On the one hand, this will allow me to compare party systems within equivalent periods of time, avoiding inadequate comparisons with other established democracies

[1] For an in-depth discussion of these two types of research design see Beach and Rohlfing (in this special issue).

which, as these are characterized by a higher degree of systemic stability, could lead to misleading conclusions (Casal Bértoa and Mair, 2012:112). On the other, I will be able to control not only for some external factors that may have influenced all countries in the region at one time (e.g. the Cold War, globalization, the world financial and economic crisis, etc.) but also for other conditions (see section 2) particularly specific to post-1989 Eastern European countries (Casal Bértoa, 2013:399). In this context, post-communism functions as the scope condition under which the causal mechanism and set-theoretic relationships described in this article are considered to hold (Ragin, 2008:73).

Methodologically, the article innovates in five respects. First of all, it continues the debate on the importance of MMR when trying to answer different research questions (Brewer and Hunter, 2006; Cooper and Glaesser, 2012; Beach and Rohlfing, in this special issue). Secondly, it complements the literature on how *Qualitative Comparative Analysis* (QCA) and process tracing (PT) could be linked (Schneider and Rohlfing, 2013; also in this special issue). Thirdly, it constitutes the first attempt to date to use - following Rihoux and Ragin´s (2009) mandate - a Most Similar Different Outcome/Most Different Same Outcome (MSDO/MDSO) procedure in order to reduce causal complexity before undertaking a crisp-set QCA (csQCA). Fourthly, it also shows the merits of combining both congruence and PT in the same comparative study. Finally, it also develops a novel "bipolar comparative method" (BCM) to explain the extent to which opposite outcomes are determined by reverse conditions and conflicting intervening causal forces.

With such an ambitious enterprise in mind the current work, adopting a "comprehensive" approach, reviews the literature on the determinants of systemic institutionalization in section 2. Before that, the paper starts with an analytical perspective on the concept and measurement of PSI, establishing to what degree party systems in post-communist Europe have institutionalized (section 1). Trying to reduce "causal complexity", the number of possible "key" factors is condensed to the minimum in section 3 with the use of MSDO/MDSO. Using both congruence and PT, section 4 looks at the "causal mechanisms" linking each of the relevant "explanatory" factors with party system (under-) institutionalization in two "typical" case studies. Aware of the problem of "complex causation" (Ragin, 1987), section 4 employs csQCA in order to identify how the different conditions combine to produce (or not) the outcome.

PSI: Conceptualization and Operationalization

Summarizing a discussion sketched out elsewhere (Casal Bértoa, **2015**), there is little agreement in the literature on how PSI should be defined. This is so because, with very few exceptions (e.g. Meleshevich, 2007), most authors pay little attention to the notion itself and simply assume its multi-dimensional character. Still, and despite the on-going discussion on what are its main elements, most conceptualizations of the notion clearly refer to one dimension: namely, stability in the nature of inter-party competition (Lindberg, 2007). For this reason,

> and bearing in mind that the core of a party system is to be found in the patterns of interaction among its subunits (i.e. political parties) […], I consider PSI to be *the process by which the patterns of interaction among political parties become routine, predictable and stable over time* […] (Casal Bértoa, 2012:453).

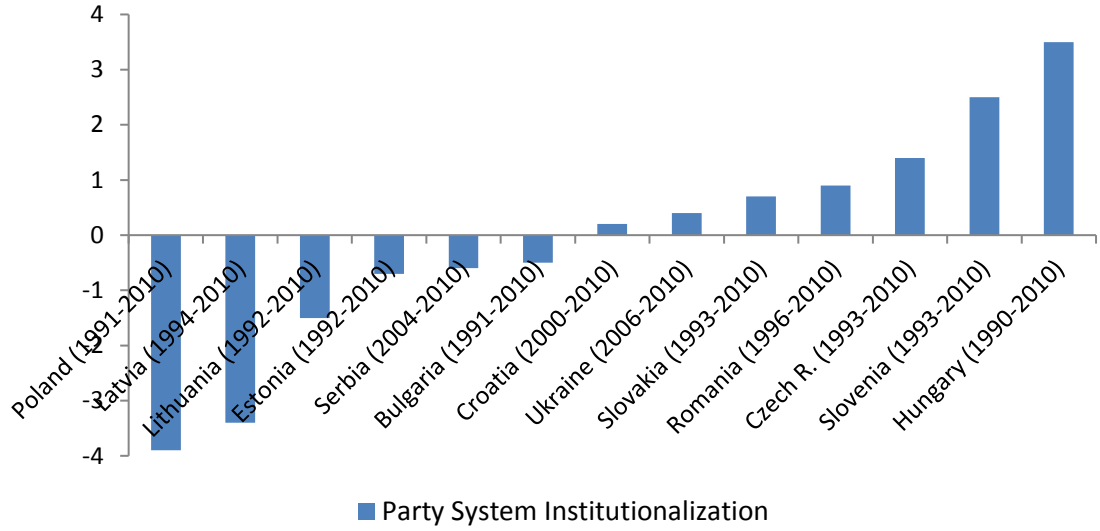
In order to assess the level of institutionalization in new post-communist party systems, and putting special emphasis on the stability of structure of inter-party competition for government, I will employ here Casal Bértoa and Mair´s framework. In their own words,

> the structure of competition is [inchoate], and hence the system is only weakly institutionalized, when there are (1) mainly partial alternations of governments; (2) the governing alternatives lack a stable composition; and (3) access to government is possible for almost all relevant parties. Conversely, the structure of competition is [stable] and the party systems institutionalized if (1) there is largely total alternation or an absence of alternation; (2) the governing alternatives are stable and familiar; and (3) government is monopolised by a limited number of the competing parties (2012:88-89).

Following Casal Bértoa and Enyedi's (2014) sophisticated new operationalization of the abovementioned framework, which combines the percentage of "ministerial volatility" (alternation) with the percentage of ministers belonging to familiar combinations of parties (familiarity) as well as to "old" governing parties (access), I will be able to rank post-communist party systems according to their level of stability in the structure of competition or institutionalization.[2]

[2] An in depth discussion on the reliability, validity and robustness of the index can be found in Casal Bértoa and Enyedi (2014: 7-11). See also the (online) Appendix.

Figure 1. PSI in Post-communist Europe (1990-2010)



Note: The year of the "founding" elections is in brackets

An overview of the level of PSI between 1990 and 2010 in 13 Eastern European democracies[3] is displayed in the figure above. The most evident conclusion derived from these summary data is that party systems in post-communist Europe have institutionalized at different rates and in different ways (Casal Bértoa and Mair, 2012). It is to explaining why this has been so that I will devote the rest of the paper.

Sources of PSI: a "Comprehensive" Approach

When looking at the current literature on the topic it is possible to identify up to seventeen different factors which, either alone or in combination, have been considered essential when trying to explain PSI (Casal Bértoa, 2012). However, the quasi-natural experiment produced by the dissolution of the Soviet Bloc in 1989 followed by the birth of newly independent and centralized states in the Baltics, the Balkans as well as in former Czechoslovakia, allows me already at this early stage to exclude from the analysis two of them: namely, *nature of state* and *time of transition*.[4] Moreover, and in a similar vein, *years of authoritarianism* can also be left out as it

[3] All of the countries included in the current study are considered to be democratic (i.e. have a score of 2 or lower), according to the Freedom House political and civil liberties index in the period here examined. With just one year of democratic experience in 2010, Montenegro has been excluded from the analysis.

[4] Democratized during the so-called "Third Wave", none of the post-communist states here analyzed adopted a federal structure.

clearly overlaps with PDEM - especially when dichotomized.[5] From a methodological perspective, it seems obvious that the variance in the outcome cannot be explained by constant conditions (Przeworksi and Teune, 1970). For all these reasons, the following paragraphs will focus only on the remaining fourteen conditions, presenting each of them in turn.

Party institutionalization (PI). Few institutional developments have been considered to be more critical for systemic institutionalization than the formation and development of institutionalized political parties (Roberts and Wibbels, 1999; Toole, 2000).

Electoral disproportionality (EDISP) *and party system concentration* (PCON). While Sartori (1976) was the first scholar to link a party system´s "format" to its "mechanics", it was not until 1990 that Bartolini and Mair established a direct relationship between systemic stability and the type of electoral system employed. Since then, however, various scholars have confirmed the importance both factors have for the institutionalization of party systems in new democracies (Mainwaring and Zoco, 2007; Tavits, 2005).

Ideological polarization (POLAR). Building on Sartori (1976), scholars have again and again maintained that ideological polarization fosters PSI, as the greater the ideological distance between the different parties in the system, the less likely that voters/elites will shift their allegiances (Bartolini and Mair, 1990; Madrid, 2005).

Type of Regime (PARL). While in parliamentary regimes presidents tend to be elected either by compromise or by a qualified majority, presidential candidates in semi-presidential regimes are usually obliged to forge broad coalitions cutting across ideological lines in order to attract as many segments of the population as possible. The main implication is that, as a reward for their support in presidential elections, parties "can plausibly claim to represent the decisive electoral bloc in a close contest and may make demands accordingly" (Linz, 1990:58). This will definitely have important implications for the stability of the structure of partisan competition at the time of government formation (Casal Bértoa, 2012, 2015).

Party Funding (PFUND). Although Huntington (1968) was the first scholar to point out that political parties can develop rules in order to protect the integrity of the

[5] It seems rather obvious that newly democratized countries (e.g. Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, etc.) display longer authoritarian spans that those which experienced democracy at some point in the past (e.g. Estonia, Czech Republic or Slovakia).

political process from outsiders challenging the *status quo ante*, it was only with Katz and Mair´s (1995) "cartelization thesis" that scholars started to examine the positive link between public subsidies and PSI (Birnir, 2005; Spirova, 2007).

Ethno-religious Concentration (ERCON). According to Lipset and Rokkan´s (1967) classical "hypothesis", party systems *freeze* because "individuals develop attachments to parties on the basis of their social locations – their religion, class, residence (urban or rural) and culture (core versus minority culture)" (Mainwaring and Zoco, 2007:163; Madrid, 2005).

Cleavage Cumulation (CCUM). More recently, Casal Bértoa (**2014**) suggested that PSI takes place in those countries with a cumulative-coinciding cleavage structure, as parties/voters will be structured by those coinciding lines of division into two clearly defined alternative camps. On the contrary, in systems where cleavages have a cross-cutting character institutionalization suffers, as parties can only cooperate across dividing ideological lines, making any possible alliance *ad hoc*, ephemeral and unpredictable.

Political Culture (PCUL). Ever since Mainwaring an "anti-organizational" political culture has been considered to be an obstacle, although not necessarily a permanent one, to PSI (1999:233-234; Johnson, 2002:720-728).

Historical legacies (LEGAC). According to Kitschelt (1995),

> [c]ritical junctures surrounding state building and timing of the entry of the masses into politics in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries determined the pattern of interwar politics, which shaped the structure of Communist authority, which in turn [coupled with a distinct mode of transition] determined the pattern of party structuration in the postcommunist period (Kopstein, 2003:239).

In a few words, the main argument holds that the earlier the economic industrialization, state formation and democratization before communism, as well as the milder the type of communist rule, the more institutionalized the structure of inter-party competition will be.

Economic development (WEALTH). The level of economic development has long been seen to shape the process of PSI in new democracies, whether in Latin America (Madrid, 2005; Roberts and Wibbels, 1999), Eastern Europe (Tavits, 2005) or East Asia (Johnson, 2002), as under conditions of economic hardship voters will move away from incumbents trying to find new political alternatives, either in the

traditional opposition or at the fringes of the political spectrum (Mainwaring and Zoco, 2007; Tucker, 2006).

Previous democracy (PDEM). Scholars have traditionally maintained that a higher level of PSI will take place in those countries with previous democratic experiences than in those nations **where** party competition is a new phenomenon (Kitschelt, 1995; Remmer, 1985).

Democratic experience (YoD). According to most scholars PSI is a lengthy process in which stable patterns of partisan competition will only emerge after democratic government has been in place for some time (Spirova, 2007: 161-162; Tavits, 2005: 296).

EU conditionality (EUCON). According to Vachudová (2008), EU integration fostered PSI by shifting the main dimension of partisan competition from culture to economy. For others, however, "EU has been a contributing factor in the inability of CEE party systems […] to acquire the attributes of an institutionalized party system" (Ladrech, 2011: 219).

Relevant Factors (What?): MSDO/MDSO

As we have already seen, comparative political theory offers different possible (co-)explanations for the distinct levels of PSI observed in new and old democracies. In this article, where the number of possible combinations of conditions (2^{14}=16,384) clearly dwarfs the number of cases available for analysis (13), I will make use of De Meur and Berg-Schlosser´s (1994) MSDO/MDSO procedure, a technique particularly well suited as a prior step before using csQCA and, on the whole, extremely useful for systemic analyses which, like this one, present the so-called "limited diversity" problem.[6] It is in the name of parsimony and in order to avoid a simple description of cases - with one individual explanation per case - that a solution to this problem needs to be found before proceeding with any QCA-type analysis (Berg-Schlosser and De Meur, 2009:27).

The idea is, thereby, that by carefully matching all the cases (i.e. party systems) under study across the different (potential) explanatory factors[7] found in the institutionalization literature, using a step-wise elaboration of distance matrices and

[6] Limited diversity occurs when no real cases matching all logically possible combinations of the selected conditions can be found (Grofman and Schneider, 2009:3).

[7] Throughout the text both terms "explanatory factors" and " conditions" are used synonymously.

dis-/similarity graphs (see online Appendix),[8] I can identify the most similar pairs of cases with a different outcome as well as the most different pairs of cases displaying a similar outcome (Rihoux, 2006:688). This will allow me to reduce the number of conditions to the minimum and, therefore, to be able to achieve a less complex comparison which, without any preconceived ideas, focuses on those *relevant* factors that might account for the different degrees of systemic institutionalization observed (De Meur and Gottcheiner, 2009:215).

Bearing in mind that we have fourteen possible explanatory factors, and following the logic of the MDSO/MSDO procedure (Berg-Schlosser and De Meur, 1994; De Meur and Gottcheiner, 2009; De Meur *et al*., 2006), I have first clustered the different conditions into three rather homogeneous categories: namely, socio-economic (A), historic-structural (B), and systemic-institutional (C).[9] Secondly, and because the criteria used to calculate the distance between (two) factors are based on Boolean algebra, all conditions need to be dichotomized (De Meur et al., 2006:69). This is done according to the criteria established in Table A1,[10] which displays not only the threshold for the dichotomization of both the conditions and the outcome, but also the sources according to which such thresholds are established. The result is a data matrix (Table A2) featuring thirteen cases (seven positive/institutionalized and six negative/non-institutionalized), and fourteen Boolean conditions where 1 indicates presence, and 0 stands for absence.

Once these operations have taken place, and before proceeding with any further comparison, it is essential to identify which pairs of cases are the most similar and which the most dissimilar. For that it is necessary to build and synthesise distance matrices within and across categories (De Meur *et al*., 2006:75), as cases can be similar in one category (e.g. socio-economic) but dissimilar for another (e.g. systemic-institutional).[11] In order to do so, I make use of the software (beta version 8/7/2006) developed by De Meur,[12] which helps to select which cases share the smallest number of same-valued conditions and identical outcomes (MDSO pairs) and

[8] Available at http://whogoverns.eu/biography/publications/.
[9] See also Casal Bértoa (2012: 455, 472).
[10] Tables A1 to A14 as well as Figures A1 to A3 are all included in the Appendix.
[11] Berg Schlosser and De Meur´s (1994:199-200) method employs the so-called "Boolean distance", which simply refers to the number of variables for which two cases differ from each other (per category).
[12] Available at http://www.jchr.be/01/beta.htm.

the smallest number of different-valued conditions and different outcomes (MSDO pairs).

Table A3 summarizes the levels of dis-/similarity for each pair of cases at different levels of requirement (more or less demanding) within each outcome:[13] namely, most different with a positive outcome (MDSO+ in zone 1, in blue); most different with a negative outcome (MDSO- in zone 2, in purple); and MSDO (zone 3, in yellow). The higher the added value (*integer*), the more dissimilar (blue and purple zones) and/or similar (yellow zone) the cases are and, therefore, the more valuable the comparison.[14]

The pairs of cases selected by this process are then aggregated in three dis-/similarity graphs (figures A1 to A3), with different levels of dis-/similarity illustrated by continuous (higher) and dotted (lower) lines. On the basis of these three graphs/figures, I then proceed to compare[15] the most dissimilar but institutionalized party systems: namely, Romania and the Czech Republic (*integer* = 22222). Out of the initial fourteen conditions, only PCON and PFUND are present in both cases and, therefore, can be considered to explain the (presence of the) outcome. Adding to the comparison the countries with the second and third highest *integer* (Slovenia and Hungary, respectively) reduces the number of similar – hence relevant - factors to just one (PFUND), although PCON is still present in three out of the four cases.[16] At a lower level of dissimilarity (*integer* = 12222), the comparison of Ukraine with Hungary yields two (similar/relevant) conditions: CCUM and again PCON, although the latter becomes irrelevant once Slovenia is added to the comparison. A third comparison (Slovakia vs. Croatia) highlights WEALTH, POLAR and, again, PFUND.

A comparison between the two most dissimilar non-institutionalized party systems (i.e. Latvia and Bulgaria)[17] yields three (similar/relevant) conditions absent in both cases: namely, WEALTH, PI and PFUND. However, the inclusion of Serbia (a

[13] Scores for Boolean distances per category, as well as for the different levels of requirement, are available from the author upon request.
[14] Thus, for example, in zone 2 (purple) the comparison between Bulgaria and Latvia (*integer* = 23333) is much more interesting than between the latter and Serbia (*integer* = 22222) as the first pair of party systems share more common conditions that help to explain their similar outcome (see table A7, also figure A2).
[15] The complete set of pairwise or three by three comparisons can be seen in tables A4 to A11 in the Appendix. It should also be noted here that factors contradicting the initial hypotheses are considered to be irrelevant: i.e. ERCON (twice), YoD (twice), LEGAC (once), PDEM (once), or EDISP (once).
[16] Just as POLAR.
[17] See footnote 14.

less dissimilar country) in the comparison allows for the exclusion of the last two (present in the Serbian case).

Serbia and Romania are the MSDO cases (*integer* = 13333). Indeed, they are similar in every condition but two: ERCON and PCON. When other less similar cases (Ukraine, Croatia and Slovenia) are added to the comparison, only PCON seems to keep its relevancy. Interestingly enough, however, the comparison between Serbia and these three countries yields CCUM as an important explanatory factor. Considering the pair Czech Republic and Latvia puts the emphasis on WEALTH, PCON and PFUND. The inclusion of Estonia in the comparison only confirms the previous results, although PFUND disappears once Poland is added to the comparison. Still, these four by four comparisons seem to yield four relevant conditions: namely, PCON, WEALTH and, to a lesser extent, PFUND as well as CCUM (present in three of the four cases). The latter three are also deemed relevant in a three by three comparison between Lithuania, Slovenia and Hungary. In this case, the importance of PI and POLAR should not be forgotten. Finally, considering the pair Romania vs. Bulgaria adds PI and PFUND to the analysis.

Once the MSDO/MDSO procedure is completed, it seems clear that the number of relevant factors can be reduced to just four: namely, parliamentary concentration, cleavage cumulation, economic wealth and party funding. Indeed, while the last two pop up in all three analyses (i.e. MDSO+, MDSO- and MSDO), the first two reach a high level of significance in both MDSO+ and MSDO analyses. All in all, these four conditions appear up to five times (WEALTH) or more (PCON, CCUM and PFUND), in contrast to other less relevant (just twice), and sometimes contradictory (see pair Serbia vs. Ukraine in table A8) factors: namely, PI and POLAR.[18]

All in all, it is only after reducing the number of possible explanatory factors by more than three quarters that a methodologically manageable, and certainly less complex, analysis of the "causal link/s" between those four conditions and the outcome (and/or the lack of it) can be undertaken.

Causal Mechanisms (Why?): Congruence and PT

[18] The inclusion of pairs displaying lower *integer* scores and, therefore, reduced dis-/similarity levels (see De Meur and Berg-Schlosser, 1994:203, 204-205) only confirms these results. WEALTH, PFUND, CCUM and PCON (in that order) are to be considered by far the most "relevant" explanatory factors. These data are available from the author upon request.

In order to know how the previously mentioned relevant factors affect the process of PSI, I will make use in this section of two well-known case-study methods. The first one, the so-called "congruence method", will help me to understand to what extent variance in the level of PSI can be explained by variance in each of the above-cited conditions. This will be done by testing both the *direction* and *degree* of change in both the outcome and the various conditions at different points in time during the process of PSI (George and Bennett, 2005:181-204, 486). In particular, the above-cited method is particularly suitable for analysing phenomena which - like PSI itself - refer to processes which not only involve specific periodizations (e.g. elections, governmental changes, etc.), but are neither monotonic, unidirectional or finite. It is in such cases that the congruence method reveals itself to be particularly useful, allowing not only for the analysis of PSI at the end of the process, but also at any particular point in time during it.

The second (PT) will allow me not only to see if there really is a common causal mechanism[19] linking the conditions and outcome, but also to specifically identify the "causal chain" leading from the presence (or the absence) of wealth and/or parliamentary concentration and/or cleavage cumulation and/or party funding to party system (non-) institutionalization (Beach and Pedersen, 2013:5). The idea is that, by breaking down the rather large process of systemic institutionalization into its constituent parts, I can more easily trace the process by which each of the above-mentioned conditions have produced the (expected) outcome (Caporaso, 2009).

Independently of the within-case method employed, the first step in any congruence/PT-*first research design* is always the selection of typical cases (see Beach and Rohlfing or Schneider and Rohlfing, in this special issue). Because I am equally interested in understanding both PSI and its absence, I will proceed with what I have called a BCM.[20] By combining the advantages of both comparative and within-case methods,[21] the BCM allows researchers not only to explain opposite outcomes, but also to capture the "causal mechanism" behind processes which, even if facing each other, do not necessarily mirror each other. In particular, the idea is that by choosing two cases which, sharing most of the conditions, totally diverge in both the

[19] For a discussion on the definition, features and foundation of a casual mechanism see Schneider and Rohlfing (in this special issue).
[20] I am especially thankful to Derek Beach for this particular suggestion.
[21] Especially, if we take into consideration that "conclusions are the more solid, the more cases we examine and the more evidence points in [a certain] direction" (Beach and Rolhfing, in this special issue).

"relevant" conditions and the outcomes, I will be able to "direct [my] attention to the ways in which they differ (Gerring, 2007:133-135)" (Tarrow, 2010:234), examining in particular how such opposite "causal forces" actually work.

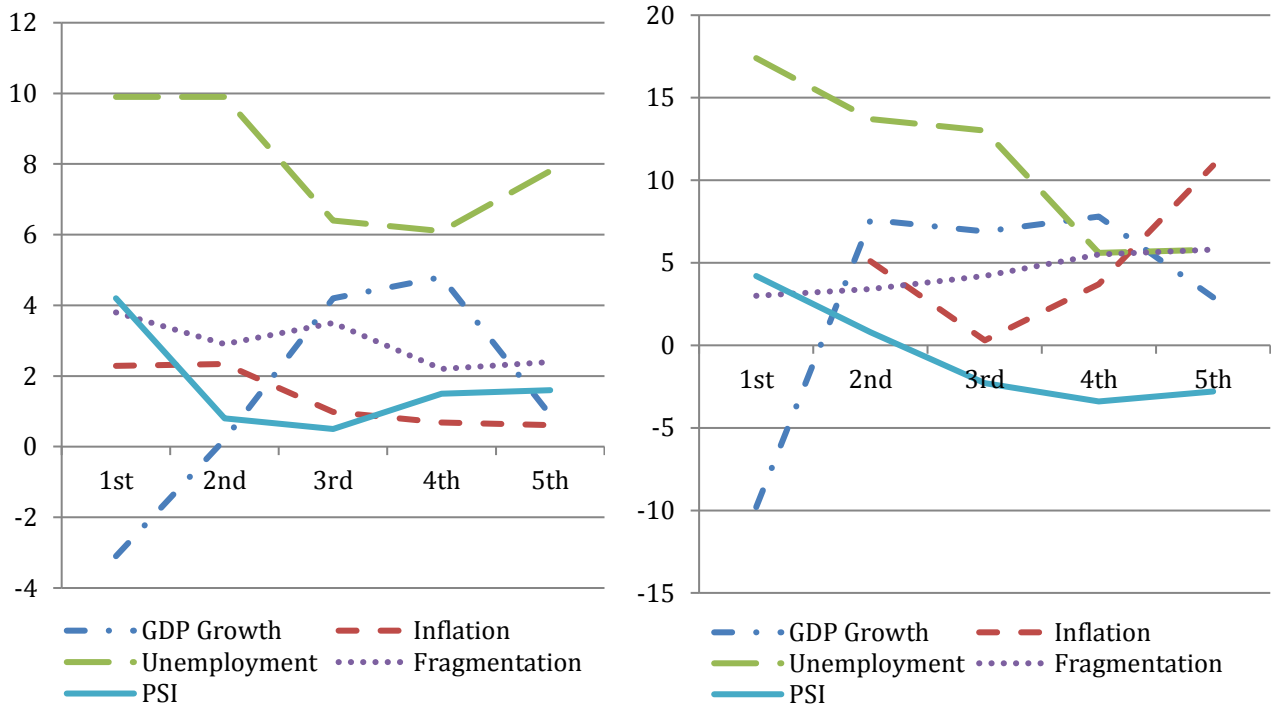
Going back to the cases and looking again at the MSDO/MDSO results (table A11) it follows that two of the most similar party systems with totally opposite levels of institutionalization are Hungary (positive) and Lithuania (negative).[22]

The fact that economic development is one of the most important determinants of PSI in post-communist Europe does not come as a surprise. Indeed, when we look at the state of the economy as well as the degree of systemic institutionalization in both Hungary (figure 2) and Lithuania (figure 3) at the end of each electoral period we can observe a rather clear (positive and negative, respectively) relationship. Thus, while the state of the economy in Lithuania – on every single indicator – has never been as good as in Hungary, the degree of PSI in the latter has always been superior. In this context, it should be borne in mind that while Hungary had already started a process of (limited) economic liberalization in the second half of the 1960s,[23] Lithuania remained within the Soviet "administratively centralized planned economy" until the early 1990s. This gave Hungary, itself one of the most economically developed countries within the Soviet bloc, a clear advantage over Lithuania, where bad economic performance has remained one of the main triggers of cabinet turnover and party system instability.

Figures 2 and 3. Economic development, legislative fragmentation and PSI in Hungary and Lithuania

[22] For the importance of analysing negative cases, even if not deviant, see Mikkelsen (in this special issue).

[23] The so-called "New Economic Mechanism", which liberalized foreign trade and enabled the limited introduction of small businesses in a still state-controlled market, was introduced by János Kádár in 1966.



But the above-mentioned differences are also visible within countries. Indeed, as follows from the figure on the left, systemic institutionalization only started to increase in Hungary once the state of the economy began clearly to improve in the second half of the 1990s. In particular, while the mixed signals of the early 1990s (i.e. GDP growth whilst high unemployment and inflation continued) did not help the structure of inter-party competition to stabilize, a clear improvement in all these indicators from the time of the second free and fair elections onwards seems certainly to have fostered the process of systemic institutionalization. That is at least until the second half of the 2000s when the latter stagnated immediately after the first signs of the global economic and financial crisis began to produce their effects (i.e. growth decline, inflation and unemployment) in the country.

On the other hand, and with the exception of the first few years when the Soviet legacy had left the economy in such bad shape that the only alternative was improvement, each post-electoral government alternation in Lithuania has been preceded by a period of economic uncertainty. In fact, and notwithstanding the sound creation of employment until 2008, the overall economic tendency since 1998 has been that of general decline, with periods of growth and moderate inflation followed by important drops in the GDP (in 1999, 2004 and, especially, after 2007) and inflation (steadily after 1999). In parallel, and as expected, the Lithuanian party

system has suffered a chronic process of de-institutionalization since the late 1990s (Ramonaitė, 2006).

As follows from the MSDO/MDSO analysis above, parliamentary fragmentation also needs to be considered as one of PSI´s most important determinants. The logic is that, as thoroughly explained elsewhere (Casal Bértoa, 2012, 2015), by indicating the numbers (and strength) of "streams of interaction", the number (and size) of parties winning seats in legislative elections clearly determines the likely tactics of partisan competition and opposition as well as government formation possibilities in a country. Moreover, because the number of parties has "mechanical predispositions" in the sense that it gives us information on certain functional properties (e.g. interaction streams, coalition potential, etc.), the relationship between party system format and institutionalization can be said to be "path-dependence" as it responds to the following pattern: "the greater the number of parties (that have a say), the greater the complexity and probably the intricacy of the [interactions will be]" (Sartori, 1976:120, 173). In other words, when party leaders must follow manoeuvres among a large number of parties, predictability and stability in the structure of inter-party competition is obviously hindered.

Figures 2 and 3 above, which display the scores of both parliamentary fragmentation and PSI at the end of each electoral period in Hungary and Lithuania (respectively), show the almost perfect relationship between the above-cited two conditions. Hence, while in the institutionalized Hungarian party system the "effective" number of legislative parties - constantly below four – has decreased over time (from 3.8 to 2.4), the Lithuanian party system has suffered from a continuous and parallel process of fragmentation (from 3 to 5.8) and de-institutionalization. Moreover, and apart from this pronounced inter-country variation, another striking pattern revealed by these data is one that is also intuitively plausible: within each country parliamentary fragmentation and PSI rise and fall in accord, so when the former decreases the latter increases and *vice versa*. In other words, and confirming previous expectations, they fluctuate not only in the same direction but also to a similar extent.

Similarly, party funding has also contributed to the institutionalization of post-communist party systems as it has eased the continuity of existing political options while, at the same time, reducing "the impact of those seeking to challenge the

political status quo" (Scarrow, 2006:629). In other words, by discouraging the entry of new parties to the system and, therefore, keeping the number of (both electoral and parliamentary) parties rather low, publicly funded party systems have been able to guarantee the supremacy of already existing parties (Katz and Mair, 1995:15) and, consequently, assure the stability and predictability of the structure of competition among them.

Table 1. Consequences of party funding for PSI in Hungary and Lithuania

Country	Period (n. of elections)	Total number of electoral parties	Small Party Vote Share	Party Survival Rate*
Hungary	1990-2010 (6)	9.2	9.7	94 (40)
Lithuania	1992-2010 (5)	14.8	20.4	n/a (52.4)
	1992-1999 (2)	16.5	24.4	n/a (73.5)
	2000-2010 (3)	13.7	17.7	95 (31.3)

* The figure in brackets refers to parties deprived of State financial support.
Source: Casal Bértoa and Spirova (2013:33, 35)

In order to test the above-mentioned statements, table 2 compares the two party systems at hand on the basis of the number of parties winning at least 0.5 per cent of the vote as well as the share of parties winning less than 5 per cent of the vote (Scarrow, 2006). No matter at which indicator we look, it seems clear that "the model of Hungarian party funding [has…] help[ed…] to consolidate the party system" (Enyedi, 2007: 102). The argument that this is the case derives also from the fact that, as displayed above, both indicators clearly improved after the introduction of public subsidies for Lithuanian political parties in 1999, although not to the same levels as its Hungarian counterpart (see also figure 3).

In a similar vein, while the Hungarian model of public funding introduced from the very beginning a clear discrimination between publicly and non-publicly funded parties, guaranteeing the concentration of the party system among a reduced number of political options; in Lithuania such a "reductive" effect only started to take place after 1999, when a 3 per cent "payout threshold" was introduced. In fact, and as follows from the last column in table 1, while publicly funded parties in Hungary have managed to survive election after election, in Lithuania up to 1999 the average survival rate of political parties barely reached 73 per cent. However, and as expected, this percentage started to increase from that year onwards for publicly funded parties, while it decreased for all those unable to pass the "payout threshold". As a result, a process of party system concentration was initiated among those parties deprived of

public funds with the only aim of survival: for example, LCS merged with LLS before the 2004 elections in order to form LCiS; similarly, LPKTS merged into TS. Equally, in 2008 both LTS and LKD, unable to cross the payout threshold in 2004, merged with TS (Casal Bértoa and Spirova, 2013:19-20, 37).

But together with a country´s economy and institutions, sociological factors have also played an important role in the process of PSI.

> The idea is that when cleavages are cross-cutting, parties will have difficulties in finding ideologically contiguous partners with which to cooperate, as being close in one dimension may be accompanied by irreconcilable differences in another. On the contrary, when cleavages are cumulative (i.e. coinciding), parties will tend to interact only with other parties within the same side of the cleavage, rejecting any cooperation that would lead them to cross such a line (Casal Bértoa, 2014).

This will definitely simplify the structure of inter-party competition into two different and separate blocs, making it more stable and predictable over time.

Thus, and as follows from the figure below, the cumulative character of cleavages in Hungary has enabled a division of the political spectrum into two very antagonistic (and stable) political camps: "a socially conservative, religious, somewhat nationalist, and anti-communist camp [...] and [...] a secular, morally permissive and generally less nationalist camp" (Tóka, 2004:322; see also Enyedi, 2006). The result has been a very well institutionalized party system in which the structure of inter-party competition has pitted again and again the political forces of the cosmopolitan, post-communist and anti-clerical "left" (mainly MSZP and SZDSZ) against the nationalist, anti-communist and clerical "right" (basically Fidesz/KDNP, MDF and FKgP).

In clear contrast, the Lithuanian party system has been characterized since the very beginning by a cross-cutting multi-dimensional space of inter-party competition revolving around two different types of cleavage: economic and urban/rural (Duvold and Jurkynas, 2004), which have divided the political spectrum into four different politico-ideological fields (figure 4):

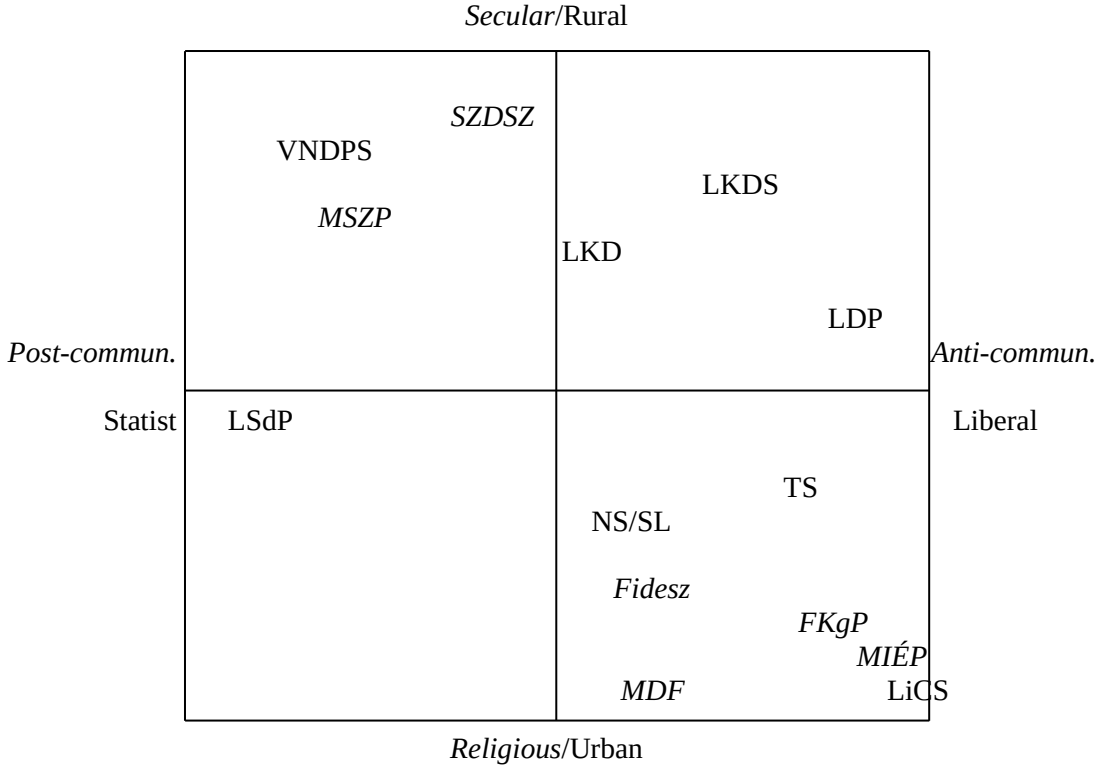
a) Socialist (strong support of state interventionism and a cosmopolitanism),

b) Agrarian (support for state interventionism combined with traditionalism),

c) Conservative (combination of pro-market attitudes and traditionalism, usually in a Christian-democratic version),

d) Liberal (strong support of free-market/enterprise and modern values).

Figure 4. Political parties and cleavages structuration in Hungary* and Lithuania



* In italics.
Source: Benoit & Laver (2006)

Because the social protectionist camp (socialists + agrarians) differs from the pro-market camp (conservatives + liberals) in terms of the economy, while the urban camp (socialists + liberals) differs from the rural camp (agrarians + conservatives) in terms of cosmopolitanism, parties have found it very difficult to establish stable patterns of governmental and/or electoral cooperation. In fact, in almost twenty years of democratic politics only the first (mono-color) Lithuanian government managed to unite all parties from the same political field.

Looking at the previous "congruent" analysis, it seems clear that there is an almost perfect - in time and degree - relationship between each of the above-mentioned explanatory factors and PSI. Unfortunately, it does not tell us anything about the causal mechanism linking the former with the latter. For that a more in-depth PT analysis "detailing each of the parts of the mechanism between X [here causal factors] and the outcome, focusing on how they transmit causal forces" is needed (Beach, in this special issue).

Interestingly enough, and implicit in previous literature (Bartolini and Mair, 1990; Birnir, 2005; Casal Bértoa, 2012; Tucker, 2006), there seems to be a common

causal mechanism linking, positively or negatively, each of the above-mentioned factors with the process of systemic institutionalization. Figure 5 displays a tentative formalization of the mechanism, with the top illustrating the parts and the bottom the observable implications.

As can be observed above, the first part of the mechanism refers to the triggers: namely, the presence of economic development, party concentration, a cumulative cleavage structure and/or public subsidies to political parties. At this moment, we should expect to find evidences of high GDP growth and/or low inflation/unemployment rates, a moderately low number of parties in parliament, low levels of cleavage cross-cuttingness in society and a rather high level of political parties financially dependent on the State.

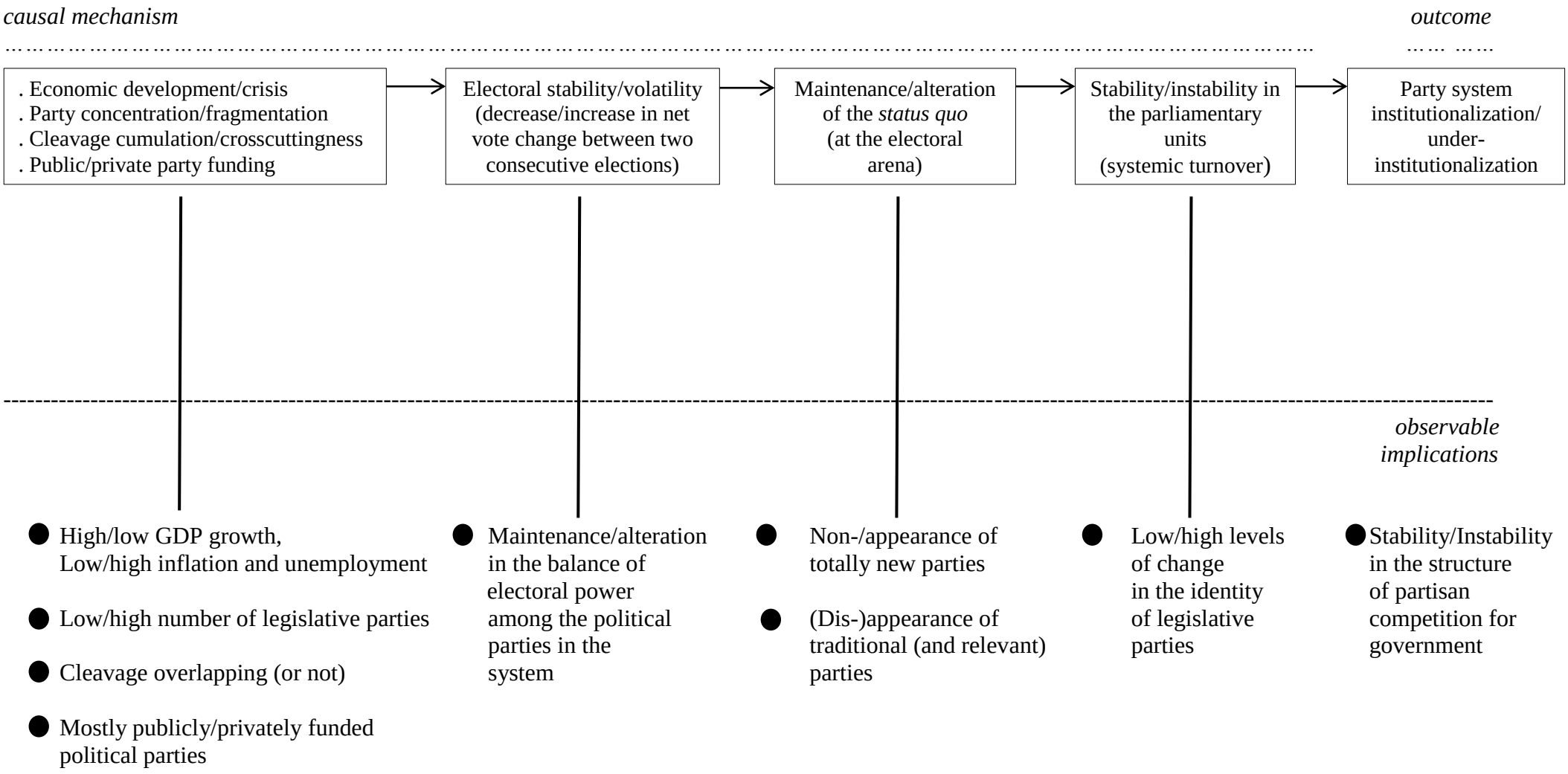
The second part shows that the electorate, in light of the above-mentioned favourable conditions, will remain stable in their partisan preferences. We should then expect to find relatively low levels of change in the balance of power among parties: that is, they should be able to attract a rather similar percentage of votes again and again. This would help them not only to strength the levels of partisanship (i.e. identification, closeness, membership) in society, but to routinize predictable patterns of (coalitional/cooperative) behaviour among them.

For the third part of the mechanism, we should see that the partisan *status quo* remains almost unaltered election after election. The observable implications here may consist of few parties coming or going within the electoral spectrum. As a result, and at the end of the mechanism, we should detect a relevant degree of systemic turnover. In this context, we should expect to observe quite high levels of partisan continuity at the parliamentary level.[24]

Lastly, the outcome should be PSI. In practical terms, we should then observe at the time of government formation stable patterns of competition among all political parties in the system, in terms of alternation, formula and access. Note here however that if the contrary is true for every single part of the mechanism displayed above, then a similar but opposite process leading to weak levels of PSI would be observed.

[24] It should be noted that party continuity and PI are two different, although related, concepts (see footnote 3 in the Appendix).

Figure 5. A Socio-Economic-Institutional Explanation of PSI: Causal Mechanism



In order to observe how the causal mechanism unpacked above works in practice, we will make use again of the typical (positive and negative, respectively) cases of Hungary and Lithuania. This will allow me to avoid the analysis of part one, already explained in depth above: both synchronically and diachronically. Regarding part three, the most straightforward way of looking at the degree of change in the balance of electoral power among political parties is to look at the Pedersen´s index of electoral volatility for both countries in the period here examined. While on average Hungarian voters´ volatility barely passes 23 per cent, and is therefore one of the most "stable" within the post-communist region, the Lithuanian electorate - with barely 40 per cent - is considered to be the most unstable in the whole European continent (Casal Bértoa, 2013:417). In fact, while until 2010 Hungarian voters´ preferences became steadily more stable (from 26.3 in 1994 to 8.4 in 2006) thanks to a rather stable economic situation (see figure 2), a clear reduction in the level of parliamentary fragmentation (from 3.8 in 1990 to 2.4 in 2006), a change from a tri-polar cleavage structure to a bipolar one in 1994 (Enyedi and Casal Bértoa, 2011:123, 127-128) and a rather liberal party funding regime (Casal Bértoa and Spirova, 2013:10); the level of volatility in Lithuania has remained rather high (always above 20 per cent, with a continuous increase until 2004) during the whole period (table A12), mainly due to the unstable (almost continuously declining) economic situation, an increasing level of fragmentation (from 3 in 1992 to 5.8 in 2008), a rather stable level of cleavage cross-cuttingness (see figure 4) and a rather restrictive party finance regime, only introduced in 1999.

Did such stable/unstable environments in Hungary/Lithuania close/open the electoral market to new political forces, while maintaining/altering the *status quo* of "traditional" parties? A strong test of this part is to look at the number of new parties (NNP) entering the electorate after the second electoral contest (table A12). In consonance with the steady decrease of electoral volatility, the NNP entering the Hungarian party system until 2010 suffered a significant decline over time (from 4 in 1994 to none in 2006). In a similar vein, the fact that none of the new parties has managed to become "relevant" - in the Sartorian meaning of the term - clearly illustrates the resilience of Hungarian "traditional" parties. In clear contrast, the average NNP in Lithuania more than doubles the same figure for Hungary: 5 vs. 2, respectively. Moreover, while it decreased from 9 in 1996 to 4 in 2000 and again to 3 in 2004, it increased again in 2008 when 4 new parties entered the electoral arena.

Two of these parties (i.e. LRLS and TPP) even became part of the governing coalition, something that had already happened both in 2000 and 2004 when the recently formed NS/SL and DP, respectively, entered the Paksas´ and Brazaukas´ cabinets as junior partners. On the other hand, various have been the "relevant" parties obliged to disappear due to their steady electoral decline: namely, LKD, LCS or LLS (see above).

Part four refers to the continuity (or not) of the main political options in the party system. The best way to test this fragment of the causal chain displayed above is to look at the number of parties entering and leaving the party system at each election. Using Toole´s "party system turnover" (PST) index (2000:450) to calculate the latter, it is possible to observe once again a clear contrast between the two countries here analysed. In fact, not only is the average PST in Hungary much lower than in Lithuania (0.4 vs. 0.6, respectively), but also it has been so in every single election but for one: 2006 (table A12). Even more, while in Lithuania

> the symptoms of the deepening crisis of traditional parties were already apparent somewhat [at the time of] the 1997/1998 presidential election [or even earlier as] the parliamentary election of 1996 was marked by an increased proportion of wasted votes (Ramonaitė, 2006:84);
>
> the post-communist history of the [Hungarian] parliament can be retold […] with no more than seven part[ies: namely, FKgP, KDNP, MDF, MIÉP, Fidesz, MSZP and SZDSZ] (Enyedi, 2006:177).

Regarding the outcome, was there a stabilization/destabilization in the structure of competition for government? As illustrated in Casal Bértoa and Mair (2012: 95, 98, 103), and explained elsewhere (Enyedi and Casal Bértoa, 2011:123-129), the patterns of inter-party collaboration/cooperation in Hungary have been rather stable, especially since 1994 when a tri-polar structure of partisan competition gave way to a bipolar one, pitting the parties on the left (MSZP and SZDSZ) against the parties on the right (Fidesz plus other minor conservative parties). On the contrary, "the Lithuanian party system appears to be in a state of flux", especially after the parliamentary elections of 2000, a real "turning point in [its] development" (Ramonaitė, 2006:71, 84). Indeed, it was at this time when the two-bloc confrontation (i.e. socialist vs. conservatives) was disturbed by the emergence - first with the liberals, later with the populists - of a tripolar structure of competition.

All in all, the previous findings confirm that PSI is far from being a "unidirectional or irreversible" phenomenon (Stockton, 2001:95). In fact, and notwithstanding the specific status of a party system at a certain point in time, what clearly follows from the "congruence" analysis undertaken above is that variance in one or more of the conditions can modulate the degree of PSI over time. This is not to deny that, as follows from the PT analysis, there are also a number of specific forces – common to all conditions – which bounded together clearly affect the mode in which those conditions determine the degree and direction of PSI as a whole.

Causal Combinations (How?): csQCA

Now that we know the intervening causal process by which socio-economic and institutional conditions are linked to PSI (or its absence), and bearing in mind that not all of them are present (or absent) in all party systems, I will try to discover how such conditions have combined in each of the post-communist countries here analysed. For that csQCA - a methodological technique dealing with a limited number of cases in a "configurational" way - constitutes the perfect tool (Beach and Rohlfing in this special issue; Ragin, 1987).

According to the "Standards of Good Practice in QCA" (Schneider and Wagemann, 2010), the analysis of necessary and of sufficient conditions, with the former always going first, needs to be separate for the outcome and for its non-occurrence.

Conditions for PSI

In terms of necessity, the analysis (table A13) reveals that none of the four conditions, either in its presence or its logical negation, reaches the consistency threshold of 0.9 recommended in the literature (Schneider and Wagemann, 2012; Schneider and Rohlfing, 2013). However PFUND with a consistency threshold of 0.86 comes close, anticipating the importance such a condition has for the explanation of PSI (see below).

In order to perform the analysis of sufficiency it is essential to elaborate a truth table based on the four conditions. As the "contradictions-free" truth table (table A14) shows, 13 cases fall into 9 truth table rows, the remaining 7 rows are logical remainders. After including only those cases when the outcome (PSI) is present (raw consistency = 1), the "standard analysis" (Ragin, 2008) is performed, limiting my interpretation to the so-called "intermediate solution" (Schneider and Wagemann,

2012). Because this solution uses for counterfactual claims all those logical remainders that comply with the directional expectations on the single conditions, the latter need to be set before proceeding further with the analysis. Thus, and on the basis of the theoretical consideration explained earlier in this article, a condition is expected to contribute to PSI when: WEALTH – PCON – CCUM – PFUND.

Taking all this setup into consideration, and after the information displayed in the truth table has been logically minimized, the csQCA analysis yields an intermediate solution term with three sufficient paths towards PSI (table 2). Their relatively low unique coverage values indicate that there are several cases displaying PSI for more than one reason: namely, Hungary, Croatia and the Czech Republic. There are, however, four uniquely covered cases: Slovakia, Slovenia, Romania and Ukraine. The overall solution term shows perfect consistency and coverage, meaning that we are able to explain PSI in all cases.

Table 2. Pathways to systemic institutionalization (PSI)

Solutions	**Raw coverage**	**Unique coverage**	**Countries**
PFUN*WEALTH	.71	.29	Hun, Cro, Cze+Slk, Slv
PFUND*PCON	.57	.14	Hun, Cro, Cze+Rom
CCUM*PCON	.57	.14	Hun, Cro, Cze+Ukr
Solution consistency	1.0		
Solution coverage	1.0		

Source: Table compiled on the basis of the results obtained with fsQCA 2.5

According to the formula displayed above, and bearing in mind that poor economic development is a necessary (but not sufficient) condition for weak systemic institutionalization, it seems clear that party systems will always be institutionalized in rich countries. This is not to say that party systems in poor countries are condemned to be under-institutionalized. On the contrary, PSI will take place in poor countries provided that, together with a low number of parliamentary parties, they make available public funding for political parties or cleavages structure in a cumulative way.

Conditions for psi

Using the same conditions as before, but bearing in mind that causation is not essentially symmetric, I proceed now to analyze why some party systems have remained under-institutionalized during the period here examined.

Interestingly enough, the analysis of necessity reveals that poor economic development (wealth), with a consistency score of 1, is a necessary condition for weak systemic institutionalization. This has important implications for the sufficiency analysis below as I will need to block any logical remainder displaying the presence of the condition (WEALTH). This finding does not come, however, as a surprise. In fact, taking into consideration the literature on the topic as well as bearing in mind the "causal mechanism" explained above, the economy is the only condition producing both a closer (i.e. on the demand side) and short-term effects on the electorate.[25]

As far as the analysis of sufficiency is concerned, and after imposing a frequency threshold of one and a raw consistency threshold of 0.8, I specify the following directional expectations: wealth-pcon-ccum-pfund. This yields an intermediate solution term consisting again of three paths containing the necessary condition wealth (table 3).

Table 3. Pathways to systemic under-institutionalization (psi)

Solutions	**Raw coverage**	**Unique coverage**	**Countries**
wealth*pcon*ccum	.67	.33	Est, Lit+Pol, Ser
wealth*pcon*pfund	.5	.17	Est, Lit+Lat
wealth*ccum*pfund	.5	.17	Bul+Est, Lit
Solution consistency	1.0		
Solution coverage	1.0		

Source: Table compiled on the basis of the results obtained with fsQCA 2.5

Similarly to the solution term for the outcome, the relatively low unique coverage values of all three paths signal that they empirically overlap. Thus, both the Estonian and Lithuanian party systems display weak levels of systemic institutionalization for different reasons. Although there are four uniquely covered cases (i.e. Poland, Serbia, Latvia and Bulgaria), both the consistency and coverage of the overall solution term is 1.

Leaving aside the fact that party systems in rich countries will never suffer from weak levels of institutionalization, it seems clear that the combination of two of any of the other three conditions (i.e. pcon, ccum and pfund) will be enough to hinder the process of systemic institutionalization.

[25] In fact, while the impact of both a country´s cleavage structure and the party funding regime on the process of systemic institutionalization tends to present a long-term character (Tavits, 2005; Birnir, 2005), the number of parties affects the supply side of electoral volatility (Bartolini and Mair, 1990; Pedersen, 1979).

All in all, it seems clear that money (WEALTH*PFUND) is the most important "causal model" explaining the process of PSI in post-communist Europe. This is not to say that PSI cannot take place in poor (wealth*pfund) countries (e.g. Ukraine), provided they have an adequate socio-institutional configuration (PCON*CCUM). However, if the latter is not true – i.e. only one of these two conditions is present - then their fate is totally sealed.

Conclusions

Since Mainwaring and Scully (1995) trumpeted the important consequences PSI may have for the consolidation of democracy in post-transitional countries, much has been written about the level of institutionalization in new party systems. Yet the question of the causes of systemic institutionalization has remained, to say the least, controversial. In order to begin to solve this question, and making use of four different methodological techniques (MSDO/MDSO, congruence, PT and csQCA), this article has tried to answer the following three questions: ***what* factors**, *why* and *how* some post-communist party systems have managed to institutionalize while others have not?

From a methodological point of view, this article not only confirms the general benefits of using MMR, but more specifically, and clearly attuned with other articles of this special issue (Beach and Rohlfing; Schneider and Rohlfing; Beach) the complementarity of both "configurational" and case-study techniques. Indeed, and adequately combined, condition-/mechanism-centered MMR designs can provide scholars with more (even if different) information than the most sophisticated quantitative analysis. Thus, while the MSDO/MDSO procedure has reduced complexity by reducing the number of possible explanatory conditions from a total of seventeen to just four, the combination of both congruence and PT has allowed me to understand the specific causal mechanisms linking each of the conditions to the outcome both at specific moments and over time, respectively. Once it was clear – thanks to the use of PT - that all causal conditions were neither always present (or absent) nor directly linked, a *fully confirmatory* csQCA, using Schneider and Rohlfing's (in this special issue) terminology, enabled me to know the manner in which they combined for specific post-communist countries.

From a substantive perspective, the main conclusion is the following: at least until 2010, party systems in economically developed nations institutionalized to a

higher degree than in economically backward countries. This is not to say, however, that poor countries could not institutionalize, as the examples of both Romania and Ukraine clearly show. However, this certainly required further efforts, that is, (1) a low number of legislative parties, and (2) a system of public funding *or* a cumulative cleavage structure.

Moreover, and perhaps more importantly, the article seems to imply, similarly to what can be found in the democratic consolidation literature (Przeworski and Limongi, 1997), the existence of a certain threshold of wealth, suggesting that during the first two decades the institutionalization in post-communist party systems was, if not only, mostly a question of money.

Although it is perhaps too early to form any definitive conclusions, as the most recent electoral results in Hungary, Slovenia or the Czech Republic show, pointing as they do to a certain process of de-institutionalization (Haughton and Kraovec, 2013; Stegmaier and Linek, 2014; Deegan-Krause and Haughton, forthcoming), what my findings do definitively show is the necessity to build a bridge between those scholars who exclusively emphasize either sociological or institutional dependence. Indeed, and in a similar vein to what all the contributions in this special issue suggest in terms of methodology, complementarity of different explanatory approaches constitutes the only way forward for any revision of the judgements made here.

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