

Parties between Thresholds: State Subsidies and Party Behavior in Post-communist Democracies

Introduction

Much has been written about what makes political parties form, persist, change and die. The availability of resources, and one of its channels, the *state* financing of political parties, is seen as both a curse and a blessing for the persistence of parties and the encouragement of strong party competition by individual authors (Knapp, 2004; Birnir, 2005; Casas-Zamora, 2006; Scarrow, 2006; Tavits, 2007; Spirova, 2007). Without any state funding, small and private-resource poor parties have little chance of making it in the electoral competition. At the same time, extending the “cartelization” thesis (Katz and Mair, 1995), state funding that is only available to the established parties might, in fact, freeze the existing patterns of competition even more. Theoretically the relationship is complicated, while empirical evidence has further obfuscated the picture.

We argue that there are at least two reasons why existing work might fail to find a clear trend. One, the conceptualization of state funding as a constraint of party behavior is often too simplistic. A binary distinction between presence and absence of state funding will only allow for the examination of a very small part of the potential effect of state resources on party development. Peculiarities of the funding system - such as which parties receive state money and how important that money is for each party - will blur a clear link between funding and party system development.

Second, and probably more importantly for this article, resource availability impacts parties differently and its results might be evident only in some particular cases. The most consequential effect, in fact, will be on the parties that fall just under the electoral threshold for parliamentary representation and which have, thus, limited access to the mainstream political process. Whether or not they are supported by the financing system of the state becomes of greater consequence than for other parties. The presence of state financing will encourage them to look at politics from a longer-term perspective and allow them to continue to function even outside parliament. Such parties, which we call parties “between thresholds” since they fall between the electoral and payout (i.e. financing) thresholds, are more likely to persist in the electoral competition and (re-)enter parliament at a later stage than parties which do not receive such support.

Such parties are also those that more often than not get excluded as irrelevant by political science research since they do not sit in parliament regularly, and as a consequence, do not have a major influence on political life overall (Bolleyer, 2013). Still, examples of small parties playing a major role at a particular - and often crucial - moment in political development abound.¹ Understanding what makes them likely to persist in the party system is thus crucial to understanding the dynamics of parliamentary politics and government formation. In addition, excluding such parties from studies of the impact of financing on party behavior presents a methodological challenge, as it is where the impact -- we argue -- might be most pronounced.

This article asks the question: does state financing of parties matter? It answers it through an endogenous institutions understanding of how and why parties persist or fail. It focuses on the political parties in 14 post-communist democracies and argues that the party financing regime is an important institutional constraint -- although clearly not the only one -- for the decision of each individual party to persist or not, and thus, also for the characteristics of the party systems as a whole. The post-communist focus allows us to look for the effect of party financing in still developing and fluid party systems, making any impact we discern a stronger finding.

The results of our analysis suggest that the availability of financing is of major consequence for small political parties, but might have less significant impact on the bigger parties, making it difficult to observe a clear aggregate trend. This article, then, contributes to our understanding of the complex relationship between money and party development, but also to the more general question of party persistence and decline. With its party-level analysis and its focus on parties outside parliament, the article views the long-standing puzzle of “why parties?” (Aldrich, 1995) in a broader perspective and, in looking for solutions to this puzzle, goes beyond the parties’ electoral support as the only indication of party’s presence in society.

Party Financing and Party Development: Conceptualizing the Relationship

Scholars are divided in their views on how party funding regulations have influenced party system development. Some have maintained that the presence of a

¹ A pertinent example for such a case is IMRO in Bulgaria. The party stayed out of parliament in the 2009 and 2013 elections but received enough votes to receive public funding (see online Appendix, available at <http://whogoverns.eu/biography/publications/>). In 2014, its re-entry into parliament (as part of the Patriotic Front) proved to be instrumental in the government coalition formation process in the country.

liberal regime of party funding is expected to influence the stability of the party system negatively by exponentially increasing the number of parties. Assuming office seeking ambitious, the logic is that by encouraging parties to form and/or run alone, as well as small parties to seek office in the long run, public funding helps increase the overall number of parties in the system, therefore, decreasing the degree of predictability-cum-stability in the structure of inter-party competition (Knapp, 2004; Spirova, 2007; Sundberg, 2002; Nassmacher, 2009).

Other scholars, on the contrary, explicitly or implicitly adopt the “cartelization” thesis posed by Katz and Mair according to which existing political parties will collusively attempt to reduce “the impact of those seeking to challenge the political status quo” either by introducing a system of public funding to those parties with a certain level of electoral support or, when already in place, by increasing the legal requirements for having access to those subsidies (Scarrow, 2006: 629; Biezen and Rashkova, 2014). The idea is that by allowing the monopoly of state resources by the main/relevant political parties and/or discouraging the entry of new parties to the system, public funding can contribute to the cartelization and, therefore, freezing of the party system (Katz and Mair, 1995: 15; Biezen, 2004).

In empirical terms, while the proponents of the latter current expect public funding not only to stabilize the “vote shares of parties between elections” (Birnie, 2005: 932), but also to reduce the number of parties in the system (Booth and Robbins, 2010: 641-642) while at the same time being detrimental for entirely new and/or small parties (Scarrow, 2006: 629); the first school of thought maintains quite the opposite (Casas-Zamora, 2006: 44-45, 218-219; Koole, 1996: 517; Roper, 2002: 181 or Tavits, 2007: 127).

Our own brief analysis of the relationship between public funding of political parties and their behavior at the system level points to mixed results. Following Birnie (2005) and Scarrow (2006), Table 1 below displays five different systemic indicators for party system development in all post-communist democracies, divided in two groups: systems with public funding of parties and systems without. The indicators of system stability include the level of electoral volatility (TEV) calculated according to Pedersen’s Index (1979), the number of new parties (NNP) entering the system, the number of parties winning at least 0.5 per cent of the vote (TNP), the “raw” number of parties winning legislative seats (NWP) and, finally, the share of parties winning less than 5 per cent of the vote (SPVS).

[Table 1 about Here]

All five indicators suggest a greater stabilization in the publicly funded party systems. The average levels of all indicators are lower in publicly funded regimes, indicating less proliferation of parties in them and in a way, clear support for the “cartelization” school of thought. But most of our cases on non-funded regimes coincide with earlier years of democratic development, when parties were less stable across the board. Further, examining the individual cases qualifies this support. If we compare Ukraine - the only post-communist democracy consistently denying public funding to political parties since the time of democratization² - with its publicly funded counterparts, we see that Ukraine is neither the most volatile nor the most fragmented and most inimical to small parties.

Several observations emerge: long-standing publicly funded party systems tend to be more stable both in terms of volatility and fragmentation than non-publicly funded ones. However, public funding has not prevented: (1) electoral volatility or the formation of new parties in Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland or Slovenia – some of them clearly challenging the status quo ante few months after their foundation; (2) electoral and parliamentary fragmentation in Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia or Slovenia; and, last but not least, (3) the growing importance of small parties in both Croatia or Lithuania. On the contrary, electoral volatility remained below the average in non-publicly funded Estonia (1992-1995), Ukraine (2006-) or Bulgaria (1991-2000); the latter displayed one of the least fragmented party systems in the region; while, as mentioned above, Ukraine and Latvia (1995-2011) presented, respectively, the most inimical conditions for the appearance of new parties and the predominance of big parties.³

² This changed in July 2016, when public funds became available for all parties obtaining at least 2 percent of the vote.

³ An alternative way to look for the effect of party funding on party development is to examine the cases where state subsidies were introduced at a later stage. This would allow us to control for other factors such as the institutional setting (e.g. electoral system, type of regime, etc.), economic conditions, historical legacies or cleavage structure. Unfortunately, and similarly to what happened in previous analyses, our findings seem to go in different directions (see Table C in the online Appendix). Electoral volatility increased after the introduction of state funding in Bulgaria, Lithuania and (to a lesser extent) Estonia; new party entry, system fragmentation and electoral support for small parties decreased in the latter two countries. In Bulgaria, however, the findings are clearly mixed: while the NNP and the NWP increased, both the TNP and SVPS decreased. Similarly in Latvia where the NNP increased and the SVPS decreased, but both the TNP and NWP maintained similar levels of fragmentation. Moreover, in Lithuania, Slovenia and Poland new parties have appeared before every election challenging the structure of partisan competition. Electoral concentration has remained rather low in all three, while parliamentary fragmentation in both Lithuania and Slovenia, and the vote share

These observations are yet another demonstration that the relationship between state funding and party development is difficult to discern at the party system level. In fact, we argue that its empirical study has been greatly hurt by our inability to properly conceptualize the impact of financing on party behavior and that this needs to be done at the party level. This is what we turn to next. We do that by borrowing the general understanding of party behavior from Spirova (2007) but taking its treatment of party financing as a constraint on party behavior one step further. Spirova (2007) sees party financing as one of the constraints on parties' decision to form, persist and change. Together with other factors – party's popularity, electoral thresholds, expected volatility, ideological position, and organizational complexity – the availability of resources is expected to determine the likelihood that a party sees a possibility for electoral success. We expand this argument to argue that the importance of the resources available – and thus of party funding – for the party's decision will vary based on how the party performs/scores on the other factors. In particular, a party that is confident in its electoral performance might not be so dependent on the provision of financial resources in deciding whether to persist in the system or not. The impact of party financing on party thus might only be evident at the party level and even more – in a particular type of party – rendering the aggregate analysis at the system level often meaningless.

Resource Availability and Party Development

As state funding provides monetary resources to the political parties, its availability will impact the decision of parties to form, persist and change by its very presence and through its specific type. This argument is similar to Casal Bértoa and Walecki (2014: 342), who argue that:

[their] intuition is that while parties relying only on private funding will have it difficult to survive, publicly subsidized political forces will be able to survive as partisan organizations even in the event of important losses of electoral support.

Direct public funding varies in terms of the basis on which it is disbursed and the amount of money given to parties. Some regimes restrict it to parliamentary parties only (further called restrictive financing regimes), while others use a certain electoral threshold as a cut off point for state subsidies (further called liberal financing

of small parties in the latter, have not suffered significant changes since the introduction of public funding.

regimes) (Duschinsky, 2002: 80; Ikstens et al., 2002: 33–34, Nassmacher, 2009: 310–324, IDEA 2012). The type of funding available influences the likelihood that parties will be able to seek office in the long term and be willing to persist in the system even if their goals are not achieved immediately (Bolleyer, 2013: 85; Casal Bértoa and Taleski, 2016: 458–461).

If a party is able to get financial resources even if outside parliament, and if it has long-term office ambitions, it will be more likely to risk staying out of parliament by running alone. So, the relevant electoral target of a party might become the threshold of the party financing regime rather than the electoral threshold itself. In addition, the availability of resources will influence the likelihood that a party believes that it will be able to turn its prospective support into actual votes and achieve its electoral target on its own. This is so because the party needs to carry out electoral campaigns and maintain an active presence in society that requires financial resources. As a result, a party in such situation is more likely to choose one of the more independent electoral strategies.

If public financing is restricted to parties that have parliamentary groups or to those that have some parliamentary presence, parties will not be encouraged to remain politically active outside parliament. As a result, for such parties the electoral threshold remains of primary significance as an electoral target and they will be less likely to choose a riskier electoral strategy.

While in the above we follow most of the arguments proposed in Spirova (2007), here we argue that there is another aspect of the relationship that leads to an even more nuanced impact of party financing on political parties. While resources availability will be of consequence for all political contestants, it will be of most importance for political parties that need it the most. Parties with comfortable margins of support over the threshold for parliamentary representation will benefit from the state funding provisions, but they will also gain other benefits from being in parliament such as political exposure, participation in the executive, and patronage benefits. However, for the parties that do not surpass the electoral threshold, whether or not there is another threshold – the state financing one – will be of greater significance because it might be what allows them to maintain their political existence. It is then, not only at the party level (as opposed to the party system level) but also in that *specific* group of parties (parties between thresholds) that we need to

look for the tangible impact of state funding of political parties on their persistence or death.

The arguments developed above suggest that, in empirical terms, it will be difficult to discern clear consequences of different types of party financing at the party system level. Even at the party level, it might be difficult to track such impact if we consider all parties as a group. Where the impact should be clear, however, is in the group of parties with an electoral share lower than the electoral threshold but higher than the payout threshold.

These arguments lead us to propose the two following hypotheses:

H1: Within any party system with state funding, parties that are publicly funded will survive to a higher extent than parties that are not.

H2: Parties outside parliament that receive funding from the state are more likely to survive than parties outside parliament which are not publicly funded.

This hypothesis reflects our argument that the impact of parliamentary status will be, to some extent, countered by the presence of other resources in this case provided by the state.

Public Financing and Party Behavior in Post-communist Europe: Party Level Analysis

Case Selection and Data

The rest of the article examines the validity of our hypotheses by focusing on 13 post-communist democracies and examining the trends in party development with a particular focus on the parties between thresholds.⁴ The empirical implications of the hypotheses are outlined at the end of this section.

The nature and regulation of party and campaign financing is a particularly important constraint on party behavior in the post-communist world. There, the establishment and initial development of the post-communist party systems happened at a time when public funding of parties had become the norm worldwide making party building and party financing develop simultaneously and impact each other (Roper, 2002; van Biezen, 2003: 178–179). At the same time, the party systems are still fluid and especially in the early years that we examine, we can be pretty certain in any stabilizing effect we can attribute to party financing. The region also provides

⁴ We consider a country to be democratic from the very moment it scores 2 or lower in the Freedom House political and civil liberties index (2015).

great variety of funding regimes across countries and within country variation across time. These different regimes and their dates in initiation are graphically presented in Figure 1. The variation enables us to examine the long-term effects of very similar funding systems, while allowing at the same time within-country comparisons over time between quite divergent funding frameworks.

Data on the specific party funding regimes is taken from the “Re-conceptualization of Party Democracy” website and contrasted with various secondary sources (e.g. Biezen and Rashkova, 2014; Birnir, 2005; Piccio, 2012; Scarrow, 2006). The study of the historical development (i.e. formation, persistence, and change) owes much to Bugajski (2002), Nohlen and Stöver (2010) and Rose and Munro (2009), as well as country experts and other sources on the World Wide Web.

[Figure 1 around here]

As Figure 1 illustrates, public subsidies to political parties in post-communist Europe are almost universal now, but its introduction has taken place gradually. Only one democratic country in the region has denied public party funding until very recently: Ukraine. Of the other 13 post-communist nations seven have guaranteed political parties access to public funding from the very beginning of democratic development. Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia have maintained a *restrictive system* of public funding; Romania, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary chose to adopt a *liberal regime providing financing for parties outside Parliament as well*. In the other six Eastern European democracies, state funding was introduced only at a later stage: Poland, Slovenia and Estonia introduced restrictive systems in 1993, 1994 and 1996, changing them to liberal ones in 1997, 2000 and 2004, respectively. Lithuania (1999), Bulgaria (2001) and Latvia (2012) adopted liberal systems of public subsidies from the very first moment.

In order to examine to what extent public funding encourages party survival at the party level we look at the extent to which publicly funded parties have managed to survive by running in election after election. Of particular importance is the survival of parties whose electoral support puts them below the electoral threshold of parliamentary representation, but above the pay-out threshold of the state financing. We develop a quantitative indicator of the ability of parties to persist in the party system: the survival rate. The survival rate is calculated as the percentage of parties in each of several categories that survive from one election to the next, adapting the list of parties to each electoral cycle. The value of the survival rate, ranging between 0

and 100 is used to compare the persistence of parties across different public funding systems and, within systems, the persistence of different groups of parties. Since we are discussing trends and the numbers of observations are small, we present and analyse the survival rates without any statistical indicators. In addition to the quantitative trends, we use a detailed qualitative discussion of several illustrative cases to supplement our arguments. A detailed case by case analysis of party development in all systems is available from the authors.

Empirically, given the indicators and classifications above, we expect to observe the following:

- Based on H1, within any political system with state funding available, the survival rate of the publicly funded parties will be greater than of non-publicly funded parties.

- Based on H2,

- a) (across systems) The survival rates of parties between thresholds will be higher than that of parties under both thresholds, leading to a higher rate of survival of extra-parliamentary parties in liberal financing regimes than in restrictive ones (where there are no parties between thresholds); and

- b) (within systems) the difference in the survival rates between parties in parliament and parties outside parliament will be greater in restrictive party financing regimes than in liberal regimes.

We base our analysis of the impact of public funding on the behavior of political parties on having tracked the political life of all parties with more than 0.5% of the vote since the (re-)introduction of democracy in all 13 post-communist party systems with public funding. Table A in the (online) Appendix lists all parties per country that have been included in the analysis and their acronyms.

Comparative Trends: Parties with State Money

To look for support for our first hypothesis, we calculate the survival rate for parties with and without public funding in restrictive (Figure 2) and liberal (Figure 3) public funding regimes, based on our classifications above. The figures present the average values of the survival rates within categories of parties over the course of democratic elections in each country. Values per election round are provided in table B in the online Appendix.

In systems where public funding is available for parties represented in parliament only, the electoral and payout thresholds coincide and we expect to see a

clear distinction in the survival rate of parties above and beyond these two overlapping thresholds. Serbia, Montenegro and Croatia are our three examples where public funding has consistently been restricted to parliamentary parties only and where the electoral and the payout threshold are set at 5 per cent of the votes.

[Figure 2 around here]

As Figure 2 illustrates, the trend in Croatia is particularly strong: there it seems that party funding has significantly contributed to the institutionalization of Croatian political parties. Only seven of the twenty-one funded *and* parliamentary parties in the 2000-2014 period did not survive to compete in the legislative elections of 2015, a process resulting in an average survival rate of 85.9% for funded parties.⁵ In clear contrast, with the exception of two regionally-based parties (ZDS and PGS), all extra-parliamentary parties did not manage to survive more than one electoral cycle, producing a survival rate of 28.8%.⁶ A similar situation can be observed in Serbia, albeit a less pronounced difference in survival rates. But there too, most parliamentary and publicly funded parties have continuously survived, even if realigned in different electoral coalitions, while extra-parliamentary/non-funded parties have found it difficult to continue in the electoral arena, except in electoral alliances with other previously legislative parties. Especially significant in this respect is the period between 2003 and 2007, when up to 6 of the 9 extra-parliamentary parties did not manage to participate in the next electoral contest.⁷

In consistently liberal party funding regimes the electoral and payout thresholds do not coincide and we can actually observe parties between the thresholds and use their experience to distinguish between public funding and presence in parliament as a factor influencing survival. But for now, we look only at the difference in the rate of survival of funded and non-funded parties (Figure 3). Hungary is the most extreme case – there the electoral threshold is set at 5%,⁸ but the payout threshold has been 1% of the votes in the first round of elections since the very

⁵ These include: KHDU, SNS, HDSS, NLIG (all four did not survive more than one electoral period); DC, which split from HDZ in April 2000 only to reunite fifteen years and a half later; as well as Libra and LS, two originally splinters of HSLS which merged into HNS (2005) and HSLS (2006), respectively. For a complete list of parties, their full names, and acronyms, please see the (online) Appendix.

⁶ These are SBHS – a legislative party in 2000 that disappeared immediately after losing its parliamentary status in 2003.

⁷ Here: LS, R-SDPV and SD immediately disappeared, while DA, SSJ and O opted for merging into other more relevant actors (SDP, SRS and DS, respectively).

⁸ Since 1994, before it was 4%.

beginning of democratic politics and the difference in the survival rates of funded and not funded parties is the largest in our sample. Similar trends, although not so extreme, are clear in the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Romania which have all had liberal funding regimes and in which the survival rates of publicly funded parties are clearly higher than for non-funded parties.

[Figure 3 around here]

Lastly, we look for the difference in survival rates among funded and non-funded parties in systems where a liberal regime was introduced only later on (Figure 4). Here, the effect over time might not be as strong and survival rates might not be that different, especially as in some countries the liberal regimes are only relevant for 2 or 3 election cycles. But in that group of relative latecomers in the liberal funding regimes, the trend is also clear: parties that get public funds survive at consistently higher rate than parties that do not.

[Figure 4 around here]

Looking at the general picture, there is clear support for all our expectations: there is not even one election cycle in a single system where the survival rate of those parties below the payout threshold exceeds the survival rate of those parties with access to public allocations (see also Table B in the online Appendix). The rates coincide, it is important to note, in just four cases (Estonia 2007, Hungary 2010, Serbia 2012 and Bulgaria 2013). In these instances, all parties managed to contest the next elections irrespective of the presence or absence of financial support from the state. Interestingly enough, the survival rate of publicly funded parties was always superior to that of the whole amount of parties at the time private funding was only available. Lithuania in 2012 constitutes the only exception (when compared to 1996).

Of course, it could be argued that because parliamentary parties (which, in some instances, are able to obtain extra financial public support) are included among those publicly funded parties, the survival rate of the latter is almost always superior to the one of the rest of the parties in the party system. Thus, it would be even better to compare the survival rate of parties that receive public funds but are not represented in parliament, our “parties between thresholds”, and parties that are neither in parliament nor receive public funds. This is what we turn to next.

Comparative Trends: Parties between thresholds

To search for more convincing evidence that funding matters, however, we need to look at the rates of survival of political parties between and under both

thresholds, as Hypothesis 2 suggests. Here we expect implications on both across systems (2a) and within systems level (2b). The first set of data – the differences in the survival rates of parties between thresholds and parties under both thresholds is presented in Figure 5.

The figure provides the average survival rates, per country, of parties which are out of Parliament and receive funding (between thresholds) and parties which are out of Parliament and do not receive public funds (see table B in the online Appendix). In 8 of the 10 cases where the relationship can be observed, we find the expected trend. Parties without parliamentary presence but with state funds survive at a substantially higher rate than parties without both.

[Figure 5 around here]

Illustrative here is the case of Hungary, our most consistent liberal funder. The difference in the average rates of survival here is over 63 percentage points, indicating a much higher likelihood of survivals for the parties with funds. If we look at the individual development of parties in that system, of the eight Hungarian parties under the payout threshold in the period between 1990 and 2014, only two (MSZDP and VP) managed to present candidates in the next election (survival rate at 25%). This is in clear contrast with what has happened to the parties between the thresholds. Particularly interesting is the case of MKM, a hardline Marxist party established in late 1989, which has continuously managed to contest elections under its own label. As discussed elsewhere (Spirova, 2007), one of the reasons for MKM's consistent presence in the party system without any major change in its organizational and electoral form has been the availability of state funding. Moreover, while “historically” important forces as FKgP disappeared from the political scene as soon as they failed to reach the payout threshold, newer parties such as the MDF or MIÉP managed to overcome their “journey in the dessert,” at least momentarily with the support of state finances.

In the Czech case, where the difference of the average survival rates is over 45 percentage points, a similar picture emerges. In the period between 1992 and 1996, 8 out of the 12 parties enjoying state financial support managed to survive, while none of the parties deprived of public funding made it into the next elections. Not happy with the aftermath, Czech legislators changed the payout threshold twice more: by increasing it by one point in 1994 and, forced by a resolution of the Czech Constitutional Court, by decreasing it to 1.5% in 2002. The positive effect of public

funding did not change much: with just two exceptions (US and VV) all parties with access to public subsidies survived electorally, while most of the other parties immediately disappeared or merged into other “more relevant” political forces (e.g. DEU). From this point of view, the most interesting cases are those of SNK, KDU and SZ. Thus, while SNK got into parliament for the first time in 2010 through an electoral coalition with VV, despite being left out of parliament twice before (in 2002 and 2006); both KDU managed to return to both parliament and government in 2013, after receiving extensive public allocations in 2010. SZ’s survival as an extra-parliamentary party can be very much explained thanks to the Czech State’s financial injection. In contrast, “historical” parties like US or the ODA fell into oblivion as soon as they lost the financial support of the State.

In Bulgaria, where liberal provisions have only introduced in 2005, the difference in the survival rates is not as pronounced. Again, looking at individual party development allows us to see a more picture. Bulgarian parties received no annual subsidies from the state from 1991 until 2001. During that period, parties were “urged” by the electoral threshold to try to form alliances in order to surpass the 4% barrier necessary for legislative representation. In that period, we observe a very high number of electoral contestants and a great variety of electoral alliances (data not provided). Of the parties that stayed out of Parliament, only a couple managed to survive through the period, while four out of the six parties represented in parliament did so.

In 2001, biannual direct subsidies for all parties with more than 1% of the vote were introduced, and that system was strengthened in 2005 when annual subsidies for all such parties are provided for. Since then the promise of state money has played a stronger incentive for the particular electoral choices of political parties (Kostadinova, 2008; Rashkova and Spirova, 2014). It appears that achieving legislative representation was no longer as important for smaller parties so long as they could finance their operations and continue their work at the local level (Petrov, 2004). Where the impact of the funding provisions is clearly visible is the appearance of numerous new parties at both the 2005 and 2009 elections. While many of them (e.g. Ataka, GERB, RZS) made it into parliament, some did not and still maintained their political presence in the system. NV is the prime example, which failed to enter parliament in 2005 but secured enough funding to persist and managed to get numerous representatives at the local level. The 2013 election demonstrated this even

further: the number of parties between the thresholds increased to unprecedented levels, a trend at least attributable to their unwillingness to join together. At the 2014 elections, many of them even made it into parliament. Parties are now, in general and in comparison to the 1990s, much more likely to be able to sustain themselves even if left out of parliament as long as they receive state funds.

There is only one system in which the average rates do not behave as expected by Hypothesis 2(a): namely, Romania. However, and as it follows from the Appendix, parties between thresholds have been absent in most Romanian elections (i.e. 2004, 2008 and 2012). Were we to analyse only the two elections we have complete data for (i.e. 1996 and 2000), the difference in favour of non-funded parties would be much reduced (31.7 vs. 25). In fact, while during the second pair of elections (2000-2004) up to 66.7 percent of the parties below both threshold did not manage to survive – similar to what happened with the only party between the thresholds (i.e. ApR); between 1996 and 2000 the survival rate of parties between the thresholds was higher than that of parties under them (see table B in the online Appendix), really proving our hypothesis wrong in just one pair of elections.

Finally, and as it has already been mentioned, Latvia is the last post-communist country to have granted parties access to state aid. And the effects of such legislative reform could have not been more dramatic, even if the contrast between parties “between” and parties “under” the thresholds cannot be made.^{9 10}

As a second empirical implication of this hypothesis we expected to find a positive difference in the extent to which parliamentary parties are advantaged in the restrictive funding regimes in comparison with the liberal ones. In Figure 6 we present the average difference in the survival rates of parliamentary parties and non-parliamentary parties within each country, divided in the restrictive and liberal funding regimes categories. What the data tells us is that, in Bulgaria, the rates to which parliamentary and no parliamentary parties survived differ, on average, by 22

⁹ As it follows from the online Appendix, no extra-parliamentary party managed to get more than 2 percent of the vote at the last 2014 legislative elections.

¹⁰ Indeed, while until 2014 the average survival rate of parliamentary parties was of just 83.9%, all the parties that made into parliament in 2011 – and therefore were the recipients of state aid from January 2012 – managed to contest the last 2014 elections. In clear contrast, only one of the exclusively privately funded parties survived. This is no surprising, though, as the Latvian Russian Union (formerly known as PCTVL) is a purely ethnic party, representing the interest of the Russian-speaking community in Latvia. In any case, and as it follows from table 3 below, the contrast in parliamentary (and publicly funded) and extra-parliamentary (and privately funded) parties in Latvia is the highest in the last twenty years.

percentage points to the benefit of parliamentary parties. In Croatia, that difference is substantially higher at 57percentage points. In other words, parties in and out of parliament in Bulgaria' liberal funding years (post 2001) had a more equal change of surviving than their counterparts in Croatia. Being in parliament by itself appears to benefit parties much less when state funding is not exclusively linked to it.

[Figure 6 around here]

Unfortunately, looking at the overall data we cannot find a clear trend – in both groups of countries, we have quite some variation in the difference in surviving. On average, the liberal countries even score higher than the restrictive ones, a finding that appears to contradict our expectations. The ways to account for that are several. First of all, our statistic represents the difference to which these two groups of parties behave differently over election cycles. There are many other factors that drive the longevity of political parties and that are also particularly effective in their impact on one or other group – higher registration requirements, for example, impact small parties more than big parties and might prevent survival in that group. Also, we have a very limited number of observation for the restrictive category, making the averages particularly sensitive to unique country dynamics. Most importantly, it might be that in aggregating so much we in fact lose the focused, detailed impact of financing that we argue demonstrates the value of state funding for parties between thresholds.

Conclusions

This article has presented a theoretical argument about why state funding of political parties will be particularly important to a specific group of political parties – those which find themselves between the electoral and payout thresholds - and provided empirical evidence to support this claim. While many factors will influence the decision of a party to form, persist or change in the political system, state funding provides important resources that make running in elections and achieving the party's electoral target more likely. In addition, the availability of state resources will make parties consider staying outside parliament as a realistic strategy as it will allow them to seek office in the longer run. We based this claim on theoretical arguments, but also on evidence presented elsewhere that, in individual party cases, party funding has been an important factor in the decision-making process of party elites. In the cases of Hungary's Munkaspart and Centrum Party or Poland's Social Democracy, Labour Union and the Democratic Party, the availability of state funding allowed them to persist and function in the political system although outside parliament. In contrast,

the absence of resources for parties outside parliament discouraged Bulgarian parties in the 1990s (such as the Bulgarian Euro Left) from running in elections independently and led to multiple electoral alliances and finally, a merger (Spirova, 2007: 145-146; Casal Bértoa, 2016). This anecdotal evidence made us refine the theoretical argument but also led us into a search for a broader comparative evidence that the availability of state resources features as a constraint in the decisions of political parties to form, persist and die.

We have also presented arguments and data to support previous claims that the relationship between state funding provision and party development is ambiguous at the system level because of the multiplicity of factors that influence party development. Electoral system characteristics, ideological saturation, and parties organizational development also clearly constraint individual parties in their ability to persist and change, making it difficult to observe a trend at the system level. Several indicators of party system stability from the 14 post-communist countries that we study provide mixed evidence for a relationship of any sort. However, when we focus on the developments at the individual party level and particularly on the parties between the electoral and payout threshold, we observe a much clearer pattern.

Comparing the trends at party level among the 13 countries with public finance provisions allow us to look the impact of these regimes in a more refined manner. We do see that parties who (anticipate to be or) are being funded by the state have a higher chance of forming and surviving in an independent format in the system. Having formulated two hypotheses to test this proposition, and discussed their expected empirical implications, we provided comparative analysis of the survival rates of different groups of parties in our 13 states and complemented that with detailed within country temporal analysis for several illustrative cases. The data provides support for two of out three empirical expectations. The survival rate of publicly funded parties, an indicator we calculate for each electoral period, exceeds the survival rate for the non-publicly funded ones in almost all cases, thus supporting our first hypothesis. Even more importantly for our argument, when the state provides funding, this allows for two distinct thresholds - the electoral and the payout one - to be considered as relevant by the parties. In support of our second hypothesis, we do observe that parties who find themselves “between the thresholds” have a higher survival rate than parties who do not have that option, irrespective of their electoral support overall. A third implication of finding a larger difference in the survival rate

so parties in and out of parliament in restrictive regimes was not supported by our evidence, possibly because of too high level aggregation.

Still, these observations lead us to conclude that the relationship between the availability of state financing of parties and their development is far from irrelevant. On the contrary, with a proper conceptualization and multi-faceted empirical approach, we can discern important patterns of interactions between the two, at least in the empirical reality of the post-communist world.

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Tables

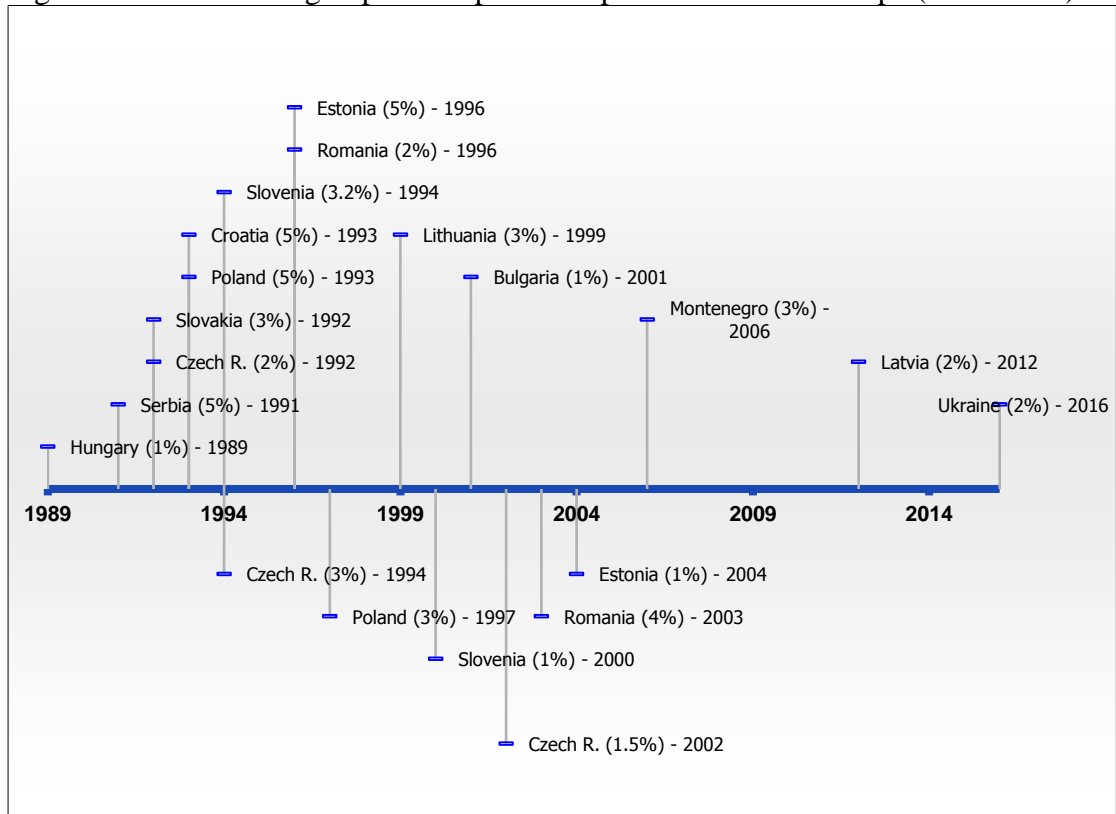
Table 1. Party funding and party system development in post-communist Europe

Country	Electoral period	TEV	NNP*	TNP	NWP	SPVS
<i>No Public Party Funding</i>						
Bulgaria	1991-1997	21.3	4	12.3	4.3	19.6
Estonia	1992-1995	22.1	8	14	8	16.2
Latvia	1995-2011	32	4	12.2	6.3	10.6
Lithuania	1992-1996	36.5	9	16.5	11	24.4
Poland	1991	-	-	23	28	20.6
Slovenia	1992	-	-	22	8	24.7
Ukraine	2006-2014	26.8	3	11.8	7.5	17.6
	Average	28.6	4.5	13.8	7.6	24.2
<i>Public Party Funding</i>						
Bulgaria	2001-2014	33	5.2	12	5.8	14.9
Croatia	2000-2011	15.1	3.3	9	7	21.1
Czech R.	1992-2013	24.7	3.5	11.9	5.7	13.1
Estonia	1999-2015	21.2	1.6	8.8	5.8	5.8
Hungary	1990-2014	21.4	2.5	9.1	5.9	9
Latvia	2014	26.4	5	10	6	5.4
Lithuania	2000-2012	35.3	3.8	13.8	9.3	17.5
Montenegro	2009-2012	17.2	1	12.5	4.5	14.2
Poland	1993-2011	24.8	3.2	9.8	5.3	10.9
Romania	1996-2012	21.5	2.8	12	4.6	15.1
Serbia	2003-2014	19	3.5	12.4	5.4	16.6
Slovakia	1992-2012	19.5	3.8	13.1	6.1	15.3
Slovenia	1996-2014	30.3	4.3	13.5	7.2	14
	Average	24.3	3.4	11.4	6	13.5

* Mergers and electoral coalitions excluded.

Figures

Figure 1. Public funding to political parties in post-communist Europe (1989-2016)



Sources: Casal Bértoa *et al.* (2014); Casal Bértoa and Biezen (2014)

Figure 2: Survival Rates (%) of parties in consistently restrictive funding regimes.

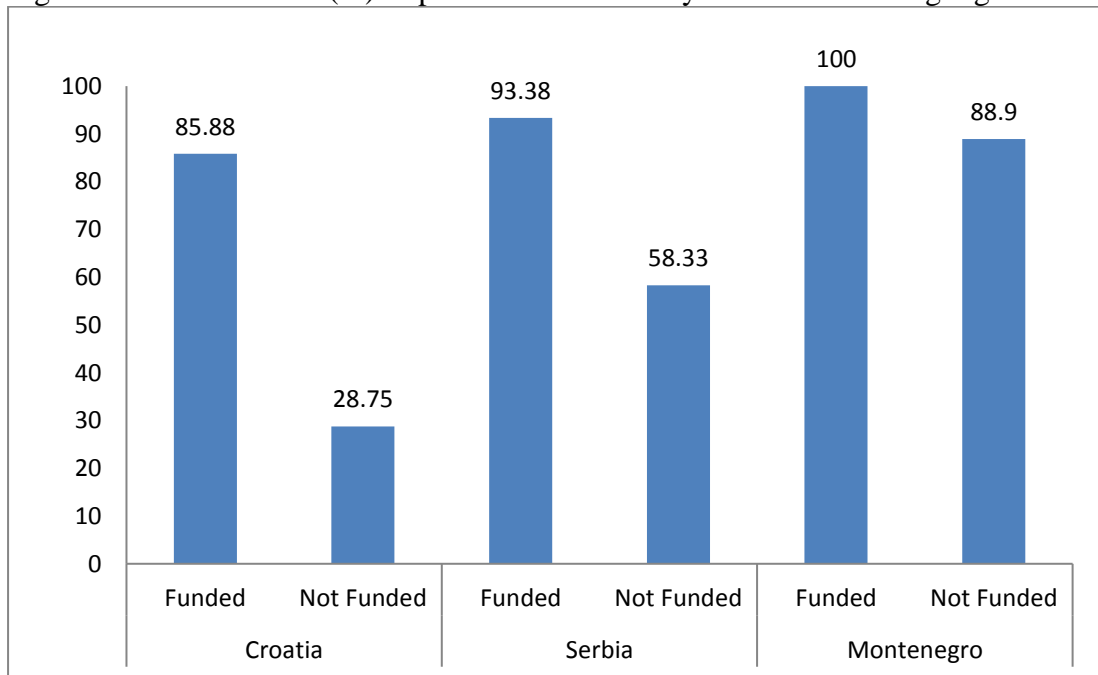


Figure 3: The survival rate of parties in consistently liberal funding regimes.

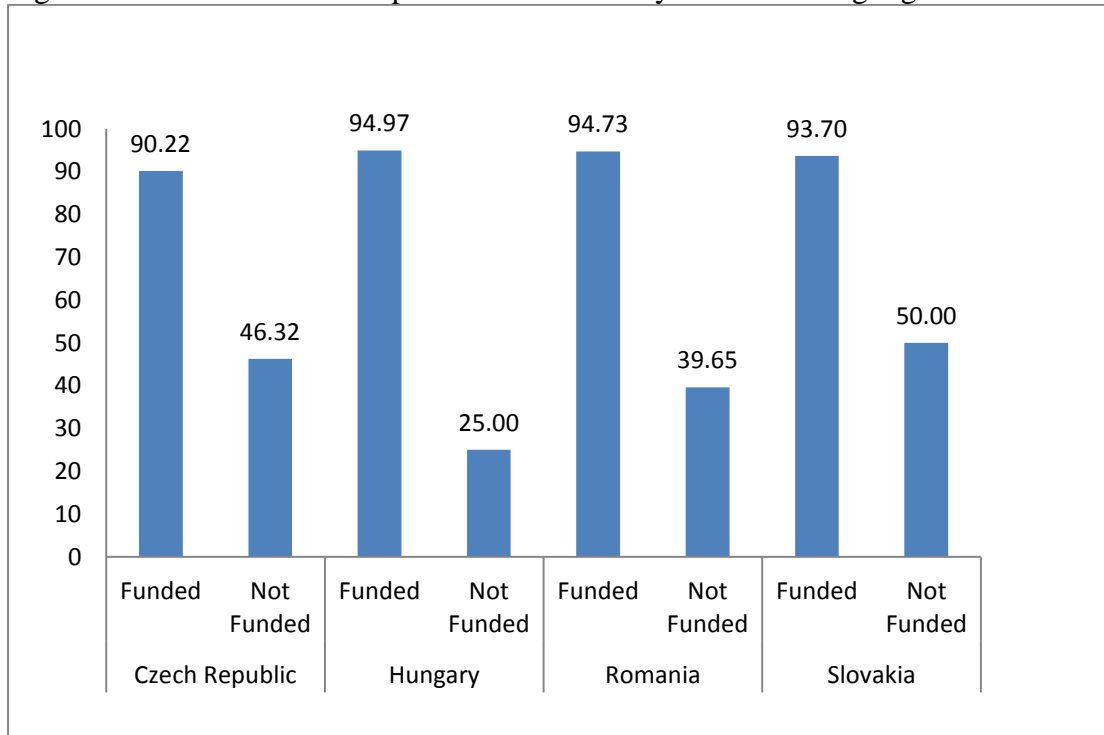


Figure 4: The survival rate of parties in “late-comers” liberal funding regimes:

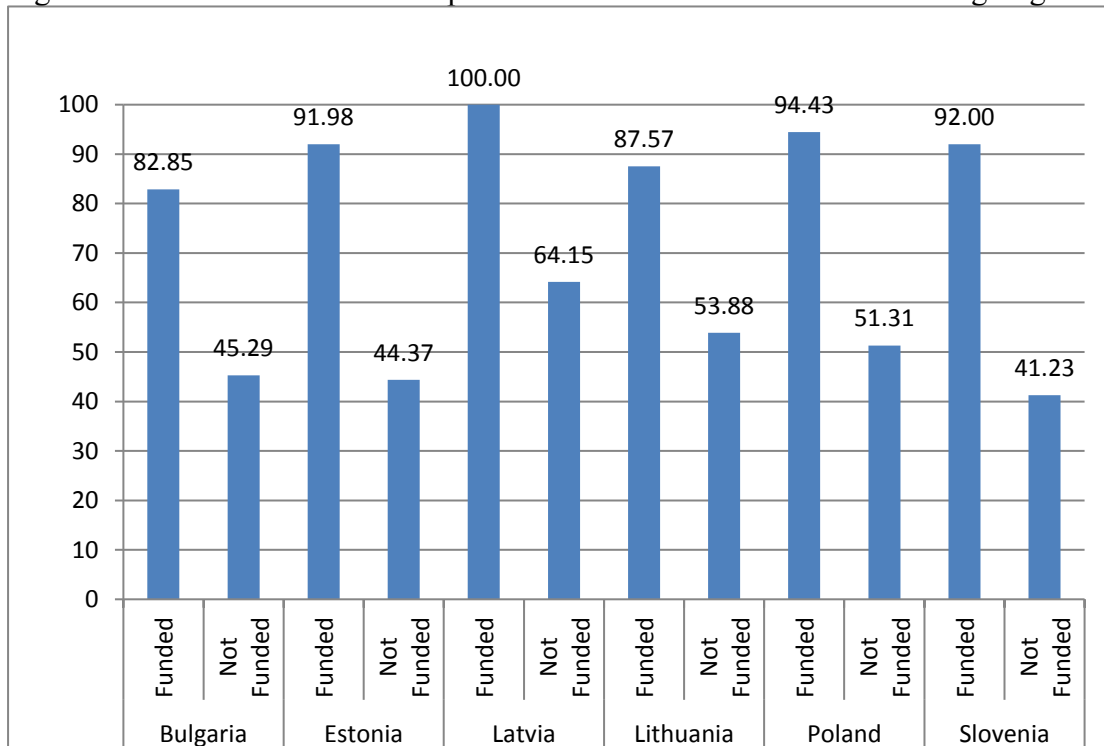


Figure 5: Survival rate (in %) of political parties between thresholds (i.e. electoral and payout) and under both thresholds

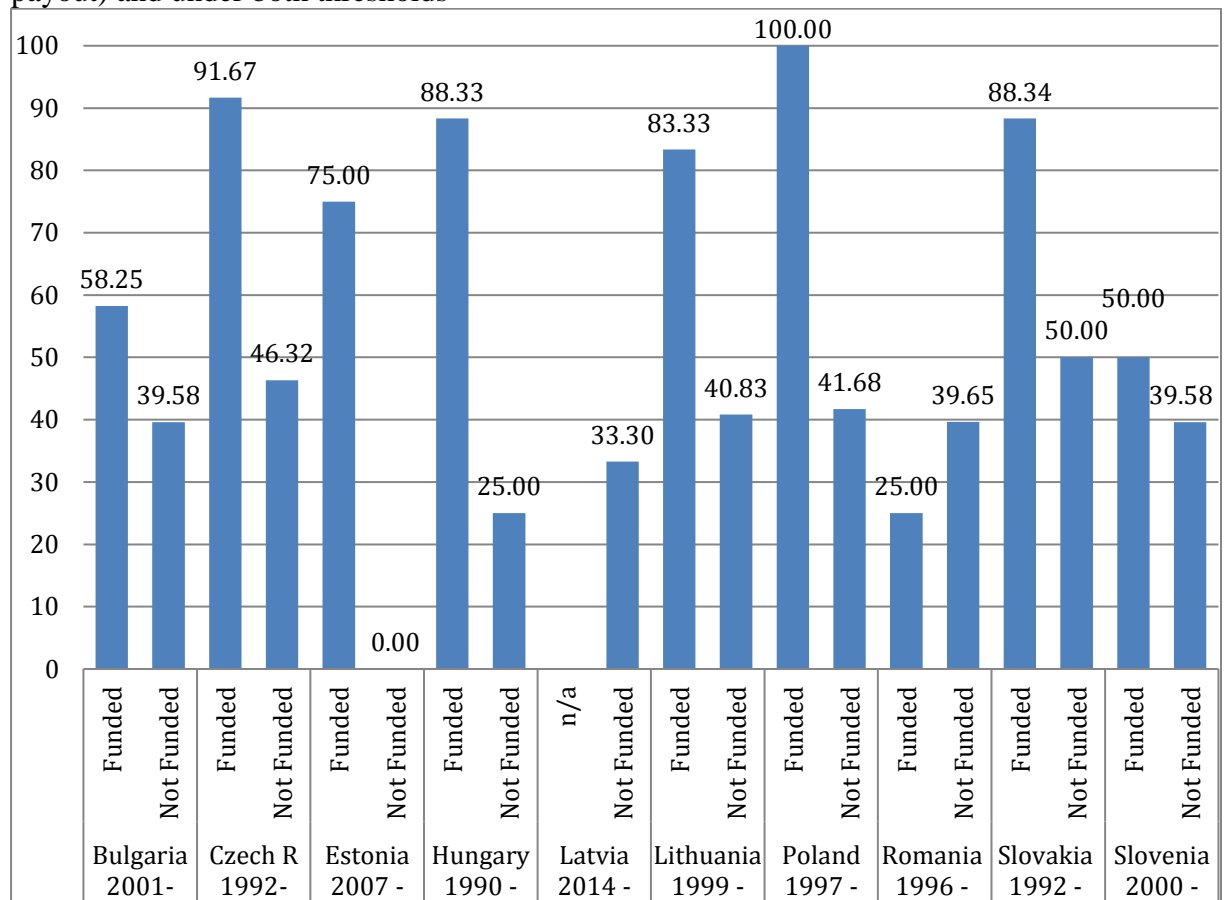
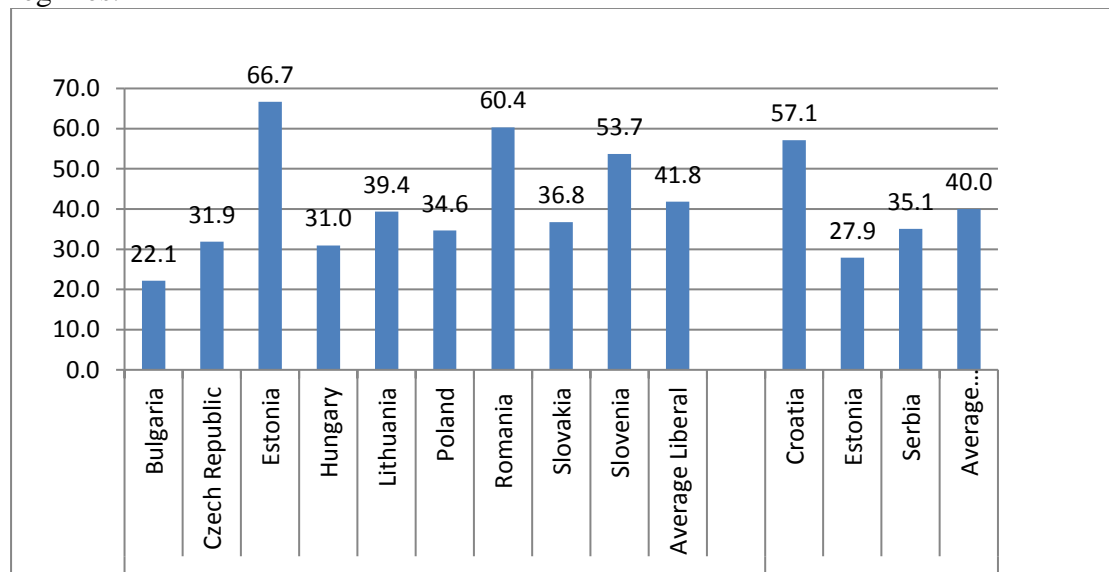


Figure 6: Average difference (in percentage points) in the survival rate of parliamentary and non-parliamentary parties in restrictive and liberal funding regimes.



Appendix (online)

Table A. Party system development in 14 post-communist democracies (1990-2015)

Country	% votes (or in parliament)	Electoral period							
		1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th	6 th	7 th	8 th
Bulgaria	≥4	SDS/BSP/ DSP	BSP/SDS/ BZNS(NS)-DP/ DPS/BBB	SDS/BSP/ DPS/EvroLev/ BBB	NDSV/SDS/ BSP/DPS	BSP/NDSV/ DPS/Ataka/ SDS/DSB/BNS	GERB/BSP/ DPS/Ataka/ SDS-DSB/RZS	GERB/BSP/ DPS/Ataka	GERB/BSP/ DPS/DSB- DBG-SDS- NPSD- BZNS/ IMRO- NFSB/BbC/ Ataka/ABV
	<4 ≥1	BZNS(U)/BZNS(NP)/ SDS(C)/SDS(L)/KTB/ BBB/BNRP	DAR/BKP/ NI/PS/TBF	BKP/OTs	VMRO-G/ KSII/NOTsSII	NV/KnR/E/	Lider/NDSV	NFSB/DBG/ DSB/Lider/ IMRO/ RZS/NDSV/ SDS/PV	D21/PV
	<1 ≥0.5	BBP/KZKS/ BKP/PFP	NDKDTsB/SMSTs/B/ BNRP/ DPSpr	BKhK/DPSpr.	BLE/UB/ NSTK/NUF-L	BKhK/FAGO	Z	Z/NA/ PROUD	Z/RBG
Croatia	(Yes) ¹	SDP-HSLS-PGS- SBHS/HDZ/ HSS-IDS-HNS-LS/ HSP/HKDU/SNS	HDZ/SDP-IDS-Libra- LS/HNS-PGS/HSS/ HSP/HSLS-DC/HSU/ HDSS	HDZ/SDP/ HSS- HSLS/HNS/ IDS/HDSSiB/ HSU/HSP	SDP-HNS-IDS-HSU/ HDZ-HGS-DC/ HLSR/HDSSiB/ NLIG/HSS/ HSp	HDZ-HSS- HSp-BUZ- HSLS-HDS- Hrast/SDP- HNS-HSU- HSLR/MOST/ IDS/B365/ZZ HDSSiB/NS			
	(No)	ASDH/HSP'1861/ NH/HPS/SDSS	SBHS/ZDS-MS/ HDC-DPZS	PGS-ZDS-ZS/ DSU/SU	Zs-SP/ HCSP/HSP/ HSLS/BUZ-PGS- HRS	ORaH/UiO/ HKS-HSP-OS			

¹ 5% threshold (at district level) does not apply to ethnic minorities.

Czech R.	≥ 5	<i>ODS/KSCM/CSSD/ LSU²/KDU/RMS/ ODA/HSD</i>	<i>ODS/CSSD/ KSCM/KDU/ RMS/ODA</i>	<i>CSSD/ODS/ KSCM/ KDU/US</i>	<i>CSSD/ODS/ KSCM/ KDU-US</i>	<i>ODS/CSSD/ KSCM/ KDU/SZ</i>	<i>CSSD/ODS/ TOP09/ KSCM/VV</i>	<i>CSSD/ANO/ KSCM/TOP09 / ODS/ÚSVIT/K DU</i>	
	< 5 ≥ 3	<i>SD/DZJ/ SPCZR</i>	<i>DZJ</i>	<i>RMS/ DZJ</i>			<i>KDU SPOZ/Suv.</i>	<i>SZ</i>	
	< 3 ≥ 1.5	<i>KAN</i>	<i>DEU/SD-CSNS</i>		<i>SNK/SZ</i>	<i>SNK</i>	<i>SZ</i>	<i>CPS/SSO/SPO Z</i>	
	< 1.5 ≥ 0.5	<i>NzI/SPP/ HSS/D92</i>	<i>LB/CMUS</i>	<i>DEU/SZ</i>	<i>RMS/SV/DZJN/C/S NS/ PB/ODA</i>	<i>ND/ SZR</i>	<i>DSSS/CPS/ SSO/PB</i>	<i>DSSS/Zmena</i>	
Estonia	≥ 5	<i>I-ER/Ek/ EK/SDE/ ERSP/SK/PEEK</i>	<i>Ek-ERL-PK- EPL/ER/EK/ I/SDE/EÜR- VEE/VKRP</i>	<i>EK/I/ER/ SDE-E/Ek/ ERL/K</i>	<i>EK/ResP/ ER/ERL/ I/SDE</i>	<i>ER/EK/ IRL/SDE/ EER/ERL</i>	<i>ER/EK/ IRL/SDE</i>	<i>ER/EK/ SDE/IRL/ EV/EKRE</i>	
	< 5 ≥ 1	<i>EPL/PK/ EER/EEE/EVP</i>	<i>PEEK/EIP/ EVP/ETRE</i>	<i>EEKD/ VEE/ESE</i>	<i>K/EEKD</i>	<i>EEKD</i>	<i>EER/ERL</i>		
	< 1 ≥ 0.5	<i>ÖRRE/ EIL</i>	<i>NJ/ERKL/ Metsa</i>	<i>PK</i>	<i>EIP</i>	<i>K</i>	<i>VEE/ EEKD</i>	<i>EER</i>	
Hungary	≥ 5	<i>MDF/SZDSZ/ FKgP/MSZP/ Fidesz/KDNP</i>	<i>MSZP/SZDSZ/ MDF/FKgP/ KDNP/Fidesz</i>	<i>MSZP/Fidesz/ FKgP/SZDSZ/ MIÉP</i>	<i>MSZP/SZDSZ/ Fidesz-MDF</i>	<i>MSZP/Fidesz/ SZDSZ/MDF</i>	<i>Fidesz/ MSZP/LMP/ Jobbik.</i>	<i>Fidesz/ MSZP-E-DK- PM-L/ Jobbik/LMP</i>	
	< 5 - ≥ 4			<i>MKM</i>	<i>MIÉP</i>				
	< 4 ≥ 1	<i>MKM/MSZDP/ ASZ/VP/HVK</i>	<i>MKM/KP/ASZ/ MIÉP</i>	<i>MDF/ KDNP/MDNP</i>	<i>C MKM</i>	<i>MIÉP-Jobbik</i>	<i>MDF</i>		
	< 1 ≥ 0.5	<i>MNP</i>	<i>MSZDP/EKgP/ VP/NDSZ</i>	<i>USZ</i>	<i>FKgP</i>		<i>CM</i>	<i>MKM/HNEM</i>	
	≥ 5	<i>LDP/TKL/LC/TB/LVP/ LZS-LKDS-LgDP/ LNNK-LZP/LSP/TSP</i>	<i>TP/LC/TB-LNNK/ TSP-LSP-L/ LDDP-LSDSP/JP</i>	<i>JL/PCTVL/TP / LPP-LKDS/ ZZS/TB-</i>	<i>TP/ZZS/JL/SC LPP-LC/TB- LNNK/PCTVL</i>	<i>SC/V/ZZS/NA / TP-LPP-LC</i>	<i>SC/ZRP/V/ NA/ZZS/ /</i>	<i>SC/V/ZZS/ NA/NsL/ LrA</i>	

² It included SZ, CSNS and ZS.

Latvia				LNNK					
	<5 ≥2	LDDP-LSDSP-T	LZS/ DP-LKDS-LZP	LC/LSDSP	LSDSP-DP-LKDS- LG/ SDLP-KP		LPP-LC ³		
	<2-≥0.5	TPA/LZs/ LKPP/LTF/ MPA-LNP/MZ-PA	TKL/LDP/ LAP/NPP/ LVP	LG/SDS/SDL P/ LDP-DP- LB-LZs/ KP	VL/JD PSP/Mz	PCTVL/RL/ PP/PPR/ LSDSP	PCTVL/PP	PCTVL/VL2/ La/JKP	
Lithuania	≥5	LDDP/ TS/LKDP/ LSDP	TS/LKDP/ LDDP/LCS/ LSDP	LDDP-LSDP- LRS-NDP/ NS/LLS/TS	DP/LSdP-NS TS/TT LiCS/LVZS	TS/PPP/TT LSdP/DP/LS LiCS	LSdP/TS/ DPTT/LS/ LLRA/DK		
	<5 ≥3	JL	JL/NDP/ KDS/LLRA	KDS/LVZS/ LKDP	LLRA	LLRA/LVZS/ NS/FP	LVZS		
	<3 ≥0.5	LCS/LLRA/LTS-NP/ LLS/LLL/TPJ/ NJ/VPJST	LTMA/LTS/ LLS/LVZS/LRS / LPKTS/LLaS/ LUP/LLL/ LSTS/LSP	LCS/KKSS/ LLRA/LLS- UTL/ LLaS/JL/LTS/ LPSD“2000”	KKSS/LKD/ NCP	JL/PDP/ LRS/LSDS LCP	LiCS/TAIP/ SPF/KP/ ULL/JL		
Montenegro	(Yes) ⁴	DPS-SDP/ SNP/NSD/PzP	DPS-SDP/NSD-PzP SNP/PCG/BS						
	(No)	NS-DSS/LPCG/ SPICG/SNL-SSR/ BMZJ/OSS/SKCG	NS-SNL-OSS/ SSR-DSS/UDSH						
Poland	≥5	UD/SLD/ZChN/PC/ PSL/KPN/KLD/PL/S	SLD/PSL/ UD/UP/ KPN/BBWR	AWS/SLD/ PD/PSL/ ROP	SLD-UP PO/PiS SO/LPR	PiS/PO/ SO/SLD/ LPR/PSL	PO/PiS/PSL/ SLD-SdPL-PD	PO/PiS/ RP/PSL/ SLD	PiS/PO/K'15 .N/ZL/ PSL
	<5 ≥3	PPPP	ZChN/S/PC/ KLD/UPR	UP	AWSP ⁵ PD	SdPL-UP			KORWiN Razem
	<3 ≥0.5	ChDSP/UPR/SP/SD/ PCD/PPEZ/ZP/PW/ SN/PPE/X/RDS	SO/X/ RdR/PL	KPEiR/UPR/ KPEiRRP/Bd P		PD/UPR/ RPRP/PPP	SO/LPR/ PPP	PJN/KNP/ PPP	

³ Although entitled to state subsidies, the party dissolved itself on December 1st 2011, just one month ahead of the first payment (January 15th, 2012).

⁴ 3% threshold does not apply to ethnic minorities

⁵ It was an electoral coalition.

Romania	≥ 5	<i>PNTCD-PNL/PDSR/ PSDR-PDL/UDMR/ PUNR/PRM</i>	<i>PDSR-PSDR-PC/ PRM/PDL/PNL/ UDMR/PNTCD</i>	<i>PSD-PC/ PNL-PDL/ PRM/UDMR</i>	<i>PSD-PC PDL/PNL UDMR</i>	<i>PSD-UNPR/ PNL-PC PDL-FC- PNTCD (II) PP- DD/UDMR</i>			
	$<5/\geq 4$		<i>ApR</i>						
	$<4/\geq 2$	<i>PS/PSM</i>		<i>PNG</i>	<i>PRM/PNG</i>				
	<2 ≥ 0.5	<i>PSMR/ANL/PPR/ UNC/PNT/ANLE/ Pro/UR/PNDC/PNA</i>	<i>PNLC/PUNR/ PER/PSM/PPR/ Pro/PMR/PLDR/PNT</i>	<i>PNTCD/FDR/ PER/Pro/ PUNR/AP</i>	<i>Pro</i>	<i>PRM/ PER</i>			
Serbia	$\geq 5^6$	<i>SRS/DSS/DS/G17+-SDP SPO-NS/SPS</i>	<i>SRS/DS/DSS- NS/G17+/ SPS/LDP-GSS-DHSS</i>	<i>DS-G17+- SdPS-SPO/ SRS/DSS-NS/ SPS-PUPS- US/LDP- DHSS</i>	<i>SNS-NS-PS-PSS/DS- SdPS-DHSS/SPS- PUPS/DSS/LDP- SPO/G17+</i>	<i>SNS-SdPS-NS- SPO-PS/SPS- PUPS/DS/ND/ S-ZZS</i>			
	<5 ≥ 0.5	<i>DA/SSJ-NSS/O DHSS/"SPP"/LS "RSDPV"/SD</i>	<i>SPO-NSS/PUPS-SDP- "SPP"/PSS</i>	<i>PSS</i>	<i>SRS/PD/ "MWP"/"CP"</i>	<i>DSS/PD/LDP/ G17+/DjB/ SRS/TS</i>			
Slovakia	≥ 5	<i>HZDS SDL'/KDH SNS/MK</i>	<i>HZDS/ SDL'-SDSS-SZS/MK KDH/DÚ/ZRS/SNS</i>	<i>HZDS/SDK/ SDL'/SMK/ SNS/SOP</i>	<i>HZDS/SDKÚ/ Smer/SMK/ KDH/ANO/KSS</i>	<i>Smer/SDKÚ/ SNS/SMK/ HZDS/KDH</i>	<i>Smer/SDKÚ/ SaS/KDH/ Most/SNS</i>	<i>Smer/KDH/ OLaNO/Most/ SDKÚ/SaS</i>	
	$<5-\geq 3$	<i>ODÚ/SDSS/DS/KSU</i>	<i>DS</i>		<i>PSNS/SNS/HZD</i>	<i>KSS/SF</i>	<i>SMK/HZDS</i>	<i>SNS/SMK</i>	
	<3 ≥ 0.5	<i>MPP/SZS SZ/SPI KSS/ROI</i>	<i>KSS/KSÚ/ NS/SPK/ HZPCS/ROI</i>	<i>KSS/ZRSNS</i>	<i>SDA/SDL'/ SZS/ NOSNP/ZRS</i>	<i>ANO/HZD/ Nádej</i>	<i>SdL'/LSNS/ KSS/USPS/ VPS</i>	<i>99%/LSNS/ ZZ/SSS/HZD SKSS/NaS</i>	
Slovenia	≥ 4	<i>LDS/SKD SD/SNS SLS/DSS</i>	<i>LDS/SLS/ SDS/SKD/ SD/DeSUS/ SNS</i>	<i>LDS/SDS/ SD/SLS-SKD/ NSi/DeSUS/ SNS/SMS</i>	<i>SDS/LDS/ SD/NSi/ SLS/SNS/ DeSUS</i>	<i>SD/SDS/ Zares/DeSUS/ SNS/SLS- SMS/LDS</i>	<i>PS/SDS/SD/ DL/DeSUS/ SLS/NSi</i>	<i>SMC/SDS/ DeSUS/SD/ ZL/NSi/ZaAB</i>	
	$<4-\geq 3.2$	<i>ZS/SDS</i>				<i>NSi/ Lipa</i>		<i>SLS/ PS/SNS/</i>	
	<3.2	<i>SSS/ND/SOPS/LS</i>	<i>DSS/ZS/</i>		<i>AS/SJN/</i>		<i>SNS/LDS/</i>		

⁶ Ethnic minority parties are excluded.

	≥ 1	LDSS/SN/KS	SOPS/SF		SMS		TRS	PSS	
	<1 ≥ 0.5	ZZP/Demos SDKS/SEG GOD/Smer/RZS	LS/NSD/ZA/ RZS/KPS/KSU	ZS/DSS/NS	JL/ZS/ PS/GZS	LPR/ZS/ KDS	SMS/Zares/ DSD	VERJAMEM/ DL/ZS	
Ukraine	≥ 5	PR/VoB NU/SPU KPU	PR/VoB-PVS/ NU-PZV/KPU/ NP	PR/VoB-PVS/ UDAR/KPU/ VOS	PF/BPP/S/O/ RP/VoB				
	$<5-\geq 3$				VOS/KPU/SU/GP				
	<3 ≥ 1	PSPU/NP/PRiP B/PVS/SDPU (o)/PV	SPU/PSPU	UV!/NU/RP	Z/PS				
	$<1-\geq 0.5$	PZV/PZU/PDP/EKO	VOS	SPU/PPU	SzU				

Sources: Nohlen and Stöver (2010), Rose and Munro (2009).

Party acronyms (in alphabetic order):

Bulgaria: ABV = Alternative for Bulgarian Revival; BBB =Bulgarian Business Block; BbC = Bulgaria without Censorship; BBP=Bulgarian Business Party; BESDP = United Social-Democrats; BKhK= Bulgarian Christian Coalition; BKP=Bulgarian Communist Party; BLE/UB=Bulgarian Euroleft, BNRP=Bulgarian National Radical Party; BNS= Bulgarian People’s Union; BSP= Bulgarian Socialist Party; BZNS(U)=Bulgarian Agrarian National Union–United; BZNS(NP) = Bulgarian Agrarian National Union–“Nikola Petkov”; BZNS(NS) Bulgarian Agrarian National Union (Naroden Sayuz); D21 = Movement 21; DAR= Democratic Alternative for the Republic; DBG = Bulgaria for Citizens Movement; DP=Democratic Party; DPS= Movement for Rights and Freedoms; DPSpr= Democratic Party of Justice; DSB= Democrats for a Strong Bulgaria; E=Evroroma; EvroLev =Euroleft; FAGO = Federation for an Active Civil Society ; GERB=Citizens for European Development of Bulgaria; IMRO = IMRO-Bulgarian National Movement; KnR=Coalition of the Rose; KSII=Alliance “Simeon II”; KTB = Kingdom of Bulgaria Federation; KTKS= “Freedom” Coalition for the Turnovo Constitution; NA = New Alternative; NDKDTsB=Kingdom of Bulgaria National Movement for Crowned Democracy; NDSV= National Movement Simeon the Second; NFSB = National Front for the Salvation of Bulgaria; NOTsSII =National Union for Tzar Simeon II; NPSD = People’s Party “Freedom and Dignity”; NSTK= Alliance “National Union Tzar Kiro”; NUF-L = Natioal Union fatherland and Left ; NV=New Time; OT=Alliance for the King; PFP= Political Transformation Forum; PROUD = Proud Bulgaria; PS =Patriotic Union; PV = People’s Voice; RZS = Order, Law and Justice; SDS= Union of Democratic Forces; SDS(C)=Union of Democratic Forces–Centre; SDS(L) = Union of Democratic Forces–Liberals; SMSTsB= Kingdom of Bulgaria Union of Monarchist Forces; SNI= New Choice Union; VMRO-G=Gergiovden-VMRO.

Croatia: ADSh = Social Democratic Action of Croatia; B365 = Milan Bandić 365-The Party Of Labout and Solidarity; BUZ = Bloc Pensioners Together; DC = Democratic Centre; DPZS = Democratic Prigorje-Zagreb Party; DSU = Democratic Party of Pensioners; HCSP = Croatian Pure Party of Rights; HDC = Croatian Democratic Centre; HDSS = Croatian Democratic Peasant Party; HDSSiB = Croatian Democratic Assembly of Slavonia and Baranja; HDZ = Croatian Democratic Union; HGS = Croatian Citizen Party; HKDU = Croatian Christian Democratic Union; HKS = Croatian Conservative Party; HLSR = Croatian Labourists-Labour Party; HNS = Croatian People’s Party; HPS = Croatian People’s Party; Hrast = Croatian Growth; HRS = Croatian Labour Party; HSLS = Croatian Social Liberal Party; HSP = Croatian Party of Rights; HSp = Croatian Party of Rights dr. Ante Starcevic HSP’1861 = Croatian Party of Rights 1861; HSS = Croatian Peasant Party; HSU = Croatian Party of Pensioners; IDS = Istrian Democratic Assembly; Libra = Party of Liberal Democrats; LS = Liberal Party; MOST = Bridge of Independent Lists; MS = Medimurje Party; NH = New Croatia; NLIG = Independent list Ivan Grubisic; NS = People’s Party-Reformists; ORaH = Sustainable Development of Croatia; OS = Family Party; PGS = Alliance of Primorje-Gorski Kotar; SBHS = Slavonia-Baranja Croatian Party; SDSS = Independent Democratic Serbian Party; SDP = Social Democratic Party; SNS = Serb People’s Party; SP = Pensioners’ Party; UiO = In the Name of the Family; ZDS = Zagorje Democratic Party; ZS = Zagorje Party; Zs = Green Party; ZZ = Human Blockade.

Czech Republic: ANO = Action of Dissatisfied Citizens; CMUS = Czech Moravian Union of the Centre; CPS = Czech Pirate Party; CSNS = Czech National Socialist Party; CSSD = Czech Social Democratic Party; D92 = Democrats 92 for Unified Country; DEU = Democratic Union; DSSS = Worker’s Party of Social Justice; DZJ = Movement of Pensioners for Social Guarantees;

HSD = Movement for Self-Governing Democracy-Society for Moravia and Silesia; HSS = Movement for Social Justice; KAN = Club of Active Non-partisans; KDU/CSL = Christian and Democratic Union/Czechoslovak People's Party; KSCM = Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia; LB = Left Bloc; LSU = Liberal Social Union; N = Hope; ND = Independent Democrats; NzI = Independent Initiative; ODA = Civic Democratic Alliance; ODS = Civic Democratic Party; PB = Bloc of the Right; RMS (SPR-RSC) = Republicans of Miroslav Sladek; SCPZR = Party of Czechoslovak Entrepreneurs, Small Business, and Farmers; SD (OH) = Free Democrats; SNK = Union of Independents-European Democrats; SPP = Friends of Beer Party; SSO = Party of Free Citizens; Suv. = Sovereignty; SV = Rural Party; SZ = Green Party; SZR = Common Sense Party; TOP 09 = Tradition Responsibility Prosperity 09; US = Freedom Union; ÚSVIT = Dawn of Direct Democracy; VV = Public Affairs; Zmena = Political Change Movement.

Estonia: E = People's Party (VKRP+ETRE); EEE = Estonian Entrepreneurs' Party; EEKD = Party of Estonian Christian Democrats; EIP (TEE) = Estonian Independence Party; EIL = Estonian Disabled Societies' Union; Ek = Estonian Coalition Party; EK = Estonian Centre Party; EKRE = Conservative People's Party; EPL = Estonian Pensioners' and Families League; EER = Estonian Greens; ER = Estonian Reform party; ERKL = Estonian Nationalist Central League; ERL (EME) = People's Union of Estonia; ERSP = Estonian National Independence Party; ESE = Estonian Blue Party; ETRE = Estonian Farmers' Party; EÜR = Estonian United People's Party; EV = Free Party; EVP = Estonian Left Party; I = Pro Patria Union; IresPL = Union of Pro Patria and Res Publica; K = Constitutional Party; KMÜ = Coalition Party and Rural Union; Metsa = Forest Party; NJ = Fourth Force; ÖRRE = National Party of the Illegally Repressed; PEEK = Better Estonia and Estonian Citizen; PK = Farmers' Assembly; ResP = Union for the Republic: Res Publica; SDE (M) = Social Democratic Party; SK = Independent Royalist Party of Estonia; VEE = Russian Party in Estonia; VKRP = Right-Wingers' Party

Hungary: ASZ = Agrarian Alliance; C = Centre Party; CM = Civic Movement; DK = Democratic Coalition; E = Together 2014; EKgP = United Smallholders' Party; Fidesz = Federation of Young Democrats; FKgP = Independent Party of Smallholders; HNEM = Homeland Not for Sale Movement Party; HVK = Patriotic Election Coalition; Jobbik = Movement for a Better Hungary; KDNP = Christian Democratic People's Party; KP = Party of the Republic; L = Hungarian Liberal Party; LPM = Politics Can Be Different; MDF = Hungarian Democratic Forum; MDNP = Hungarian Democratic People's Party; *MIÉP* = Hungarian Justice and Life Party; MNP = Hungarian People's Party; MKM = Hungarian Communist Workers' Party; MSZP = Hungarian Socialist Party; MSZDP = Social Democratic Party of Hungary; NDSZ = National Democratic Alliance; PM = Dialogue for Hungary; SZDSZ = Alliance of Free Democrats; VP = Party of Entrepreneurs; USZ = New Alliance for Hungary

Latvia: DP = Workers' Party; DPS = Democratic Party "Saimnieks"; JD = New Democrats; JKP = New Conservative Party; JP = New Party; KP = Russian Party; L = Equal Rights; La = Latvian Development; LAP = Latvian Revival Party; LB = For Freedom in Latvia; LC = Latvian Way; LDDP = Latvian Democratic Labour Party; LDP = Latvian Democratic Party; LG = Life of Latgale; LgDP = Latgale Democratic Party; LKDS = Latvian Christian Democratic Union; LKPP = Party of Russian Citizens of Latvia; LNNK = Latvian National Conservative Party; LNP = Latvian Independence Party; LSDSP = Latvian Social Democratic Workers' Party; LTF = Latvia's Popular Front; LVP = Latvian Unity Party; Latvian Unity Party; LSP = Latvian Socialist Party; LZP = Latvian Green Party; LZS = Latvian Farmers' Union; LZs= Union of Latvian Farmers; MPA = Political Association of the Underprivileged; MZ = Party Our Land; Mz = Mara's Land; NA = National Alliance; NPP = National Progress Party; NsL = For Latvia from the Heart; PA = Anti-communist Union; PCTVL = For Human Rights in a United Latvia; PP = Last Party; PPR = For a Presidential Republic; PSP = Pensioners' and Seniors' Party; RL = Made in Latvia; SC = Harmony Centre; SDS = Social-Democratic Union; SDLP = Social-Democratic Welfare Party; T = Party for the Defence of Latvia's Defrauded People "Justice"; TB = For Fatherland and Freedom; TKL = People's Movement for Latvia; TP = Popular Party; TPA = Political Union of Economists; TSP = National Harmony Party; V = Unity; VL = All for Latvia!; VL2 = All for Latvia; ZS = Green and Farmers Union.

Lithuania: DP = Labour Party; FP = "Frontas" Party; JL = "Young Lithuanians"; KDS = Christian Democratic Union; KKSS (NKS) = Christian Conservative Social Union; LiCS = Liberal and Centre Union; LCS (LCJ) = Lithuanian Centre Union; LKD = Lithuanian Christian Democrats; LKDP = Lithuanian Christian Democratic Party; LLaS = Lithuanian Liberty Union; LLL = Lithuanian Freedom League; LLRA = Electoral Action for Lithuania's Poles; LLS = Lithuanian Liberal Union; LLS-UTL = Lithuanian People's Union for a Fair Lithuania; LPKTS = Union of Political Prisoners and Deportees; LRa = Latvian Association of Regions; LRS = Lithuanian Russian Union; LS = Liberal Movement; LSDP = Lithuanian Social Democratic Party; LSdP = Social Democratic Party of Lithuania; LSTS = Lithuanian Social Justice Union; LTMA = Alliance of Lithuania's Ethnic Minorities; LTS = Lithuanian National Union; LUP = Lithuanian Economic Party; LVZS (VNDPS, LVP)= Lithuanian Peasant and Green Union; NDP (LMP)= Party of New Democracy; NJ = Moderates' Movement; NS = New Union-Social Liberals; PDP = Party of Civic Democracy; TPJ = National Progress Movement; TPP = Nation's Resurrection Party; TS-LKD (LPS+LKP) = Homeland Union-Lithuanian Christian Democrats; TT = For Order and Justice; VPJST = Social-Political Movement for Social Justice.

Montenegro: BMZJ = Bosniacs and Muslims Together, as One; BS = Bosniak Party; DPS = Democratic Party of Socialists of Montenegro; DSS = Democratic Serb Party; LPCG = Liberals' Party; NS = People's Party; NSD = New Serbian Democracy; OSS = Fatherland Serbian Party; PCG = Positive Montenegro; PzP = Movement for Changes; SDP = Social Democratic Party of Montenegro; SKCG = League of Communist of Montenegro; SNL = Serbian National List; SNP = Socialist People's Party of Montenegro; SPICG = Party of Pensioners and Disable People of Montenegro; SSR = Party of Serb Radicals; UDSH = Democratic Union of Albanians.

Poland: AWS = Solidarity Electoral Action; BBWR = Non-Partisan Bloc in Support of Reforms; BdP = Bloc for Poland; ChDSP = Christian Democratic Labour Party; KLD = Liberal Democratic Congress; KNP = Congress of the New Right; KORWiN = Coalition for the Renewal of the Republic-Liberal and Hope; KPEiR = National Party of the Retired and Pensioners; KPEiRRP = National Alliance of the Retired and Pensioners of the Polish Republic; KPN = Confederation for an Independent Poland; K'15 = Kukiz'15; LPR = League of Polish Families; .N= Modern; PC = Centre Alliance; PCD = Christian Democratic Party; PD (UW) = Democratic Party; PiS = Law and Justice; PJN = Poland Comes First; PL = Peasant Alliance; PO = Civic Platform; PPP = Polish Labour Party; PPPP = Polish Beer-Lovers' Party; PSL = Polish Peasant Party; PW = Freedom Party; PPE = Polish Ecology and Polish Green Party; PPEZ = Polish Ecology Party-Greens; Razem = Together; RdR = Movement for the Republic; RDS = Democratic Social Movement; ROP = Movement for the Reconstruction of Poland; RPRP = Patriotic Movement of the Polish Republic; "S" = Solidarity; SD = Democratic Party; SdPL = Social Democracy of Poland; SLD = Democratic Left Alliance; SN = Nationalist Party; SO = Self-Defence of the Republic of Poland; SP = Labour Solidarity; UD = Democratic Union; UP = Union of Labour; UPR = Realpolitik Union; "X" = Party X; ZChN= Christian National Union; ZL = United Left; ZP = Healthy Poland.

Romania: ANL = National Liberal Alliance; ANLE = National Liberal Ecologist Alliance; AP = Popular Action Party; ApR = Alliance for Romania; FC = Civic Force; FDR = Party of Democratic Force of Romania; PC (PUR) = Conservative Party; PDL = Democratic Liberal Party; PDSR = Social Democratic Party of Romania; PER = Romanian Ecologist Party; PLDR = Romanian Liberal Democratic Party; PMR = Romanian Working Party; PNA = National Party of Motorists; PNDC = National Democratic Christian Party; PNG = Party of the New Generation-Christian Democrat; PNL = National Liberal Party; PNLC = National Liberal Party-Campeanu; PNT = National Peasant Party; PNTCD = Christian Democratic National Peasants' Party; ; PNTCD (II) = Christian Democratic National Peasants' Party (Pavelescu's fraction); PP-DD = People's Party-Dan Diaconescu; PPR = Pensioners' Party in Romania; PRo = Roma Party; PRM = Greater Romania Party; PS = Socialist Party; PSD = Social Democratic Party; PSM = Socialist Labour Party; PSMR = Romanian Socialist Workers' Party; PSDR = Romanian Socialist Democratic Party; PUNR = Romanian National Unity Party; UDMR = Democratic Union of Hungarians in Romania; UNC = National Union of the Centre; UNPR = National Union for the Progress of Romania; UR = Roma Union.

Serbia: "CP" = Communist Party; DA = Democratic Alternative; DHSS = Christian Democratic Party of Serbia; DjB = Enough of That; DOS = Democratic Opposition of Serbia; DS = Democratic Party; DSS = Democratic Party of Serbia; "D&J"= ; G17+ = G17 Plus; LDP = Liberal Democratic Party; LS = Liberals of Serbia; "MWP" = Movement of Workers and Peasants; NDS = New Democratic Party; NS = New Serbia; NSS = People's Peasant Party; O = Resistance; PD = Dveri Movement; PSS = Serbian Strength Movement; PUPS = Party of United Pensioners of Serbia; RSDPV = Reformist -of the Social Democratic Party of Vojvodina-of Serbia; SD = Social Democracy; SDP = Social Democratic Party of Serbia; SPO = Serbian Renewal Movement; "SPP" = Socialist People's Party; SPS = Socialist Party of Serbia; SRS = Serbian Radical Party; SSJ = Party of Serbian Unity; TS = Third Party; ZZS = Together for Serbia.

Slovakia: ANO = Alliance of the New Citizen; DS = Democratic Party; DÚ = Democratic Union of Slovakia; KDH = Christian Democratic Movement; HZD = Movement for Democracy; HZDS = People's Party-Movement for a Democratic Slovakia; HZPCS = Movement for a Prosperous Czechia and Slovakia; KSS = Communist Party of Slovakia; KSU (SKDH) = Christian Social Union; LSNS = People's Party-Our Slovakia; MKDH-ESWS = Hungarian Christian Democratic Movement-Coexistence; Most = Bridge; MPP-MOS = Hungarian Civic Party; Nádej = Hope; NaS = Nation and Justice-Our Party; NOSNP = Independent Civic Party of the Unemployed and Injured; NS = New Slovakia; ODÚ = Civic Democratic Union; OLaNO = Ordinary People and Independent Personalities; PSNS = Real Slovak National Party; ROI = Roma Civic Initiative; SaS = Freedom and Solidarity; SDA = Social Democratic Alternative; SDK = Slovak Democratic Coalition; SDKÚ = Slovak Democratic and Christian Union-Democratic Party; SDL' = Party of the Democratic Left; SdL' = Party of the Democratic Left (2005); SDSS = Social Democratic Party in Slovakia; SF = Free Forum; Smer = Direction-Social Democracy; SMK = Hungarian Coalition; SNS = Slovak National Party; SOP = Party of Civic Understanding; SPK = Party Against Corruption, for Order, Work and Money for All Decent Citizens; SSS = Free Word Party of Nora Mojsejová; SZ = Green Party; SZS = Green Party in Slovakia; USPS = Union-Party for Slovakia; VPS = Cheerful Political Party; ZRS = Association of Workers of Slovakia; ZZ = Change from the Bottom; 99% = 99 Percent-Civic Voice.

Slovenia: AS = Active Slovenia; Demos = Demos; DeSUS = Democratic Party of Pensioners; DL = Civic List; DSS= Democratic Party; GOD = Movement for Democracy; GZS = Women’s Voice of Slovenia; JL = The June List; KDS = Christian Democratic Party; KPS = Slovenian Communist Party; KS = Christian Socialists; KSU = Christian Social Union; LDS = Liberal Democracy; LDSS = Liberal Democratic Party; Lipa = Lime Tree; LPR = List for Justice and Development; LS = Liberal Party; ND = National Democrats; NS = New Party; NSD = National Labour Party; NSi = New Slovenia-Christian People; PS = For Enterprising Slovenia; PSS = Slovenian Pirate Party; RZS = Republican Party of Slovenia; SD = Social Democrats; SDKS = Stajerska Christian Democratic Party; SDS = Slovenian Democratic Party; SEG = Party of Ecological Movement of Slovenia; SF = Slovenian Forum; SJN = Slovenia is Ours; SKD = Slovenian Christian Democrats; SLS = Slovenian People’s Party; SMC = Party of Miro Cerar; SMS = Party of Slovenian Youth; Smer = Direction; SN = Party of Independents; SNS = Slovenian National Party; SOPS = Party of Small Entrepreneurs; SSN = Party of Slovenian People; SSS = Socialist Party; VERJAMEM = Verjamem; Zares = For Real; ZaAB = Alliance of Alenka Bratusek; ZA = Green Alternative of Slovenia; ZL = United Left; ZS = Greens; ZZZP = Association for Primorska.

Ukraine: BPP = Petro Poroshenko Bloc; EKO = Party of Environmental Help “EKO+25%”; GP = Civil Position; KPU = Communist Party of Ukraine; NP = People’s Party; NU = Our Ukraine; O = Opposition Bloc; PDP = People’s Democratic Party; PF = People’s Front; PPU = Party of Pensioners of Ukraine; PR = Party of Regions; PRiP = Party of Free Peasants and Entrepreneurs of Ukraine; PS = Right Sector; PSPU = Progressive Socialist Party of Ukraine; PV = Party Revival; PVS = Reforms and Order Party; PZU = Party of Greens of Ukraine; PZV = Motherland Defenders Party; RP = Radical Party; S = Self Reliance Party; SDPU (o) = Social Democratic Party of Ukraine (united); SPU = Socialist Party of Ukraine; SU = Strong Ukraine; SzU = Solidarity of Women of Ukraine; UDAR = Ukrainian Democratic Alliance for Reform; UV! = Ukraine, Forward!; V = Viche; VoB = All-Ukrainian Union “Fatherland”; VOS = All-Ukrainian Union “Freedom”; Z = Zastup.

Table B. Survival rate (in %) of political parties above and below the electoral threshold

Country	Above ET	2 nd election	3 rd election	4 th election	5 th election	6 th election	7 th election	8 th election
<i>Bulgaria</i>	Yes	-	-	-		75	71,2	83,3
	No	33	90	87.5	100	57.1	40	66
<i>Croatia</i>	Yes	83.3	76.9	100	83.3			
	No	0	20	20	75			
<i>Czech R.</i>	Yes	75	83.3	100	100	100	80	
	No	25	66.7	75	42.9	50	87.5	
<i>Estonia</i>	Yes	87.5	90.9	85.7	100	100	83.3	
	No	57.1	42.9	50	100	50	0	
<i>Hungary</i>	Yes	100	100	100	100	100	100	
	No	66.7	62.5	60	75	100	50	
<i>Latvia</i>	Yes	100	77.8	100	100	85.7	100	
	No	27.3	66.7	80	70	66.7	33.3	
<i>Lithuania</i>	Yes	100	100	85.7	100	85.7		
	No	66.7	60	72.7	25	55.6		

<i>Montenegro</i>	Yes	100						
	No	88.9						
<i>Poland</i>	Yes	100	100	80	100	100	83.3	100
	No	33.3	88.9	40	50	66.7	66.7	66.7
<i>Romania</i>	Yes	100	100	100	100			
	No	33.3	30	28.6	66.7			
<i>Serbia</i>	Yes	100	88.9	100	84.6			
	No	33.3	50	100	50			
<i>Slovakia</i>	Yes	100	100	83.3	100	100	100	
	No	70	42.9	66.7	37.5	60	85.7	
<i>Slovenia</i>	Yes	100	100	100	100	100	100	
	No	35.7	30	66.7	28.6	40	50	
<i>Ukraine</i>	Yes	100	85.7	66.7				
	No	72.7	66.7	60				

Note: ET = electoral threshold.

Table C. Payout threshold changes and party system development in post-communist Europe

Country	Electoral period	Payout Threshold	TEV	NNP*	TNP	NWP	SPVS
Czech R.	1992	2%	-	-	16	8	19.1
	1996-1998	3%	22.1	2.5	10	5.5	11.3
	2002-2013	1.5%	26	4	11.8	5.3	12.5
Estonia	1999-2003	5%	28.5	2.5	10	6.5	6.7
	2007-2015	1%	16.3	1	8	5.3	5.2
Poland	1993	5%	28.9	4	15	6	28.1
	1997-2015	3%	25.3	3.2	8.7	5.2	7.7
Romania	1996-2000	2%	32.5	5	17	5.5	23.5
	2004-2012	4%	17.8	2	8.7	4	9.5
Slovenia	1996	3.2%	25.1	5	17	7	18.9
	2000-2014	1%	31.3	4.2	12.8	7.2	13

* Mergers and electoral coalitions excluded.