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Political Parties after 1989



- ❧ Origins of parties:
- ❧ Historical parties (a continuity with pre-Communist time subjects)
- ❧ Parties emerging as a result of transition to democracy and regime change
- ❧ parties with a continuity with the communist-time subjects
- ❧ parties originating from the dynamics of the post-Communist development

Party Mobilization Strategies after 1989



- ☞ a strategy of pre-communist ideology and identity (ethnic, Christian-Democratic)
- ☞ a strategy of a left-right competition
- ☞ radicalism of the extreme right (and left)
- ☞ what accounts for differentiated party development in the region?
- ☞ structural, interactional and other explanations

Historical Structural Explanations

∞ H. Kitschelt:

∞ incomplete modernization before communism AND forced modernization of the Communist period led to preservation of various populist, rural and conservative elements in society (POL and HUN)

∞ initially a division of the right into the liberal and conservative streams (the left, the liberal right and the conservative right)

Historical Structural Explanations

☞ in contrast, a completed pre-Communist modernization AND an effective bureaucratic-authoritarian Communism led to creation of a dominant liberal-conservative right in the Czech case

☞ a low degree of pre-communist modernization AND clientelist type of Communism and, after 1989, to a merger of nationalism and economic populism (Communist-successor parties)

Strategic Interactions



- ✧ Vachudova: nature of the political right after 1989 depended on the character of the anti-Communist opposition before 1989
- ✧ a weak opposition (SVK, RUM, BUL, CRO) resulted in weak and moderate right
- ✧ domination of parties that combined nationalism and economic populism (post-communists or nationalists)

The New Issues



- ✧ macrostructural explanations cannot explain the strength, success and unity/cohesion of political parties; deterministic and static
- ✧ the key parties went through far-reaching transformations and adaptations (transformation of Fidesz and the collapse of the left in POL and HUN, gradual fragmentation of the party-political scene)
- ✧ post-Communist dynamics increasingly important

The New Issues



- ❧ **Culture:** respect for norms of religion and moral authority (abortion, LGBT+ rights, a free choice of lifestyle and morals), taken up by the far right
- ❧ **Democracy:** authoritarian vs. prodemocratic forces, support for a “firm political hand”
- ❧ **Corruption:** The use of state resources for private gain - a host of antiestablishment anticorruption parties
- ❧ **Populism:** rejection of elites on behalf of “virtuous people”, often (but not necessarily) far right parties, e.g. (technocratic) populism

Party and State before 1989



- ✧ the communist party either existed as the sole party (USSR, GDR, BUL, ...)
- ✧ or as a hegemonic party, a small number of other parties permitted (POL, CS)
- ✧ the party controlled the state apparatus by the so-called nomenclature system
- ✧ the party controlled the state but also the economy and society (state-owned companies, positive sanctions of a pro-regime organizations)

Party and State before 1989



- ∞ strong links and potential for exploitation remain:
- ∞ a degree of dependence of parties on the state funding
- ∞ a degree of control the state has over parties (legal regulations, constitutionalization etc.)
- ∞ a degree of party control over the state (patronage, clientelism, corruption)

Interest Organizations before 1989



- ☞ the party used the state to control society
- ☞ Communist societies were highly organized (several exclusive “societal organizations” with a *de facto* compulsory membership)
- ☞ independent associational activities were prohibited and sanctioned
- ☞ umbrella-type of organizing principle (“the front”) containing the communist party, other parties, trade unions, cultural and sport organizations etc.

Trade Unions in Communism



- ✧ an important part of ideological legitimacy of the regime
- ✧ served as transmission belts in transferring and implementing party decisions onto society
- ✧ anti-regime opposition in the 1980s often used the trade union strategy as an organizing principle:
- ✧ Solidarity (POL), Podkrepa (BUL) and Independent Trade Unions (HUN)

Tripartite structures

- ✧ tripartite structures emerged in many countries in the early 1990s
- ✧ a mechanism to coordinate industrial policy making (the government, trade unions, the employers)
- ✧ largely a symbolic access to decision making
- ✧ some argue tripartite arrangements served as a formal tool to provide legitimacy to the governments pursuing large-scale transformations

The weakness of trade unions

- ❧ governments (left and right) sought to minimize the impact of the tripartite deals and negotiations
- ❧ frequent interruptions of the “social dialogue”
- ❧ weak social identification of the employees?
- ❧ pro-capitalist atmosphere of the 1990s?
- ❧ low interest of trade union members, defeatism

Civil Society in CEE



- ∞ comparative data indicate a low degree of membership in voluntary (non-profit) and protest activities in the region
- ∞ it is lower compared to Western European averages but also when compared to other countries of the third wave of democratization (Southern Europe, Latin America)
- ∞ does not mean that civil society emerged in the CEE only after 1989 nor it means it is politically and socially irrelevant

Civil Society in CEE



- ☞ behind the facade of a single communist regime, one could see enormous differences between the countries
- ☞ the existence of an institutionalized sphere of associations and organizations controlled by the regime (not just trade unions but also professional and interest associations etc.
- ☞ during communism it was a strongly centralized, bureaucratized and politicized field
- ☞ over time, clear differences between POL and HUN vs. CS, ROM and GDR

Differences before 1989



- ✧ POL: frequent protests and resistance of society (workers, students, peasants, the Catholic church)
- ✧ culminated in 1980 – the Solidarity Movement, resurfaced in 1988-89
- ✧ influential and relatively autonomous Catholic Church
- ✧ HUN – a similar vibrant protest initiatives, a strategy of co-optation somewhat more successful

Differences before 1989



- ✧ lower number of dissidents in CS, Slovenia and the Baltics – smaller political, religious and cultural initiatives
- ✧ after 1989, many of the pro-regime organizations lost members, changed their leadership and names but kept some of their resources
- ✧ the fall of communism brought about an organizational revolution – many charities, non-governmental organizations and foundations emerged

Differences after 1989



- enormous differences between democratic regimes and hybrid/autocratic regimes in:
- the number of organizations
- their legal regulations
- in the latter, organizations inherited from the communist era often dominate
- “new” civil society often based on a “dissent principle” – protests and social movements emerge as a reaction to the regime breaking violating the norms

Differences after 1989



- ❧ **strong autocratic regimes** (BEL, TUR, UZB, RUS) attempts to eliminate any activities of autonomous organizations
- ❧ **less authorit/hybrid regimes:** marginalization of some types of organizations, strong restrictions on the NGOs, subsidies for pro-regime organizations (some of them inherited from Communism)
- ❧ **democracies:** legal framework and activities similar to Western Europe

Differences after 1989



- ∞ the real indicators of the strength of civil society are not the membership numbers but the influence such organizations have on policy making
- ∞ there are differences in attitudes civil society organizations have toward the state institutions: cooperation or protests?
- ∞ a growth of a new ideological type of civil society organizations: uncivil society

Two types of activism



- ✧ **participatory activism:** potential and actual participation in civic activities (interest organization activities, election participation)
- ✧ **transactional activism:** semi-permanent links among various non-state organized actors, and their interactions with political and institutional actors
- ✧ when we look at the latter, we find richer and more numerous mixture of activities

Transactional activism



- based on coalition-building among small professional organizations, aimed at gaining strategic positions vis-a-vis the state power
- it is well equipped to put checks on the state power and does not attest to a society of isolated, passive and alienated citizens
- however, it cannot support its claims by claiming legitimacy derived from citizens, the fact that weakens its leverage