

Central European University

The Influence of European Integration on Party and Party System Development in East European Neighborhood

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fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

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*I hereby declare that this work contains no materials accepted for any other degrees in
any other institutions. This thesis contains no materials previously written and/or
published by another person, unless otherwise noted.*

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Summary

The dissertation represents an important scholarly contribution to three strands of theoretical debate: EU democracy promotion, the institutionalization of post-communist parties and party systems, and the special case of the Europeanization of party politics and party systems. It addresses the existing theoretical debates on the influence of European integration on party and party system change and aims at exploring the nature and the extent of EU involvement in domestic political transformation within East European Neighborhood (Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia).

By contrast to the majority of studies on Europeanization of party politics, it advances a theoretical framework that combines IR and CP approaches in order to provide a more careful consideration of EU influence outside its borders. The model is based on two major variables from the European and the domestic levels, as identified in the existing literature: the type of EU involvement (direct versus indirect) and the degree of freedom of domestic political elite in transforming according to EU standards and requirements. While the degree of clarity of EU stipulations and the material incentives are considered as intervening variables that determine the type and the extent of EU leverage, the number of internal veto players, party strategic behavior, and party-government relation are argued to be the major domestic level intervening factors that define the degree of freedom of political elite.

The empirical findings show that European Union can exercise both direct and indirect influence outside its borders. Brussels can be directly involved in EEN party politics via two mechanisms: the adjustment of party-related laws to European stipulations (as stated in APs) and the compliance to EPFs' affiliation requirements. Yet, the evidence shows that at the moment this type of influence is limited because of the vaguely defined EU requirements within the APs and the reduced material incentives, particularly the absence of EU membership perspective. Also, the analysis of domestic level factors reveals that the success of Brussels' involvement in domestic political transformations depends largely on the number of internal veto players, particularly on the strength of liberal-democratic opposition forces.

The thesis confirms that the indirect European level influence is stronger in the case of EEN outsiders. Two mechanisms of indirect influence are examined hereby: the change in the patterns of party interaction and coalition formation and the emergence of pro- and anti-European parties. While the empirical results show the lack of successful parties that establish their identity in their Europeaness, they also point to the existence of EU involvement in the change of party interaction by means of supporting the coalition of pro-European forces (e.g. ‘electoral revolutions’ in Georgian and Ukraine) and contributing to a cooperation between opposition and government for avoiding political deadlock (e.g. Moldovan 2005 presidential elections). However, EU leverage decreases considerably once the decisive points of political crisis are overcome and party strategic calculations are responsible for the final outcome of EU influence, constrained by party-government position and the strength of opposition forces.

Regarding the broader influence of European integration process on party and party system institutionalization the dissertation shows that the EU fails to contribute to the consolidation of EEN party organizations and party systems, which remain weakly institutionalized and characterized by a fluid political environment as well as instability and unpredictability in the patterns of party interaction.

Overall, the dissertation represents an important academic contribution by addressing the major limitations of the existing Europeanization literature (case selection, causality, methodology) and providing original empirical data based on MRG manifesto content-analysis, expert surveys, and party leader interviews. Although the work is limited to the case of East European neighborhood, the advanced theoretical framework can be applied to the study of other EU outsiders, particularly within the post-Soviet space.

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Abbreviations

General:

AP – Action Plan
CDE – Council for Democratic Elections
CEC – Central Electoral Commission
CEE – Central and Eastern Europe
CGPEM – Code of Good Practices in Electoral Matters
CoE – Council of Europe
ECPR – European Consortium for Political Research
EEN – East European Neighborhood
ENP – European Neighborhood Policy
EU – European Union
FSU – Former Soviet Union
IPS – Index of Party Stabilization
MRG – Manifesto Research Group
NATO – North-Atlantic Treaty Organization
OECD – Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
ODIHR – Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
OSCE – Organization for Security and Cooperation
USSR – Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
VC - Venice Commission

Party Abbreviations:

AMA – New Rights-Novas
ASLMN – Social-Liberal Alliance “Our Moldova”
BAS – Bloc “For a New Georgia”
BD – Burjanadze – Democrats
BMD – Democratic Moldova Bloc
BYuT and JT – Yulia Timoshenko’s Bloc
DAK – Democratic Revival Union
ENM – United National Movement
KPU – Communist Party of Ukraine
MGS – Industry will save Georgia
NBL – National Bloc Lytvín
NU – “Our Ukraine” Bloc
NV and NV-NO – Natalya Vitrenko’s Bloc “People’s Opposition”
PCRM – Party of Communists of the Republic of Moldova
PDM –Democratic Party of Moldova
PPCD – Christian-Democrat People’s Party
PR – Party of Regions
P.-R. – "Patria-Rodina" Bloc
PSDM – Social-Democratic Party of Moldova

PSL – Social Liberal Party
Ravn. – "Ravnopravie" Movement
RP – Republican Party
SDPU – Social-Democratic Party of Ukraine
SLP – Labour Party
S-NM – Saakashvili National Movement
SMK – Citizen's Union of Georgia
SPU – Socialist Party of Ukraine
ZYU – For a United Ukraine¹

¹ The list contains only the abbreviations of the relevant parties that are included in the MRG dataset, 2003-2004 Benoit/Laver expert survey, and 2006 Timuș expert survey.

Chapter 1. Introduction

Background

In the last decades, there has been a growing scholarly interest in examining the impact of European integration process on domestic developments of non-member states. Although most of the studies dealing with the outsiders usually do not refer to the concept of Europeanization, they nevertheless constitute an important part of the emerging Europeanization literature. Their major contribution is the broadening of the scope of Europeanization research by investigating the character and the degree of European level influence (usually operationalized as EU influence) on domestic changes of the outsiders of the European club.

Depending on the research questions that scholars address in their works, there can be distinguished several major categories of outsiders. The first group deals with the so-called EU ‘adaptive outsiders,’ specifically European Free Trade Association EFTA countries that came closer to Europe in order to avoid the negative externalities of European integration process. The second group includes post-communist candidate countries from Central and Eastern Europe, as well as Malta and Cyprus. Scholars have been investigating the impact of EU enlargement conditionality policy on successful domestic transformations of candidate states towards democracy and market economy.

After the recent 2004 enlargement and the new developments of EU external policies, scholarly research interests have expanded to examine EU involvement in domestic changes of its neighboring countries - associated states from Western Balkans and countries within the framework of European Neighborhood Policy ENP.

The Europeanization research has been dominated by the investigation of the domestic level compliance to EU level institutions and practices, particularly measuring the fit/misfit between the two levels. As a result, the primary focus of scholarly interest was the analysis of institutional settings and policy domains that are primarily regulated from the EU level, such as environmental policy. Yet, a more troublesome area of Europeanization research is the investigation of some domestic fields where the ‘goodness of fit’ is not so helpful in explaining domestic transformation because of the broad freedom of national discretion in reacting to EU level requirements. One of these

areas is the study of party and party system changes. The analysis of EU influence on national parties has been under-investigated until the beginning of the third millennium. It was mostly the result of the widespread consensus about the limited direct EU effects on parties and party systems and the methodological difficulty of investigating the indirect EU effects. The study of EU old member states has been dominated by Mair's argument about the imperviousness of national parties and party systems to the influence of European integration process. (Mair 2000, 162-170) One of the most extensive volumes on West European democracies (Poguntke, Aylott et al. 2007) points to the absence of EU induced fundamental changes on the level of national parties and party systems.

Yet, during the last decade there has been a mushrooming of the literature on the Europeanization of party politics, especially due to the intensive research on post-communist candidates and new member states. The literature has been particularly dominated by CEE case studies and the comparative analyses of old EU members and CEE candidates/members. The study of direct influence has been focused on the investigation of EU conditionality as a major mechanism for pursuing national party and party system level transformation in accordance to European level requirements. The indirect EU influence has been examined differently, starting with the analysis of party policy transfer as the result of transnational/trans-European party links and ending with the hollowing out the competition between parties with governing ambition.

Statement of the problem

With the exception of studies on CEE candidates, which achieved during the last years a certain level of theoretical sophistication, the Europeanization literature fails to provide a theoretical approach towards EU non-member states that would examine both the character and the degree of EU involvement in domestic transformations, as well as internal factors that would explain the resistance to or the acceptance of EU requirements. As Haverland (2006) argues, one has to include non-EU members as control cases in order to identify the presence and the strength of European level influence on domestic transformations.

So far, a large part of literature on EU outsiders has been merely concerned with the study of the direct EU influence within the different legal frameworks, such as

Association Agreements AA with CEE countries, Stabilization and Association Agreements SAA in the case of Western Balkans, or European Neighborhood Policy ENP that applies to new EU neighbors. Yet, the indirect EU influence on domestic transformations, such as the change of internal opportunity structure, the shaping of domestic actors' preferences, or the more voluntarily adjustment of outsiders to EU rules and practices remain largely unexplored.

Despite the significant number of studies on the Europeanization of parties and party systems there is a lot of controversy about the way in which European integration process affects (if at all) this domain of national politics. As the literature review section will present, there are several major problems that the study of the Europeanization of party politics faces at the moment. First, the key difficulty is the causality and it represents a central shortcoming of Europeanization research. The major concern is the distinction between the domestic level factors and the European ones, on the one hand, and between the EU influence as opposed to the influence of other regional and international actors and processes. (Lewis 2006a) The primary assumption that there has been an EU influence on national parties and party systems leads to the problem of stretching the EU impact on party politics and of distinguishing "a bark from a whimper." (Batory 2007, 1)

Also, the study of the Europeanization of party politics largely ignores the adjustment of party-related legislation to European level regulations. Several major reasons are responsible for this state of the art. The EU level stipulations regarding party politics, such as political pluralism, free and fair elections, party financing, etc. are of more relevance for the emerging post-communist European democracies than for the old EU members. Only during the last two waves of enlargement the Union introduced more substantive clauses within its democratic conditionality. Yet, even in these circumstances the EU makes reference to the norms and standards defined by other European level institutions, primarily by Venice Commission (a joint body of OSCE and CoE), regarding the electoral conduct and party politics. Within the existing literature only party funding has received a greater attention and again the primary focus is on the case of CEE. (see for example Smilov and Toplak 2007)

The absence of some clear European level "reference points" for national party

and party system changes results in different interpretations of the way how Europe can influence party politics and aggravates the causality problem of Europeanization of domestic political actors. While in the case of CEE candidate states it is still possible to trace some reference points regarding European level requirements and standards on party politics, as set in EU political conditionality, in the case of non-members a clear conditionality is missing and this represents a key problem in investigating nature and the extent of European level influence outside its official borders. (Lehmkuhl 2006)

The time dimension is another important limitation of Europeanization literature. Scholars point out the difficulty of applying a time sensitive analysis, particularly to the study of political arenas, where it is hard to discern whether there was something “moving” at the domestic level “before Brussels entered into the scheme.” (Radaelli and Pasquier 2006, 40) Getting the time dimension right and distinguishing between the domestic level factors and the European level influence is particularly salient in the case of non-EU members and candidates.

The general problems of causality and time dimension, which lie at the core of the Europeanization research, determine important methodological problems in investigating the EU impact on party politics. Scholarly opinion is divided with regard to the type (direct versus indirect) and the extent of European influence on party and party system changes and, consequently, the indicators that point to EU induced transformations, particularly in the case of candidate states or non-members. Ladrech's (2002) and Mair's (2000; 2006) seminal works advanced some clear indicators of the direct and indirect influence on party and party systems in Western Europe. The change in policy/programmatic content regarding the mention of Europe, organizational change, party-government relation, as well as the transnational party cooperation are considered as the major indicators of a direct EU impact at party level. (Ladrech 2002) At party system level some strict criteria are advanced for discerning the direct EU influence: the emergence of new parties that ground their identity within their European stances and the competition along the pro- and anti-European dimension. (Ladrech 2002; Mair 2000) The hollowing out of competition on the European dimension between the mainstream parties and a turn-away from the traditional politics are considered as the main markers of indirect EU impact within the EU members. (Mair 2000)

While the literature from Western Europe has been dominated by Mair's argument about the limited direct impact of EU on party politics, the study of CEE candidates has revealed that both the direct and the indirect EU influence have been stronger in the case of the newly emerging post-communist parties and party systems. Scholars have pointed that the indirect influence is the strongest within the CEE, advancing a series of other indicators. At party level these are the decrease of coalition potential as a result of hard Euroskeptic party stances, (Taggart and Szczerbiak 2004a) as well as the homogeneity of ideological profiles as a consequence of party affiliation to European Party Federations and transnational cooperation. (Enyedi and Lewis 2006) At party system level, the research on candidate countries reveals that hard Euroskeptic parties are constrained in their coalition formation with parties with governing ambitions because of the expected negative reaction from Brussels during the accession process. (Batory 2008; Enyedi and Lewis 2006)

Despite the significant scholarly achievements in identifying the indicators of EU influence on party politics, the major concern is how much of the identified changes can be related to Europe and which factors from the domestic level are responsible for different outcomes. As the literature review will show, scholarly debate focuses on two key factors responsible for the different party reaction to the European issue: ideology or strategy. The first group of studies argues that party ideological stance determines the European position and the ideological dimension subsumes the European issue. (Kopecký and Mudde 2002; Marks et al. 2005; Rohrschneider and Whitefield 2004) The second group suggests that strategy is responsible for party European attitudes, particularly in the case of the newly consolidating CEE parties and party systems. (Bielsiak 2004; Sitter 2002a) The high probability of party strategic behavior and the 'playing with Europe' (Enyedi 2006b) as opposed to some fundamental party changes in line with EU norms and requirements is an important obstacle in investigated EU induced changes within the post-communist space.

An important limitation of the existing theoretical approaches is the fact that they are grounded in Comparative Politics (CP) reasoning and are derived from the cases of old EU members and CEE candidates, whose national parties are directly involved (or preparing to be involved) in the process of EU policy-making. Also, the domestic level

environment is characterized by a higher degree of party system institutionalization as compared to the former Soviet republics. However, there is no research at the moment that would focus on the non-EU countries and adaptive outsiders, which are not part of EU policy-making and of EU accession and have weakly institutionalized parties and party systems. The mentioned above differences might shed light on the advantages and disadvantages of different scholarly interpretations of the nature and the extent of EU impact on party politics. For example, it is important to examine whether the scholarly indicators of EU impact identified so far point to the same type of influence – direct or indirect – in the case of non-EU outsiders, where the direct influence is expected to be weak, if at all present, and the indirect one is the most likely to occur.

The purpose of the dissertation

In light of the mentioned above limitations the dissertation contributes to the existing research on the Europeanization of parties and party systems in several ways.

First, it makes a step further in this research field by investigating both the direct and the indirect EU involvement in domestic transformations of EU outsiders, specifically East European neighbors. It aims at addressing a key limitation of the existing research – case selection, and at filling the gap in the Europeanization literature and analyzing the extent and the nature of European influence outside its official borders.

Second, as the literature review section will present, the thesis addresses the causality and methodological problems of Europeanization research by combining the IR and CP approaches. It looks at the EU as the major actor in promoting European level norms and standards. In order to make a clearer distinction between European and other domestic, regional and global factors the dissertation identifies the EU stipulations from country Action Plans and the EPFs' membership criteria as the major European level requirements that can determine a direct EU influence on domestic political transformations. Also, the work combines different methodological approaches and datasets, such as MRG² manifesto content-analysis, expert analysis and party leaders' interviews in order to provide an objective analysis of the type and the extent of EU

² Manifesto Research Group of European Consortium for Political Research (ECPR), Berlin.

influence on EEN party politics following the existing scholarly debate from EU members and candidates.

The purpose of the dissertation is the investigation of the effects of European integration process on parties and the environments in which they operate, party systems, in Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia. The analysis of a small number of cases allows not only discerning the factors that determine the influence of the process of European integration, but also the observation of the causal mechanisms of the impact of Europe on party politics and party systems. The research is based on a comparative longitudinal analysis of the three selected countries starting with the first parliamentary elections after the declaration of independence until the Georgian parliamentary elections from 2008.

I advance a new framework of analysis of the extent and the nature of European integration influence on party and party system change within the EU outsiders. The theoretical model combines the IR approach on EU democracy promotion with the CP approach of the large number of Europeanization of party politics from EU members and candidates. The identification of major variables from the European and the domestic level responsible for different mechanisms and outcomes of EU involvement in party and party system changes provides a more accurate relationship between the European and the domestic level changes. The research framework is built on two major variables: the type of EU involvement, operationalized according to the extent (high or low) and the nature (direct or indirect) of European level influence, and the degree of domestic elite's engagement in pursuing domestic changes according to EU norms and requirements. The latter is operationalized according to the freedom that the domestic actors possess: more or less voluntary.

Chapter 3 presents four modes of European level influence on parties and party systems derived from the interaction of the two mentioned-above variables. As the research agenda will illustrate, the empirical part of the thesis is structured according to the two types of EU influence: direct and indirect one.

The major findings of the thesis show that there can be traced a direct EU influence even outside its members and candidates, though conditional on the degree of domestic elite's commitment to comply to European requirements, which is exemplified by the case of legislative adjustment to party related requirements set in country Action

Plans and in the compliance to EPFs' membership criteria. (chapter 4) The indirect influence is stronger within EEN, similar to the case of CEE countries. This type of EU influence is represented by the change in the patterns of interaction resulting from the change of opportunities available for political actors from the process of European integration or the identification with Europe. EU is also proven to have a greater indirect leverage during some decisive historical moments, such as 'electoral revolutions' or political crisis, which decreases afterward and party strategic behavior is largely responsible for the degree of domestic political elite's freedom in complying to European requirements.

The analysis of the broader EU influence on party and party system development the research reveals the failure of EU to induce domestic political transformations that would contribute to the institutionalization of EEN parties and party systems, by contrast to the case of CEE candidates.

Significance and contribution of the dissertation

The present dissertation contributes in several ways to the existing academic research. First, the work touches upon several important theoretical debates and provides its own scholarly value to each of them. The analysis of the European influence on party development through the prism of Europeanization literature combines the European Studies/IR approach with the Comparative Politics tradition and allows for a better understanding of the causal relationship between the European level factors and the domestic ones in determining party and party system changes. Also, the combination of theories on political parties with the EU studies and Europeanization literature, as well as with the academic works on post-communist transition and democratization offers an interdisciplinary character to the present research framework.

The second major contribution refers to the broadening of the theoretical and empirical research on the influence of European integration process on party politics. As the current Europeanization research is limited to the study of EU members and candidates, as well as of 'adaptive outsiders' the present work aims at overcoming this shortcoming by examining EU influence outside its borders. The comparison with the cases of EU members and CEE candidates helps to address this limitation and to identify

the existence and the power of European influence for domestic change from a broader theoretical and empirical perspective. (Haverland 2006) The proposed theoretical model can be applied later to the study of EU impact on other non-EU members, particularly of former USSR countries, Russia being an interesting case for research also.

Last, but not least, the originality and contribution of the dissertation is determined by its empirical data. The case of East European neighboring states and of former Soviet republics represents an empirical ‘blind spot’ in investigating the impact of European integration on domestic structures and party politics. A major reason why prior research on European integration does not include this region is the lack of systematic, comparative information on the subject in Eastern Europe. Because the present research uses original datasets established explicitly for the purpose of this research it fills in the empirical gap on the EU influence on political developments in EEN. The use of alternative methods of analysis and data collection, such as expert survey, party leaders’ interviews, and manifesto analysis, provides a comprehensive empirical analysis on EEN parties and party systems.

Research Agenda and the major findings

The dissertation has the following structure. The second chapter is devoted to present the literature review with the focus on the major academic debates used in this work: theoretical approaches to EU impact on domestic political transformations, Europeanization debate and the special case of the Europeanization of party politics and party systems. It presents author’s stand within each of the theoretical approaches and shows how the dissertation addresses the existing scholarly debates and how the work deals with their limitations, with a thorough analysis of the Europeanization of party politics.

The next chapter presents the theoretical model, as well as the conceptual and methodological background of the thesis. The model draws on the distinction between the direct and indirect EU influence, as well as the freedom of national discretion in domestic implementation of EU level institutional templates and practices. It advances four major modes of EU influence on EEN parties and party systems. The work then defines the major terms used in this research, such as the controversial notion of Europeanization, the

European issue and the European dimension, as well as the definition of party and party system institutionalization. The conceptualization of the major terms is followed by the presentation of the methodological background with the primary focus of the analysis of the two major methods: party manifesto research and expert survey. The chapter also argues the case selection and the advantages and disadvantages of the study of a small number of cases.

The fourth chapter deals with the first two cases of direct EU influence identified in the theoretical model from chapter 3. It starts with the analysis of legislative adjustment of party-related legislation to European templates, which represent the strongest mode of EU direct influence on domestic party and party system changes within the EEN. The key finding confirms scholarly argument that the vague EU requirements with regard to political reforms in APs, along with the absence of clear implementation guidelines and the absence of EU membership perspective loosen the strength of EU pressure on domestic legislative adjustment. As a consequence, political parties obtain more freedom in complying with European standards, which is however constrained by the number of domestic veto players, specifically the strength of liberal-democratic opposition forces.

The analysis of the second mechanism of direct European influence – the compliance with EPFs' accession criteria shows that EU influence via European Party Federations has been weaker than in the case of CEE candidates because of the limited financial support and membership offer within the biggest Europarties, EPP and PES. However, EEN parties are still eager to join EPFs because of the politico-intellectual and politico-material support, but chiefly because of the domestic and international legitimacy they could obtain from EPFs membership. Also, the case study of EPP shows that by contrast to the theoretical expectations of the present research EPFs apply a weaker membership conditionality policy within the EEN, highlighted primarily by the loosening of the ideological compliance criteria, and the tendency of affiliating strong mainstream parties from the region in order to increase EPFs' influence and prestige outside EU.

Thereafter I examine the two modes of indirect EU influence on the format and mechanics of EEN party systems. The work examines the change in the patterns of party

interaction and coalition formation resulting from the change of opportunities available for political actors in the context of the European integration process. Following the existing theoretical debates on the domestic factors responsible for how Europe matters for parties the dissertation reveals that party strategy, rather than ideology, is the major determinant of EU influence on party and party system changes. It points to a negative relation between the European issue and the two non-economic dimensions of competition: anti-communist – communist issue and Russia/CIS issue. One of the most interesting findings is related to the connection of the European issue with the nationalism. The case studies of Ukraine and Moldova show that the Right wing nationalist parties are the most Europhile ones while Slavic nationalist parties represent the Euroskeptic segment of political spectrum.

The investigation of the EU indirect impact on party interaction reveals that Brussels' backing of pro-reform Europhile forces during the 'electoral revolutions' from Ukraine and Georgia contributed to their victory by offering them internal legitimacy and international credibility. Moreover, EU could play a significant role of negotiator between the governing Communist Party and the opposition forces in order to avoid a potential revolution in Moldova.

The second mode of indirect EU involvement is the emergence of pro/anti European parties and political blocs as well as changes in party identity as a result of the adoption of a pro- or anti-European position. The empirical findings show that there are no successful parties that were established with the purpose of gaining support for or against European integration.

Chapter 6 examines the broader EU impact on party and party system consolidation. By contrast to CEE candidates the European integration process does not exercise a remarkable influence on the institutionalization of EEN parties and party systems, which are still characterized by a low degree of 'systemness.'

Finally, the conclusion of the dissertation summarizes the theoretical and empirical findings. It highlights once more the major theoretical and empirical contributions of this thesis based on the advanced theoretical model from chapter 3. The study finishes with explaining the limitations of the research and potential ways of its improvement.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

Introduction

In order to understand the influence of European integration process on political developments in East European neighborhood I proceed with the analysis of three main theoretical debates. I start with the examination of the broader scholarly approaches to the study of EU impact on domestic political transformations. I identify the major European and domestic level variables that determine the nature, the extent, and the final outcome of the influence of European integration process on domestic political transformations. Next, I move on to the presentation of the theoretical debates on post-communist party and party system institutionalization. The aim is to present the theoretical debates on the consolidation of parties and party systems from EEN and to highlight the domestic level factors that can be accountable for the nature and the extent of EU level influence on the institutionalization of parties and party systems. In the end, the work discusses thoroughly the most relevant strand of literature for the present research – the Europeanization of party politic. It illustrates the major findings and limitations of this study area and shows the author's stand within the existing academic debate on the Europeanization of party politics, specifically regarding the non-EU candidate or member states. The chapter concludes with the presentation of the theoretical reasoning behind the dissertation's theoretical framework and explaining how the work addresses the major shortcomings of the existing literature and the academic contribution of this thesis.

Theoretical approaches to EU impact on domestic political transformations

The analysis of different types of interaction between the external and domestic factors has advanced various classifications of channels of outside influence on internal structures, including both the coordinated and uncoordinated interdependence. Whitehead's pioneering approach (1996) of analyzing the external influence on domestic transformations advances three main "linkage processes" that characterize the international dimensions of democratization in Europe and Americas: contagion, control, and consent. While the first two headings deal merely with international level factors, the third one takes into account the developments from domestic level that affect the success

of international influence on democratic consolidation. It envisages that external actors and developments offer their support to reform-oriented internal forces (both societal and political actors) that share common grounds with international democracy-promoters in order to assure the successful implementation of external policies and practices.

Following a similar reasoning to Whitehead's third "linkage process" - consent, Jacoby (2006) advanced the "coalitional approach" to external influence. After presenting the three modes of international influence on post-communist transformations: inspiration (a flow of ideas from outside to inside), subsidy (material and political benefits), and substitution (direct imposition of foreign services and templates, with the most aggressive form of military occupation), the scholar argues that foreign inspiration and subsidies have proved to work best in cases where there existed an implicit partnership, a coalition strategy with domestic actors, specifically with post-communist reformers. Coalition approach, an alternative to substitution, emphasizes the need of external support for 'minority traditions' and like-minded domestic actors in order to achieve a higher probability of successful and long-lasting implementation of liberal-democratic reforms.

The works on European influence on domestic changes of EU outsiders engage into the debate on external dimension of internal transformations and provide new theoretical and empirical findings on the subject. There can be distinguished three subfields of Europeanization literature based on the examined research questions. The first one includes studies that focus merely on the analysis of European level variables. The main research objectives are the investigation of the character and the degree of EU involvement in post-communist developments. This type of literature analyzes the specific EU policies towards non-member states: enlargement conditionality (Grabbe 2001, 2003, 2005; Jacoby 1999; Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier 2004, 2006; Smith 2003, 2005a; Spendzharova 2003); relations with Western Balkans (Bechev 2006; Demetropoulos 2002; Pippa 2004; Vachudová 2003); ENP (Emerson and Noutcheva 2004; Kelley 2006; Smith 2005b; Tulmets 2005); 'partial integration' agreements with EFTA states (Archer 2005; Eliassen and Sitter 2003; Gstöhl 2002; Vahl and Grolimund 2006); or EU external relations and EU external governance (Börzel and Risse 2004; Bretherton and Vogler 2006; Farrell 2005; Kubicek 2003; Lavenex 2004; Lavenex and Schimmelfennig 2006; Smith 1998). Another group of literature explores the domestic

factors that mediate European Union's influence or the conditions that determine the acceptance or resistance to European level influence, such as the number of veto players, the type of government and domestic resonance of EU norms and values, institutional patterns, cultural and historical legacies, etc. (Brusis 2002; Schimmelfennig 2005b; Vachudová 2005). Finally, fewer studies aim at investigating the specific mechanisms of European level influence on domestic systems and the possible outcomes, such as convergence, approximation, learning, etc. (Diez et al. 2006; Jacoby 2004; Johnson 2006; Knill and Lehmkuhl 1999; Schimmelfennig 2007; Schimmelfennig et al. 2003; Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier 2005a; Sverdrup 2000; Vachudová 2005)

EU democracy promotion has been a central element of its conditionality policy towards non-member states. The Union has affirmed itself as a successful promoter of democratic principles through material and political rewards in the post-communist space, particularly through the granting of full membership perspective. As Whitehead argues, the full EU membership "generates powerful, broad-based, and long-term support for the establishment of democratic institutions" because of its irreversible nature, its incentives, and the complex set of mutual adjustments that contribute to democratic consolidation. (1996, 19) The democratic conditionality of the European Union has evolved over time from the primarily procedural criteria, such as the rule of law, free and fair elections, separation of institutional powers, freedom of expression, etc. to more substantive democratic clauses, such as political pluralism and the importance of parties for fostering political participation, pluralist media, local administration, or the respect of minority rights. (Pridham 1999, 1221)

Summarizing the theoretical debates there can be distinguished two major lines of reasoning that dominate the theoretical approaches of EU impact on domestic political changes in non-member states. First of all, following the *instrumentalist approach*, domestic political elites – the key internal actor – would tend to maximize their benefits (political or material ones) during the internal changes occurring as a result of European integration process. The cost-benefit analysis of political leadership would depend, however on the number of veto players (Börzel and Risse 2003; Cowles et al. 2001; Jacoby 2004; Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier 2004, 2005a; Vachudová 2005) in the domestic arena and the specific political and societal groups they represent (e.g. political

parties, particularly non-reformed Communist parties, interest groups, electorate, etc.) Concomitantly, internal institutional templates of decision-making (Börzel and Risse 2003; Cowles et al. 2001) such as the electoral rule, the structure of a party system (the degree of fragmentation and polarization, the major conflicting lines in EEN political spaces), or the federal-unitary structure of a state, etc. represent another important factor in determining the strategic behavior of political elites. Vachudova also argues the importance of the transitional path and the type of government: liberal or illiberal in determining the level of commitment of national leadership. So, she suggests that a liberal government, devoted to democratic principles of decision-making, is more committed to implement EU level policies and it is more constrained, therefore, in its strategic behavior, while the opposite is true about an illiberal, authoritarian-type government. (Vachudová 2005, 81)

Second of all, the *constructivist approach* advances several sociological factors that influence the degree of domestic elite's freedom to transform according to EU level institutions and practices. Coming from the historical institutionalisms, one of the major variables in determining the attraction and the commitment to European norms and practices is represented by specific historical and institutional legacies from previous regimes. (Hanson 1995; Shugart 1997; Vachudová 2005) Especially in the case of the post-socialist countries, this is an important factor that explains the preference of European norms and templates over other practices, such as Russian ones, for example. Likewise, the 'closeness to Europe,' understood as the resonance of norms and values that define the domestic culture with the European ones is a major sociological factor that determines political actors' reaction to European integration process. (Epstein 2006; Schimmelfennig 2005a; Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier 2004) The more national and sub-national actors identify themselves as 'belonging to Europe,' stressing historical and cultural arguments, the more committed the political leadership would be in its engagement to transform according to EU level policies, having the EU as a "reference point" for national level political activity (Vachudová 2005, 37).

Thus, the *goodness of fit* (Börzel and Risse 2003; Cowles et al. 2001) between the European and domestic level with regard to the nature of institutional templates, historical and cultural legacies, as well as the domestic resonance with European norms

and values influence political actors' European preferences and strategies in the process of EEN democratic transition and the EU involvement in carrying out liberal-democratic reforms.

Critical accounts on EU impact on domestic political transformations

The promotion and the implementation of EU democratic conditionality have encountered major difficulties because of both European and domestic level factors. First of all, political conditionality criteria are broadly defined, lacking a high degree of clarity and leaving room for different interpretations. Brussels' clauses concerning transformations in such fields like democracy, human rights and the rule of law are not well specified and do not contain a clear description of the steps that have to be undertaken in order to fulfill the implementation of EU demands. (Tocci 2008) What counts as meeting the criteria of the implementation of EU regulations depends from case to case, from a specific policy area to a particular country, because EU lacks institutional templates to measure the compliance with its democratic requirements. (Grabbe 2003) This is one of the major problems of investigating the EU impact on political transformations in the case of non-members and non-candidate states, where some clear stipulations of EU requirements are missing. Yet, in order to overcome this problem the present dissertation focuses on the analysis of Action Plan's requirements as the major source of EU conditionality within East European neighborhood. It also considers the membership requirements set by European Party Federations as the second set of European level norms and standards according to which EEN parties can transform themselves. As it will be argued in the next chapter, the degree of clarity of the EU requirements, as well as the extent of EU incentives and punishments, or 'carrots' and 'sticks,' represent the most important variables in determining the nature of EU influence – direct versus indirect, as well as the extent of EU engagement in domestic political transformations. The empirical results from the chapter 4 that examines the direct EU influence on party politics will prove that the vague requirements of the Action Plans and of EPFs' affiliation, together with the weak rewards leave room for more freedom of interpretation by domestic actors of the European level stipulations and result in a weak direct EU involvement in party politics transformations.

Another difficulty in studying the EU impact on political transformations is that domestic political elites obtain a certain degree of freedom in their interpretation and implementation of EU democratic provisions. Thus, the success or failure of EU involvement in the process of domestic transformations largely depends on the willingness or the degree of discretion of domestic elites to accept or resist European policies.

As compared to other domestic areas on which the European integration can exercise an influence on internal transformations, the political arena represents a field of Europeanization research in which the domestic factors, particularly the European preferences of political elites, are the decisive ones in determining the degree of EU involvement in domestic changes, which in this case represent the dependent variable.

Most Europeanization studies have pointed out that the mechanism and the final outcome of Europeanization process depend on the freedom of national discretion in domestic implementation of EU level institutional templates and practices. (Börzel 2005; Haverland 2000; Héritier and Knill 2001; Radaelli 2000, 2003). The degree of discretion of domestic political elites in carrying out reforms according to EU standards represents the major factor that determines the degree of European influence on domestic transformations, particularly in the case of the post-communist EU outsiders.

In this context, I argue that the study of political actors – parties and other political organizations – as well as of the environments in which they operate – party systems, is of particular importance for understanding the making of domestic politics and the different degrees of EU involvement in the process of democratic transition. Also, I agree with the scholars that the degree of freedom of domestic political elite in complying with European level policies and standards is the major variable from the domestic level that determines the extent of the European level influence on party and party system transformations.

As the empirical findings from the chapter 4 and particularly chapter 5 will show, political elite's behavior is a more important factor than institutional settings in explaining the transitional path of different post-communist outsiders and the degree of influence of European integration process on domestic transformations. In the newly emerging democracies after the collapse of the communist regime the political actors

(both the governing and the opposition parties) have been the ones that made the choice of specific institutional arrangements that would suit them better (usually aimed at increasing their power, however conditional upon the degree of political competition and the strength of political opposition, especially the one promoting democratic reforms). Therefore, the present study agrees with the scholars that argue that political elites direct the process of institutional building in the newly established democracies (Kitschelt 2003; Vachudová 2005) and disagrees with researchers that stress the supremacy of institutional design factors in explaining post-communist domestic transformations (Crawford and Lijphart 1995; Diamond and Plattner 1996).

Post-communist Party and Party system institutionalization

Two contrasting views on post-communist party and party system institutionalization have been shaped within the existing literature. The pessimistic view, including the *tabula rasa* perspective, argues the chaotic nature of socio-economic and political conditions that allow for significant uncertainties and disturbances within political arenas. Several major characteristics are highlighted as being responsible for major differences between the established West European democracies and the newly emerging post-communist states. Party systems are described to be open political marketplaces, with parties entering and leaving the political arenas. (Bunce and Csanadi 1993; Kostelecký 2002; Mair 1991, 1998) The opportunistic behavior of political actors and weak civil societies impede the transformation of social conflicts into salient political identities of the establishing political organizations. A wide-spread fear of inchoate parties and party systems dominated the post-communist literature. (Dawisha 1999; Innes 2002; Kopstein 2003; Kreuzer and Pettai 1999, 2003; Mair 1997c) Scholars have pointed to the high degree of party fragmentation and fluidity of political spaces, when parties “constantly enter and leave the scene or change their identity.” (Kopstein 2003, 250) Party competition is likely to prove both more conflictual and adversarial than in established democracies. (Mair 1997c, 175)

Based on the mentioned-above factors, this theoretical approach argues the low degree of party and party system institutionalization. The short period of life of political parties within the post-communist political spaces, as well as the high degree of party

fragmentation decrease the role of political parties and their programmatic cohesion. In these circumstances individual political entrepreneurs achieve a greater success than political organizations, particularly in the former Soviet republics. (Ágh 1996; Birch 2000; Mainwaring 1998) Scholarly expectations suggest that the longer time period of Communist experience would result in weaker party and party system institutionalization in ex-Soviet republics and compared to CEE. (Duch and Palmer 2002). Most of these sceptical studies stress the lack of ‘systemness’(Mair 1997a, 213-214) of post-communist party systems as the major conditions of party system consolidations are missing. This refers to the continuing party fragmentation (Bielasiak 2005; Innes 2002; Zielinski 2002) and high degree of electoral volatility, (Bakke and Sitter 2005; Birch 2003; Cotta 1996; Mair 1997c; Olson 1998; Rose 1995; Tóka 1997) which result in the absence of stability in the patterns of party interaction, one of the basic features of an institutionalized party system.

Another group of scholars claims the existence of a certain ‘structure’ in the patterns of party and party system stabilization in post-communist space. (Kitschelt et al. 1999) The ‘structure’ view argues the rapid translation of the major societal cleavages of social, economic, or cultural nature into the principal axes of political competition after the declaration of independence of the ex-communist republics. Kitschelt et al. have argued in their volume that post-communist party systems show similar features to those from established Western democracies and they argue the existence of “a great deal of structure” in the patterns of political representation and governance. (Kitschelt et al. 1999, 402-403) The emerging political forces were found to be able to offer to the electorate different positions on the salient issues of competition and mobilize the public. (Evans and Whitefield 1993; Kitschelt 1992; Miller et al. 2000; Tóka 1996) The choice of democratic electoral systems determines political actors to accept democracy as ‘the only game in town’ and limits the opportunistic power maximizing behavior of political actors in the emerging post-communist democracies. (Ágh 1994; Lewis 1994; Olson 1998)

Scholarly research has revealed positive changes towards party and party system institutionalization, specifically in the case of Central and Eastern Europe. Some studies point out the reaching of a certain degree of “crystallization of political forces”(Ágh 1998, 204) in CEE, with parties becoming the major players of domestic politics and

achieving a programmatic cohesion. (Enyedi 2006a, 235) In a recent work Lewis reveals that political parties have received a certain degree of stabilization in CEE based on party age and its rootedness in the society. (2006b, 574-575) He argues that party fragmentation in a number of examined countries is the result of the parliamentary control of established small parties over large and medium-scale ones, which provide “a relatively stable multi-polar basis for successive government coalitions.” (idem, 574) Lewis’ finding also confirms an earlier work of Millard that describes Hungary, Slovenia, and the Czech Republic (and Estonia to a certain degree³) as having “stable party systems offering a measure of predictability to their voters.” (Millard 2004, 143, 153)

Other works on post-communist Europe even suggest the existence of a developed party system, highlighting the dominance of political parties during electoral process, the stable inter-party competition and the emergence of a party-structured government-opposition dynamic, (Sitter 2002b, 78) as well as a “remarkable degree of party system stability.” (Bakke and Sitter 2005, 243) There seems to be also more similarity between CEE and post-Soviet country patterns of party and party system development, by contrast to the view that there is a generalized gap between the two post-communist regions. (Dawisha and Deets 2006)

Critical accounts on post-communist party and party system institutionalization in EEN

As it is often the case with the ‘radical’ theoretical expectation, the large number of post-communist studies has pointed out that party and party system development in the region is neither as weak as *tabula rasa* and the pessimistic views argue nor is it ‘remarkably’ stabilized as the optimistic approaches suggest.

First of all, the post-communist societies and party systems were not built from scratch, as *tabula rasa* approach suggest. Although some well-established cleavages⁴ were missing, the EEN countries had at least one dominant line of political conflict, representing party attitudes regarding the course of post-communist developments: authoritarian/non-market versus libertarian/pro-market continuum. (Kitschelt 1992)

³ Despite the existence of stable parties over time Estonian party system is described as “susceptible” to the penetration of new political parties. (Lewis 2006b, 575)

⁴ In the form they were defined and found in Western democracies (Bartolini and Mair 1990)

Moreover, the emerging post-Soviet societies were divided by some other post-communist issues that translated into political conflicts and shaped the party systems during the first years of transition, such as attitudes on nation/state building and de-communization. (Mikkel 1998) Therefore, by contrast to scholarly predictions the newly established EEN democracies did not prove to be “atomized and decapitated mass of ex-clients of state socialism.” (Offe et al. 1998, 25)

It is true that after the collapse of the USSR many former republics, particularly those that were part of the Soviet Union, lacked previous democratic experience and some pre-Soviet parties that would be able to re-emerge and affirm themselves as successful political actors. However, I argue that post-communist parties did not emerge from scratch during the first years of transition of EEN; they were emerging either from the former regime parties, benefiting from previous political experience, managerial and organizational skills, or from the opposition movements, most of which were politically active during the last years of Communist rule. As the elite theories suggest, the maintenance in power of the former *nomenklatura* and its significant bargaining power during the early transition affected negatively the choice of electoral rules (majoritarian over PR) and type of government (presidential over parliamentarian) by strengthening the role of personalities and clientalism. (Kitschelt 1996) The maintenance in power of communist *nomenklatura* until the ‘electoral revolutions’ in Ukraine and Georgia and their preference for a mixed system represented one of the major causes of the weak partisan logic and the limited programmatic behavior of major political parties. The significant number of SMD MPs and the unprecedented influence of independents among them promoted the flourishing of individual political entrepreneurs, clientalism and rent-seeking behavior of Ukrainian and Georgian MPs. (Aprasidze 2007; Birch 2003; Potichnyj 1994)

However, there has been also a positive effect of the maintenance of Communist ruling party officials because they had a significant advantage over the newly emerging political class with regard to professionalism and efficiency in policy-making, as well as organizational and managerial skills. (Enyedi 2006a) This is well illustrated by the electoral success of the Communist Party from Moldova and its ability to secure a parliamentary majority during the two consecutive mandates, as well as the influence of

party discipline and professionalism on the efficient policy-making of the Communist government.

The adoption of post-communist electoral systems helped to structure political competition and to experience the institutionalization of the democratic rules of the game during the early transition period, particularly in CEE. Bielasiak, for example, argues in a cross-national study that few systemic changes have been made in the laws that structure the election conduct and political competition across the whole post-communist space. Even in cases when some revisions took place they did not “undermine significantly the widespread stability of electoral regulations,” which contributed to the consolidation of electoral democracies in the region. (Bielasiak 2001, 38) However, these changes prove to be not as few and minor in the case of the three examined countries as described to be in the whole post-communist space. Although the tendency of adjusting the electoral formula is towards a more proportional representation, the changes of electoral threshold did not follow a clear increasing pattern, as suggested by Bielasciak in his post-communist comparative study of party system institutionalization. (2001, 12) Rather, it shows that threshold modification reflects the existing opportunities for political actors (both ex-communist elites and opposition forces) to maximize their political representation. Also, it reveals that most of the changes in electoral laws were carried out within a couple of months before elections, most of the cases in favor of ruling parties,⁵ which determine uncertainty of electoral results and hits first of all small opposition parties, coming up against political pluralism.

Finally, post-Soviet neighbors have not been part of the European accession process, which represented a major political and material stimulus for post-communist political transformation in line with EU democratic conditionality from the CEE candidates. (Lewis 2005a, 2006a; Vachudová 2005, 161-180; 2008) The major stick of EU democracy promotion – full membership perspective – is missing in the case of EEN, which determined the weakness of EU policies set within the framework of country Action Plans.

Overall, I argue that Mair’s concern that party systems might never become

⁵ Shevardnadze’s increase of threshold form 5% to 7% before 1999 parliamentary elections, Kuchma’s alteration of electoral barrier from 3% to 4% before 2002 legislative elections, or current raise of threshold by PCRM in Moldova form 4% to 6% in anticipation of 2009 elections.

consolidated because of the significant obstacles encountered within the post-communist socio-political context, (1997b, 197) is more relevant for the case of post-Soviet republics than for the Central and Eastern Europe. EEN party systems still experience a high degree of electoral volatility and party fragmentation, (Bielsiak 2005; Dawisha and Deets 2006; Lane and Ersson 2007), as compared to CEE countries. The fact that party birth and death, fusions and fissions is merely an elite decision in post-Soviet space (Birch 2003, 3; Powell and Tucker 2008, 3) determines a high level of fluctuations among parties and political blocs from one election to another and a fluid political environment. While scholarly findings point to a significant progress towards party and party system stabilization within Central and Eastern Europe, East European neighbors are still characterized by weakly institutionalized parties and party systems.

Deriving from all the mentioned above characteristics of EEN political developments, I state that the nature and the extent of EU involvement in domestic transformations of EEN parties and party systems would depend on several factors. First of all, the weakly institutionalized parties would not be as constrained as their CEE counterparts in defining and changing their European stances, as most of them lack a well-defined ideological profile and do not follow a programmatic behavior. Second, the flourishing of political entrepreneurs and rent-seeking behavior determine a more strategic oriented reaction of EEN parties to EU level requirements, with a primary focus on short-term benefits offered by the adoption of pro- or anti-European positions. Finally, the institutional settings tend to favor the governing political actors and decrease the role of opposition parties and civic society as veto players during the implementation of EU stipulations. Thus, the level of EU involvement in party and party system changes will depend on the degree of domestic political elite's freedom in complying with European level requirements.

The ‘Europeanization’ of Post-communist Parties and Party systems

The study of the influence of European integration on party politics had achieved less attention within the first phase of Europeanization literature, as scholarly interests were primarily focused on the investigation of the ‘goodness of fit’ between European and national policies and institutions. The existing few studies dealing with

Europeanization of national parties were based within European integration and IR theories, starting with the assumption that there existed a European level influence on political parties and aiming at finding its effect within the domestic political scene. (Hix and Goetz 2000) However, these studies encountered the same difficulty as the rest of Europeanization research that applied a top-down approach to the study of domestic transformation, when there was no uniform pattern of adaptation within the different EU members or candidate states and much of the unexplained variation was argued to be the result of context specific factors.

The end of the second millennium brought a new of literature on EU impact on party politics, which was rooted in the Comparative Politics track and looked at the influence of European integration on national parties through the lenses of domestic politics. This type of studies applies a bottom-up or bottom-up-down approach of Europeanization. Two different strands of research can be identified within this research framework: the one dealing with the *institutionalization* of a European party system and the other one examining the *penetration* of European level norms and practices into the domestic political spheres. (Mair 2004, 340-343) The first one deals with the study of transnational party linkages and Europarties, (Bardi 1994, 2002; Hix 1995; Pridham 1975; Pridham and Pridham 1981), European level elections (Marsh 2005; Reif and Schmitt 1980; Schmitt 2005) and the investigation of the shape and the dynamic of Europarties and the European party system within the European Parliament. (Attinà 1990; Bardi 1989, 1996; Marks and Steenbergen 2004)

The *penetration* dimension, however, emerged as the major strand of literature within the Europeanization of national parties and party systems. Its central focus is the investigation of political conflicts that emerge as the result of the influence of European norms and practices on domestic parties and party systems. (Marks and Steenbergen 2002; Marks and Wilson 1999) Moreover, since the non-EU members do not participate in the process of institutionalization of a European level party system,⁶ the *penetration* dimension is the primary field of inquiry of the influence of European integration outside EU borders. Therefore, it represents the major focus of the present research.

⁶ With the exception of transnational party linkages and the affiliation to European Party Federations, which is still available for non-EU members from the continent.

Within the *penetration* approach scholars focus on the analysis of national parties' European attitudes (pro- and anti-European) and try to explain party position on European issues through the existing patterns of party competition. A considerable research on the Europeanization of national political parties and Euro-parties has been carried over the last decades by the European Consortium for Political Research, particularly the Manifesto Research Group and Party Manifestos project. (Budge et al. 2001) This kind of research provides a comparative content-analytic approach on policy positions of EU national parties by focusing on the electoral programs as the main indicator of party policies. As the three EEN countries are included in the MRG database the work will use it as one major source of empirical analysis of party European stances, comparing it with the expert survey data and party leaders' interviews.

Another strain of literature has examined the interaction of party European stances with the pre-existing cleavages that shape national party systems. The key research question is whether the European issue, understood as the sum of party policy stances related to EU and European integration, represents a separate dimension of competition or it is subsumed to the existing lines of political conflict. The majority of studies examine the relationship between the economic and non-economic, or cultural ideological dimension and the European issue. (Aspinwall 2002; Hooghe and Marks 2001; Hooghe et al. 2002; Marks et al. 2005; Marks and Wilson 2000; Tsebelis and Garrett 2000; Vachudová 2008; Vachudová and Hooghe 2006) Although the post-Soviet neighbors lack some well-defined political cleavages and the ideological axis of competition is different from the Western established democracies, the study of the interaction of the European issue with other existing lines of political conflict represents another important point of the present thesis. The study will start with the identification of the major axes of political competition in EEN and of the ideological Left-Right dimension and it will explore whether the European issue is subsumed or cross-cuts the existing political conflicts.

Yet, the dominant field of inquiry of Europeanization as *penetration* is represented by Euroskepticism studies. Since Taggart's seminal work (1998), scholars have focused on the study of factors that determine party level Euroskepticism and how the opposition to European integration structure domestic political competition in

Western Europe. (Heffernan 2001; Taggart and Szczerbiak 2004b) The number of Euroskeptic studies has increased since the scholarly research started exploring the opposition to Europe within the candidate states, particularly in CEE and comparing the Western and Eastern European Euroskepticism. (Bielsiak 2006; Kaniok 2005; Kopecký and Mudde 2002; Markowski and Tucker 2006; Szczerbiak and Taggart 2008; Taggart and Szczerbiak 2002, 2004a) While in the case of CEE candidates the Euroskepticism was argued to increase with the approaching of the EU accession date, it is interesting to examine whether an opposition to Europe exists within its Eastern neighbors, who do not have a clear membership perspective, and if it does exist to explore the nature of Euroskepticism within the EEN party systems.

However, as Ladrech (2002) argues, the focus on the pro- and anti-European integration positions of political parties has overshadowed the EU impact on other aspects of party life. His influential work from 2002 represents one of the most extensive theoretical frameworks within the field, which unpacks the notion of Europeanization of party politics following five dimensions of analysis:

1. policy change: an increased mention of Europe and domestic policy areas where the influence of European integration is more prominent and the emphasis on the potential co-operation with transnational European organizations.
2. organisational change: change of party rules and statutes and the relations with the European federations to which a party belongs
3. party competition: politicization of the European issue; the emergence of new parties based largely on their pro- or anti-EU position, and the strategic use of Europe by the existing parties
4. party-government relations: how the participation of executive representatives in EU forums influence the relation with the party basis and the following of party official program
5. relations beyond the party system: transnational activities and co-operation with other parties from the same party family at the European level.

The changes in these areas as a result of the process of European integration affect both the relations between parties and voters, by increasing the political distance between party elites and masses, and between parties, merely the potential coalition formation and

government formation. (*ibidem*)

Within the large number of studies that take Ladrech's typology as a starting point for case study or comparative research, two major volume contributions examine the Europeanization of national parties. The first one focuses on Western Europe and examines the EU influence on the internal organizational dynamics of national political parties within six member states. (Poguntke et al. 2007) The second one draws on the Central and East European members and has as a starting point the expectation about the non-impact of EU on political parties.⁷ There is no scholarly contribution, however, that would apply Ladrech's framework for the analysis of non-EU members' or candidates' party and party system changes as a result of European integration. Out of the mentioned five dimensions, one of them is not relevant at all for the study of EU outsiders. This is the dimension four, related to the participation of national parties within the European party system and European forums. The present thesis draws its theoretical framework on the other four Ladrech's dimensions and examines the similarities and differences of EU impact in the case of CEE candidates with the case of EEN countries. Because indirect influence is stronger than the direct one in the case of non-EU members, as it will be argued in the next chapter, party competition represents the domain in which the EU impact should be most prominent.

The nature of EU influence: direct versus indirect impact. As in the case of other fields of inquiry of Europeanization research, scholars distinguish between two different types of EU influence on party politics: direct and indirect one.

Ladrech's theoretical framework (2002) represents the major work that presents a series of indicators that detect the EU impact at party level. Four out of five Europeanization dimensions mentioned above from Ladrech's work refer to the direct influence of European integration on party politics: policy/programmatic change, organizational change, party/government relations and transnational party cooperation. Another indicator that points to the direct EU impact on party level is the existence of intra-party splits over Europe. (Taggart 1998) In the case of non-EU members, the nature

⁷ The forthcoming publication in *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics* of the papers presented during the workshop "Beyond Europeanization? The (Non-) Impact of the EU on Party Politics in Central and Eastern Europe," 7 May 2008, UCL School of Slavonic and East European Studies.

of EU influence is different with regard to Ladrech's dimensions. Because EEN states are not full members, nor are they part of the EU accession process, I argue in the next chapter that the major direct party level changes can result from the legislative adjustment to country Action Plan stipulations⁸ and the compliance to EPFs accession requirements.

The indirect influence of the European Union on party level is believed to change the coalition potential of hard Euroskeptic parties because of the negative reaction from the European level in case if these parties (usually being anti-democratic ones) would join the governing parties. (Batory 2008; Lewis 2006a) The EU is likely to have a stronger influence on constraining the coalition building in its candidate countries thanks to its conditionality policy. (Pridham 2002; Vachudová 2005) The homogeneity of party ideological profiles as a result of transnational cooperation with Europarties is another indirect effect of EU level influence on party politics. (Enyedi 2007; Enyedi and Lewis 2006)

Although in the case of East European neighbors the EU conditionality is weaker than in the case of CEE candidates, mostly because the major carrot – EU membership perspective – is missing, it is interesting to examine whether EU can still have a significant influence on party interaction by providing political and material support to liberal-democratic forces and whether it can contribute to the establishment of successful pro-European coalitions. An interesting point of research would be the ‘electoral revolutions’ from Georgia and Ukraine and the role of EU in the emergence of pro-Western/European coalitions, as well as the lack of a ‘color revolution’ in Moldova, where the majority of the relevant parties signed a political partnership for achieving European integration.

With regard to the second type of EU indirect influence on party level – lesson drawing resulting in the ideological homogeneity resulting from transnational party cooperation, this thesis does not investigate it because of the lack of relevant systematic comparative data.

On party system level the influence of European integration process has been

⁸ Country Action Plans represent the official legal framework of EU relations with its Eastern Neighbors and it contains some provisions related to party activity and election conduct.

thoroughly examined by Mair. (2000; 2004; 2006) In his seminal work on old EU members (2000, 29-37) he applies strict criteria for discerning direct from indirect EU impact on party systems. He distinguishes between EU impact on the format (the number of parties and the degree of fragmentation) and the mechanics of a party system (party interaction). The emergence of parties with the explicit and primary purpose of mobilizing voters for or against the EU is regarded as the major indicator of direct EU influence on the format of a party system. Yet, he points out that most of West European parties are not single-issue organizations, but combine in their programs a series of broad objectives. Concerning the mechanics of party system, the scholar suggests the necessity of examining the pro- and anti-European attitudes of the relevant parties. His conclusion is that there is a lack of a significant opposition of West European parties towards the process of European integration, which points to a resistance of national party systems to the direct impact of Europeanization. (idem, 33) However, Mair shows the existence of indirect effects of Europeanization on party system, such as the hollowing out of the competition between parties with governing ambition on the European dimension and the “separation of the world of politics from the wider society,” which indicates a turn-away from the traditional politics that reflects the social cleavages in the party politics. (idem, 28-29)

Yet, Mair’s framework presents limitations for the study of European influence on non-EU party systems. First of all it was built on old EU members, which have a higher degree of party system institutionalization and present a stronger resistance to EU level influence (Poguntke, Aylott et al. 2007) Second of all, for him, as for Landrech, the emergence of pro- and anti-European parties at national level is a direct effect of European level influence. The reason behind this is that although EU is not directly involved in the emergence of pro- or anti-European parties, parties refer directly to the EU and thus this is considered an indicator of direct EU influence. Even if the EU does not exert a direct pressure on parties in this respect, national parties of members states are directly involved in the process of EU policy making, either through Euro-parties within the European Parliament or via intergovernmental channels. Thus, the rise of Euroskeptic feelings among the existing parties as well as the emergence of new parties that oppose EU level decision-making at domestic or European levels (penetration) represents for

Mair an indicator of direct EU impact. (Mair 2006)

However, I argue that in the case of non-EU members the emergence of parties with the purpose of mobilizing support for or against EU represents an indirect impact. The argument is that domestic parties from EEN are not involved at all in the EU policy making, by contrast to old EU members of CEE candidates. Also, I follow the IR line of reasoning of Europeanization literature and the definition of direct and indirect mechanisms and outcomes of EU influence on party politics is based on the existence or absence of specific party-related EU policies and requirements with which the domestic political actors should comply. As the theoretical model from the next chapter will show, the present dissertation regards the instances when parties decide to establish or change their identities based on their ‘Europeaness’ as an indicator of an indirect EU influence on party politics. In this case the EU does not directly affect the party identity via its regulations or policies, nor can it present an environment that allows for a direct connection between the domestic and European level parties and party systems (e.g. Europarties within the EP or European level elections). Consequently, these instances are argued to be the outcome of the flow of ideas between the European and domestic levels and the resulting change in domestic beliefs and expectations. (Knill and Lehmkuhl 2002)

If the empirical evidence from EEN points to the instances of EU impact on the format of a party system, they should be investigated as the result of a voluntary decision of political actors of establishing a new political organization with the purpose of mobilizing support for or against the European integration perspective. The theoretical analysis presented in the next chapter as well as the empirical findings from chapter 5 will show that the emergence of pro- and anti-European parties is the result of strategic calculations of political elites in the context of the change of domestic opportunities available as a result of identification with or criticism of Europe and the process of European integration. For example, for the newly established parties the grounding of their political identity in their Europeaness can give them political legitimacy from the association to European liberal-democratic norms and values and help them to attract the support of the large segment of voters that are in favor of European integration.

The extent of the influence of European integration. There has been a broad

agreement that the process of European integration has had a minimal direct impact on parties and party systems. The literature on Western Europe confirms Mair's argument about the limited EU direct impact on national party systems, which prove to be "the most impervious to change." (Mair 2000, 28) The extensive volume that studied the EU pressure on internal transformation of parties from Western Europe (Poguntke, Aylott et al. 2007) reveals that national parties have been well prepared to face the challenges of Europeanization.

The direct EU influence on parties and party systems has been stronger in the case of post-communist candidates. The Union had more leverage on domestic changes of aspiring members thanks to its conditionality policy that offered political and material incentives for national political parties to transform according to European requirements. (Vachudová 2005, 2008) Also, the liberal-democratic transition of post-communist candidates facilitated the domestic reforms in line with EU standards as the newly emerging political systems has been more open to changes than the well-established Western political systems.

Overall, the process of European integration has had a stronger indirect than direct influence on domestic transformations of parties and party systems. One of the major areas of scholarly interest in examining the indirect EU impact on party interaction is the examination of whether European issue represents a separate axis of competition or it is subsumed to the existing lines of political conflict. The debate between scholars on the interpretation of the way Europe matters for domestic political space raised two main explanations. The first argues that the European issue has been subsumed to the Left-Right dimension of the political spectrum and parties deal with it according to their historical ideological orientation. Parties respond to the new emerging issues, such as the European integration, according to their ideological commitments developed as a result of political cleavages. Building on Lipset and Rokkan's theory of social cleavages, Marks and Wilson argue that parties are organizations that assimilate and make use of the new issues through the existing "historically rooted orientations," which force them to behave in the limits of bounded rationality. (Marks and Wilson 2000, 434)

Marks et al. (2005) argue that party stances on European issues can be predicted fairly accurately if knowing not only its stand on the economic Left-Right axis, but also

on the non-economic, new politics GAL-TAN (Green/Alternative/Libertarian and Traditional/Authority/Nationalism) dimension, which together represent the major dimensions of a political space. In the old EU states it is found a bipolar opposition to European integration, located both at Left and TAN extremes. The main explanation of this fact is that the European Union represents a “centrist project,” being found by the mainstream parties, such as Social-Democrats, Conservatives, Liberals, and Christian-Democrats, which represented the majority in the governing institutions both at the national and European levels. (Aspinwall 2002; Marks et al. 2005; Marks et al. 2002; Taggart 1998) As a result, most of the remaining parties perceive the European dimension as one more confrontational line on which they may oppose the governing parties.

The specific historical developments of post-communist states and the process of European accession determined a different relationship between the European issue and the economic and cultural Left-Right axes in the CEE candidates. The opposition towards the communist past and the compliance to EU joining criteria, which required parties to adopt a pro-market economy (Right), liberal-democratic (GAL) stance lead to a shift of the GAL-TAN dimension at 90 degrees as compared to the old EU members. (Evans and Whitefield 1993; Marks et al. 2005; Vachudová 2008; Vachudová and Hooghe 2006) As a result, Euroskeptic parties are located in the Left-TAN quadrant, while the pro-European ones are found to share a Right-GAL stance, which confirms earlier scholarly findings regarding the connection between the European question and party ideology in the post-communist space. (Kopecký and Mudde 2002; Rohrschneider and Whitefield 2005; Taggart and Szczerbiak 2004a)

In the case of East European neighbors, the weakly institutionalized ideological profiles, as well as the absence of EU accession process determine an even looser relationship between the ideological dimension and the European question and the European issue is not subsumed by the Left-Right axis. However, as the chapter 5 will show, Left wing parties, particularly the non-reformed Communist parties and those promoting the restoration of the Soviet system, as well as the ‘losers’ of transition (Tucker et al. 2002) are associated with Euroskeptic attitudes. The non-economic GAL-TAN has also a different relationship with the European issue as compared to the old EU members or the CEE candidates. I argue that the major difference is in the relationship

between nationalism and the European stance. Because of the longer time period spent under the Soviet rule and the stronger negative impact of Communism on the national identity, culture, and statehood determine most of the pro-reform nationalist forces see the process of European integration as a positive one. These Right wing parties see the EU as a guarantee of the preservation of national identity and even of statehood against the Russian domination in the region. The relationship between the nationalism and the European issue will be examined thoroughly in the chapter 5 of the present thesis.

The idea that parties respond to the European issue according to their ideological position has been contradicted by scholars who perceive the European issue as a maverick issue. (Sitter 2002a) In order to be considered as a maverick one, an issue needs to have a disruptive effect on the existing configuration of party competition and the structure of party system. This term refers to the issues that arise in a bottom-up way and cannot be assimilated by the existing dimensions of party competition but cross-cut them. The values and interests that constitute such an issue, raised by the society, do not fit the major dimensions of a party system. (Moore and Smith 1993) The Euroskepticism studies argue that there is not a linear relationship between ideological orientation and attitudes towards Europe. The evidence that supports this argument is the existence of parties with Euroskeptic stances both on the Right and on the Left of the political spectrum and, therefore, the ideological position is not a good predictor of European attitudes of a party. According to Taggart (1998) and Mair (2000), the mainstream parties are expected to be more pragmatic and moderate in their attitudes towards Europe, while the extreme parties or protest parties, are more likely to adopt a strong Euroscepticism. Even if the mainstream parties can develop Eurosceptic feelings, they are estimated to be ‘soft’ ones, and particularly characteristic for parties that found themselves in opposition, and not in government. (Sitter 2002a, 12)

Sitter points to another explanatory factor of party attitudes on the European issue, drawing from the patterns of political competition. He argues that the attitudes towards EU are dynamic because they depend on the contextual situation of challenges and opportunities for political parties. Hence, the competition between government and opposition is considered to have a significant impact on a party’s Eurosceptic stance. So, the most Euroskeptic parties can be expected to be those that are permanently excluded

from the governmental arena. An opposition party from the Center-Left or Center-Right, which usually contests the politics of the governing party (parties), can afford itself to adopt an anti-European attitude if the ruling party has a pro-European one. (Sitter 2002a, 12-15) This would allow these parties to find allies at the extremes that also share an anti-European position, though a stronger one, and to promote a centrifugal strategy of party competition, aimed at attacking the center. (Sartori 1990)

I argue that party strategic behavior, constrained by its position in a political space (center-extremes) is the major explanatory factor of party European attitudes and of the way the European issue interacts with other lines of political conflict within the EEN. As stated earlier in this chapter, East European parties and party systems are weakly institutionalized and can adopt a cost-benefit approach to EU level norms and requirements. Also, the fact that EEN countries are not part of the accession process allows political actors more flexibility in defining and shifting their European attitudes in the same way as their counterparts from EU member or candidate states. The indirect influence of European integration process on EEN party and party systems will be investigated in the pre-last chapter of the dissertation.

Critical accounts on the ‘Europeanization’ of parties and party systems

Despite the vast number of scholarly contributions to the analysis of the ‘Europeanization’ of national parties and party systems this area of study still faces some serious problems regarding the recognition and the investigation of EU impact. The problem of causality between the domestic and European level factors and processes represents the core dilemma for the study of EU impact on parties and party systems, (Lewis 2006a) similar to the rest of Europeanization literature. It is hard to distinguish whether the changes that occur at party and party system level are EU driven or whether they are the result of other factors. Even if a bottom-up-down approach is the most suitable one in investigating the Europeanization of national parties and party systems, the major difficulty is in discerning clearly what was ‘moving’ within the domestic arena before the contact with European level policies and processes. This concern is particularly important in investigating the EU influence outside its official borders.

With regard to domestic level factors scholars have argued the need of examining

firstly how much of domestic changes can be explained by internal political factors and only afterwards to turn to the analysis of a potential EU impact. One of the major concerns is the problem of differentiating between party strategic behavior (Bielasiak 2004) and the ‘playing with Europe’ (Enyedi 2006b) as opposed to the existence of some EU induced fundamental changes. As it was mentioned earlier, in the case of EEN countries, the newly emerging and weakly institutionalized parties and party systems are more open to changes. The political actors can engage in strategic behavior and benefit from the short-term opportunities offered by the adoption of pro- or anti-European stances instead of focusing on long-term benefits and pursuing some fundamental identity changes in order to comply with their European aspirations. This problem is especially salient in the case of non-EU members or candidates, when there is no direct EU pressure to comply with accession requirements but political parties can decide to adjust voluntarily their portfolios to European liberal-democratic norms and values to obtain, for example, political legitimacy and electoral support.

As the process of European integration takes place together with other regional and international processes it is hard to decide whether the determinant factors of domestic change are the result of European integration or of other regional or international factors. For example, the affiliation to party internationals and party groups within the Council of Europe is usually a requirement set by Euro-parties before granting the membership perspective to national actors. Because the ideological compliance is a common clause both for adhering to party internationals and Euro-parties it is hard to discern what is the nature and the extent of European level influence on party identity change in this case.

The difficulty of discerning the nature and the extent of EU influence on party politics is also determined by the measurement problem. For example, the use of the number of EU programmatic references as an indicator of European level influence might point to party programmatic changes but the number itself does not tell much about the intensity of EU impact. It is hard to understand how significant the EU impact can be without examining the influence of programmatic change on party discourse, its interaction with other political actors, or on public opinion. (Batory paper, p.2-3)

Another important methodological problem deals with the time dimension. The

interconnection of the EU accession with domestic level processes ('triple transition') as well as with regional⁹ and international¹⁰ ones makes it hard to apply a time sensitive political analysis in order to draw a clear causal chain between the European and national levels. While most of the Europeanization scholars prefer to take as a starting point the signing of the Association agreement or the official joining of the EU, in the case of the study of the political parties it is hard to determine when the EU started exercising a direct and particularly an indirect influence. This problem is particularly prominent in the case of non-EU members, when political parties can engage voluntarily in reforming themselves according to European standards even before the launching of an official EU conditionality or despite a weak direct influence from the European level.

While analyzing the broader impact of the European integration process most of the literature suggests a positive influence on party system stability and, as a consequence, on democratic consolidation in general. However, the negative effect of European integration on national parties and party systems has been seldom examined and the few cases when scholars have paid attention to this type of influence include the CEE candidates and later new member states.¹¹ (Bielasiak 2006; Enyedi 2007; Lewis 2006a) Thus, the future research should expand its focus and provide a more in-depth analysis of the potential negative effect of the EU influence on party system institutionalization and democratic consolidation, particularly in the case of the post-communist CEE countries.

Finally, a serious limitation is the primary assumption about the existence of EU influence on party politics, especially in the case of post-communist candidate states and the risk of stretching the EU role in the transformation of domestic political actors. The recent contributions to the study of the EU influence in CEE party and party system change starts with the non-traditional assumption about the non-impact of EU and suggests a limited EU level influence on party politics in the post-communist Europe. ¹²

⁹ For example the cooperation within the Visegrad Group, Central European Initiative CEI, Southeast European Cooperative Initiative SECI, etc.).

¹⁰ Such as joining the North-Atlantic Treaty Organization.

¹¹ After the recent accession of CEE countries scholars start raising concern regarding the potential downturn to party and party system instability. (Petrovic 2006)

¹² The forthcoming publication in *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics* of the papers presented during the workshop "Beyond Europeanization? The (Non-) Impact of the EU on Party Politics in Central and Eastern Europe ,," 7 May 2008, UCL School of Slavonic and East European Studies.

Conclusion

Departing from the theoretical arguments of the three mentioned above theoretical debates, the present thesis aims at providing a theoretical framework for the analysis of EU influence on EEN party politics that addresses their major shortcomings. First of all, in order not to stretch the EU role in party and party system transformations the study lays down its theoretical framework at the intersection of the IR and CP approaches, which will be discussed in the next chapter. Although the causality and the time dimension problem cannot be completely overcome, the work aims at providing a more accurate analysis of the relationship between the European and domestic level factors and processes by distinguishing the major variables from each level of analysis that are responsible for the different nature and extent of EU involvement in domestic transformation of EEN parties and party systems.

The dissertation does not aim at isolating and examining the sole EU impact on EEN party and party system changes. It is true that the EU is considered to be the major player among the other European level institutions in stimulating and supporting party and party system level transformations in line with European liberal-democratic norms and practices. Yet, as it will be conceptualized in the next section, the work focuses on the EEN party and party systems reaction to European integration process, with reference to all the other European level institutions that promote similar norms and standards to those on which the EU is based.¹³

For the sake of avoiding the methodological problem of operationalizing the impact of European integration process from domestic, as well as regional and international level factors, the present research limits its focus on the EEN party and party system reaction to European norms and requirements. The two ways in which the EU can induce domestic level political transformations are the legislative compliance with the requirements set within the legal framework that defines Brussel's relations with its neighbors – Action Plans, as well as the compliance to accession requirements of European Party Federations. Because the EU cannot be directly involved in other type of domestic transformations in the case of EEN, the rest of instances of party identification

¹³ Specifically Council of Europe CoE, European Free Trade Association EFTA, Organization for Security and Cooperation OSCE.

with or adaptation to European norms and standards, as well as the role of the European issue within party interaction, are considered to be indirect modes of EU involvement in party and party system transformations.

The dissertation aims at overcoming the measurement problem of different indicators of EU level influence on party politics. In order to provide the broader picture the dissertation integrates and compares the advantages and disadvantages of different methodological analyses and alternative empirical datasets, such as MRG manifesto content-analysis, expert surveys, and party leaders interviews, as well as secondary sources.

Finally, this thesis addresses one of the core limitations of the literature on the EU impact on domestic transformations – the case selection. It expands the research to the cases of non-EU members and it offers new theoretical and empirical insights regarding the existence and the power of European issue for domestic change outside its official borders. It does not start with the assumption of the existence of a EU impact on party politics. Its goal is to examine the different scenarios of EU induced domestic changes, be they positive, negative, or not present at all.

Chapter 3. Theoretical Framework, Concepts and Methods

Introduction

The following section lays down the theoretical and methodological framework of the dissertation. Departing from the discussed above advantages and disadvantages of different theoretical approaches, I advance a theoretical model for the study of EU impact on party and party system transformations within EEN based on IR and CP approaches.

The work advances four major modes of EU influence on party politics resulting from the interaction of the main variables from the domestic level: political elite's freedom (more or less constrained) and the type of EU involvement (direct versus indirect). From the IR perspective, I examine the role of EU's 'carrots and sticks' as well as the degree of clarity of EU requirements in determining the nature and the strength of European level pressure on domestic transformations. Concomitantly, from the CP perspective, I examine the role of domestic constraints on the degree of political elite's commitment in transforming according to European level norms and standards, with a primary analysis of the role of opposition parties as a major veto player.

After presenting the theoretical framework, the thesis turns to the conceptualization of the major terms of the research, such as the notion of Europeanization, the European issue and the European dimension, as well as the clarification of party and party system institutionalization. This section is followed by the explanation of the methodological framework, with the focus on the analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of the two main methods and databases: party program content analysis and expert surveys. The final part of the chapter argues the selection of cases and highlights the benefits and limitations of the analysis of a small number of cases.

Theoretical framework of analyzing EU influence on parties and party systems of EEN

As it was already mentioned in the previous chapter, EU policies of democracy promotion are broadly defined, lacking a significant degree of determinacy and some specific pathways according to which the political system of a country should transform

itself. Concomitantly, the European Union does not possess some powerful ‘sticks’ in relations with its East European Neighbors, in form of sanctions for example, which would allow Brussels to exercise a strong direct influence on the process of building political pluralist societies and assuring the stability of party systems and thus contributing to democratic consolidation in the region. As a consequence, the EU involvement in promoting and implementing liberal democratic transformations in the political arena of EEN is mostly based on persuasion rather than coercion and the Union has merely an indirect influence on political transformations rather than a direct one.

Table 1 aims at providing a better understanding of the relationship between the nature of domestic political elite’s freedom and the degree and nature of EU involvement in internal political transformations. Two major variables from domestic and European levels are included in the framework of analysis. Firstly, the extent of political elite’s freedom (operationalized and more or less constrained) depends merely on the degree of domestic political and societal resistance or support of EU institutional templates and practices, in general, and EU policies designed for different national and sub-national actors in particular, conditional on the mentioned-above domestic factors. I consider liberal-democratic opposition parties as the major veto players because of their strength in inducing radical changes in domestic political processes, which will be exemplified in the following chapters by the role of liberal-democratic opposition in carrying out ‘electoral revolutions’ or in bringing to a potential political deadlock in Moldovan case during presidential elections in 2005.

Secondly, the degree of EU involvement highly depends on the nature and the degree of EU pressure, or the power that European Union possesses in influencing domestic changes. Scholars have stressed the importance of distinguishing between two different types of EU pressure: direct and indirect pressure emanated from Brussels, which determine different mechanisms and outcomes of Europeanization process. (Diez et al. 2006; Knill and Lehmkuhl 1999; Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier 2004, 2005b; Vachudová 2001, 2005, 2006) Both of the cases can be present in member states and outsiders, but indirect EU pressure is more influential than the direct one in the case of non-EU countries. The European level variable – the degree of EU involvement – is operationalized in the present analysis as direct and indirect.

While analyzing the direct EU influence I examine the role of two major intervening variables highlighted by scholars working on EU conditionality: the size of politico-material incentives offered by the EU and the degree of clarity of EU requirements. It should be stressed that these two variables are considered important only in the case of the direct EU influence, with reference to the adjustment of party-related legislation and the accession process to European Party Federations.

An important factor that determines the extent of EU pressure is represented by the material and political incentives that EU can offer as carrots in order to stimulate the domestic actors to follow its rules. (Grabbe 2003, 2005; Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier 2005b; Vachudová 2005) However, as compared to EU candidates from Central and Eastern Europe, the ‘carrots’ offered by the EU to political actors as a reward for successful liberal democratic transformation are much weaker in the case of its eastern neighbors, such as Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia. Most importantly, the most powerful EU instrument in promoting domestic changes - full membership perspective – is missing from the framework of ENP. As a consequence, the EU direct force is significantly diminished in determining successful democratic transformations within the political arenas of its Eastern post-Soviet outsiders.

The degree of clarity of EU requirements represents another important factor in determining the direct European impact on domestic transformations. In order to observe a high direct EU pressure on non-member states, EU policies should be determinate, that is unambiguously designed and holding a binding power. (Franck 1990, 52-83; Legro 1997, 34; Schimmelfennig and Schwellnus 2006, 5) Some scholars have referred to it as the ‘density’ of the rules or the extent of EU demands (Jacoby 2004, 9-10). Scholars have stressed that a clear formulation of EU requirements is of significant importance for determining the effectiveness of their implementation and for avoiding a potential political distortion (Tocci 2008, 890)

TABLE 1 NEAR HERE

With regard to the analysis of indirect EU influence, the theoretical model builds merely on the literature of Europeanization of political parties. The major intervening

variables that determine the way in which Europe matters for party politics are party strategic behavior and party/government relation.

Direct EU influence. Table 1 presents four different modes of EU influence on parties and party systems in the East European Neighborhood. The first mode (1) is represented by the case when there is a direct EU pressure to reform according to European requirements and the domestic elites have a certain degree of obligation to act according to Brussels requirements as a result of the mutually signed agreements. The Action Plans (APs) signed between each of the three examined countries and the EU stipulate the strengthening of the stability and effectiveness of institutions guaranteeing democracy and the rule of law as the first priority. They also indicate some specific steps that have to be undertaken by political leadership of each country. So, for example, the states have to ensure the democratic conduct of local, parliamentary and presidential elections in accordance to European standards (such as pluralism, freedom of speech and media, respect of minority rights, non discrimination on grounds of gender, and on political, religious and ethnic views), and the effective dialogue between the different political forces of the country.

In order to comply with EU requirements the domestic political elites would have to adopt some specific legislation that would address these issues according to European standards. The mentioned above EU policies are not well specified and lack a clear description of the steps that have to be undertaken in order to fulfill the implementation of AP priorities at domestic level, thus offering the political elites a certain degree of freedom in their actions during domestic transformations. As it is the case with EU political conditionality in general, what counts as meeting the criteria of the implementation of EU regulations depends from case to case, from a specific policy area to a particular country, because EU lacks institutional templates to measure the compliance with its requirements.(Grabbe 2003) Yet, the EU direct pressure is still present and imposes an obligation on the countries that signed the AP to act according to its stipulations.

The second mode (2) of EU influence on internal political changes characterizes the cases when there is a degree of direct pressure emanated from Brussels, yet the initiative to transform according to European standards comes from the domestic level.

An illustration of such an adjustment is the initiative of some parties from East European neighborhood to comply with affiliation requirements of different European Party Federations (EPFs) of European Parliament (EP). Post-communist parties engage in such a compliance voluntarily, mostly driven by the perceived political legitimacy benefits they can obtain both at domestic and European/international levels as a result of their affiliation to one of the EU-based party groupings. Once the parties step on the path towards the status of an EPF observer, they come under a direct influence from the European level as they have to pass the final exam of the compliance to EPF's requirements. Apart from the politico-intellectual and politico-material support that EPFs offer for domestic transformation of EEN parties, they also provide an important source of political legitimacy and international credibility regarding post-communist parties' commitment to the promotion of democratic reforms and their European aspirations. (Delsoldato 2002, 278; Pridham 1999, 1225; 2001, 184) For Left wing parties, for example, obtaining the status of PES observer is of major importance for proving the domestic public and EU that they reformed themselves and could get over the communist past.

The present mechanism refers to the mainstream EU-based parties, or the so-called stable “core” of the Euro-party system – the European People’s Party EPP,¹⁴ the Party of European Socialists PES and the European Liberal, Democrat, and Reform Party ELDR. (Smith 1989) As these EPFs hold the majority seats within the European Parliament they are actively involved in EU policy making and in the promotion of European integration and of EU-based norms and values. Consequently, this mode of European influence does not apply to EPFs that are Euroskeptic and oppose the process of European integration and the nature of the European Union.¹⁵

Indirect EU influence. After clarifying the possible modes of direct Brussels’ involvement in domestic political transformations, we now turn our attention to the study of cases when the direct EU pressure is missing. The third box (3) of the table 1 describes cases when the European Union exercises a high degree of indirect influence on parties and

¹⁴ Currently the Parliamentary Group of the European People’s Party – European Democrats.

¹⁵ Particularly the case of the European Left, which gathers most of the anti-establishment Marxist-Leninist parties that oppose the capitalist nature of the EU and its liberal-democratic values and are the most anti-European party network from the continent.

party system developments, which determines certain constraints on domestic political actors' behavior. As Knill and Lehmkuhl mention (1999) one of the indirect mechanisms of Europeanization, which is also to be found merely outside EU borders, is the change of domestic structure of opportunities and constraints available for political actors. By the nature of its existence and as a result of the flow of ideas between the European and national levels within the EU environment, EU can influence indirectly domestic transformations through changes in domestic beliefs and expectations and, thus, through changes in domestic political actor's preferences. (Börzel and Risse 2003; Checkel 1999; Knill and Lehmkuhl 2002; Liebert 2003; Radaelli 1997)

At party level, the indicator of this mode of EU influence is the increase or decrease of coalition potential of domestic parties as a result of the adoption of a pro- or anti-European position. On the one hand, Brussels can increase the coalition potential of domestic actors by encouraging (through material and political incentives) internal political parties that attach importance to European norms and practices. Since the first years of post-communist transition the European Union has become a symbolic point of reference for successful democratization. It has been a valuable source of moral support for political forces through its identification with liberal-democratic and market economy values and the pro-European political elites linked the prospects for the new democratic society with the ideal of EU membership perspective. (Legro 1997, 62). The interaction between European representatives and the domestic actors¹⁶ contributes to the increase of the electoral campaign and the electoral results of pro-European parties and their closer collaboration under the pro-European orientation.

On the other hand, based on Euroscepticism studies (Kopecký and Mudde 2002; Szczerbiak and Taggart 2008; Taggart 1998; Taggart and Szczerbiak 2004b) EU can constrain coalition potential, particularly of extreme Eurosceptic parties or of those who do not define clearly their European stance in the case when the electorate, as well as most of the mainstream parties, are in favor of European liberal-democratic norms and market economy and of European integration in general. The decreased coalition potential is expected to lower the chances of domestic actor for obtaining the governing

¹⁶ Specifically opposition leaders in case of governments that were not strong supporters of liberal-democratic reforms. (see Vachudová 2005)

mandate. Moreover, in the case of a stronger EU indirect influence, once a soft or a hard Eurosceptic party would come to power it can also be constrained in adopting a moderate position towards the EU or even become a Europhile because of the need to follow the European aspirations of domestic electorate.

At party system level, the EU can influence indirectly party interaction and the patterns of coalition formation. The indicator of the degree of EU influence is the salience of the European issue and the existence of a competition based on pro- and anti-European attitudes. The European issue can be either subsumed to the existing political divides (particularly to the ideological Left-Right axis (Kopecký and Mudde 2002; Rohrschneider and Whitefield 2005; Taggart and Szczerbiak 2004a)) or it can create a new political divide, acting like a ‘maverick issue.’(Sitter 2002a) The two major intervening variables that determine the way in which Europe matters for party politics are party strategic behavior and party/government relation. So, if the empirical evidence shows that parties can engage in a strategic behavior aimed at maximizing their electoral support or at obtaining more offices, then the expectation is that party strategy, and not party ideology, is the major determinant of European attitudes of EEN political actors. Also, following scholarly reasoning from the case of Western democracies and CEE candidates (Ladrech 2002; Sitter 2002a) I argue that the shift from opposition to government might constrain party European stance and its strategic behavior and can determine a shift from a Euroskeptic position to a moderate or even a clear pro-European position.

In a broader perspective the process of European integration can influence the degree of party system institutionalization in two different ways. The European question can represent a valence issue and thus determine a less confrontational political competition, (Kostelecký 2002) representing a unifying force for the mainstream political parties with the aim of achieving the major goal of European integration. In this case the European question will have a positive influence on the format of a party system. The second scenario is that Europe has a minor, if at all, influence on the patterns of party interaction and it is party strategy that determines different European stances, which can be changed with the aim of achieving short-term benefits. In this case the European issue represents just another dimension on which parties can compete in order to gain

maximum advantages.

Finally, the fourth mode (4) of EU influence on domestic political transformations is characterized by a low degree of EU indirect pressure and a greater degree of freedom of political actors in reacting to European integration process. The indicator of such a type of EU influence is the emergence of parties with the explicit goal of mobilizing support for or against European integration. Although the EU membership perspective has not been offered to any of the examined countries, as Knill and Lehmkuhl (2002) argue, the flow of ideas between the European and domestic levels can contribute to the change of domestic beliefs and expectations. It is in this context that I regard the instances when parties decide to establish or change their identities based on their ‘Europeaness’ as an indicator of an indirect EU influence on party politics. In this respect my theoretical approach differs from the common understanding of the emergence of pro- and anti-European parties as an indicator of direct EU influence in the case of old EU members and CEE candidates. (Mair 2000, 2006) The EEN parties may establish their identity in their European stance in order to differentiate themselves from other parties and if they perceive that this action can help them in increasing their electoral support. Europe can therefore influence the format of a party system by increasing the degree of fragmentation as a result of the emergence of this type of parties.

Also, an example of this mode of EU influence is party lesson-drawing from the experience of political actors of EU member states and the standardization of party ideologies with their Western counterparts. It can result in positive learning (following successful European level policies and processes) or negative learning (gathering knowledge from the negative experience of member states’ political forces while dealing with a certain issue or with the programmatic content of a party’s platform). The outcome can also be a simple use of information gathered within the European club of states to simply repackage the existing domestic policies during political competition. (Dolowitz 2003, 103) This mode of EU influence, however, will not be examined in the present research.¹⁷

¹⁷ The major reason for not examining this mode of EU influence is the lack of systematic data that would allow a comparative analysis.

Concepts

'Europeanization' versus the influence of European integration. Although the present work is part of the Europeanization literature on party and party system development the term 'Europeanization' is not used in this research. The main cause for excluding this term is the problem of conceptualization and operationalization. A simple definition of Europeanization is its common understanding as the domestic reaction to European integration process, where European integration refers not only to European Union, but also to other European level institutions (Council of Europe CoE, European Free Trade Association EFTA, Organization for Security and Cooperation OSCE) that are closely linked to EU by their common rules and objectives (to be discussed in the following chapters). This basic conceptualization has evolved together with the different approaches of Europeanization research and it rises above other terms previously used to describe the influence of European integration on domestic structures, such as domestication, Unionization, or EU-ization.

An important moment in conceptualizing the term Europeanization is the clarification of its relation to European integration. Depending on the representation of the distinction between the two mentioned above concepts, scholars have understood and interpreted differently the mechanisms and the effects of Europeanization process. Cowles, Caporaso and Risse, for example, described Europeanization as the creation and the development at the European level of distinct structures of governance." (2001, 3) Yet, this conceptualization seems almost synonymous with the notion of European integration, as opposed to the process induced by it - Europeanization. In a later work, Caporaso (2006, 27) elaborates more on the concept of Europeanization, defining it as a term that "turns the causal arrows around and asks how European integration and everyday policy-making affect domestic structures" and claims that it accounts for phenomena by which national level structures adjust to European integration process.

Olsen (2002), in his turn, does not draw a clear difference between the two terms. Understanding Europeanization as domestic changes resulted from the evolving European polity, his concern is merely the study of what, how, and why is changing rather than the supply of a clear definition of Europeanization. However, some of the five areas identified by Olsen for examining what is changing can be understood as aspects of

the evolving process of European integration (e.g. the development of supranational institutions, the adoption and promotion of European legislation, as well as the political nature of European project, or European enlargement). (Howell 2004, 8)

One of the major difficulties in presenting a clear definition of Europeanization is the fact that it does not represent an “objective entity” per se, but a sum of “contested discourses and narratives” on the influence of European integration on domestic structures. (Radaelli and Pasquier 2006, 35) As a result, Europeanization is “what political actors make of it” (*ibid.*).

A major contribution for the conceptualization of Europeanization is the recent study of Radaelli and Pasquier (2006). The authors draw attention to the fact that the ‘encyclopedic’ definition of Europeanization as “Europe of Brussels” is confusing and state that the term Europeanization refers to the study of the “effects of European integration on domestic polity, politics, and policy” (*idem*, 36). Also, the scholars specify that in order to be able to speak about the existence of effects of European integration on domestic changes, EU level processes have to be a “reference point” for national level political activity (*idem*, 37).

This last point is one of the major reasons why the scholars have been trying to avoid the concept of Europeanization in investigating the relationship between the European level processes and domestic party and party system changes. The lack of some clear “reference points” for the transformation of national parties and party systems has been a key problem in investigating the mechanisms and outcomes of European level influence. The use of the term becomes even more problematic in the case of non-EU members, when the indirect influence of European integration process is the dominant one, with a lower level (if at all) of direct EU impact on political transformations. The major constraint in this case is the filtering out of the European level impact from other factors, both from the domestic and the international levels. (Lehmkuhl 2006)

In these circumstances, I refer in my dissertation to the influence of European integration process instead of the Europeanization of party politics and party systems. The primary focus of research is on the EU influence, understood also as the EU involvement or EU impact, as the Union is the major promoter of European norms and patterns and the nucleus of European integration. Yet, I refer also to the influence of

Council of Europe and the OSCE, which are closely linked to EU by their common rules and objectives of democracy promotion.

The concept of European issue or the European question refers to the political debate over the EU and the European integration perspective. The European dimension of political competition represents the sum of party stances towards EU and European integration.

Party and party system institutionalization. The broader objective of the present research is the investigation of the influence of European integration process on party and party system institutionalization. Therefore, it is worth clarifying the definition of the two concepts mentioned above.

Despite its valuable contribution to the study of party systems, Sartori's two dimensional typology of party systems mostly ignored and poorly defined the degree of consolidation, or the differences in the level of institutionalization of various party system. His dichotomous view on party systems as consolidated or non-consolidated raised a major problem for examining party interaction in the cases of less consolidated party systems that fall in between his classification. Studies of emerging democracies from Latin America (Coppedge 1998; Mainwaring 1999; Mainwaring and Scully 1995; Mainwaring and Torcal 2006; Molina and Pérez 2004), Africa (Kuenze and Lambright 2001; Lindberg 2007), or post-communist space (Bielasiak 1997, 2001; Grzymala-Busse 2002; Lewis 2006b; Markowski 2000; Tóka 1997) stress the importance of studying the degree of institutionalization of a party system in addition to the two major dimensions advanced by Sartori in his typology. In the present study I agree with most of the scholars who diverge from Sartori's dichotomous perception of party system consolidation because, as Parson correctly noted, "institutionalization is a matter of degree not of absolute presence or absence." (1951, 20) Therefore, one needs to perceive party system institutionalization as a continuum rather than a dichotomy in order to investigate the specific patterns of institutionalization or de-institutionalization of a party system.

The history of party system institutionalization can be also traced to Sartori's classic work, where he talks about structured and non-structured party systems, or consolidated systems and non-systems (1976). Yet, Mainwaring and Scully, in their study from 1995 are the first one to introduce the concept of party system institutionalization,

initiating a new era of the study of this area of political science. By party system institutionalization they mean “the process by which a practice or organization becomes well established and widely known, if not universally acceptable.” (Mainwaring and Scully 1995, 4) Some scholars prefer to use other concepts to describe the same process, such as party system stabilization (Bakke and Sitter 2005; Birch 2003; Krupavicius 1999; Lane and Ersson 2007), consolidation (Horowitz and Browne 2005; Tóka 1997) or structuring (Morlino 1995; Sartori 1976). Although in the present work I give preference to the concept of party system institutionalization, I still refer sometimes to other scholarly concepts mentioned-above to describe this process.

The growing scholarly interest in the study of party system institutionalization, particularly in the case of the establishing democracies, starting with Mainwaring and Scully’s work (1995) led to the emergence of a diversity of dimensions that are considered to characterize the level of institutionalization. A classification of the major dimensions highlighted in the literature on party system institutionalization reveals a broad diversity. So, with regard to internal aspects of party systems, scholars highlight the importance of *continuity and stability* in party alternatives and in the patterns of inter-party competition (Bielsiak 2001; Krupavicius 1999; Mainwaring and Scully 1995; Mair 1997b; Meleshevich 2007; Morlino 1995; Randall and Svåsand 2002), parties’ *mutual acceptance* of each other as legitimate competitors (Randall and Svåsand 2002), as well as party level variables, such as *stable party roots* in the society (Mainwaring and Scully 1995; Morlino 1995; Welfling 1973) or *party organization* (Mainwaring and Scully 1995; Tóka 1997). Some researchers emphasize also the importance of external aspects of party system, particularly of the *degree of autonomy* that refers to the interaction of the party system with its environment and state (Meleshevich 2007; Randall and Svåsand 2002), and *external legitimacy*, when voters and interest groups perceive parties and electoral mechanisms as legitimate (Mainwaring and Scully 1995; Randall and Svåsand 2002).

Overall, there is a lot of disagreement in the literature concerning the characteristics of party system institutionalization, their operationalization and measurement. On the one hand, this does not represent one of exceptional cases in political science, because as Randall and Svåsand well noted, it is the faith of “the most interesting and fruitful concepts in political science” to be “multi-dimensional and riddled

with ambiguities and tensions.” (2002, 12) On the other hand, it presents serious problems in the empirical research of the level of institutionalization, particularly while applying a cross-national analysis. Some scholars use different names to characterize basically the same dimensions of party systems.¹⁸ Also, different indicators are applied to study the same dimension, but the reverse situation is also present: scholars tend to apply the same indicator to explain different dimensions of party system institutionalization. (Casal Bértoa 2007) For example, analyzing the *degree of stability* researchers apply a more quantitative approach (party fractionalization (Bielsiak 2001; Morlino 1995; Tóka 1997) or volatility and proportionality indexes (Birch 2003; Mainwaring and Scully 1995; Meleshevich 2007)) or a qualitative one (patterns of government formation and alteration (Mair 1997b)). In a reverse mode, geographic patterns of voting are used by Welfling (1973) to investigate the *scope* dimension, while Meleshevich applies it for the study of *autonomy* dimension.

However, despite the broad scholarly disagreement on different dimensions of party system institutionalization, there appears to be a general consensus, to which I also subscribe, that *stability* in the type and rules of inter-party competition represents the necessary component for a party system to be considered as institutionalized. (Lindberg 2007) It is exactly because of the major importance of *stability* and continuity in party interaction for investigating the level of party system institutionalization that the present work focuses on the examination of this particular dimension. Without a certain degree of continuity and predictability over time of patterns of party competition and of the rules of the game there cannot be achieved the institutionalization of a party system.

The concept of party institutionalization lacks a clear definition, one of the reasons being its confusion in the literature with the notion of party system institutionalization. The analysis of research on party level institutionalization reveals several important dimensions that represent the core elements of the concept. Most of the scholars highlight the significance of two aspects of party development in measuring the level of institutionalization. In agreement with the vast majority of scholars, the concept

¹⁸ For example, as Casal Bértoa (2007) observed, Welfling (1973) uses the term *boundary* to describe the same external dimension of a party system that Randall and Svåsand (2002) and recently Meleshevich (2007) call *autonomy*, Welfling’s *scope* refers to what Mainwaring and Scully (1995) call *stable party roots*, while Randall and Svåsand’s (2002) internal dimension on partisan trust and commitment – *appreciation by the electorate* – expresses the same what Mainwaring and Scully (1995) call *legitimacy*.

of party consolidation is defined in this dissertation following two characteristics: the existence of *stable roots* at societal level and the *stability in organizational structure* or *party systemness*, understood as the growing scope, density and regularity (routinization) of the interactions that constitute the party as an organization. (Jin 1995; Levitsky 1998; Mainwaring and Scully 1995; Randall and Svåsand 2002)

One of the greatest problems of the research on party and party system institutionalization is the unit of analysis. There has been a large confusion and overlap between the study of the level of institutionalization of parties and party systems, the implication being that “the institutionalization of the party system directly depends on that of individual parties,” because parties represent the primary components of a party system. (Meleshevich 2007, 16) I stand for a clear differentiation between the two units of analysis, because it is not possible to trace a clear relationship between party and party system level institutionalization. As Randall and Svasand (2002, 6) correctly noted, there can be cases when although parties may have a significant level of institutionalization, their patterns of interaction within a specific party system may not be, and the reverse situation is also possible. Therefore, although the literature on this subject suggests a positive and significant correlation between party and party system institutionalization in democratic societies, the relationship between the two variables cannot be described as a linear one. (Mainwaring and Torcal 2006; Randall and Svåsand 2002; Wallis 2003)

Based on the mentioned above reasoning, the present research focuses on the investigation of the European integration process on two units of analysis: party level and party system level with the broader objective of examining the EU impact on the degree of institutionalization of parties and party systems within the EEN. I argue that it is particularly important to differentiate between the two units of analysis while studying the newly emerging post-communist democracies, where within the short period of time since their declaration of independence individual political parties may have not achieved a considerable level of institutionalization, yet we might witness relatively stable and predictable inter-party interaction. It is what Sitter (2002b) refers to as the ‘paradox’ in the case of East Central Europe, where he finds a high degree of instability of parties with comparatively stable patterns of political competition. Thus, stability at the level of party system organization is not to be regarded as a guarantee of stability in the patterns of

political competition. (Bakke and Sitter 2005, 246) In this context, my research separates the analysis of party level and party system level institutionalization and deviates from scholars who use party level variables to explain party system institutionalization. (Bielasiak 2001; Birch 2003; Horowitz and Browne 2005; Krupavicius 1999; Mainwaring and Scully 1995; Morlino 1995; Tóka 1997)

Methodology

The research constitutes a comparative longitudinal analysis of political parties in the three selected countries: Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia. The examined time period includes all parliamentary elections after the declaration of independence in 1990's until the year 2008. The study includes all relevant parties, defined by Sartori's criteria.¹⁹

The two major data sources of the present project are represented by party electoral programs dataset and expert surveys. The first one consists of MRG (Manifesto Research Group) dataset on Georgia and Ukraine (from the first parliamentary elections until the last ones) and my own dataset on Moldovan parties, developed for the MRG and under the supervision of Andrea Volkens. Election programs cover a broad range of political positions and issues and, according to Budge et.al.,²⁰ can be regarded as a "set of key central statements of party positions." They are representative statements for the whole party, and not statements of one group within the party. Because they appear before every parliamentary election, they offer a possibility of studying the changes of parties' positions over time. Hence, manifesto dataset provides valuable information with regard to the importance (salience) of different issues (including the European one) for parties' programmatic content, their ideological profile, and offers the possibility of a comparative longitudinal analysis both at intra- and inter-state levels.

The MRG data is based on the textual approach of extracting party positions from its electoral manifestos. The philosophy behind MRG, based on the salience theory of

¹⁹ Two party counting rules are advanced by Sartori: 1. a minor party should be discarded only if it is "never needed or put to use for any feasible coalition majority" and 2. all the parties that affect the tactics of party competition, particularly the direction of competition of governing-oriented parties, are considered relevant. (Sartori 1976, 122-123)

²⁰ Ian Budge, David Robertson, and Derek Hearl (eds.) (1987), *Ideology, Strategy and Party Change: Spatial Analysis of Post-War Election Programs in 19 Democracies* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP), p.18.

party competition, (Budge and Farlie 1983) is the investigation of the salience or the relative emphasis of different themes found in party manifestos. Following the salience theory, many of MRG policy categories are unidirectional, lacking a differentiation between negative and positive references. (Ray 2007) Yet, the European ‘theme’ is one of the categories that examine both the positive and the negative party attitudes.

MRG coding procedures asks the coder to place each sentence in only one category out of 56 existing ones. Sometimes, the reference to European Community and the European level policies more than one category seems to apply (e.g. Foreign Special Relations, or Internationalism), particularly in the case of EEN, where parties are more inclined to make general references to EU and European integration within the broader context of ‘Western foreign policy orientation,’ regional integration and cooperation, etc. The strict categorization of direct party references to EU also fails to include references to EU norms and values, such as, for example, minority rights. (Enyedi 2007, 66) As a result, both the number of positive and negative references to the EU can be reduced because of the limitations of the textual coding.

In conclusion, the MRG dataset provides information on the salience of the European issue for party programs and for domestic competition. However, it does not allow for discerning the real position a party adopts towards a specific issue. The dataset presents also a limitation in drawing more clearly pro- and anti-European stances of parties and in connecting the European issue with the Left-Right ideological axis, as well as other major dimensions of political competition.

Another shortcoming of manifesto research is the fact that the sole observation of party mentions regarding EU and European integration does not tell us anything about the existence of a discernable impact of these stances on party political discourse and its interaction with other political forces. Also, it is not possible to explore under which circumstances a change in party European discourse appears and whether this change is for good or a temporary one, for example determined by government/opposition shift or by party strategic calculations.

In this respect, the analysis of expert survey data represents a valuable set of information that complements much of the variation found in the MRG dataset. Having real scores for each of the major parties on their European stance and on other major

dimensions of post-communist political spaces, the expert surveys offer the opportunity to trace a clearer interaction of the European issue with other party policy stances. Unfortunately there is only one expert survey that covers the three examined countries, conducted by the author in 2006. However, the present study analyzes also Benoit/Laver expert survey from 2003-2004, which covers only Ukraine (2002 parliamentary elections) and Moldova (2001 elections), in order to present the evolution of party positions between the time periods covered by the two expert surveys.

In Benoit and Laver in 2003-2004 the experts were asked to determine party stands on the major dimensions of a political space, such as economic, social, EU joining, environment, nationalism, Left-Right, etc. on a 20 points scale, ranging from 1= strongly opposed to 20= favors. There are two different codes for each of the examined issues, representing party position and the importance of a certain issue for party politics.

Timuș 2006 expert survey has been carried out with the primary purpose of collecting empirical data for the present research. It covers Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia and it includes 20 experts from each country. It uses a 10 points scale ranging from 1= strongly opposed to 10= favors. The expert survey covers a variety of questions, such as party ideological profile, its position on freedoms and rights and market economy, nationalism, EU and European integration and other major dimensions of the three political spaces (anti-communist divide, Russia/CIS). As compared to Benoit and Laver survey, this expert survey provides more in-depth information regarding party stances on country's major political divides and more accurate measurement of some country specific issue. An example is the investigation of the relationship between nationalism and the European issue. Timuș 2006 survey refers to country nationalism and Russian/pan-Slavic nationalism as separate categories, instead of a general reference to nationalism used by Benoit and Laver. This offers the possibility of including into country nationalism category both Romanian and Moldovan nationalist discourses, which in Moldovan case represent alternative political discourses to country nationalism. Concomitantly, it allows for the evaluation of the relationship between the European dimension with country nationalism, on the one hand, and with Russian/pan-Slavic

nationalism,²¹ on the other hand, and gives more insights in explaining the nature of Euroskepticism in the three examined countries.

The use of both electoral manifestos and expert surveys allows for a cross-validation of the two most commonly used measures of party positioning on European integration, as well as on other issues. It makes possible the avoidance of individual measurement errors of which suffer each of the data sources (e.g. subjective judgment, informational asymmetry, or temporal constraints in the case of expert data, or declared salience, timing, or intra-party dissent for the election manifestos).²²

The methodology used is a combination of qualitative and quantitative analysis. First I provide a discourse analysis of the electoral programs and other party programmatic documents for examining the major political issues discussed by parties in each of the countries, which are worth being investigated for the purpose of this research.

Following a qualitative analysis of parties programmatic documents, I examine what major arguments parties use in expressing their European position, what are the issues most commonly discussed (e.g. trans-border economic cooperation with the EU members, visa regimes and free movement of people, European liberal-democratic norms) and the specific words and expressions (metaphors) used in their programs (e.g. European norms and values, European standards, ‘return to Europe,’ European future).

Apart from the two main methods listed above the present research uses also party leaders interviews, conducted by the author in the spring-summer of 2007. They compliment the information obtained from manifesto content analysis and expert survey by providing the insights from the ‘first source,’ that is party leaders. Party officials were asked to specify party position on the same issues as examined in Timuș 2006 expert survey, it also includes valuable information about transnational party cooperation, particularly with Euro-parties.

The study of a small number of countries, by contrast to a large-*n* analysis, offers several advantages. Although it limits the possibility of generalizing the findings of the

²¹ This type of nationalism refers to parties promoting the national interests of the Russian minority in Ukraine and Moldova, as well as pan-Slavic parties from Ukraine, which stress Ukraine’s belonging to Slavic people and argue for close relations with Russia and the CIS.

²² Gary Marks, Liesbet Hooghe, Marco Steenbergen and Ryan Bakker (2005) “Cross-validating Data on Party Positioning on European Integration: A Comparison of Manifesto and Expert Data,” Mimeo, downloadable from <http://www.unc.edu/~hooghe>, pp.8-10.

research, it offers the opportunity for closer examining the causal mechanisms between the process of European integration and party politics and party systems. Usually the large-*n* studies, in general, and particularly those analyzing the impact of European integration on party politics and party systems in EU members and candidate states, draw the causal relationships from a static data (e.g. expert surveys, party manifesto analysis). This restricts the possibility of understanding the causal mechanisms, because one does not follow the dynamics of parties' European stances and of the working of the European issue in a political space.

The small number of examined cases offers the possibility to use process tracing for exploring how the European integration is perceived and represented in party politics. I observe when the issue of European integration appeared for the first time in the political spaces of each of the examined countries, which parties brought this issue in the political arena, and how the debate has evolved across the time. I also investigate what role the European issue plays in party policy paradigm and how parties argue their positions towards European integration.

Case selection

The definition of the universe of countries to be examined is based on several criteria. First, one of the major criteria is their belonging to the former USSR. I consider the Soviet heritage (the question of national identity, economic structure, the Communist ideological legacy, etc.) being an important factor in the transition period and the political development in the post-communist space. It has a particular influence on the impact of the process of European integration, which is different from the other countries of the Soviet block, such as the Central and East European states or the Balkans.

Second, choosing the relevant countries for the study of the impact of European integration of political parties, an important criterion is the existence of party competition in a political space, which implies also some uncertainty in the electoral outcome and potential party alteration in government. Therefore, Belarus and Azerbaijan are considered as irrelevant countries for the present theoretical framework, as their authoritarian regimes limit the possibility of party competition and of fair parliamentary elections.

Third, another criterion of country selection is the closeness to the European institutions, or countries' position of sharing the EU borders, core beliefs, political and economic conditions. Therefore, at the beginning of the research I chose Ukraine, which was sharing the direct borders with the EU members, Moldova, which was a future direct neighbor of the EU after Romania's accession in 2007, and Georgia, which does not share direct borders with the EU, nor do its direct neighbors.

Finally, I focus only on non-EU members, excluding the case of the Baltic States both during their accession period and EU membership. I consider (and this is one of the aims of the present research) that the impact of the European integration is different in the three categories of states: EU members, candidate countries (specifically from CEECs), and non-EU states.

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to present the theoretical model and the research design of the dissertation. Following the aim of providing a more accurate relationship between the European and domestic level factors and processes the advanced theoretical model combines IR and CP approaches in investigating EU impact on domestic transformations outside its borders. The interaction of the two major variables from the European and domestic levels, the type of EU involvement and the degree of political elite's engagement, results in four modes of EU involvement in party and party system transformation. The first two modes of direct EU influence are the legislative adjustment to party-related legislation, according to country Action Plan, and the compliance to EPFs' accession criteria. The two mechanisms of indirect EU involvement are expected to be stronger in the case of EEN outsiders. These are the change in the patterns of party interaction and coalition formation resulting from the change of opportunities available for political actors, on the one hand, and the emergence of pro/anti-European parties and voluntary party lesson-drawing from their European counterparts.

The chapter also clarified the conceptualization of the major terms from the European and domestic levels. It showed that the present thesis avoids the use of the term of 'Europeanization of party politics' and argues that in the case of non-EU members it is more appropriate to talk about the influence of European integration process, with the

focus on the EU as the major actor in promoting European norms and practices. Also, party and party system institutionalization are considered as separate processes and the present research focuses on two units of analysis: party and party system levels in order to provide a more precise analysis of potential EU influence on domestic political changes.

The methodological framework used in the present thesis combines the major methods of party and party system analysis in order to tackle the measurement problem of Europeanization of party politics. The use of manifesto content-analysis, expert surveys, and party leaders' interviews aims at offering a more objective empirical analysis and overcoming the shortcomings of each of the individual methods.

Finally, addressing the limitation of Europeanization research regarding the case selection, the thesis expands the research to East European non-EU members, specifically to Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia. Among the advantages of examining a small number of cases is the possibility of using process-tracing and discerning context-specific factors that can determine different type and extent of influence of European integration process on party and party system transformation outside EU borders.

Chapter 4. EU direct influence on party and party system developments in EEN

Introduction

This part of the thesis aims at exploring the two cases identified in the chapter 3 when there is a direct EU pressure to reform according to European requirements. The first mode of direct EU involvement is the legislative adjustment of party-related legislation to European standards. This particular mode represents the strongest type of direct EU influence on domestic political changes in its neighboring countries. Domestic elites have a certain degree of obligation to act according to Brussels requirements following the stipulations of country Action Plans. Although Action Plans are not as specific as, for example, Association Agreements between CEE and EC, they still contain some (largely general) provisions with regard to the strengthening of the stability and effectiveness of institutions guaranteeing democracy and the rule of law, specified in chapter 3.

The second way in which EU can directly influence party and party system transformation in EEN is via EU-based party federations. The requirements set by EPFs for post-communist parties that wish to obtain observer or full membership represent a case when there is a direct pressure emanated from the European level, yet the initiative to transform according to European standards comes from the domestic level. Although the non-EU parties make a voluntary decision of affiliation to Europarties and the pressure from the EU side (i.e. from EP party groups) is less than in the case of candidate countries, once the EEN parties engage in the affiliation process they come under direct influence from the core Europarties to comply to EU-based norms and values.

The chapter concludes with a discussion of the relevance of the theoretical expectations of the model exposed in the previous chapter to the empirical analysis of EEN countries and traces the similarities and the differences between the present research results with those from Central and East European candidates.

The adjustment of party-related legislation to European standards

European democratic standards. As in the case of political conditionality of CEE candidates, (idem, 8) the AP provisions regarding the democratic reforms within the

EEN, particularly party-related requirements, represented some general statements with a vague description of specific steps to be undertaken for the fulfillment of EU demands. The Union makes reference to European standards on the democratic conduct of elections and the strengthening of democratic institutions, particularly those set by OSCE/ODIHR and Council of Europe. Therefore, the first step of this chapter is to present the theoretical overview of the European standards on democracy promotion. I start with the clarification of the concept, followed by the identification of the major European level institutions in charge of promoting the European democratic standards as well as the major related documents. I then limit the focus of my research on the analysis of the adjustment of EEN laws on political parties, electoral laws and party financing to European requirements and present the empirical findings regarding the nature and the extent of EU level influence on party-related legislative changes.

The concept of European standards in the democratic field refers primarily to the principles of European electoral heritage, which represent the common standards of European electoral systems. The underlying principles of European electoral heritage have been compiled by the Council for Democratic Elections (CDE) – the joint working group of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (CoE) and the Venice Commission (VC) of CoE²³ – in 2002 and adopted through the “Code of Good Practices in Electoral Matters” (Venice Commission 2002). The ‘hard core’ of these electoral standards is the European constitutional heritage which represents the foundation of any genuinely democratic society and consists merely of international rules. It states that the suffrage must be universal, equal, free, secret and direct and that elections must be held periodically. (*idem*, 13) Furthermore, the Article 2.3 refers to party funding and stipulates the need of public funding of election campaigns and political parties. It refers to distribution of public money to political contestants based on the principle of “strict” or “proportional” equality of opportunity (taking into consideration votes received in the last elections, the status of a parliamentary party, etc.) (*idem*, 18)

The CGPEM highlights also the general conditions for the implementation of the underlying principles of European electoral heritage. Some of the most important conditions that set the basis of a democratic society are the respect for fundamental

²³ The European Commission for Democracy through Law

human rights, above all freedom of expression, assembly and association. Also, the Code requires that the electoral law must have a certain stability that would protect it against political manipulation. (idem, 25) As a consequence the document suggests the electoral legislation, particularly that dealing with the electoral system, should not be changed within one year before elections and should not undergo often changes in general. With regard to party funding, the Code stipulates the condition of transparency in the field of party funding, both during the electoral campaigns and monitoring the financial status of elected representatives. (idem, 31-32)

Based on the electoral principles described in the CGPEM two major Conventions were adopted within the Venice Commission framework that apply to the post-communist space. The first one was drafted by the CIS states (2006) and the second one was drafted by the ACEEEO, (2002) both in the autumn of 2002, with the primary aim of synchronizing and harmonizing the national legislation with the European electoral standards.

In March 2007 the Parliamentary Assembly of the CoE invited the Venice Commission to elaborate a separate “Code of Good Practices on Political Parties” that would set the basic principles of party activity, such as equality, dialogue, co-operation, transparency and fight against corruption. Furthermore, the document is aimed at promoting “concepts and strategies which enhance and strengthens the role, status and relevance of political parties in a democratic system.” (Venice Commission 2007) So far, however, several other major documents represent European level instruments in promoting European standards in the field of political parties, dealing specifically with party financing.²⁴

EEN legislative adjustment. Departing from APs general provisions on the democratic conduct of elections in accordance to European standards²⁵ and the effective dialogue between domestic political actors the present analysis focuses on laws on political parties, electoral laws and party financing. Electoral legislation is the one that offers the most complex information on party activity and party system structure and in

²⁴ Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, Recommendation 1516 (2001), *Financing of political parties*, Adopted on May 22 2001; PACE Political Affairs Committee, Report “*Financing of Political Parties*”, Doc. 9077, 4 May 2001.

²⁵ The APs refer in this respect to pluralism, freedom of speech and media, respect of minority rights, non discrimination on grounds of gender, and on political, religious and ethnic views.

cases when a separate law on political parties does not exist, it also offers valuable information on the basic principles of party formation. As regarding party financing, this issue is considered by scholars as one of the aspects that achieved a special attention of European institutions (such as EU, CoE, or OSCE) in setting the requirements for domestic transformations, in general (fight against corruption), and for the Europeanization of political parties, in particular. (Smilov and Toplak 2007; Szarek 2006; Walecki 2007)

The Action Plans (APs) signed between each of the three examined countries and the EU stipulate the strengthening of the stability and effectiveness of institutions guaranteeing democracy and the rule of law as the first priority. In order to comply with EU requirements the domestic political elites would have to adopt some specific legislation that would address these issues according to European standards. The mentioned above EU policies are not well specified and lack a clear description of the steps that have to be undertaken in order to fulfill the implementation of AP priorities at domestic level, thus offering the political elites a certain degree of freedom in their actions during domestic transformations. What counts as meeting the criteria of the implementation of EU regulations depends from case to case, from a specific policy area to a particular country, because EU lacks institutional templates to measure the compliance with its requirements. Yet, the EU direct pressure is still present and imposes an obligation on the countries that signed the AP to act according to its stipulations.

The starting point of empirical research is the study of the three country cases with the focus on the legislative adjustment to European standards within the context-specific circumstances, beginning with the country that experienced most of legislative transformations on election laws and party finance (Moldova) and ending with the one with the fewest legal changes with a shorter period of time since the signing of AP (Georgia). In the end a comparative overview of the major empirical findings is presented and the final conclusions are drawn with regard to EU direct impact on party and party systems from EEN.

Several primary expectations guide the present analysis of EU influence on domestic legislative changes in Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia. Because EU stipulations with regard to political changes are not well specified and lack a clear description of

implementation instructions of AP priorities at domestic level, the political elites of EEN countries obtain a certain degree of freedom in legislative compliance to European standards. As a result, the outcome of legislative adjustments will be merely country-specific, taking into consideration contextual factors, yet presenting a similar pattern of reforms towards ensuring free and fair elections, optimal political representation, as well as political pluralism and effective dialogue between government and opposition (AP requirements). Concomitantly, because of the general reference in AP regarding the compliance with European standards, particularly in accordance with OSCE/ODIHR and Council of Europe norms and principles, I anticipate that domestic political leadership has the freedom of ‘choosing’ from the multiple recommendations provided by the experts of European institutions and implementing the desired ones or the ones considered to have a greater weight in EU’s balance of legislative adjustment to European norms and standards. In these circumstances, I argue, the ruling political forces will have more opportunities of following an instrumentalist behavior, aiming at increasing their political power by promoting the European standards and recommendations that suit them better and that weaken the rest of the parties. Yet, as it was argued in the description of the degree of freedom of domestic political elite (chapter 3), the strength of the existing opposition parties, particularly of those promoting liberal-democratic reforms, will largely determine the strategic opportunities of the governing political elites and the final outcome of legislative adjustment in line with European level policies.

Moldova. The examination of electoral activity of Moldovan parliament since the signing of Action Plan in February 2005 reveals a significant number of legislative initiatives addressing both the electoral code and party activity. With regard to AP stipulation on the insurance of the democratic conduct of elections according to European standards (OSCE and CoE norms and standards), the Moldovan legislative has promoted and approved some important changes of electoral laws that influence party politics and political competition.

On 22 July and 17 November 2005, right before the local elections, Moldovan MPs adopted two amendments to Electoral Code, which were analyzed by the experts of the Venice Commission of Council of Europe and OSCE/ODIHR in a report adopted in

March 2006. The Joint Opinion highlights the fact that one of the most controversial issues of the amended Electoral Code regards representation, particularly the thresholds and constituencies. Although the electoral changes followed some of advises of European institutions on lowering the parliamentary barrier (from 6% to 4% for individual parties and from 9% and 12% in case of coalitions of two and, respectively, three or more parties to a single threshold of 8%), the report stressed the fact that Moldovan legislative was advised to adopt a single threshold for parties and electoral blocs at 3-4%. The experts also argued the unfairness of PR system combined with the threshold distribution to both party lists and independent candidates (3% electoral barrier). (Venice Commission and OSCE/ODIHR 2006a, 6-7)

Another important comment of the European experts was the need of ensuring electoral representation of national minorities, regionally concentrated in the Republic of Moldova, and allowing them a reasonable participation in politics, which the current single national constituency failed to address. Finally, the Joint Opinion pointed to the need of adopting an electoral mechanism that would assure the existence of a Central Electoral Commission (CEC) independent from any political forces. The study welcomed the amendments that stipulated a politically inclusive composition of CEC, yet it stressed the necessity of ensuring in practice inclusiveness and impartiality with regard to the composition of CEC.

Apart from remarks on the changes in electoral laws, the Joint Opinion of CoE and OSCE/ODIHR expressed its dissatisfaction with the failure of Moldovan MPs to take into consideration significant recommendations with regard to the Law of the Republic of Moldova on Political Parties. Despite the progress made through the abolition of the requirement that party membership lists had to be submitted every year for review, the study argued that the existing requirement on mandatory party support across the whole country had an unfavourable effect on the formation of ethnic minority and regional parties. (idem, 8-10)

A new amendment of Electoral Code followed on 21 July 2006, which was argued to address the recommendation of European institutions after the 2005 parliamentary and local elections. However, it included merely changes of technical nature, aimed at simplifying voting procedures and at clarifying some terms that could

have been subject to different interpretations. In general, the amendment did not tackle the major recommendations on electoral system and minority representation, as well as on party registration and activity stipulated in the last Joint Opinion of Venice Commission and OSCE/ODIHR from March 2006. The European Commission ENP Progress Report on the implementation of Moldovan AP acknowledged that the parliamentary and local elections from 2005 were conducted ‘reasonably’ free and fair and stated that the overall assessment of the 2006 amendment to Electoral Code was “positive, but attention must be paid to proper implementation.” (Commission of the European Communities 2006a, 3)

An important legislative act on political parties entered Moldovan Parliament on 22 December 2006 at the initiative of MPs representing the ‘political partners’: the governing PCRM and the opposition PPCD. This initiative did not undergo a preliminary public debate and was adopted very quickly in the first reading during the last meeting of 2006 parliamentary session. One of the novelties of this law was its stipulations regarding party financing. Although the Moldovan legislative body declared as a priority for the year 2006 the examination of a law initiative on party and campaign financing, considered also a priority action for the prevention and fighting against corruption (Grosu 2007) and the Ministry of Justice prepared a special legislative project on that subject in September 2005, the Parliament did not adopt it within the set period of time. Thus, the reference to party and campaign financing of the new legislative initiative from December 2006 was perceived as a novelty of Moldovan MPs aimed at following the recommendations of European experts of Council of Europe on this matter.

The analysis of this legislative act by Venice Commission criticized first of all the lack of public debate and transparency in the adoption of the new Law on Parties, as well as of a scientific investigation on the consequences of the implementation of this act. Also, after acknowledging that the legislative document represented an important step forward for the establishment of a “modern system of party financing,” the European expert H.Vogel argued that it had also serious shortcomings. (Vogel 2007) He pointed to the fact that the new law contained too though restrictions on party activity that affected the fundamental democratic principles and the VC standards, such as, for example, the requirements for party registration and the periodical actualization of data on party

members, or the restriction of foreign citizens to become party members. The author also mentioned that the Law on Parties does not contain clauses on the functioning of minority or regional parties, on the establishment and rights of political alliances and blocs, and other important recommendations made in the previous reports and opinions of CoE and OSCE/ODIHR.

Regarding party and campaign financing, Vogel argued about the need to clarify most of its broad clauses and comply them with the existing legislation of Electoral, Civic, and Fiscal Codes of the Republic of Moldova. He particularly recommended the revision of the stipulation about the interdiction of foreign party financing, stressing that this limits the rights of Moldovan citizens who reside abroad, the introduction of a clause on the interdiction of financial contributions on behalf of third persons, as well as the clear statement on the mechanism of state budget allocation for party and campaign financing.

Finally, the most recent legal changes regarding political parties and elections entered Moldovan Parliament in the autumn of 2007, influenced by the last local elections and the approaching 2009 parliamentary ones. One of the major provisions of the law projects concerning the amendment of Electoral Code stated the increase of electoral threshold for political parties from 4 to 6 percent following the initiative of Communist MPs who argues that the low barrier would contribute to the sudden increase in the number of parliamentary parties and would constitute an obstacle for the functioning of a viable coalition government. Other important stipulations concerned the exclusion of notions of “electoral bloc” and the regulation of electoral blocs, the interdiction of participation in electoral campaigns of persons with open criminal cases, as well as of those holding the double citizenship, and some regulations of electoral advertisement via internet and mobile phones. (Info-Prim Neo 2007)

The new law on political parties was adopted by the parliament on December 21, 2008, right before the winter holidays, despite the strong criticism from opposition parties. The ruling Communist MPs stressed their will to follow the recommendations of European institutions and to “introduce advanced European standards in Moldova.” (Volnitchi 2008) The legal act envisages the reduction from five to four thousand the minimal membership condition for registering a new political party and the lowering of

minimum party member requirement from 150 to 125 in each of the two-thirds of Moldova's administrative-territorial units of the second level., Yet, the final change is still a minor one as compared to the recommendations of Venice Commission and OSCE/ODIHR, and presents further ambiguity with regard to the definition of administrative territorial units, particularly whether or not the Transnistrian region should or should not be counted in this respect. Also, the document did not comply with European recommendations on the subject of allowing the existence of racial or ethnic parties, maintaining a major restriction on the freedom of association.

Among other positive changes to party legislation in accordance with European standards is the abolition of the prohibition of political organizations to propagate anti-constitutional ideas and the clause that Ministry of Justice was not competent to suspend party activities any more. (Infotag 2008)

Regarding party financing, the new draft Law on Political Parties from 2008 states that the state will allocate 0,2% of its annual revenues for political parties, half of the money going to parliamentary parties and the other one being distributed between extra-parliamentary parties based on their local election results. However, the Communist MPs changed the original clause that stipulated the initiation of state funding from January 2008 to July 2009, right after the parliamentary elections. (*ibidem*)

In conclusion, the analysis of changes in laws on parties and electoral rules occurred in Moldova after the signing of the country Action Plan with the European Union in February 2005 shows significant progress towards the implementation of the broad EU requirements in ensuring a democratic conduct of elections and the strengthening of democratic institutions in accordance to European standards, particularly of CoE and OSCE. Yet, most of the adopted legislative acts did not endorse a preliminary public discussion and a scientific investigation on consequences of their implementation, which was criticized both by European and national experts and opposition parties. As PCRM holds the majority in Moldovan Parliament, it mostly omitted the criticism and recommendations of opposition parties, which accused the ruling leadership of using the legislative power for promoting laws that would increase their electoral outcomes (both during 2007 local elections and 2009 parliamentary ones) and would help them in fighting their political opponents. Even if the Communists were following the

recommendations of European experts, they were merely concerning some areas that were not ‘harmful’ to electoral success of PCRM or by contrast were favoring them and disfavoring opposition parties (e.g. party registration requirements, party financing from July 2009, abolition of electoral blocs, the increase of threshold, etc.)

Ukraine. As compared to Moldovan case, Ukrainian legislation did not undergo multiple and complex changes since the signing of the Action Plan in February 2005, aimed at adjusting Ukrainian laws to European standards. The Constitutional Amendments (Article 3, Chapter XV) that entered into force on December 2004 introduced PR electoral formula, a single all national constituency, and a lower threshold from 4 to 3 percent. On 7 July 2005, Ukrainian Rada adopted a new Law on the Election of People’s Deputies (in force since 1 October 2005), which actually amended partially the existing law from March 2004. Building on previous recommendation of European institutions and the experience during the 2002 elections, it contained exceedingly detailed provisions on parliamentary elections, for which it was also criticized by Venice Commission and OSCE/ODIHR. (2006b) The following recommendation from the European experts was to combine all existing separate laws on elections into a unique Electoral Code in order to simplify the legislative provisions and their application.

Regarding the recent introduction of the PR system and single national constituency, the authors of the VC report remind about the fact that their fellow experts provided both positive and negative opinions about the applicability of a PR rule to a country as big as Ukraine and that the national authorities have to give a personal evaluation on the practical implementation of the new electoral formula and its outcomes. They also highlighted the fact that the new legislation needs further adaptation to the new PR system, as in the case of the number of electoral districts or the absence of a provision concerning the run for office of independent candidates, according to Paragraph 7.5 of the OSCE Copenhagen Document.

The mentioned Joint Opinion acknowledges the improvements introduced by the new law on the election of national deputies, such as those on election campaign, the use of mobile ballot box, or the composition of electoral commissions, yet it draws attention to the fact that important recommendations of European experts were not taken into consideration. Among the existing limitations of the new law is the requirement of party

registration one year before elections if they want to participate in parliamentary race or the interdiction of running for a parliamentary mandate for those who have not resided in the country for at least five years. The study also points out to the fact that some stipulations of the legal act on national deputies are not fully complying with European standards, such as those regarding the freedom of expression: the restrictions on mass-media for electoral campaign coverage or the endorsements on the violation of campaign rules. Finally, it stresses the importance of bringing together the new territorial voter lists in an electronic national voter list and the adoption of clearer stipulations regarding media coverage during electoral campaigns.

Unfortunately, so far the large majority of these recommendations from European institutions regarding electoral legislations have not been followed and implemented through a legal act. One legislative project merits to be mentioned in this respect – the Law on the State Register of Voters of Ukraine (in force since October 2007) – that was built on the recommendations of Venice Commission and OSCE/ODIHR Joint Opinion from 2006 and also on OSCE recommendations following 2006 parliamentary elections. In its last report coming after the recent September 2007 parliamentary elections, OSCE/ODIHR welcomed the adoption of this law, but emphasized the need to secure the adoption of a unified centralized Voter Register system. Also the report stress the necessity of following the previous recommendations of Joint Opinion on the Law of Election People's deputies from 2005 and of OSCE/ODIHR 2006 post-election study regarding the individual candidates, adoption of a unified Election Code, securing minority representation, media coverage of electoral campaign, as well as clarifying the role of the President in an election campaign. (OSCE/ODIHR 2007)

The subject of party financing receives a special attention both within domestic public and political debate and the analyses of European experts. It is considered to be one of the most severe problems of Ukrainian political system. The high country level of poverty and the concentration of wealth in the hands of business oligarchs, together with the fragmented and non-institutionalized party system offer the opportunity of emergence of business clans seeking political power through the existing parties or through the creation of their own ones. Political corruption that determined the defection of a large number of MPs to the governing coalition led by Yanukovych determined one of the most

serious political crises in Ukrainian post-communist political history. The dissolution of Rada in April 2007 by the President Yushchenko represented a step towards the prevention of Yanukovych's team from obtaining a constitutional majority with the means of corrupt defections.

National, as well as international expert analyses stress the disadvantage of closed party list of the current PR formula for fighting party corruption as it allows influential businessmen to buy a place in a party list as a result of bribery or generous financial contributions to party electoral campaigns. (Spector et al. 2006, 53) As a member state of the Council of Europe Ukraine is urged to adopt legislative provisions fighting political corruption and regulating party financing. The law on the Election of People's Deputies from July 2005 included several provisions with regard to electoral campaign financing. It envisaged that parties that passed the electoral threshold of three per cent would receive financial compensations from state budget not exceeding 100,000 times the minimum monthly salary. Article 53 of the mentioned law states the prohibition of donations from anonymous donors, foreign citizens, and stateless persons and, by implication, juridical persons are prohibited. Yet, the VC Opinion No.338 (December 2005) highlighted the need of further improvement of party and campaign financing legislation. It pointed out that the law does not stipulate anything about the prohibition of contributions to the party or parties forming blocs and then for parties to transfer and use this donation for campaign funds. Therefore, the study recommended the introduction of a legal requirement of full disclosure before and after the electoral race of sources and totals of financial contributions and campaign costs.

In its ENP Progress Report on Ukraine's implementation of Action Plan (2006b), the European Commission mentioned that the "endemic corruption" was the major obstacle in the way of Ukraine's development. It also stated that despite progress in revising the legislative framework according to post-2004 elections OSCE recommendations (with reference to the Law on the Election of People's Deputies from 2005), the Ukrainian leadership had still to overcome the shortcomings of legal stipulations regarding campaign financing. Also, the anti-corruption report of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) stated that despite the achieved democratic progress in 2006 parliamentary elections, Ukrainian leadership had

to launch some more specific measures in fighting party and campaign corruption, with the special attention to the control of electoral campaign financing and the use of administrative resources. (Anti-Corruption Network for Eastern Europe and Central Asia 2006)

So, despite the fact that Ukrainian Rada did not promote a large number of legislative adjustments on elections and party activity since the ratification of EU Action Plan, several important steps were taken in order to bring the Ukrainian legislation closer to European standards. This includes the adoption of Law on the Election of People's Deputies applicable from October 2005 and the Law on the State Register of Voters of Ukraine (taking effect from October 2007). The recent approval of the new government and of Yulia Tymoshenko as a prime-minister brings new hopes for legislative adjustment according to European standards with regard to electoral laws and party financing, after a long period of political instability. The fight against corruption was one of the major issues of the successors of the Orange Revolution, BYuT's electoral program, adopted as Government's action plan at the beginning of 2008 also calling for self-accountability of MPs by abolishing parliamentary immunity.

Georgia. Finally, the analysis of Georgian case presents its specificity regarding legislative adaptation on electoral laws and party activity to European standards. Commenting on the 2004 parliamentary elections, OSCE Mission and representatives of the European Parliament stressed the fact that substantial progress was achieved by national authorities to assure the conduct of elections in a “closer alignment with European standards for democratic elections.” However, the European observers also pointed to the fact of the need to ensure a more competitive political environment with a “genuine level of political pluralism” and a dialogue between government and opposition. (OSCE/ODIHR 2004)

As Georgia officially signed the EU Action Plan later than the mentioned-above two counterparts, on October 2, 2006, the short period of time does not provide sufficient time span for the analysis of legislative adjustments regarding the provisions of country AP on elections and party activity. Yet, since October 2006 some important amendments have been adopted with the purpose of introducing changes to electoral system prior to the recent January 2008 presidential elections.

It is worth starting the investigation of Georgian legislative adjustment to European standards with the recommendations that national leadership received from European institutions, following the request of Georgian political elite, with regard to the examination of the existing Electoral code and its recent amendments through July 2006.

VC – OSCE/ODIHR Joint Opinion on the Election Code of Georgia adopted on December 2006 contains an evaluation of Constitutional amendments enacted from February 2005 on changes in electoral system and of the latest amendments to Election Code of Georgia, and provides several important recommendations for bringing the Georgian legislations in a closer compliance to European standards. First of all, without making reference to any particular electoral system, the European experts advise Georgian leadership to “carefully consider” the appropriateness of the components of the existing system for assuring “an optimum relationship between genuine representation and stability of government.” Second, it points out to the failure to adapt the old provisions of the electoral rules to the new amendments since 2004. So, for example, it observes that although the Constitutional changes of Articles 49 and 58 from 2004 lower the number of parliamentary seats, they do not modify the text with regard to some MP’s election following the PR rule (100 seats) and others by a majority system (50 seats). Also, the study suggests that the amount of legislative mandates allocated per multi-member district (by contrast to the previous single-member district) has to be consistent with CoE and OSCE standards for universal and equal suffrage and some well-established principles should guide the drawing of district boundaries. (Venice Commission and OSCE/ODIHR 2007)

Furthermore, the expert analysis argues that the 2005 amendments regarding CEC do not stipulate a politically inclusive and transparent procedure of appointing members of this electoral commission, giving a central role to the President of the state. Regarding the number of signatures required for a candidate to participate in presidential elections and of a party that has no parliamentary representation to run for legislative elections, the Joint Opinion reminds that it should not exceed 1% of country voters.

Finally, important remarks are made in the analysis with regard to the legislative barrier and independent candidates. The Venice Commission and OSCE/ODIHR experts emphasize that the existing threshold of seven percent is too high and that the European

practice shows that a barrier between three and five percent is most appropriate. Concerning the independent candidates, it mentions that the newly amended electoral system does not offer a possibility for independent candidates to seek legislative and Tbilisi local representation. (*ibidem*)

The most important changes to Georgian electoral laws during the period following the December 2006 European experts' examination were adopted in the autumn 2007, as a result of the negotiations held between the ruling party and the opposition for reaching a constructive compromise on the modification of electoral provisions. The latest amendments from December 2007 address several important recommendations made by European institutions regarding the Electoral Code. According to a constitutional amendment initiated by the Government of Georgia, the electoral threshold for achieving legislative representation is to be reduced from 7 to 5 percent and the number of signatures necessary for candidate registration is to be reduced. The existing majoritarian electoral system is substituted with a proportional representation formula. (Government of Georgia 2007)

Significant changes were made in order to ensure more transparency and political inclusiveness in the process of appointing CEC members. At the request of opposition parties, the new amendments to Electoral Code stipulate that Central Electoral Commission will consist of six independent members and seven party representatives (from parties with at least 4 percent of votes in the last national election or with a parliamentary faction).

The subject of party financing received considerable attention within Georgian political space since the signing of EU – Georgia Action Plan. Georgian leadership adopted important legislative modification on party financing after the Rose Revolution through the Constitutional amendments from 2005. Article 30 of the Organic Law stipulates that from January 2006 all the parties that received at least 4% of electoral support during the latest legislative elections would be offered financial support from the state budget. The Joint Opinion from December 2006 of Venice Commission and OSCE/ODIHR welcomes the new regulations of Georgian legislation on party and campaign financing. Yet, the European experts point out that further improvement should be made in order to bring the legislation closer to European standards. So, for example,

they recommend the adoption of further amendments on laws on party financing in order to assure more transparency in this field, such as the disclosure of sources of campaign finance, including the amount and the types of financial support, both before and after the elections. They also advise that campaign funding is to be audited by a state organization rather than a private audit, as stipulated in December 2005 legal amendments. Finally, attention is drawn to the need of reviewing the existing provisions on sanctions for the violation of campaign funding rules, which were evaluated as being disproportionate and not allowing for a fair reviewing process. (Venice Commission and OSCE/ODIHR 2007)

The issue of party financing became especially salient within Georgian public and political arenas after a corruption case prior to 2006 local elections, when one of the opposition legislators, Koba Davitashvili, was recorded accepting a large amount of money supposedly in return for a place in his party list. As a result, the ruling party initiated a draft law on party funding, which however was criticized by opposition parties as aiming at leaving them without their major sources of financing. (Transparency International Georgia 2007) Because of the parliamentary deadlock of the debate on party funding, Georgian political parties were invited to discuss this issue under the auspice of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg on 26-27 February 2007. The outcome of this discussion was the adoption the “Strasbourg Memorandum” that formed the basis of a new legislative act on party financing. According to its stipulations, a systematized mechanism of state funding for parties should be introduced based on party votes and its parliamentary representation in order to contribute to the consolidation and institutionalization of party system. The new bill also provided the prohibition of anonymous donations, with the exception of funds resulting from public events (with an annual limit of 30 thousand GEL). The opposition representatives further demanded that the state funding of parties is to be fixed according to some specific indicators, such as a share of state budget, GDP, etc. in order to ensure a better security and flexibility of party financing.²⁶

After the Strasbourg discussion, the issues of party financing were the topic of an

²⁶ This proposal was made by the two MPs, Zviad Dzidziguri of the Conservative Party and Irakli Iashvili of the New Rights during the Conference on Political Party Funding from 27 March 2007, Tbilisi, organized by OSCE/ODIHR, the Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy (NIMD), and the Caucasus Institute for Peace, Democracy and Development (CIPDD).

international conference held in Tbilisi on 27 March 2007, with the participation of Georgian parties and European experts. During the meeting, the former chairman of the Dutch Social-Democratic Party (PvdA), Ruud Koole, presented different models of state party financing and fundraising of political organizations based on European regulations and practices. A particular attention was given to the discussion of Dutch experience of party funding and its relevance for Georgian draft bill on party financing. (CIPDD 2007)

The recent amendments to Electoral Code of Georgia from December 2007 brought to life most of the key points of Georgian political debate from 2006-2007 on party financing and European experts recommendations on this matter. The new legislation aims at ensuring a greater degree of transparency of state and private funding of political organizations. It advances a fixed regressive formula for distribution of state financial support for political parties through which parties with less electoral support are eligible for a greater funding from state budget than those gathering more votes. It includes an additional provision to the existing legislation on party funding by specifying that eligible for state financing and also TV airtime are parties that achieved 4% during parliamentary elections and those that gained at least 3% during latest local elections. The amendment also declares that all party financial transactions have to be conducted via bank transfer and sets a clear limit on private donations. (Government of Georgia 2007)

In conclusion, the Georgian case reveals that the political leadership has shown considerable interest in adapting the electoral legislation and party financing according to European standards, primarily those set by the Council of Europe and OSCE/ODIHR, even before the official signing of its ENP Action Plan in October 2006. Yet, despite the positive changes addressed by the recent amendments of Electoral Code, the short period of time between their adoption (17 December 2007) and the presidential (5 January 2008) and parliamentary elections (May 2008) represents one of the major obstacles in ensuring their optimal implementation in line with European standards.

Comparative assessment of party-related legislative adjustment to European requirements. Despite the fact that provisions with regard to election conduct and party activity are part of the first priority of Action Plans signed between the EU and its East European Neighbors, because of the broad stipulations and the absence of clear implementation guidelines Brussels does not hold a very strong direct pressure on

determining domestic legislative adjustment in line with European level policies. Also, the progress reports on AP's implementation are very general with regard to the strengthening of democratic institutions, including political parties, ensuring the conduct of free and fair elections or encouraging political pluralism and a viable dialogue between opposition and government. They merely provide an overall positive assessment of political developments towards democratic consolidation in the three examined countries, stressing that the conduct of the latest elections can be regarded as free and fair and largely in line with European standards, but stressing that more progress should be done in order to overcome the shortcomings of electoral legislation and to ensure a more democratic conduct of elections by following the advises of European experts, primarily of the Council of Europe and OSCE/ODIHR.

The weakness of EU direct involvement in domestic political changes according to European requirements is also determined by the lack of a strong incentive as that of EU membership perspective, compared with the case of post-communist CEE candidate countries. Yet, because the Action Plans are to be implemented during a period of three years and because the EU has made multiple declarations regarding the 'rewarding' of EEN political leadership with a more enhanced cooperation agreement and more intermediary incentives, such as the already achieved visa facilitation regimes, or the granting of economic preferences for trading with EU countries (by Moldova only so far), Brussels still has substantial bargaining power in its relations with EEN. So, although the EU itself declares other European institutions, such as the Council of Europe or OSCE as the watchdogs of democratic performance of political elites from its neighborhood, it has a major role in encouraging its EEN to follow the European standards set by these institutions as well as the recommendations of European experts by providing both rhetorical and material incentives within the existing ENP framework.

The analysis of the three case studies reveals several important findings for the comparative assessment of party-related legislative adjustment to European requirements. First of all, it confirms the theoretical expectation that the broadly specified EU requirements on party-related legislative adjustment provides political elites from EEN a certain degree of freedom in pursuing domestic transformations in compliance with European standards. Although the Joint Opinions of VC and OSCE/ODIHR and other

European experts' examinations have advanced a large number of recommendations in each of the three cases regarding electoral changes and party financing, political elites from EEN do not endure significant direct pressure from European institutions, including EU, to adopt all of them. Rather, they have a certain degree of choice of the issues to be modified in line with European requirements.

Second, both the recommendations from European experts and the outcomes of legislative changes are closely related to country-specific factors, reflecting the most politicized and salient issues within a party system, yet aiming at ensuring the common AP requirements with regard to democratic conduct of elections, optimal political representation, as well as political pluralism. So, for example, in Moldovan and Ukrainian cases, where a PR system is used and it is based on a single national constituency, the European experts highlighted the importance of securing minority representation in the legislative body. In Ukrainian and Georgian cases, foreign recommendations and political debate was merely centered on the need to providing the legislative adjustment of all the laws on elections and party registration and activity to the newly adopted legal changes (e.g. PR system in Ukraine and the shift from single-member to multi-member district in Georgia) and the "careful consideration" of the existing electoral legislation with regard to ensuring the optimal political representation and genuine political pluralism. Although party financing is an issue of legislative changes in all the three states, because of country-specific factors it is particularly salient in Ukrainian case, political corruption being the major cause of one of the most severe political crises from the spring of 2007.

Finally, the empirical analysis proves that the freedom of choice of the ruling political forces to pursue legislative changes according to European standards opens a window of opportunity for adopting an instrumentalist behavior. Yet, the promotion of legal initiatives that would maximize the gains of the ruling elites is conditional on the strength and the bargaining power of opposition parties. Both in Moldovan and Georgian cases the parliamentary majority is in the hands of a single party: the Communists Party in Moldova and Saakashvili National Movement in Georgia. Yet, the nature of interaction between government and opposition and its influence on the promotion and adoption of legal acts is different in the two cases.

In Moldovan case, PCRM has extensively used its parliamentary majority to promote legislative changes that would increase their political power and future electoral results from 2009 elections. The parliamentary and extra-parliamentary opposition parties have express their criticism to the modification of laws on elections and party activity, particularly on the recent 2007 legal acts, arguing that this is an instrument of fighting political pluralism and political opponents in the eve of the next parliamentary elections. Yet, the ruling party has largely neglected the opposition demands, as well as some important recommendations from European institutions. One of the visible strategies of PCRM is to choose from European experts' advises the ones that are increasing its cost-benefit analysis and ignoring the rest. So, for example, PCRM introduced some modifications in party registration requirements and the number of party members in Moldova's administrative-territorial units of the second level, party state funding or the abolition of the clause prohibiting parties to propagate ideas contradicting to the Organic Law. The Communist leadership stressed that these changes prove in practice the desire to promote "advanced" European standards in Moldova. But, at the same time, the ruling party ignored some of important recommendations on ensuring political pluralism and better political representation and even adopted regressive legislative changes, such as the increase of party electoral threshold from 4% to 6%, the application of the provision on state funding of parties only after the next 2009 elections, or the interdiction of electoral blocs, all hitting badly opposition activity.

In Georgian case, as compared to the Republic of Moldova, the legislative adjustment to European requirements does not follow the same pattern of instrumentalist behavior of the ruling party. I argue that on the one hand this was determined by the more democratic-oriented profile of the National Movement as well as the readiness of Saakashvili to listen better to European advises with regard to the required legislative transformations. On the other hand, it is induced by the existence of a more unified opposition and a more active one in expressing its demands and having a greater bargaining power, as compared to Moldovan case. When a political deadlock emerged among opposition and government on party financing legislation, both parties agreed on using the European framework for reaching a compromise by meeting at Strasbourg and adopting a memorandum that included considerable remarks of opposition parties. Also,

before the recent presidential elections, important modifications of electoral provisions were adopted as a result of the negotiations between the ruling party and the opposition forces. Some of them favor significantly the opposition parties and aim at ensuring a higher degree of political pluralism, such as the lowering of electoral threshold from 7% to 5% or the adoption of a systematized mechanism of state funding for parties for parties that achieved 4% during parliamentary elections and those that gained at least 3% during latest local elections.

In Ukraine, the pro-Orange political forces, Our Ukraine and BYuT failed to work together towards the achievement of European standards during their post-revolution governing because their strategic behavior and political corruption prevailed over their commitment to European norms and values. It resulted in a severe political crisis from April-May 2007, which represented a major obstacle for Ukraine's progress on the road of democratic consolidation and the adoption of legal acts that would assure an optimal political representation and would regulate party financing.

Transnational Party Linkages

Since the fall of the Iron Curtain, the European party federations have strove for establishing like-minded parties in the post-soviet space. On the one hand, this was determined by their desire to promote their ideological doctrines within the broader Europe. On the other hand, the eastward enlargement of EPFs transnational linkages was motivated by the opportunity of increasing their influence within European legislature once the post-soviet CEE countries would become EU members. In this respect, the EU-based parties have been competing in the region in recruiting new members in order to maximize their influence within EP and gain institutional and financial benefits.²⁷ (Delsoldato 2002; Hanley 2002; Öhlén 2008)

The European party federations have been perceived differently across member and candidate states, as well as outside EU borders. Thus, their influence on national political actors and party systems is estimated to be also different across various groups of countries. In the case of old EU members, European party federations were perceived

²⁷ Article 138a of Maastricht Treaty (1992) provided constitutional recognition for European level parties, while the Treaty of Nice (amendment to Article 191 of Amsterdam Treaty) stipulated the procedure of European party financing, one of them being that a party is “reasonably” representative either in the EP (at least 5% of votes) or in a number of EU members (at least five).

as “nothing more than clearing houses,”(Hix 1995, 535) with relatively weak resources and weight as compared to national parties, mostly because of the EU institutional settings. (Bardi 1994, 2002) The European Parliament elections have had a second-order nature (Reif and Schmitt 1980) for national parties, when politicians that failed in national legislatures run in European level elections and electoral participation is low. (Marsh 2005) Also, national political actors prefer using intergovernmental channels for promoting directly their policies at European level, instead of using European party groupings because of the relative weakness of the European Parliament in advancing the interests of national parties. (Schmitt 2005) As a result, EPFs do not have significant influence on political developments within the old EU members.

In the case of post-communist candidate states, however, the situation is different. European party groupings have had a larger prestige in the region and, thus, a stronger influence on national party and party system development. The recent comparative studies of EP elections from 2004 show the relatively good performance of government parties and a poor success of small parties from CEEC. This finding suggests that within the post-communist EU members the European level elections do not have a ‘second-order’ character. (Schmitt 2005, 650)

Transnational links between EPFs and post-communist parties were believed to have the role of “stimulant and support factor” in the process of democratization of Central and East European countries. (Pridham 1999, 1226) The cooperation with EU-based party groupings has benefited in several ways the development of parties and party systems in CEE candidates. First, it had a positive socialization impact on the emerging political actors that were looking for inspiration regarding their ideological doctrine towards the established parties from Western democracies. The transnational party cooperation helped to mould party identities in the initial stage of their development by familiarizing them with democratic principles and overcoming authoritarian tendencies in post-Soviet political spaces. (Pridham 1999, 1225; 2001, 184-185) The compliance to EPFs membership requirements helped CEE parties to consolidate their identities and to increase their electoral performance. Moreover, apart from ideological support, EPFs offered significant politico-material support by transferring organizational, managerial, and electoral know-how via joint activities (elite socialization, trainings, conferences,

etc).

Second, the cooperation with EU-based parties and their potential membership were perceived as offering international credibility and internal political legitimacy. (Delsoldato 2002, 278; Pridham 1999, 1225; 2001, 184) For the newly emerging parties the association to EPFs helped them gain more political legitimacy within domestic politics by offering them an image of parties committed to promote liberal-democratic reforms and European integration objective. (Vachudová 2005, 139) Concomitantly, the achievement of EPF observer or member status for Left wing parties was of a significant importance for proving at domestic and international levels their devotion to ideological reform according to Western political doctrines (mostly social-democracy). (Buras 2005; Hough 2005; Sloam 2005; Stoyanov 2006) It was an imperative step in proving the overcome of the authoritarian past and their belonging “in real terms to a set of values which are also values of the EU.”²⁸ The close contacts with EU party groupings helped post-communist parties to portray themselves as reliable partners for international institutions, particularly the European Union, and to gain international credibility.

Finally, the transnational cooperation between post-communist parties from aspiring EU members and EPFs were viewed as a mean of establishing contacts with European leaders and as non-official channels for networking in favor of EU adherence. (Pridham 2001, 192-193)

I expect, however, that the European party federations would have a different influence on parties from non-candidate states, in this case from East European Neighborhood, based on the following reasoning. In the case of EU candidate countries, both European party groupings and national parties had more interest in transnational cooperation. The clear EU membership perspective motivated CEE parties to establish early contacts with EPFs and adapt to their ideological principles knowing that they will be able to achieve full membership and participate in EU decision-making once their country would join the Union. Apart from this long-term incentive, the adjustment of CEE national parties to EPFs requirements was also encouraged by short-term material and political benefits, in the form of financial-material, ideological, or organizational

²⁸ Interview of G.Pridham with E.Poptodorova, National Deputy of the Bulgarian Socialist Party, Sofia, September 1995.

support.

Compared to post-communist parties from non-candidate states, the EU-based party groupings were more inclined to support the development of parties from associate countries. On the one hand, it was determined by the strong lobbying from domestic political actors from CEE that aspired for EPFs membership. On the other hand, EU-based parties were motivated by the opportunity of spreading their ideological principles and obtaining more representation and political power in the enlarged European Union, as well as new party funding. European Peoples Party, the largest European party federation, has created a special working group on Central and Eastern Europe and even a special enlargement fund aimed at supporting their sister parties from post-communist candidate states. (Delsoldato 2002, 274) The rivalry between the two major EP party groupings, EPP and PES, spread outside the EU countries in their contest to build and recruit like-minded political organizations within the newly opening post-communist political arena.

The requirements of joining European party federations are argued to be the same for all aspiring parties. Yet, the high stakes of accepting sister-parties from associate countries, together with the pressure exerted by the fixed date of EU joining, determined some EPFs to relax their ideological requirements and adopt a more strategic behavior regarding the granting of membership perspective. Europarties decisions of recognition and affiliation of CEE sister-parties were determined by political rather than ideological reasoning (larger and successful parties were easier granted EPF membership), and inter-party competition (particularly between EPP and PES) rather than ideological cohesion. (Delsoldato 2002, 281)

By contrast to CEE candidate countries, the lack of a clear membership perspective and the absence of high political and material stakes are expected to shape a more principal-oriented rather than a strategic behavior of EPFs in EU's post-communist neighborhood. I speculate that Europarties would be stricter in the selection of EEN applicants, monitoring closely the fulfillment of association requirements by EEN parties, particularly the implementation of their ideological principles. Because EEN parties cannot offer more votes to EPFs within the European Parliament, I expect to find that the political strength of a party (particularly its governing potential) plays a secondary role in EEN party selection. As a consequence I anticipate that EPFs have a narrower impact on

EEN parties, directed merely towards the ‘natural’ sister-parties.

Concomitantly, the lack of a special budget for non-EU members and candidates makes the cooperation between EEN parties and EPFs harder and more limited, with political foundations playing a major role in supporting financially the transnational party cooperation. The limited financial support, together with the restricted membership rights that the biggest EPF’s can grant to EEN actors, determine the existence of a weaker conditionality policy that EPFs can apply to persuade the like-minded EEN actors to comply with their accession requirements. The degree of their direct influence depends primarily on the willingness and the readiness of domestic political actors to cooperate with Europarties.

Internationals, Political foundations and Europarties. Before proceeding with the analysis of the adjustment to EPFs association requirements it needs to be stressed once again the interconnection between the principles and actions of Europarties with other actors from the European and international levels, primarily with political foundations from different member states and International party networks. Similar to the case of legislative adjustment to European norms and values, the analysis of the fulfillment of EPFs membership requirements cannot be done in isolation from the influence of other transnational party networks, political foundations and bilateral cooperation with particular parties from EU members. However, as the EU is the major actor within the European continent in promoting European liberal-democratic norms and values, so the Europarties represent the major actor in determining the post-communist parties to come closer to Western ideology and party types. As compared to other European and international actors, EPFs have more persuasive power on reformation of parties from countries aspiring to join the EU because of expected benefits from the association to EPFs, such as political legitimacy and financial-material support, as well as the potential EU membership perspective.

In the first years of transition, the activity of party Internationals in the region preceded the involvement of EPFs, influencing the adaptation of post-communist parties to Western party families. The achievement of party Internationals membership was a first exam for the emerging post-communist parties regarding their commitment to democratic principles and the overcoming of the authoritarian past. Also, the political

foundations of parties from different member states, primarily Germany, but also Alfred Mozer (The Netherlands), Jean Jaures and Robert Schuman (France) had played an important role in assisting post-communist EEN parties in their identity construction and in networking at the European level, helping them to socialize to European political principles. Until the moment when EEN parties officially applied for EPF affiliations, political foundations represented informal channels of spreading European political norms within the post-communist space. The norm transfer was done either through the encouragement of general liberal-democratic principles, such as the acceptance of the democratic rules of political activity, tolerance, minority rights, or through the promotion of ideological principles of some specific parties from old EU members.

Once the EEN parties stepped on the path of EPF accession process, political foundations became a major intermediary in monitoring the transfer and implementation of Europarties membership requirements. Similar to the case of Central and Eastern Europe, German political foundations²⁹ have been the major partner organizations of EPFs, as they had a large budget for promoting political projects in the region. (Dakowska 2002, 287-289) European political foundation represent important partners of EPFs in following the political developments in the post-communist space since the collapse of the USSR, as well as in providing informational support regarding the European Union and the process of European integration.

EPFs

EPF affiliation requirements and EEN members. The common membership requirements of EU-based parties refer to the acceptance of their fundamental ideological principles, expressed in their statutes and political manifestos. Another important requirement, which sometimes is not stipulated in a written form in EPF statutes or manifestos, is the electoral representation of a candidate party, either within the parliament or local administration. The adjustment of candidate parties to EPFs principles and the type of membership that can be granted to non-EU members varies between the Europarties. The less influential party federations, such as the European Liberal Democrat and Reform Party ELDR or the European Left EL, are more flexible on making the final judgment

²⁹ The major foundations are Friedrich Erbert Stiftung, closely linked to German Social Democratic Party, and Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, linked to Christian democrat Union.

regarding the acceptance of Europarty principles. EL, for example, even allows candidate parties to suggest comments and amendments to its fundamental principles.³⁰ In an interview with Daniel Tanahoe (February 2008), the political advisor of ELDR, he argued that the flexibility regarding post-communist parties' compliance to his EPF requirements is the result of ELDR's awareness of the big diversity in European political culture and traditions. Consequently, his Europarty tries to focus on the basic requirements and not "go too much into details" because of the difficulty to measure the programmatic and behavioral adjustment to EPF membership stipulations.

However, even EPP, the most influential Europarty within EP, proves to be flexible regarding the acceptance of its ideological principles by the post-communist parties, causing some further ideological dilution resulting from the eastward expansion. So, the current EPP observer parties from EEN do not share a clear Christian democrat ideology. As it will be discussed later, some of them can even be placed on the other side of the ideological spectrum, being closer to social-democracy (e.g. Batkivshchyna from Ukraine). The Party of European Socialists, by contrast, has been more careful in its relations with EEN parties. A stricter compliance to socialist and social-democrat ideological principles and the conditions relating to the handling of party history by communist successor parties resulted in a weaker recruitment rate of EEN like-minded parties by PES.

Europarties also present different strategies regarding the electoral representativeness requirement. While for the European People's Party parliamentary representation and party establishment as a national force is of a major importance, for ELDR and EL some form of electoral representation is enough, either parliamentarian or regional.

Finally, EPFs approaches regarding the membership status to be granted to EEN parties varies. EPP and PES offer only 'observer membership' to non-EU parties, while ELDR and EL allow the candidates from the region to obtain a full membership of their party grouping.

The most popular and the most successful EPF in recruiting new members from

³⁰ Interview with Giorgos Karatsioubanis, Neolaia Synaspismou (Greece), European Left, Brussels, March 2008.

East European Neighborhood has been European People's Party. The majority of post-communist center-right parties, most of whom are also governing parties, hold a EPP observer membership. Surprisingly enough, PES, the second largest EP party grouping, is not represented in the region. On the one hand, this is determined by PES strategy of granting membership, particularly stricter selection criteria towards communist successor parties. On the other hand, compared to Central and Eastern Europe (particularly Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland) where Left wing parties managed to adapt to West European type of social democracy and represent successful political actors, (Delwit 2005, 74) there have been few well-established social-democrat parties in EEN. First of all, the existence of strong communist successor parties that dominated the Left wing spectrum in countries like Ukraine and Moldova represented a serious obstacle for the creation of strong social-democrat parties. Second of all, the antipathy to socialist principles among the emerging post-communist parties and the wide-spread belief that being Left wing is wrong was another cause of the weak social-democrat parties in the region. Despite the lack of PES membership, there are several parties that are interested in cooperation with this party federation, particularly Democratic Party PDM and PSDM from Moldova, as well as SPU from Ukraine. PDM, for example, was nominated as the strategic partner of PES in the Republic of Moldova during PES congress from December 2006.³¹ PDM considers this to be a great achievement for its European recognition as a modern social-democrat party of European type and it is interpreted as a proof of PDM's devotion to the promotion of European integration objective. (PDM 2008)

The poor ELDR representation in the region is explained largely by the lack of well-established liberal parties. The two EEN full members joined ELDR relatively recently: Alianța Moldova Noastră AMN³² joined in April 2007 and Republican Party RP from Georgia joined in October 2007.

Finally, the European Left has one full member in Eastern Neighborhood, represented by the Communist Party of Moldova, who joined it in 2005. However, while the affiliation to EPP, PES, or ELDR is interpreted as giving internal and external credibility regarding party commitment to European liberal-democratic values and to

³¹ Interview with Oleg Țulea, International Secretary, PDM, Chisinau, May 2007.

³² AMN was the major political force within Democratic Moldova Bloc during 2005 elections

European integration perspective, the opposite is true about EL membership. As the ideological principles shared by member parties are based on radical Marxism, anti-capitalism, including Euroskeptic and anti-American feelings, the pro-European image that PCRM has started to build from 2003 onwards has been severely damaged. Some of opposition forces consider that the affiliation to the EL reconfirms PCRM's devotion to Marxist-Leninist thinking and anti-EU stance, and brings a bad image for the whole country, as PCRM is the sole governing party since 2001. (Serebrian 2005)

TABLE 2 NER HERE

Transnational links between EPP and EEN sister-parties. European People's Party has been the most popular EU-based party grouping for EEN political organization. Therefore, the next part of the present work will focus on the analysis of its activity in the region and the type and nature of EPP influence on EEN party and party system developments.

Because of the lack of some specific membership requirements that could be easily operationalized and measured, I focus on several important EPP provisions that represent the main points in taking the decision on adherence to this party federation. First of all, the straightforward acceptance of and the programmatic behavior according to Christian democrat ideological principles (listed in EPP statutes and manifesto) is examined as the major condition for a potential member. Also, I examine the role played by the EPP clause on the commitment to the European integration of a federal model.³³ The establishment as a national force and parliamentary representation of a party is another unwritten requirement that EPP seeks from the applicant parties, which played an important role in recruiting like-minded parties from CEEC. (Dakowska 2002, 284)

Compliance to Christian democrat ideology. Before examining EPP's policies towards applicant parties regarding the programmatic and behavioral adjustment to Christian democrat principles, it is worth mentioning the role played by Center-Right Internationals in bringing EEN parties closer to Western type ideology. The membership in International

³³ The commitment to a federal Europe represents a key clause of EPP's "Basic Programme" adopted by the IXth Congress, Athens, in November 1992.

Democratic Union IDU or Centrist Democratic International CDU of aspiring EPP members helped EEN parties to familiarize at an earlier stage to Western ideology and sometimes even to change their programmatic principles as a result of their accession to party Internationals. For example, PPCD's accession to Christian Democrat International (currently the Centrist Democrat International) in 1999 was followed by changes in party statute and manifesto. Its name changed from Christian Democrat People's Front to Christian Democrat People's Party and the organization declared its commitment to Christian democrat ideology. In order to stress its belonging to the CDI, PPCD adopted a new party symbol that comprised the image of Middle Ages Moldovan ruler, Stefan the Great, with a cross in his hand, framed into the flag of the Council of Europe. As a result of these adjustments, PPCD did not undergo other considerable programmatic changes before its accession to EPP in 2005.

Compared to PPCD, the adherence of other EEN Center-Right organizations to party Internationals and EPP did not exercise a significant influence on their ideological adjustment to Christian democracy. On the one hand, I argue that this is determined by their relatively recent establishment, which allowed parties to look for ideological inspiration and engage into policy-learning from Western European counterparts since their official founding. For example, the New Rights Party AMA from Georgia argues that at the time it was established in 2001 the party already gathered around the ideological principles of the International Democratic Union.³⁴

On the other hand, it is important to stress that in the political programs of current EPP observers, such as ENM, NU, or Batkivshchyna there is no clear reference to Christian democracy. Moreover, in the case of Batkivshchina, most of its programmatic principles resemble more social democracy³⁵ than Christian democracy, fact that is highlighted also by its ex-Orange coalition partner, Our Ukraine, as an obstacle in the way of a potential merge of the two political forces. (Yekhanurov 2007) Also, its major partner within BYuT is Ukrainian Social-democrat Party. New Rights Party, a candidate to EPP observer status, stresses its belonging to the neo-conservative doctrine,

³⁴ Interview with George Mosidze, International Secretary, AMA, Tbilisi, August 2007.

³⁵ Batkivshchina argues the promotion of a "new type of social ideology that combines social solidarity with individual freedoms and rights." (Batkivshchyna 1999)

positioning itself on market economy issue between EPP and British Conservatives.³⁶ ENM, the governing Georgian party, was founded on a liberal-democratic doctrine, fact that determined it to apply initially for ELDR membership.³⁷ Therefore, the acceptance of few ‘natural’ Christian democrat EEN parties shows that ideology did not represent the key criteria in EPP candidate selection, similar to the case of Central and Eastern Europe. (Hanley 2002, 472-473)

Federal Europe. The commitment to a federal model of European integration represents another important provision of EPP statutes and manifesto. During the accession of CEE parties the EPP expected them to endorse European integration through the federal model. (*EPP Yearbook '99 2000*) This was one of the major criteria for associate status listed by EPP Political Bureau in July 1996 in Luxemburg. Moreover, EPP had ‘pursued’ CEE candidate parties that expressed their commitment to European integration and federalism. The compliance to these ideational commitments was more important for candidate selection than the meeting of other formal criteria, such as the granting of observer status prior to a full member status, or the requirement regarding the affiliation to EPP group at the Parliamentary Assembly of Council of Europe.³⁸

Yet, the lack of a clear EU membership perspective in the case of EEN countries lowered the importance of this EPP requirement for parties from the region. While European integration is declared as a major foreign policy objective in EEN party programs, none of them makes reference to a federal model of European integration. Despite that, the candidate Center-Right parties were granted the observer status of EPP. *Establishment as a national force.* As it was presented earlier, during the European integration process of CEE countries EPP had to lower its accession requirements because of the need to speed up the adherence of aspiring parties from the countries that obtained EU associate status. The Europarty was granting the associate membership to political organizations if they affirmed themselves as a national force within their national political arena. (Öhlén 2008, 14) Thus, EPP strategy of recruiting powerful post-

³⁶ Interview with George Mosidze.

³⁷ A similar case can be found in Hungary, when Fidesz was firstly a Member of ELDR and later it was pursued by EPP to join the Europarty. (Dakowska 2002, 284)

³⁸ These two formal requirements were bypassed during the accession of the Polish Freedom Union UW, which complied however to EPP normative criteria, including the endorsement of the European integration of a federal model. (Dakowska 2002, 282)

communist parties had been more important than ideological compliance to EPP principles because it allowed EPP to increase its EP representation after the EU accession of CEEC.

Surprisingly enough, in the case of East European Neighborhood, in the absence of high political and material stakes from the accession of like-minded parties, EPP still favors the inclusion of strong parties over a rigorous selection based on ideological affinity. Most of EPP observers from the region (NU, Batkivshchyna, ENM) have been governing parties and represented powerful national actors at the moment when they applied for EPF's membership.

The establishment as a national force and parliamentary representation is one of the criteria that the Europarty asks from of its aspiring members. In some cases EPP would require from its applicant parties that they would be represented in their national parliaments more than on one occasion. This was one of the conditions set to the New Rights Party from Georgia. EPP declared that it will take the final decision on AMA's accession after it would get into the new 2008 legislature, although the party was largely fulfilling EPP membership requirements.³⁹

Party interaction. Because of the short time span between the establishment of EEN parties and their accession to EPP it is hard to examine the role played by EPP in the coalition choices of aspiring parties. Yet, it is worth mentioning EPP's influence on the creation of a 'national equipe' of Center-Right forces in Ukrainian case by declaring its support for the coalition of Orange revolution forces, NU and BYuT immediately after the 2004 elections and during the recent political crises that followed the revolution. (EPP 2007a, 2008c) For example, the President of the EPP Wilfried Martens congratulated of Tymoshenko with her election as a prime-minister in 2007 and declared that this represents the end of the "painsstaking process of coalition-building," proving "the strong unity of the democratic "orange" forces." Concomitantly, he believed that Tymoshenko would give "new impetus to Ukraine's European drive" and that EPP "will be ready to assist her in this process."(EPP 2007b) Later, during EPP's summit from March 2008, Martens stressed that his party "has always supported and will support consolidated steps of the democratic coalition for realization of the European vocation of Ukraine." (The

³⁹ Interview with George Mosidze.

Government's Portal 2008) The EPP continued to express its support for “the revival and strengthening of the coalition of democratic pro-European forces in Ukraine” during the latest political crisis from the fall of 2008, criticizing the idea of new parliamentary elections. (KMU Press Service 2008)

However, it is also owing to EPP membership that the two Orange forces have been competing on domestic and international levels in their contest for the ‘true’ liberal-democratic and pro-European force. This is particularly visible in BYuT’s case. Tymoshenko has been intensively using EPP’s framework to build herself the image of the promoter and defender of the Orange revolution’s ideals and the leader of the democratic coalition. As a result, Ukrainian prime-minister managed to achieve EPP’s support of her governmental policies and its criticism of Yushchenko for the blocking of Tymoshenko’s course of reforms. (EPP 2008b; Kuzio 2008c) At the same time, EPP’s backing of Tymoshenko’s governing policies and the leader of democratic coalition determined a deterioration of Yushchenko’s relations with EPP and the president and NSNU have stayed out of EPP meetings since 2007 as a sign of protest to EPP’s support for BYuT’s policies.(Kuzio 2008b)

Mechanisms of EPP influence. During the application process EPP has been using a series of mechanisms of influencing the aspiring EEN parties in order to come closer and comply with its membership requirements. Fact-finding missions represented an important method of gaining information about party activity. During these trips EPP members could meet party leaders and attend party congresses, which provided valuable insights into the political culture of the aspiring members and allowed the examination of party compliance to EPP requirements not only on paper but also during its political activity. An important partner of EPP’s monitoring of its candidate parties was Konrad Adenauer Stiftung KAS, which offered valuable information regarding the readiness and the liability of political actors from the region to join the Europarty. Also, during the fact-finding missions EPP officials were meeting other political forces and were collecting their opinion on the candidate countries. After the political crisis in Georgia from the autumn of 2007, the opinion of opposition parties had a considerable influence on the postponing of ENM’s accession.⁴⁰ Meeting local NGOs and think tanks, as well as

⁴⁰ Interview with Urszula Gacek, Civic Platform, Poland, EPP MEP, Brussels, March 2007.

individual experts, represented another important element of EPP's party monitoring. Apart from the fact-finding missions, EPP has been sending its observers during the parliamentary elections, which allowed the Europarty to eyewitness the electoral behavior and success of its potential party members.

After listing mechanisms that are used by EPP in the adoption of its decision on membership granting, the work turns now to analyze how exactly the Europarty exercises its influence on EEN parties. First of all, aspiring parties are socialized to West European ideology and party organization thanks to EPP's politico-intellectual and politico-material support. The transnational relations with the European People's party represent important socializing channels for post-communist parties that are exposed to informational flows and political dialogue at the European level. EPP promotes its policies via trainings, seminars, and other education activities involving EEN party officials. In conditions when a special budget for cooperation with EEN parties was missing, as compared to the case of CEEC, the organizational and financial support of political foundations, primarily KAS and Robert Schuman,⁴¹ has been crucial for building close contacts between EPP and EEN political actors. Shuman foundation, for example, offers monthly internships in the EP and trainings from which young EEN party leaders can benefit. In its turn, KAS plays an important role in providing information and education on EU and its institutions for EEN parties, as well as in facilitating the implementation of EU level policies. In partnership with local NGOs and individual experts KAS is also involved in monitoring the fulfillment of EU Action Plans by EEN countries. Together with KAS, EPP organizes joint meetings in the EEN states, one of the largest events being its pan-European forum in Kiev in 1999 (*EPP Yearbook '99 2000*, 327). Finally, KAS is a valuable EPP partner in providing national expert analyses and in-depth reports on aspiring parties' activities and electoral performance, which have a considerable weight in EPP's final decision on granting membership.

The ideational and material support offered by EPP and its partner organizations provided the applicant EEN parties the opportunity to strengthen their role within domestic politics and European arena. Similar to the case of CEE countries, EPP

⁴¹ The Robert Schuman Foundation for Cooperation among Christian Democrats in Europe, founded in 1989, is an entity of the Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats).

affiliation represents an important source of internal and external legitimacy. The post-communist parties use it as a proof of their commitment to the promotion of liberal-democratic reforms and European integration, as well as of their recognition at the European and international levels as a modern, pro-European political organization.

The affiliation to EPP has as well a symbolic importance for EEN parties. Joining EPP, although with limited observer rights, means joining a prestigious club of European politicians. Even if some of the well-established, governing EEN parties are closer from ideological point of view to other EU-based parties, such as European Democrats, ELDR or even PES,⁴² they still choose to affiliate to European People's Party. For example, the liberal-democrat ENM initially applied for ELDR membership. Later, however, following the recommendation of Saakashvili's economic counselor, Maart Laar (ex-prime minister of Estonia), ENM withdrew its application from ELDR and applied for EPP membership because it represented the largest and most influential Europarty.⁴³

Although the EEN applicants' status and their membership rights are significantly lower than those of their CEE counterparts, the framework provided by EPP is intensively used by pro-European EEN forces for lobbying at the European level for their European aspirations and for obtaining the backing of European officials. PPCD, for example, has been using EPP's backing with numerous occasions for criticizing the governing policies of the Communist party, particularly during the mass protests organized by the party in the winter-spring 2002 against PCRM. PPCD's leader, Iurie Roșca, even argued that it was thanks to the strong support of its European Christian democrat colleagues, together with that of Washington authorities, that PPCD remained legal and its leaders escaped the arrest despite PCRM's actions to annihilate PPCD as a political force. (PPCD 2007)

The Westward-leaning Yushchenko, Tymoshenko, and Saakashvili have been particularly active in using EPP congresses and other formal and informal meetings to stress their party achievements regarding the promotion of liberal-democratic reforms and demanding a more enhanced EU approach towards their countries. The most they could achieve has been the verbal support of EPP party leaders and these statements have had

⁴² Here I refer to Batkivshchyna's affinity to social democracy.

⁴³ Correspondence with George Mosidze, International Secretary, AMA.

no significant weight on EU decisions on bringing EEN countries closer to EU entry. Yet, because most of EPP member parties are governing parties and their representatives are also high-ranked officials in their home countries, the achievement of their verbal support has been interpreted by EEN parties as a significant success of their leaders and it has been used to persuade the domestic electorate of their pro-European policies. (Lobjakas 2007; Ukrainian Government's Portal 2008a, 2008b) As Ukrainian analyst Taras Kuzio argues, the alignment of Batkivshchyna and its eponymous bloc, BYuT to the largest Europarty “was a statement of direction for her political force which assured governments and businesses alike.” (Kuzio 2008a)

Conditionality policy that EPP applies for influencing directly its applicant sister-parties from EEN is much weaker than in Central and Eastern Europe. Because the Europarty offered only a restricted membership to non-EU candidate parties, with the right of attending EPP meetings and expressing its opinion, but with no right of initiative or voting, the EU party grouping could not play hard with its EEN applicants during the implementation of its membership requirements. The only ‘stick’ that the European People’s Party has used in relation to its EEN candidates is putting the parties on a long waiting list. This policy applies mostly to parties whose general commitment to democratic rules of political game is questioned or to those who are perceived as not desirable EPP members.

EPP used the postponing of Saakashvili’s party accession because ENM restricted the rights of opposition and mass-media during the autumn of 2007. EU officials and experts from the CoE, OSCE, as well as from the USA, criticized openly Saakashvili’s policies, describing them as undemocratic and representing a “disappointment.”⁴⁴ (Collin 2007) Also, the OSCE and other international observers had criticized the preparation and the conduct of Georgian presidential and parliamentary elections from 2008, (International Election Observation Mission 2008; ODIHR 2008a) stressing particularly the blurred distinction between the state and the ruling party and “the unequal playing field” in favor of ENM resulting from the last moment changes of Constitution and Election Code. (ODIHR 2008b)

⁴⁴ This was the expression used by the US State Department to describe Saakashvili’s actions against opposition in the fall of 2007.

Because of the political crisis from the fall of 2007 and the way in which the presidential elections from January 2008 were conducted the procedure of ENM's affiliation to EPP was temporarily halted. The parliamentary elections from May 2008 were regarded as an exam for ENM for proving its commitment to democratic principles and the respect of opposition's rights.⁴⁵ However, EPP leaders avoided an official criticism of ENM's policies on their web page and were 'mild' in their remarks regarding the conduct of presidential and parliamentary elections from 2008. The President Martens described the presidential elections as "very positive" and expressed his hope that Georgia "will continue to improve" the independence of media, judiciary, and state institutions. (EPP 2008d) Similarly, despite the mentions about the general reference of EPP's Vice-President to "severe shortcomings" during the legislative elections, EPP observers were very positive in their official statements. (EPP 2008a) Although the May 2008 legislative elections were not considered by European and international observers to be completely free and fair, EPP still wanted to have ENM as one of its members, mostly because it meant including another powerful, governing party from the region and increasing EPP's representation within European neighborhood.

Another example of the use of long waiting list during the EPP accession process is represented by the New Rights Party from Georgia. Since 2003, when it officially applied for EPP membership, the Europarty has been postponing AMA's accession process, despite its general fulfillment of EPP membership requirements. AMA's officials believe that this is the result of their party's criticism of the authoritarian governing policy of ENM, another EPP applicant. AMA's International Secretary, George Mosidze, argues that before the use of force against opposition in the fall of 2007 the stereotype of Saakashvili as the "apotheosis of democracy" in the post-communist region dominated the impression that the European politicians had about his party, ENM. As a result, they could not accept AMA's criticism of the governing party and tried to avoid the inclusion in their club of two opposing forces from Georgia by postponing AMA's accession with the promise that it would become an EPP member if it obtains again parliamentary representation in the new 2008 parliament.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Interview with Urszula Gacek.

⁴⁶ Correspondence with George Mosidze.

Conclusion

This chapter brings into analysis the two modes of EU direct influence on domestic political transformations from East European Neighborhood. The analysis of the first mechanism of EU impact – legislative adjustment – confirms the theoretical expectation of present dissertation that the vaguely defined country APs political stipulations decrease the strength of the direct EU influence on party and party system transformations. This empirical finding supports the broader scholarly argument that the degree of clarity of European requirements is a major factor in determining the type and the degree of EU involvement in domestic level changes. (Franck 1990; Jacoby 2004; Legro 1997; Schimmelfennig and Schwellnus 2006)

Along with the absence of clear implementation guidelines and lack of the strongest EU tool – membership perspective – the vaguely defined EU requirements makes EU direct influence to loose its strength in determining domestic legislative adjustment in line with European level policies. As a consequence, political elites from EU bordering countries attain a certain degree of freedom in pursuing domestic transformations in compliance with European standards. The resulting legislative changes according to European experts' recommendations are closely related to country-specific variables, which supports the constructivist arguments about the importance of sociological factors in defining the degree of domestic political engagement in pursuing EU induced changes. These factors are represented by the most politicized and prominent issues within a party system.

With regard to the second key variable that is considered in the present theoretical model to be responsible for the extent of European influence on domestic politics – material and political incentives, it is important to mention that Brussels still has a significant direct influence on domestic legislative changes in EEN, as compared to other European institutions. By contrast to the dominant scholarly belief that the lack of membership perspective means a failure of EU conditionality policy outside its members and candidates, the empirical findings show that the Union provides both rhetorical and material incentives within the existing ENP framework for domestic political actors. The current AP are signed for a period of only three years and EU has expressed repeatedly its readiness to ‘reward’ the successful implementation of its requirements by post-Soviet

political elites with a more advanced cooperation agreement (not ruling out the full EU membership perspective). Concomitantly, the European Union provides intermediary rewards of coming closer to European integration (visa facilitation, preferential trade agreements, etc.) and, as a consequence, Brussels has more bargaining power to encourage EEN political forces in pursuing reforms according to European standards.

Lastly, the three case studies confirm the theoretical argument of the instrumentalist approach to the study of EU impact on domestic political changes in non-member states. (Börzel and Risse 2003; Cowles et al. 2001; Jacoby 2004; Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier 2004, 2005a; Vachudová 2005) The research results show that the domestic degree of engagement of political elites in pursuing reforms according to European requirements largely depends on the number of internal veto players. So, although the ruling elites have a certain degree of freedom in complying with EU policies with regard to party-related legislation, their instrumentalist behavior is conditional on the strength and the bargaining power of opposition political parties, particularly the pro-democratic ones that supports domestic changes in line with European standards.

The investigation of the compliance to EPFs' accession criteria, with the case study of EPP, reveals that the direct influence exercised by EPFs on aspiring party members from EEN has been weaker than in the case of CEE candidates, as it was hypothesized in the dissertation's theoretical model. This is merely the outcome of a more limited financial assistance and membership offer within the largest Europarties, EPP and PES. As a consequence, EPFs could use a weaker conditionality policy to determine the candidate parties from the region to undergo significant changes in order to comply with their accession requirements. By contrast to the theoretical expectation of the present research, it lowers down the accession requirement regarding the ideological compliance in case of parties that affirmed themselves as the major actors on the EEN political arenas. Similar to the case of Central and Eastern Europe, the recruiting strategy of the largest EPF – European People's Party – favors the inclusion of well-established, usually governing parties, in order to increase its pan-European influence despite the Europarty's ideological dilution. (Delsoldato 2002)

EEN parties have been motivated to affiliate to different Europarties because of

the politico-intellectual and politico-material support, but mostly because of the domestic and international legitimacy they could achieve in return, as in the case of CEE countries. (Delsoldato 2002; Pridham 1999, 2001) Also, the study discloses that the European party federations have had a larger prestige in the post-communist space, including East European Neighborhood, than in the old EU members. (Schmitt 2005) For EEN parties joining a European party network, particularly the largest one - EPP, means joining a prestigious club of European politicians that recognize their commitment to liberal-democratic principles and European integration.

Chapter 5. The Indirect Influence of European Integration on Parties and Party Systems in EEN

Introduction

There has been a growing scholarly interest in studying how Europe matters for domestic transformation of parties and party systems both in the case of Western and Central and Eastern Europe. In the case of the old EU members the major assumption was that there had been a minimal direct impact of Europe on national party politics and that party systems had proved to be “the most impervious to change” (Mair 2000, 28). In the case of CEE candidates Europeanization was “a guiding light” for post-communist transformations (Lewis 2006a, 1) and political actors and party systems have developed within the process of European integration since the early 1990s. (Bielasiak 2006; Enyedi 2007; Henderson 2005; Lewis 2005b; Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier 2005b) The impact of the European integration is believed to be stronger in the post-communist space because of the fragility of party systems in the region. (Henderson 2005; Lewis 2005b)

In the case of East European Neighborhood, the indirect influence of European integration on party and party system levels is anticipated to be more probable than the direct one mentioned in chapter 3 (legislative adjustment and party compliance to requirements for joining EPFs). As it was argued in the literature review and in the chapter 3 I consider that the fact that EEN parties are not involved in EU policy making either via Euro-parties or via intergovernmental channels determine the EU to have only an indirect impact on the establishment or change of party identity based on its European attitudes, as well as on party competition along the European dimension. By contrast to the case of member or candidate states, European integration can have limited impact on the format and mechanics of EEN party systems, depending on their degree of freedom (more or less constrained) to ‘come closer to Europe.’

The aim of the present chapter is to analyze the indirect EU influence on parties and party systems by investigating their reaction to challenges and opportunities offered by European integration process. The empirical analysis is based on primary data such as

Manifesto Research Group (MRG) dataset and expert surveys,⁴⁷ as well as the author analysis of party manifestos and EEN party leaders interviews conducted in the spring-summer 2007. The research also investigates the dynamic impact of European integration on parties and party systems by following the emergence and the development of party European stances and of European issue within EEN political spaces. It starts with the analysis of the interaction of party European attitudes with other policy stances and examines the location of Euroskepticism within EEN political systems. It moves then to the investigation of the influence of European integration process on the format and the mechanics of the party system. The conclusion summarizes the major theoretical and empirical findings.

Theoretical debate

The analysis of how European integration matters for parties and party systems in the case of Western and Central and East European democracies has raised two major scholarly arguments. In the first case, the discussion of party stance towards Europe brings to the conclusion that it depends primarily on two key factors that guide party behavior: ideology and strategy. According to some authors, such as Kopecky and Mudde (2002), Marks and Wilson (2000), Marks et al. (2002), Tsebelis and Garrett (2000), Benoit and Laver (2006), and Rohrschneider and Whitefield (2004) ideology is the major factor that explains parties' attitudes towards European integration. The major argument is that parties are organizations that assimilate and make use of the new issues through the existing "historically rooted orientations," which force them to behave in the limits of bounded rationality. (Marks and Wilson 2000, 434) Therefore, party identity is considered to be the major determinant of its European stance and party attitudes towards Europe are expected to be less exposed to change as a result of short-term concerns of political parties.

Vachudova and Hooghe (2006) argue that ideology is the strongest predictor of party European stance both in the old EU members and in the CEE states. However, in the latter case the existence of the "communist magnet," which combines the Left wing economics with cultural traditionalism, and of the "EU magnet" at the other pole,

⁴⁷ 2003-2004 Benoit/Laver expert survey on Ukraine and Moldova and 2006 Timuș expert survey on Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia

characterized by market and cultural liberalism, determined party alignment on a single axis of political competition from Left-TAN to Right-GAL, with Euroskeptic parties being concentrated within the Left-TAN quadrant.

Yet, another group of studies highlight the importance of party strategy in determining the influence of European integration on party and party system transformations in the post-communist neighborhood. Because of the fundamental and rapid changes in all spheres of the in the post-communist societies, some well-defined social cleavages in which parties could be deeply rooted and which could determine their political behavior are absent (Bielsiak 2001, 2004; Mainwaring 1998; Mair 1997c; Zielinski 2002). As a result, party ideological profiles are not well-formed and they do not constrain party behavior and reaction to the new emerging issues as in the consolidated Western European democracies. This, in its turn, offers political parties more flexible policy positioning and strategic behavior, when political actors can benefit from newly emerging opportunities in a party system, for example, by focusing on new issues/dimensions of competitions that would bring them a greater electoral support. In this context, party position in a political spectrum (margin-center), (Mair 2000; Taggart 1998; Taggart and Szczerbiak 2004a) as well as its government/opposition relation (Sitter 2002a) play an important role for its strategic behavior. So, extreme and opposition parties are expected to be more inclined in adopting a Euroskeptic position, often with the primary aim of distinguishing themselves from the mainstream parties, while the governing political forces are constrained in their attitudes towards Europe, adopting moderate or strong Europhile stances.

Theoretical model

As discussed in the conceptualization section from the chapter 3 it is important to distinguish between the two units of analysis: party and party system for the investigation of the evolution of post-communist political transformations. I agree with the scholars that argue that the relationship between the consolidation of parties and of party systems cannot be described as a linear one. (Mainwaring and Torcal 2006; Randall and Svåsand 2002; Wallis 2003) Therefore, the distinction between the two units of analysis allows for a more careful investigation of the potential indirect influence of European integration

process on domestic political transformations.

At **party level** the impact of European integration is operationalized by looking at party attitudes towards Europe and the role played by the European issue in party politics. For the purpose of this study, the impact of European integration at party level is examined narrowly, without looking at party organizational changes and other aspects of party life, such as intra-party disputes on the European issue and the shifts in the intra-party power, party-public relation. I limit myself at examining the most important factors that determine party European stances.

First, I examine the role of party ideological profile, particularly party position on the major dimensions of political competition, in shaping the European stance of the EEN political organizations. The post-communist literature advances several important political divides based on legacies of the past (Comisso 1997; Geddes 1997; Jowitt 1992), the type of transition towards democracy (Cotta 1996; Rivera 1996), and endogenous and exogenous (external influence) factors that shape the political arenas of the post-communist states. (Cotta 1996; Whitehead 2001) The systemic dimension, represented by party stances regarding democratic and market economy reforms, is considered to be the major axis that structure political competition in most of post-communist countries. (Kitschelt 1992, 1995)

Following scholarly approach of disentangling party ideological profile based on the economic Left-Right and non-economic, or cultural dimension I examine the relationship of party European stance with the market economy in the former case and with its position regarding individual freedoms and rights in the later one. Yet, the authoritarian versus libertarian divide did not experience a significant degree of politicization in former Soviet Union, as compared to the established Western democracies or Central and Eastern Europe (Ramonaite 2006; Szczerbiak 2006).⁴⁸ At the same time two other dimensions have shaped the non-economic Left-Right competition

⁴⁸ While in all three EEN countries there are Green parties, they do not manage to gain significant electoral support, which also proves the low salience at public and political levels of post-modern and new politics issues. Although most of the relevant parties in the three countries do not openly challenge liberal principles of individual freedoms and rights (with the exception of extreme Left parties), they do not engage in a too liberal view, partly because of the broad public and political consensus on the special role played by the Orthodox Church in defining and preserving traditional family values and moral principles. This is particularly true in Georgian case, where Orthodox Church plays an active role in public and political life and determines the preservation of cultural conservatism and traditionalism. (Nodia and Scholtbach 2006, 136)

within the post-communist space. Nation/state building and anticommunist divides dominated political competition in the first years of democratic transition both in CEE and FSU. (Dawisha and Parrott 1997a, 1997b; Jungerstam-Mulders 2006) As compared to Central and East European countries, the former conflict line was particularly salient in the post-Soviet republics, most of which lacked previous nation/state experience in the present territories before the Russian domination and Communist rule.⁴⁹ I argue that the major role played by the anti-communist divide in defining the ideological axis of competition, both in the FSU and CEE, is conditional on the presence and strength of non-reformed Communist parties across the region. So, the existence of this type of parties in Ukraine and Moldova make this issue one of the central dimensions of Left-Right competition.

Finally, attitudes towards Russia/CIS represent the key exogenous factor that influences the European stance of post-Soviet EEN parties. The strong Russian influence in the region that started from the Tsarist Empire and continued during the Communist rule has influenced significantly the transition process, specifically through the presence of Russian minorities and Russian-speaking population (e.g. Ukraine and Moldova) and the Russian support of separatist conflicts in the post-Soviet space (e.g. Transnistrian conflict in Moldova, Abkhaz and South-Osetian conflicts in Georgia). Most of the parties from the region, particularly the liberal-democratic forces, perceive European integration as an alternative to close relations to Russia and CIS and a way of getting rid of Russian domination.

So, summarizing the presented-above analysis of the major political conflicts within the EEN political arenas, the dissertation focuses on the investigation of the relationship between party ideological profile and the European issue with the focus on several major dimensions that shape party identity within EEN political spaces:

- economic Left-Right dimension, operationalized as market economy issue
- non-economic or cultural dimensions, such as individual freedoms and rights, nationalism, and communist issue

⁴⁹ In the case of the three examined countries this is particularly relevant for Ukraine (Prizel 1997) and Moldova. (Cărăuș 2002; Timuș 2004)

- exogenous issues, such as attitudes towards Russia/CIS, which might represent alternatives to European integration process.

Concomitantly, the thesis examines the relevance of the alternative scholarly explanation of considering party position within a party system (center-extreme) (Mair 2000; Taggart 1998; Taggart and Szczerbiak 2004a) and its government/opposition relation as the major predictors of party attitudes towards European integration. (Sitter 2002a)

At **party system level**, the operationalization of the impact of Europe is made following two major features of a party system: the *format*, the number of relevant parties, and the *mechanics*, or the interaction between the parties. In the former case I examine the instances when parties decide to establish or change their identities based on their European stance.⁵⁰ With regard to the *mechanics* of a party system, I explore how the European issue influences party interaction and coalition formation and the nature of those impacts.⁵¹ Above all, I examine whether the European question has changed the prevailing modes of party competition and brought new formulas of coalition formation.

The empirical research will start with the analysis of MRG dataset on the three examined countries, followed by the examination of 2003-2004 Benoit/Laver expert survey on Ukraine and Moldova with 2006 Timuș survey dataset.

Theoretical expectations. Several major theoretical expectations guide the present research. The newly emerged post-Soviet states lacked well-defined socio-historical divisions that could be rendered by parties into political identities. At the same time, most of the parties in the region do not possess a political experience during the pre-Soviet and Communist times. At party level, the first theoretical expectation is that because of the lack of well established party identities ideology does not represent the major predictor of party European stance and, consequently, the Left-Right dimension does not subsume the European issue. Yet, I expect to find a correlation between the promotion of democratic principles and market economy, on the one hand, and the European profiles of parties. Parties on the Left of the political center, particularly non-reformed Communist parties,

⁵⁰ Mode 4 of EU influence on party and party system transformation from the table 1, chapter 2 of the present work.

⁵¹ Mode 3 of EU influence on party and party system transformation from the table 1, chapter 2 of the present work.

'retrofitting' the orthodox Soviet analysis of capitalism to accommodate Western post-industrial society (Curry and Urban 2003, 254) and promoting the restoration of the Soviet system, as well as the 'losers' of transitional reforms (Tucker et al. 2002) (e.g. Agrarian, ethnic or extreme nationalist parties) will tend to have a Euroskeptic position.

Building on the above theoretical reasoning, the second hypothesis is that that strategy is the major predictor of party reaction and transformation as a result of European integration. Weak ideological profiles and the short period of time of transition towards a democratic society allow EEN parties to adopt a more flexible behavior in reacting to new issues, including the European one. As a consequence, parties tend to adopt a strategic behavior and react to the European issue according to the emerging opportunities they perceive the European integration process might bring them. The expected empirical finding in this case is that European issue has a weaker influence on party politics and changes in party European stance do not induce significant party identity changes.

Two major theoretical expectations are examined with regard to EU influence at party system level, with the focus on the format and the mechanics of EEN party systems. By contrast to post-communist EU candidates, the lack of a clear membership perspective for EEN does not constrain parties in adopting a clear pro- or anti-EU position. Parties that do not support the European integration can differentiate themselves by competing on other issues (e.g. promoting alternative integration into CIS space or even the restoration of the Soviet Union) without opposing directly the EU. As a result, the first hypothesis states that the polarization of political competition on the European issue is not likely to occur and EEN parties will be less inclined to emerge with the explicit intention of mobilizing support for or against the EU. Moreover, if there exists a broad agreement of the majority of relevant parties on the European integration I expect to find a low occurrence of new parties that would ground their identity in their Europeaness as they will not be able to mobilize a significant number of voters belonging to other pro-European parties. If the mentioned above hypothesis is confirmed by the empirical findings then the conclusion is that the process of European integration does not influence the degree of fragmentation and thus the *format* of EEN party systems.

With regard to the *mechanics* of a party system I consider party position in a political space and its government/opposition relation as intervening variables that determine party interaction and coalition building. Following the scholarly arguments from the cases of old EU members and CEE (Mair 2000; Taggart 1998; Taggart and Szczerbiak 2004a) the first hypothesis is that party strategic behavior is constrained by its position within a political system, with mainstream and governing parties adopting moderate or strongly pro-European stance, and extreme and opposition parties – more inclined to adopt Euroskepticism. Concerning party – government relation the second expectation is that the contextual situation of challenges and opportunities available for political parties influences the attitudes towards Europe. The major argument is that parties aiming to obtain the ruling power and/or form the government tend to be more moderate and adopt a pro-European position. This position would be determined by the possibility of being regarded as a potential coalition partner by the mainstream parties, which would increase the chances of entering the executive.

Empirical Findings from party level

MRG dataset. The preliminary analysis of MRG dataset on Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia since the first parliamentary elections in 1990's provides the following empirical evidence for the influence of Europe on party politics and party systems in the two countries.

Firstly, the analysis of party scores on category 108, EC+ (positive references to European Community), shows the importance of the European issue for party electoral programs and, consequently, the salience of the European discourse in the domestic competition of a certain country. In Georgian case, during the first parliamentary elections in 1992, 1/3 (4 out of 13) of relevant parties make specific positive reference to EC in their electoral programs, in 1995 - 2 out of 6 parties, in 1999 - the two parties that gained the majority of votes in the parliament: Shevardnadze's SMK (Citizen's Union) and SSAK (All-Georgian Revival Union) score positively on EC+, and in 2004 - 4 out of 6 relevant parties are pro-European. Another important observation is that the highest percentage of programmatic references dedicated to EC+ belongs to the governing party blocs (e.g. Shevardnadze's *Citizen's Union* in 1999, or *National Movement-Democrats* in

2004). However, in order to investigate a clearer relationship between party/government position of a party and its European stance a deeper analysis is needed.

In Moldova, in 1994 elections, out of four relevant parties and electoral blocs, only one – Peasants and Intellectuals Bloc, makes explicit references to European Community, in 1998 – all the relevant parties, with the exception of Communists Party of Moldova (PCRM) and Socialists Party (PSM), refer positively to European Community. In 2001 elections six out of ten relevant parties score positively on their attitudes towards EU, and the remaining four that make no reference to European Community are all Left wing parties, merely those approaching the Left margin of party system. In 2005, surprisingly enough, PCRM, which since its first parliamentary elections made no explicit reference at all to Europe, appeared to score the highest (15.25%) on European Community dimension. The only parties that made no reference to EC are the two Left wing parties: Republican Social-Political Movement "Ravnopravie" and "Patria-Rodina" Bloc, which have a nostalgic Soviet rhetoric.

In Ukraine, in the late 1994 first parliamentary elections, 1/2 of parties (4 out of 8) score positively on EC, in 1998 2/5 of parties (4 out of 10) make positive reference to EC, while in 2002, 1/2 of parties are pro-European in their electoral programs. Comparing the saliency of the European issue for party programs in Ukraine and Georgia, one is to observe that the European issue appears to be more important for parties in their electoral programs in Georgian case (maximum of 8,89 references dedicated to EC+) than in Ukraine (maximum of 1,04). Therefore, according to party programs, the salience of the European discourse is higher in Georgia, than in Ukrainian electoral competition. The clarification of this empirical evidence is to be found in the contextual factors, such as the cultural and national issues, as well as the geographic proximity to EU borders, which determine the different perception of the European issue within the two political spaces.

Secondly, examining 110 category of MRG dataset (EC-),⁵² the conclusion is, surprisingly enough, that no party makes negative references to European Union in their electoral programs in both countries. This can be regarded as an evidence for salience theory that argues that parties do not compete by adopting opposite positions

⁵² The category represents the sum of the negative references to EU and European integration.

but by highlighting different ‘themes.’⁵³ A qualitative analysis of parties that do not make any reference to the EC shows that most of these parties are Leftist and radical Left parteis (e.g. KPU, SPU (until 2002 elections) in Ukraine; SMSP Socialist Workers' Party or SSP Socialist Party in Georgia; PCRM (until 2005), Patria-Rodina, and Ravnopravie in Moldova), which promote an alternative to democracy form of government - the restoration of the socialist system, and even of the USSR. Other groups of parties that lack any mention of EU in their electoral programs are agrarian or peasants' parties⁵⁴ and nationalist parties.⁵⁵ A closer look at these political organizations reveals that most of them are “losers of transition,”(Tucker et al. 2002) which oppose liberal-democratic changes. So, the lack of references to Europe can be related to their lack of support for democratization and market liberalization and promotion of an alternative socialist system based on a planned economy. In these circumstances, the theoretical expectation with regard to the connection between party ideological profile and its European orientation seems to be confirmed.

However, a deeper analysis of parties’ European stances is needed for understanding the lack of reference to EU in party programs and drawing its relationship to other party ideological identities.

TABLE 3a-3c NEAR HERE

Expert survey data. The analysis of Benoit/Laver and Timuș expert surveys helps to overcome the drawbacks of the MRG dataset regarding the influence of European integration on EEN parties and party systems. Figure 1 reflects the interconnection of party attitudes on EU joining and their ideological orientation in Ukraine and Moldova. The graph shows an interesting relationship between EU joining position and ideological orientation of a party in the two countries. It also provides information on the location of Euroskepticism in the two examined post-Soviet party systems. It appears that the

⁵³ I thank Zsolt Enyedi for this remark.

⁵⁴ APU Agrarian Party and SelPU Peasant Party, BSP-SP Socialist Party-Peasant Party in Ukraine and SSFK All-Georgian Farmers' Union; Democratic-Agrarian Party of Moldova.

⁵⁵ KUN Congress of Nationalists, UKRP Conservative Republican Party, NF National Front in Ukraine, and SEDP National Independence Party, SRKET Reformers' Union - National Accord, AMA New Rights-Novas in Georgia.

following statement is true: the more Leftist a party is, the more Euroskeptic it is, and *vice versa*, the more Right wing a party is, the stronger its pro-European stance. According to expert survey results, there is no relevant political party that scores negatively on EU joining in Moldova. Even the Communist party scores a bit more than 10 points (10.17), even if at the moment the survey was conducted it was still a non-reformed doctrinaire Communist party, running in 2001 on a platform that proposed the unification of Moldova with Russia-Belarus Union.

In Ukrainian case there are four parties that score under 10 on EU joining in 2003-2004, which means they can be defined as Euroskeptic. A close look shows that all the parties that score negatively on European integration are Left wing parties, with the exception of the ZM Women for the Future union, which according to the present expert survey is placed in the Center of the Left-Right ideological divide. All these parties are promoting, more or less, the Soviet-times socialist ideas, with the exception of SPU, which evolved since its political activities in the early 1990's to a reformed Left wing party, a proof of this being its close contacts with the European Socialists and being a consultative party in Socialist International. Parties that are the lowest on their support to Europe are the two Left extremist parties: Communist Party of Ukraine KPU, and Natalia Vitrenko's bloc NV. This shows that party positioning in a political space, specifically their closeness to the Left ideological pole, represents an important factor in defining party European stance. The analysis of parties that adopt a pro-European stance shows that these are all Right wing parties. Parties that are the most Europhile are the two parties that led the Orange revolution's pro-European coalition: Yushchenko's *Our Ukraine* bloc and Julia Timoshenko's bloc BYuT.

FIGURE 1, 1a, and 1b NEAR HERE

2006 Timuș expert survey on Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia, confirms this pattern of connection between party ideological profile and its European orientation. While there is no linear relationship between the ideological dimension and the European issue, figure 3 confirms the statement that the more Leftist a party is the lower it scores on its attitudes towards EU and European integration. The analysis of country graphs

shows that the most Euroskeptic parties are Labour Party SLP in Georgia, Ravnopravie and Patria-Rodina in Moldova, KPU and NV-NO in Ukraine. In Georgian case, SLP is the only relevant party that represents the Left ideological segment after 2004 parliamentary elections.⁵⁶ Ravnopravie and Patria-Rodina are the two extremist anti-system forces of Moldovan political space that promote socialist values and represent the interests of Russian minorities.

FIGURE 3, 3a, 3b, and 3c NEAR HERE

The cross-country comparison also reveals that party placement in a political spectrum (particularly their proximity to the Left extreme) is an important variable in determining party European orientation, representing a good indicator of party Euroskepticism.

Wrapping up, the broad Left-Right dimension (in the form that it exists in these states) does not absorb the European issue. However, the more Leftist a party is, the more Euroskeptic its political discourse is. The expert surveys reveal that Euroskepticism is a unipolar phenomenon, situated at the Left ideological extreme, represented by anti-system parties with a nostalgic Soviet rhetoric and those that base their support on Russian minority. In this respect, the empirical findings of present research are similar to those of scholars working on the impact of European integration on CEE that argue that Euroskepticism correlates with Leftist parties due the specific socio-politic context (Marks et al. 2005; Taggart and Szczerbiak 2004a) and liberal parties tend to be the most Europhile ones. (Kopecký and Mudde 2002; Marks et al. 2005)

Because broad ideological profiles of EEN political parties are not well-defined it is worth examining the relationship of the European issue with the major lines of political conflict that have defined EEN political spaces after the collapse of the USSR. The research proceeds with examining the relationship between party European stance and its position on market economy (economic Left-Right dimension) and traditional/authoritarian – modern/libertarian divide (non-economic Left-Right

⁵⁶ Shevardnadze's bloc For a New Georgia BAS and Abashidze's Union of Democratic Revival DAK, which were defined by country experts as Center-Left, found their political death after the Rose Revolution.

dimension). These two political divides represent the core dimensions of systemic transformation in post-communist space and parties are expected to have a better defined position on these issues as compared to other policy domains that shape their broad ideological profiles. Concomitantly, these lines of conflict are the closest related to European integration, as EU is based on liberal-democratic principles, which implies that they should explain more accurate party European stance.

FIGURE 4 AND 5 NEAR HERE

The cross-country analysis of the relationship between market economy and EU and European integration shows the existence of a significant correlation between party position on market economy and its European stance. This finding is analogous to that from the post-Soviet CEE candidate countries (Marks et al. 2005; Vachudová and Hooghe 2006) but it is contradicting the scholarly argument about the relationship between the economic Left-Right axis with the European issue. (Hooghe and Marks 1999; Marks et al. 2005; Tsebelis and Garrett 2000)

A similar relationship exists between traditional/authoritarian versus modern/libertarian divide. It shows that the more a party is favoring market economy and of modern/libertarian policies regarding individual freedoms and rights, the more pro-European it is. The examination of each of the country graphs shows that the cases that diverge significantly from the general trend are the PCRM in Moldova and Party of Regions in Ukraine. In order to understand why these two cases present a different relationship between the two examined lines of conflict and the European issue one needs to investigate also other policy positions and the political activity of these parties.

One of the most interesting discoveries is the relationship between country nationalism and European integration. The two expert surveys present different results. Benoit and Laver examine party approaches to history, culture and national consciousness between two extremes: nationalism⁵⁷ and cosmopolitanism. The expert answers from Ukraine and Moldova are presented in figure 2. Although there is no linear correlation between such a nationalist dimension and the European issue, the general

⁵⁷ With reference to the majority nationalism.

trend is that nationalist parties are more pro-EU than the parties located as ‘cosmopolitan.’ It appears that we have a relationship that opposes the findings from Western and Central Europe, where cosmopolitan parties are more Europhile and the nationalist ones are Euroskeptic . (Benoit and Laver 2006, 168-169; Bielasiak 2004, 2006; Lewis and Mansfeldová 2006)

FIGURE 2 NEAR HERE

However, this empirical finding is the result of several shortcomings of Benoit/Laver expert survey. First of all, as local experts from Moldova and Ukraine argue, the other end of the majority nationalism for most of the parties (particularly Left parties) is not cosmopolitanism.⁵⁸ Usually we find the Russian/pan-Slavic nationalism at the other extreme of country nationalism. This point was raised by most of the experts from Ukraine and Moldova that participated in 2006 Timuş survey, which determined the author to differentiate between party stances on country nationalism versus cosmopolitanism and Russian/pan-Slavic nationalism versus cosmopolitanism. Second of all, because of the reference to country nationalism in the expert survey, it is possible to include into this dimension both Romanian and Moldovan nationalist discourses, which in Moldovan case represent alternative political discourses to country nationalism.

In this respect, the 2006 Timuş survey allows us to examine more accurately the relationship between the nationalistic dimension and the European issue. Apart from examining the connection between country nationalism⁵⁹ and the European issue, it also provides information regarding the link between Russian/pan-Slavic nationalism and the European question.

FIGURE 6 NEAR HERE

Figure 6 depicts the cross-country connection between country nationalism and EU and European integration. The analysis of each of the three cases shows different

⁵⁸ I thank Mykola Ryabchuk (Ukraine) and Alex Oprunenco (Moldova) for raising this point during author’s expert survey in 2006.

⁵⁹ As defined in previous chapter.

patterns of interaction between the two issues. While in the case of Ukraine and Moldova it appears that the higher a party scores on country nationalism divide the more Europhile it is, in Georgian case the reverse is true. The explanation of this dissimilarity can be found in the degree of politicization of the nationalist question in the examined states. In Georgian case there is a low degree of politicization and the broad agreement of parties on nation and state issues, as well as a lack of relevant minority parties. As a result, Right wing pro-democracy and pro-market parties tend to be cosmopolitan and Europhile in their policy stances. Thus, Georgian political space shows similarities to the majority of CEE countries, where cosmopolitan parties are also the most Europhile ones and nationalist parties oppose the European integration. (see for example Hungary (Enyedi 2006b), Czech Republic (Linek and Mansfeldová 2006) or Poland (Markowski 2006)).

By contrast, in Ukrainian and Moldovan cases, there is a high degree of politicization of issues dealing with historical past, national and state identity, exemplified by the existence of relevant political parties (often anti-establishment, approaching the Left extreme) representing the interests of Russian minority. Consequently, nationalist discourse is used by Right wing parties as a way to differentiate themselves from the non-reformed, anti-system, and pro-Russian Left wing parties and usually comes hand in hand with a pro-European stance.

Because of differentiation between country nationalism and Russian/pan-Slavic nationalism in Timuş survey dataset, it is possible to draw a more accurate relationship between the two issues. First, by including in the analysis the anti-establishment parties that represent Russian minority the graphic illustration of Moldovan results shows that these parties score the lowest on country nationalist dimension and on European question (Patria-Rodina and Ravnopravie). In Ukrainian case it is also NV-NO and KPU, the two anti-systems pro-Russian parties that score the lowest on country nationalist dimension. Graphs 7a and 7b show that these are also the political forces that promote Russian type nationalism and share pro-Russia/CIS stances, which correlate negatively with European issue, by contrast to pro-Russian parties from some Baltic states. (see Estonia (Sikk 2007)) Thus, it is not the case that this group of parties lacks nationalist discourse at all, as Benoit/Laver expert survey would suggest. They do embrace nationalist rhetoric, which however does not refer to the country nationalism, but to another type of ethnic

nationalism, specifically Russian. It also appears that the nationalist divides (both country nationalism and Russian/pan-Slavic nationalism) correlate best with the European issue in Ukrainian case, where party position on nationalism predicts its European stance.

Second, because of the reference to country nationalism in the expert survey, it is possible to include into this dimension both Romanian and Moldovan nationalist discourses, which in Moldovan case represent alternative political discourses to country nationalism. As a result, PCRM emerges as the second most nationalistic party after PPCD, these two parties representing the major promoters of Moldovan and, consecutively, Romanian nationalist discourses.

FIGURE 7a AND 7b NEAR HERE

When one is to look at the Benoit/Laver cases that score the lowest on EU joining on Figure 2, it appears that these are the Communists parties from the both countries, Natalya Vytrenko bloc from Ukraine and Social-Democratic Party (PSDM) from Moldova. In Ukrainian case these parties promote the idea of the restoration of the socialist system and have a very nationalistic discourse but based on Russian/Slavic nationalism, while the nationalistic discourses of PCRM and PSDM are dominated by a Moldovan nationalism, an invention of the Soviet nationalist politics. So, it is not the cosmopolitan stance that places these parties at the other pole of the (majority) nationalist dimension in Benoit/Laver survey, but their promotion of the alternative types of nationalisms, particularly that of the dominant Russian minority.

A similar trend in the nature of the nationalist dimension and its relationship with the European issue is found in Latvia. The nation/state divide has structured profoundly party competition since country's independence, with Leftist parties being categorized as Slavic and Rightist parties as Latvian ones. (Ikstens 2006, 2) The analysis of the connection between the nationalist dimension and the EU using Benoit/Laver dataset shows that parties that score lowest on nationalism, classified as cosmopolitan parties, are the Left wing Slavic parties, which are also the most Euroskeptic ones (PCTVL⁶⁰ and

⁶⁰ For Human Rights in a United Latvia

TSP⁶¹),(Benoit and Laver 2006, 269) as well as the Socialist Party of Latvia SPL⁶². Despite the lack of a positive correlation between nationalism and European integration in the other two Baltic States, Right wing nationalist parties are also among the most Europhile ones.⁶³ (Benoit and Laver 2006, 258, 270)

Regarding the relationship between the European issue with the other non-economic Left-Right dimension, anti-communist - communist divide, the following empirical results are provided by Timuş expert survey. Both the cross country and case study graphs show a more similar pattern of interaction between the two political themes than in the case of nationalistic divide. Graph 8 illustrates a negative correlation between the supporters of communist values and those of European integration. An exceptional case is the Communist Party of Moldova, which despite its ideological commitment to communist values scores considerably high on EU and European integration during 2006 survey. Further explanations of PCRM's policy stances will be provided later in this chapter.

FIGURE 8 NEAR HERE

Finally, the analysis of the interaction of the European question with another exogenous issue of post-Soviet EEN political spaces – Russia/CIS issue – points to a negative correlation between the two subjects. This reflects the fact that European integration and close relations with Russia, as well as CIS membership are perceived as alternative foreign policy orientations by EEN political parties.

FIGURE 9 NEAR HERE

Summing up, while position on systemic transformation dimension represents a good predictor of party European attitudes, there is also a significant degree of correlation

⁶¹ People's Harmony Party

⁶² The successor of the Communist Party that views the European Union as “a structure of capitalist enslavement.”(Ikstens 2006, 5)

⁶³ The most nationalistic parties Pro Patria “Isam” and People’s Union RL in Estonia score 17 and respectively 14 out of 20 on European Integration. The most nationalistic Lithuanian Christian Democrats LKD and Homeland Union TS score 15.6 and respectively 18.7 on European integration.

between the European orientation and party stance on two of the non-economic dimensions of competition, anticommunist-communist and Russia/CIS issues, although following different patterns of interaction within each of the three countries. Yet, the context specific factors, particularly the difference in the nature and the degree of politicization of nation/state issues determine different patterns of interaction between the nationalist dimension and the European question. While nationalist parties are the least Euro-enthusiast in Georgia, similar to most of CEE countries, the cosmopolitan – pro-EU combination is missing in Ukraine and Moldova, resembling the Latvian case, because at the other end of the country nationalist dimension one finds nationalist Slavic parties.

Party system level

Format of a party system. The investigation of the impact of European integration process on the *format* of a party system reveals the emergence of two parties (both in Moldovan case) that based their identity on their Europeaness. The first is the Social-Liberal Party PSL, which also is placed highest on its pro-European stance in the figure 3b. Established on May 9, 2001, on Europe's Day, PSL declared itself a “social-liberal party of European vocation.” (PSL 2001) Its appearance on the political scene followed the parliamentary victory of PCRM in 2001, PSL declaring itself a fighter against the communist doctrine and PCRM’s rule and a true liberal-democratic party, based on intelligentsia and youth, mostly educated in the Occident. Its general secretary, Igor Klipii, argued that PSL was the first party to make out of the idea of European integration a political message in 2001. European Union was perceived as “a solution for problems of small states that find their place within Western civilization.”⁶⁴

According to Klipii PSL’s ideological platform was inspired by the new political doctrine advanced by Blair and Schroeder in Western democracies – social liberalism, which was adapted to Moldovan context. PSL’s official program stipulated that European Unity represented the “pivot” of its actions, the “whole activity being subordinated to this desideratum.” Cooperating closely with European Federal Movement, an organization that brings together political parties and NGOs, it opted for a federal Europe. PSL’s leader, Oleg Serebrian, declared that its party advanced a “modern programmatic aim” which represents “the aspirations of the intellectuals and young generation from Western

⁶⁴ Interview with Igor Klipii, general secretary of PSL, Chisinau, May 2007.

Europe” – the federalization of Europe following the principle of Europe of regions. (2001) An important role in PSL’s activity has played the financial and informational support received from the German liberal foundation Friedrich Neumann.

The history of PSL activity proved that European integration question had not been the quintessence of its political live. It appears that the creation of a ‘true’ liberal party and the establishment of a viable political alternative to PCRM have been a more important party aim than the sole European issue. Yet, The European level influence was strong enough even in the backing of the initiative of the establishment of a single Liberal party in Moldova. European liberals, with whom PSL closely cooperated, were willing to see a united liberal force within Moldovan political spectrum and perceived PSL as a key actor in achieving this aim. The call addressed by PSL to all parties following the liberal orientation stipulated the formation of a party that would follow a liberal socio-economic platform and whose political principles would call for “full European integration and the removal of the border between the two Romanian states.” (SLP 2006)

However, PSL did not manage to gather a significant electoral support, getting three out of 101 mandates during 2005 elections, when it was a part of Democratic Moldova Bloc. The failure to unite Moldovan liberal parties into a single political force determined PSL to turn to the Democratic Party PDM and to merge with it, which was described as the first step towards a potential unification of the ideological center with the purpose of defeating the communists in the upcoming 2009 legislative elections. During the fusion congress, ex-PSL leader Serebrian expressed his hope that the new united PDM would represent Moldova’s “vector towards Europe.”⁶⁵

The second Moldovan party that emerged with the explicit and primary intention of mobilizing support for European integration is the European Party. It was founded on September 2005 by young people and intelligentsia, most of them defected from the existing political forces after the victory of PCRM in 2005 elections. It declares itself the party of those that “want to see Europe in the Republic of Moldova,” in other words, to make people “feel themselves Europeans not only geographically, but also with regard to

⁶⁵ Serebrian’s speech during the fusion congress, available at <http://www.unimedia.md/index.php?mod=home&hmod=newsbyid&id=3748>, accessed on July 17, 2008.

their way of living and values they share.”⁶⁶ The party leader, V.Ghimpură, stated that PE did not have its inspiration or backing from any Moldovan or foreign political organization.⁶⁷

From ideological point of view PE somehow repeats PSL’s project by declaring itself a social-liberal party of ‘European vocation.’ Yet, it argues that its aim is to build “a new political elite,” which does not have its origins in the former *nomenklatura* and opposes the communist governing, while considering that PSL discredited itself when it voted for PCRM’s leader Voronin as the head of the state in 2005.⁶⁸

The official program presents PE as a party that sees the future of Moldova near the developed European countries, thus opting for EU and NATO integration. In order to achieve this desideratum the major aim of PE’s activity is the establishment of “adequate conditions” for Moldovan people to have a “decent” way of living, tallying with the European standards. During 2007 local elections PE competed with the slogan “Europe starts at our home.”

So far, the electoral support that PE managed to achieve during 2007 local elections was around 0.2 percent, which proves that PE has not been able to attract voters from other relevant parties and shows its insignificant support among Moldovan public. Thus, PE’s strategy of grounding party identity in ‘Europeanism’ did not prove to be appealing for the voters. This, I argue, is a proof of the fact that because of the valence of the European question within Moldovan political spectrum, PE did not manage to attract voters from the established parties on the basis of its European integration message.

Thus, when European question represents a valence issue, when most of the relevant parties agree on the European integration objective, such as in Moldovan case, political actors find it difficult to emerge and gain electoral success on the basis of their European stance.

So, the empirical evidence points to the lack of relevant political parties that emerged with the explicit and primary intention of gaining support for or against European integration in Ukraine and Georgia, as well as to the failure of the two

⁶⁶ Ghimpură’s for Ziarul de Gardă October 6, 2005, available at <http://garda.com.md/55/interviu/>, accessed November 20, 2005.

⁶⁷ Interview with Viorel Ghimpură, leader of European Party PE, Chisinau, May 2007.

⁶⁸ Ibidem.

examined-above Moldovan parties to become successful political contestants on the basis of their ‘Europeanism.’ As a result, I conclude that the European integration process does not influence the format of party systems, as it does not determine an increase in the number of parties and, thus, in the degree of party system fragmentation.

Mechanics of a party system. In order to investigate the influence of European integration process on party interaction in EEN it is necessary to see when the European issue emerged as a political message for the first time, how the European issue is brought into the political competition by different parties and how they articulate it to the existing dimensions of competition. Also, the investigation of the role played by the European issue in coalition formation and in party competition represents a major point of the present research. Following the theoretical expectations regarding the influence of European issue on EEN party systems the work proceeds with the investigation of whether parties are constrained in their attitudes towards European integration by their existing ideological identities or the European issue is perceived by parties as offering new opportunities and determines them to adopt a strategic behavior. In this respect, party positioning in a political space (discussed in the previous section) and party-government relationship constitute important intervening variables in the analysis of party strategic behavior and interaction among political actors. A particular attention is paid to examining if and how the shift from government to opposition and vice-versa influences a party’s European stance and whether the change in party’s European attitudes determine also a change in other party’s identities.

Party-government relationship and the European stance. Georgian party system does not allow for an investigation of the relationship between party positioning in a political space and government/opposition relation, on the one hand, and party European stance, on the other hand. This is because of the lack of relevant parties that are positioned near the two ideological extremes and because of the discontinuity of the governing parties – SMG and S-NM – before and after Rose revolution, none of them being in opposition. Yet, this is also a reason to speculate that it is because of these factors that a broad consensus on pro-European orientation exists among the relevant political forces in Georgia and the European issue does not represent a politicized dimension of political competition.

In Ukraine, the former president Kuchma declared European integration as a major goal of his politics in 1998, when he also mentioned his country's need to 'return to Europe.' The so-called 'party of power' under Kuchma administration, though characterized as being pro-Russian, could not afford itself a Euroskeptic feeling. As a governing party, it had to represent also the interests of the whole country, which, however, is strongly divided, from a geographical point of view, between the supporters of pro-Russian and pro-Western orientation. As a result, the behavior adopted by Kuchma's party was pointing at a simultaneous Russian and European orientation, best expressed in the slogan used for 2004 presidential elections: "To Europe with Russia." (Kuzio 2003) Therefore, it adopted an electoral behavior that could benefit it the best: keeping the established support of Russian-oriented electorate, and attracting the support of European voters. So, the European attitudes of Kuchma's party of power went hand in hand with the pro-Russian orientation and the strengthening of cooperation within the CIS. However, since in 2004 the Orange revolution coalition run the presidential campaign on a strong pro-European orientation and strong anti-Russian attitudes, Kuchma-backed Party of Regions,⁶⁹ which found itself in opposition, campaigned for 2006 legislative elections on a clear pro-Russian stance, against the European orientation of the country. The change of party position from opposition to government in autumn 2005 and 2006 made PR revise its political discourse towards European integration, as its leader Yanukovich, in his posture as the prime minister, had to represent Ukrainian people not only on the internal politics scene, but also at international level. Although more reluctant towards European integration than his major political rivals, Yanukovich did not deflect from the European course of his country. This is also confirmed by PR's score on EU and European integration during 2006 Timuș expert survey, when the party was given a mark of 4,15 out of 10 on the European issue. While adopting a clear anti-NATO position, PR did not declare itself against European integration. By contrast, it argued that party policies are in line with most of EU objectives, particularly regarding minorities and regional governments, the creation of Euro-regions.⁷⁰ It also stressed the fact that it was Yanukovich who negotiated the deal with EU on visa facilitation for

⁶⁹ PR was one of the major parties that formed pro-Kuchma electoral bloc For a United Ukraine ZYU in 2002.

⁷⁰ Interview with Ivan Popescu, MP, Party of Regions, Kiev, July 2007.

Ukrainian citizens. As Popescu, a party MP in 2006-2007 legislature, stated, PR is “neither pro-Russian, nor pro-European, we are pro-Ukrainian and depending on Ukraine’s interests we are looking for what interests us in our foreign cooperation.”⁷¹

SPU represents another case of the shift of European attitudes resulting from the change of position in a political space and the change in party-government relationship. Established itself in 1991 as a successor of the ruling Communist Party of Ukraine, in its political program from 1992 it declared itself the “heir of Lenin’s Communist Party” and announced the construction of socialism through popular democracy. Yet, after the return of the Communist Party in Ukraine and the creation of the Progressive Socialist Party in 1993, SPU lost its monopoly of the Left-side political spectrum. The loss of a part of its orthodox communist electorate in favor of KPU was also determined by the shift from the ‘Soviet card’ strategy to a modern socialist arrangement during the October 1994 Party Congress, after the leader of SPU, Oleksandr Moroz, became the speaker of Ukrainian parliament. SPU faction also supported market economy reforms package of Kuchma in the fall of 1994, despite its declaration during the presidential campaign earlier in the same year that it is against the “re-capitalization of Ukraine.” The new political strategy that SPU embraced for 1998 parliamentary elections brought in a pro-European foreign policy dimension. (Ukraine Update. SPU 2005) Moreover, SPU became one of the pro-European Orange revolution coalition partners. After the 2006 elections its leader managed to re-gain the post of speaker of Ukrainian parliament. Another proof of SPU’s move from the Left pole towards the centre of political spectrum through its reformation is its close contacts with the European Socialists and its status of a consultative party in Socialist International. In 2006 Timuş survey on SPU scores 2,90 on ideological dimension, while it is situated in the center of the European dimension (5,20). However, one cannot say that its supporters can be related to the European-type Left wing voters. (Rakhmanin and Mostovaya 2002) Neither can one say that European integration issue has played an important role for defining party identity or its interaction with other political forces. By contrast, one can clearly argue that it was the strategic behaviour of SPU and particularly of its leader that brought it into the pro-European Orange coalition camp in 2004, as a result of which Moroz became the speaker of Ukrainian Rada.

⁷¹ Ibidem.

Between 1998 and 2004 SPU and KPU were among the major opposition forces in Ukrainian parliament, during the first half of 2004 SPU went to pro-Kuchma camp and supported presidential constitutional amendments, while in the second part of 2004 it shifted to anti-Kuchma camp, criticizing its ‘undemocratic’ style of government. In 2006 elections SPU was still close to its Orange revolution partners and used the pro-European discourse during its campaign.⁷² Yet, the strategic calculations of SPU’s leader determined the party to form an ‘anti-crisis’ coalition with PR and KPU against the Orange coalition parties and to obtain as a result the much-wanted mandate of parliamentary speaker in the summer of 2006. SPU has not changed its attitudes towards Europe since in extra-parliamentary opposition. Its political program still declares the implementation of European democratic standards and of European integration as its priorities and it still preserves the slogan “Let us build Europe in Ukraine.”

The pressure exercised by the position of being the governing party on the European stance is also illustrated in Moldovan case by the Communists Party. Since its establishment in 1993, PCRM was the strongest ideological oriented party, also due to its political experience and the continuation of the Communist ideology. Since its establishment in 1993, the PCRM has won a specific electorate using the “Golden Age” myth of Soviet times and speaking of a re-making of the Soviet Union. The declaration of Russian as an official language, as during the Soviet period, was seen as a tool of modernization and affirmation on the international arena. (Munteanu 2002) It had been the major Euroskeptic party of the Moldavian politics during its opposition periods, until 2001. Yet, once in government, the attempts to implement its major objectives failed as a result of massive opposition and public protests. At the same time, the refusal of the Communist leader and the head of the state Vladimir Voronin to sign the Russian project of solving the Transnistrian conflict, the Kozak memorandum, proposed on November 15, 2003 led to a loss of Communist leadership’s support from Russia. (Budeanu 2003) As a result, left without no choice but ‘turning to the West,’ the Communist party made a radical shift from a strong Euroskeptic to a strong pro-European position (PCRM scores the highest on EC+ of MRG dataset – 15.25%, in 2005 elections).

⁷² SPU stressed its devotion to European socialism and called for ‘building Europe in Ukraine.’

The shift in its European stance required also the adaptation of party identity and political activity to its pro-European orientation. During the 2005 elections, the party presented itself as devoted to European ideals and ready for organizational and identity changes to prove in practice its commitment. PCRM used intensively a pro-European discourse, reflected in its behavior on domestic and international stages. So, throughout electoral campaign Voronin has signed a range of agreements with the pro-European leaders of Romania, Ukraine, and Georgia on the cooperation for the promotion of democratic and market economy reforms and the achievement of European integration objective.⁷³

During its second term, the PCRM declared itself a party of ‘European type’ and considered as his primary objectives the achievement of European norms and standards (including, first of all, democratic consolidation and market economy reforms) and of European integration. The signing of The Declaration on Political Partnership to Achieve the Objectives of the European Integration⁷⁴ on 23 March 2005 between PCRM and the three opposition factions came as another proof of the importance of European issue for Communists party’s activity and the pressure exercised by its governing position on party European stance.

However, the change from anti- to pro-European position did not lead to significant, long-term changes in party identity and activity under the influence of the European question. The European issue has not had a significant power on Communists party identity change. Rather, the shift in party European stance reflected its strategic calculations to obtain and, consequently, maintain the governing mandate and the post of the head of state. PCRM lost a pro-Russian segment of its voters after the failure to implement its 2001 electoral promises of making Russian the second official language and of an eventual joining of Russia-Belarus Union. Yet, by changing to a pro-European

⁷³ See, for example, “The Joint Declaration” of Voronin and Basescu from 21 January 2005, or “Chisinau Declaration on the Supremacy of Democratic Values and Principles,” signed by Saakashvili and Voronin, or the declaration signed between Ukraine and Moldova on 1 March 2005.

⁷⁴ “We [believe] that the main elements of the political partnership [between government supporters and the opposition] shall be as follows: The concerted diplomatic, legal and political efforts, as well as civic initiatives, aimed [at the implementation of the] Republic of Moldova – European Union Action Plan, joint efforts on [the full] spectrum of problems, [the] resolution of which will contribute to [the] early accession of the Republic of Moldova to the European community”. *The Declaration of the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova on Political Partnership to Achieve the Objectives of the European Integration, March 23, 2005.*

position and declaring its intentions to become a party of ‘European type’ before 2005 elections, PCRM managed to picture itself as good as the other political forces regarding its ‘devotion’ to the promotion of liberal-democratic reforms and the European integration perspective. The result was the achievement of the backing of the West, including of the European Union, during 2005 elections. Believing in PCRM’s readiness to modernize and to be devoted to pro-European reforms, the EU saw in the Communist party the best domestic partner in promoting liberal-democratic reforms after the potential victory in legislative elections.

In the circumstances when around 77 percent of Moldovan population had been in favor of European integration and the achieving of the European standards of living, PCRM was able to keep and even raise its public support.⁷⁵ This, however, is largely explained by weakly developed party identities among post-Soviet citizens and the existing tendency to cast their votes on the basis of leader’s sympathy and trust, but not judging on party programmatic principles.

At the beginning of its second mandate, PCRM signed an agreement with the opposition parties⁷⁶ on the reformation of its political doctrine (and even of its name) in line with its declarations on the promotion of liberal-democratic reforms and European integration. Yet, once it obtained a parliamentary majority and managed to get opposition’s support for the re-election of its leader as the head of state, these changes in party identity have not materialized. PCRM’s activity since 2005, particularly the 2007 campaign for local elections has proved that self-preservation as the governing party is of a greater importance than the reformation in line with European standards and European integration. The Communists party has been rigorously following the centralization of power in its own hands and its maintenance through KGB-like means of blackmailing and settling accounts with its political rivals.(Timuş 2006) Only in the eve of the new legislative elections PCRM referred again to the issue of its reformation and modernization following European norms and values. The so-called ‘reformation congress’ from March 2008 represented a start of PCRM’s 2009 electoral campaign by adopting a new political program that tries to combine the ‘liberal communism’ with the

⁷⁵ Public Opinion Barometer, IPP, Soros Foundation Moldova, fall 2004.

⁷⁶ The agreement was reached between the opposition parties PPCD, PDM and PSL (the later)

transition to a ‘post-industrial society’ adapted to EU objectives stipulated in the EU’s Lisbon Strategy. (Boțan 2008) PCRM tried to picture itself as the first governing party that made European integration one of its ruling objectives, forgetting about the political achievements of its predecessors on this subject. Concomitantly, it tried to reassure its orthodox communist members and voters that PCRM’s new course presents a continuation of its old political doctrine by inviting Moscow scientists to give propagandistic talks about building ‘liberal communism’ in a post-industrial society.⁷⁷

In conclusion, party-government relation represents an important variable in determining the opportunities and constraints for the change in party European stance. Although the weakly institutionalized EEN party system allow for a more flexible party conduct regarding the dimensions of political contestation, their strategic behavior is conditional upon the position they held with regard to the ruling power. The empirical findings confirm scholarly arguments from Western and Central-Eastern Europe, when opposition are more inclined to criticize the European integration objective as a step to differentiate themselves from the governing forces, while the mainstream and ruling parties are constrained to adopt a moderate or a clear pro-European stance and eventually to adapt other policy stances to their ‘Europeanism.’ (Mair 2000; Sitter 2002a; Taggart 1998; Taggart and Szczerbiak 2004a)

Party interaction and coalition formation. Georgian domestic politics proves to be the least affected by changes in party interaction as a result of the influence of European integration process. As compared to Saakashvili’s ENM, Shevardnadze did not stress the pro-European stance of his party, SMG, and he did not give a major consideration to European integration perspective of his country. The major goal of former Georgian president was to obtain peace and stability in Georgia and within Southern Caucasus through the cooperation with the West, including both EU and NATO. (Komissina 2001) His primary aim was to have “a strong Georgia in Caucasus,”⁷⁸ to make Georgia the main regional partner of the West within Southern Caucasus. While maintaining good relations with Russian Federations, Shevardnadze perceived cooperation with the EU as a security

⁷⁷ The invitation of Moscow guests was a similar step with the one taken by PCRM in 2001, when the Chinese head of state, Jiang Zemin, was invited to visit Chisinau after some party members showed their discontent with Voronin’s divergence from the building of communism in Moldovan society. (Boțan 2008)

⁷⁸ Interview with Malkhaz Matsaberidze, TSU, Tbilisi, August 2006.

and economic project that would lead to long-term internal transformations and, at the same time, would represent an alternative to the cooperation with its big neighbor.

At party level, because of the internal rivalries between the conservative and the reformist wings, Shevardnadze's SMG did not adopt a clear strategy of joining EU and NATO. Rather, the former president had tried to balance between the two wings and not to adopt any policy positions that would upset any of party rival camps. Yet, the pro-European discourse within the party of power was defined by the same leaders who got the ruling power after the Rose revolution, such as Saakashvili or Zvania. As Ghia Nodia stated, they were the ones whose governing coalition has initiated internal and external policies aimed at showing that being pro-European means becoming pro-European by transforming according to European standards.⁷⁹

By contrast to Shevardnadze's period, the European aspirations of the Rose revolution forces played a major role in the creation of the large opposition political bloc National Movement – Democrats. National Movement – Democrats brought together parties from both Left and Right wings, but which defined themselves as being the 'truly' pro-European political force. Similar to Ukrainian Orange revolution coalition, the emergence of such a political bloc was influenced by the lack of a clear pro-European orientation of Shevardnadze's governing party, its relationship to the former Soviet *nomenklatura*, and its failure to promote viable liberal-democratic reforms. At the same time, the pro-Western opposition forces from both countries received significant backing from EU's side, which criticized the electoral frauds and hesitated to recognize the result of the first round of elections. In this way, the European Union has offered moral support for like-minded opposition forces that identified the promotion of liberal-democratic reforms with a European future, contributing to the increase of their popularity among domestic electorate.

Despite the fact that Orange revolution emerged as a result of 2004 electoral frauds, the European integration represented an important issue that brought together ideologically diverse political forces. First, pro-European orientation was one of the major objectives of the large opposition bloc – Our Ukraine, which gathered together Left and Right wing parties. Second, the Orange coalition partners declared themselves as the

⁷⁹ Interview with Ghia Nodia, CIPDD Tbilisi, August 2006.

‘true’ promoters of European liberal-democratic values and European integration was the priority of their foreign policy. These were the major features that were used to make the distinction between the opposition coalition and the governing forces, which tried to balance between pro-Russian and pro-European stances. Thirdly, Ukraine received more backing from EU’s side than Georgia did during Rose revolution. The Union merely used rhetorical declarations of ‘welcoming’ Ukraines’s European aspirations and expressing its support for opposition political forces and later for Yushchenko’s government and encouraging the promotion of liberal democratic reforms. As a ‘reward’ for the victory of democratic forces during Orange revolution EU went as far as to suggest that it is ready to advance an enhanced cooperation agreement with Ukraine, leaving room for speculations about the offering of an European integration perspective in the nearest future. EU’s support of Orange coalition forces and their victory in the second round of presidential elections had a significant influence on the defeat of Russia’s dominance over Ukrainian politics and on the move of the country towards the consolidation of the democratic society. Yet, the failure to offer long-term incentives to Ukraine, such as the membership perspective was in the case of CEE candidates, weakened the political legitimacy of Yushchenko’s government both among the political contestants and the voters. It determined the questioning of his government’s ability to promote liberal-democratic reforms and to achieve European standards in the short-term.

The European issue has proved to have both a dividing and a unifying capacity on Ukrainian party interaction and the formation of coalition governments. After the election of Yushchenko as the head of state in 2004, the new government was formed by the Orange coalition partners – NU, YT, and SPU – with the purpose of implementing the Orange revolution objectives of liberal-democratic reforms and Euro-Atlantic integration. Since 2004, despite the frequent ‘divorces’ of the two ‘Orange spouses,’ NU and YT were forced to come together again as a government coalition because they needed each other for implementing European standards at home and promoting a pro-European foreign policy. Even in the case when NU was forced in the autumn of 2006 to make a coalition government with its political rival, PR, as a result of NU’s divorce with

Tymoshenko's bloc,⁸⁰ Our Ukraine was forced to go into opposition because of the major disagreements between NU and PR on European integration, NATO, and WTO. As a result, Our Ukraine had to turn once again to its former Orange coalition partner, YT, in February 2007 and formed a 'united opposition.'

The investigation of the patterns of party interaction reveals the existence of changes in the mechanics of Moldovan party system resulting from the influence of European integration process. Before the 2005 elections, the European question represented one of the major issues that traced a dividing line between two political camps: PCRM and other Left wing parties, such as PDAM, PSM, and later Patria-Rodina and Ravnopravie blocs, representing the Euroskeptic forces, and most of the relevant post-communist parties that expressed a pro-European stance. Before 2005 legislative elections, however, the radical shift of the major Euroskeptic party, PCRM, towards a clear pro-European position determined significant changes in party interaction.

The Communist Party basically managed to avoid an 'electoral revolution' against its government by adopting a preemptive behavior and declaring its devotion to the European integration objective and criticizing Russia's influence on Moldovan politics, as well as its readiness to promote liberal-democratic values. Because East versus West divide had been the most salient confrontational dimension of Moldovan political forces, the new pro-European face helped PCRM to gain internal and external legitimacy. On the one hand, it obtained the support of its pro-European neighbors, such as Saakashvili, Yushchenko, or even Basescu, with whom Voronin was on bad diplomatic terms because of national identity issues. In its turn, the European Union saw in PCRM a credible pro-European force, devoted to the spread of European norms and values inside its country and across the region. It express its support for Voronin's European choice during the electoral campaign and even persuaded the two most pro-reform and Europhile parties from Moldovan political spectrum – PPCD and PSL – to avoid the blocking of parliament's election of Voronin as the head of state and support PCRM's candidature in return for his promise to make European integration the major objective of his government. (Popescu 2005) So, the European Union had a considerable influence in

⁸⁰ Tymoshenko has always demanded the post of prime-minister for herself in case of the creation of a coalition government, a demand that could not be satisfied by NU's leader, Yushchenko, because of the strong opposition he faced from within his political organization.

bringing together the two major ideological enemies: PPCD, a Romanian-nationalist, Right wing party, the successor of the national independence movement, and the successor of the ruling Communist Party before 1990s – PCRM. This, I argue is a clear example of how the Union can influence party interaction outside its borders.

After the radical shift of PCRM towards a pro-European stance, during the 2005 elections there were no major differences of political contestants regarding European integration objective. As a result, the 2005 electoral bloc, Democratic Moldova BMD, which tried to present itself as the central pro-European force, had no major chances of winning on the basis of the ‘European integration card.’ Parties do not differentiate themselves any more on the European issue and the European question is basically taken away from political competition, becoming a valence issue, when practically all the relevant parties agree on the pro-European orientation.

The valence of European integration issue within Moldovan political space is reflected in the establishment of a political consensus on the pro-European course of the country several weeks after the election of the 2005 legislature. The idea of such a political partnership was spread in Central and East European countries during their EU candidacy as a proof of the existence of a large political consensus on the European integration choice of CEE states.⁸¹ Of course, in the case of CEE candidate states the signing of such an agreement was determined by the necessity of implementing Copenhagen criteria and the EU adherence. In the case of the Republic of Moldova, which has no status of a candidate state, nor has it a clear promise from EU’s side of signing an Association treaty, there is no direct pressure on the political elite to conform to the EU standards of accession. However, the analysis of the priorities mentioned in The Declaration on Political Partnership proves that these objectives are very similar to Copenhagen criteria. The interpretation of this fact, on the one hand, demonstrates the unifying force of the European integration issue, which determined political parties to pass over the ideological and strategic rivalries and to achieve a political compromise for the promotion and the achievement of democratic and market economy reforms and of

⁸¹ For example *The Agreement between Political Parties of the Republic of Lithuania on the Main goals and Objectives of Lithuania for 2004-2008*, Lithuanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, internet, available at http://www.urm.lt/popup2.php?nr=1&item_id=255&m_e_id=4&menu_i_id=162;163&no_cache=1, last accessed on April 05, 2006.

European integration.

On the other hand, though, the image portrayed by The Declaration on Political Partnership from March 23, 2005 changes when one perceives the essence and the evolution of the political consensus in the Republic of Moldova. Once PCRM obtained the re-election of its leader as the head of state with the support of some opposition parties, it basically forgot about the conditions that the opposition factions put before voting for Voronin. Having the parliamentary majority, the Communist party could pass the desired legislative projects and at the same time it held most of executive seats.

Thus, the sharing of the common objectives on internal and external policies for the purpose of achieving European integration did not determine a significant change in the patterns of interaction of parliamentary parties. The relevant parties, rather, have tended to follow their policy interests or strategic calculations, which made it impossible to achieve a political compromise in some specific domains that required reformation in accordance to the requirements of the EU Action Plan, aimed at bringing the country closer to the European integration perspective. The political consensus basically was reduced to the cooperation between PCRM and PPCD, the so-called ‘constructive’ opposition and the informal governing ally of the Communists.

It is true that EU has contributed to the cooperation of PCRM and PPCD immediately after the 2005 parliamentary elections. However, EU’s leverage decreased significantly after the election on the president by Moldovan parliament. Once PCRM started its new mandate it became clear that the Communists do not intend to implement the promises they made in front of opposition and international community regarding their ‘European transformation’ and the implementation of European standards within the stipulations of EU Action Plan. By contrast to CEE candidates, which were engaged in the process of EU accession and whose political elites the EU could keep accountable for the failure of implementing the promises made to Brussels, in the case of EEN, which are excluded from the EU integration, domestic elites have more freedom in complying to EU level requirements.

The analysis of party interaction within Moldovan parliamentary arena during 2005-2008 reveals that party strategy prevailed over political elite’s commitments made to the opposition as well as the European Union. While other parliamentarian parties have

criticized the ruling PCRM for the failure of fulfilling its promises to opposition at the beginning of its second term, PPCD followed an office-seeking behavior and became ‘the best pal’ of its former ‘deadly foe,’ the Communists Party, in return of important parliamentary and governmental offices. The image of PPCD as of one of the most pro-European and anti-communist forces has suffered considerably as a result of this cooperation both within the country and outside it. Although Europe changed its behavior regarding PCRM and has criticized the governing party for the failure to become a ‘European-type’ party and to implement successfully the Action Plan stipulations (Minzari 2008), PPCD did not modify its relationship with PCRM, continuing to cooperate with it based on a rent-seeking behavior.

In conclusion, the Moldovan case shows that EU can exercise a stronger indirect influence on party interaction during the electoral campaign or when an agreement of cooperation between opposition and governing forces should be achieved. However, due to the weakness of EU conditionality outside its members and candidates, the EU power in influencing the compliance to European level requirements decreases significantly afterwards and domestic level factors, such as party strategic behavior, determine the extent of EU influence on political transformations.

Conclusion

The analysis of EU involvement in EEN party and party system transformation shows that the European integration process is more an environment than an actor, (Enyedi 2007, 71) influencing indirectly national political spaces in its neighborhood. Although it is impossible to isolate and examine the sole EU influence on changes in domestic politics, the empirical findings point to several important ways in which Europe matters for party and party system development in EEN.

The ideological axis of competition does not absorb the European issue and Euroskepticism is a unipolar phenomenon in post-soviet neighboring countries, situated near the Left pole of a party system, by contrast to Central and East Europe or old EU members. (Marks et al. 2005; Vachudová and Hooghe 2006) There is a significant degree of positive correlation between party stance on systemic transformation dimension and its European attitudes, while a negative relationship exists with the two non-economic axis

of competition: anti-communist – communist issue and Russia/CIS issue. The connection between the European issue and the nationalist dimension varies according to the nature and the degree of politicization of nation/state issues, as well as to the presence of a significant Russian minority. While the cosmopolitan – pro-EU combination is present in Georgia, it is missing in Ukraine and Moldova. In the later two cases Right wing nationalist parties are also among the most Europhile ones while Russian/pan-Slavic nationalist parties represent the Euroskeptic segment of political spectrum.

With regard to EU influence on the format of EEN party systems the present research confirms the hypothesis that there are no successful political parties that emerged with the explicit and primary intention of gaining support for or against European integration. As a result, I argue, the European question does not influence the degree of fragmentation and the format of EEN party system.

The analysis of EU impact on the mechanics of a party system confirms the theoretical expectation about a low degree of politicization of the European issue. The absence of EU membership does not constrain parties in adopting a clear European stance and parties that do not favor European integration (e.g. approaching the Left extreme) can differentiate themselves from the pro-European parties by competing on other issues, particularly promoting closer ties with Russia and CIS or even the re-establishment of the USSR. Also, the Moldovan case shows that the European issue represents a valence issue for political competition, when the relevant parties do not question the course of European integration, but compete for being perceived as the ‘true’ European forces.

Party-government relation (Sitter 2002a) is proved to be a major intervening variable in determining European attitudes within the EEN. While strategy is dominating party behavior within the weakly institutionalized post-Soviet party systems, the instrumentalist behavior of political organizations is constrained by its governing position, which determines a shift towards a moderate or a clear European stance and can even alter short-term party identity changes.

The investigation of the role played by the European issue in party interaction shows that the backing received from the European capital by pro-European opposition forces during ‘electoral revolutions’ in Ukraine and Georgia gave them moral support and internal political legitimacy and contributed to their victory. Also, EU’s belief in the

radical pro-European shift of PCRM contributed to Brussels' persuasion of the two most pro-reform and Europhile parties from Moldovan political spectrum to avoid a political crisis that would result in a potential "democratic revolution" in Moldova.

Chapter 6. The European issue and party system institutionalization

Introduction

After discussing the different types and mechanisms of European level leverage on domestic political transformations the major goal of this chapter is to analyze the broader influence of European integration on party and party system institutionalization within the EEN. It structures the empirical findings of direct and indirect EU influence examined in the chapter 4 and 5 according to the major dimensions of party and party system level consolidation described in the conceptual part of the dissertation.

The first part of the chapter deals with EU impact on party institutionalization. It starts with a short description of the post-communist party development within the three examined countries. This is followed by the analysis of EU direct and indirect influence on party organization, with the focus on change in party identity, party age and stable roots, using party fragmentation as the main indicator for this research.

The second part is devoted to the investigation of the direct and indirect influence of European integration process on party system consolidation. It examines the two major aspects of a party system: the format and the mechanics. The primary focus is the examination of whether European Union influences the stability in the patterns of party interaction and coalition formation, which is considered to be the key dimension of party system consolidation.

Finally, the chapter concludes with summarizing the major findings and stressing the differences and similarities of European level influence on party and party system institutionalization in CEE, on the one hand, and EEN, on the other hand.

Party institutionalization

Theoretical framework. Going back to the conceptualization section of the present dissertation, this part of the work will focus on the investigation of EU influence on party consolidation based on the two main dimensions highlighted in the literature: party organization and party age/stable societal roots. (Jin 1995; Levitsky 1998; Mainwaring and Scully 1995; Randall and Svåsand 2002) Regarding party organization the study will examine the role played by European integration process in setting of party statute,

internal regulations, as well as in developing the managerial and organizational skills of party elites. Also, a particular attention will be paid to the investigation of the relationship between different aspects of party identity, based on party position on the most salient political conflicts and the European stance. In other words, the core question is whether the adoption of a pro/anti-European position or the change in party attitudes towards Europe determines a change in party established identities and what is the extent of this transformation.

Two possible theoretical scenarios are examined in this case. The first one is that EU matters for party organizational structure and EEN parties undergo fundamental long-term changes in their internal regulations and routines, as well as in the existing party identities, following EU level norms and practices. In the case of the two modes of direct EU influence this scenario would be confirmed if the empirical evidence would point to the change of party ideological doctrine, internal statute and regulations during the process of affiliation to EPFs, the involvement of domestic political elites in EU level trainings and conferences aimed at developing professionalism, managerial, and organizational skills. Also, in the case of indirect EU influence the possible outcome of this scenario is the change in party positions on the major dimensions of political competition resulting from the change of party European stance. Following scholarly arguments discussed in the previous chapter a key point for investigation is whether the change of party European position because of the alteration from opposition to government is an irreversible, fundamental one, and whether this change leads to other party identity changes.

The second scenario is that because party level variables, such as strategic calculations, represent the major predictor of party reaction to the process of European integration, EU has a limited direct and indirect influence on party consolidation. I argue that the weak political and material incentives, together with vaguely defined EU requirements regarding party politics determine a weak direct EU influence on party identity and organizational changes as a result of legislative adjustment of party-related legislation and EPFs' affiliation. In this case, the empirical evidence of indirect EU influence would show the absence of fundamental party organizational transformations and short-term party identity changes, particularly resulting from the

opposition/government alteration, aimed at increasing the coalition potential of a party with governing ambitions and the electoral support.

With regard to the second major ingredient of party institutionalization – party age and stable roots within society, I concentrate on the analysis of party fragmentation as the major indicator of EU induced changes. Two theoretical situations are examined in the present dissertation. The first is that EU can directly influence the degree of party fragmentation by encouraging political pluralism in its AP stipulations, resulting in the promotion of party-related legislation that offers a high degree of political representation. EU can influence indirectly party age/stable roots by supporting the pro-reform political forces, thus increasing their life expectancy and offering them internal political legitimacy that would help them to obtain the stable support of the pro-reform electorate. Also, the emergence of successful parties that establish their identity in their European stance is another example of EU indirect influence on the second dimension of party institutionalization.

The other theoretical expectation is that the EU has limited or no influence on party fragmentation. The evidence should point out to the lack of considerable legislative adjustments of party-related legislation that would assure political pluralism and increase political representation. With reference to indirect EU influence I argue that the fact that EEN countries are not included in the accession process make the EU a weaker indirect actor in supporting the pro-reform opposition and offering them political and material assistance than compared to CEE candidates.

Background of post-communist party development in East European Neighborhood. Before proceeding to the analysis of EU impact on party level consolidation it is important to illustrate shortly the evolution of post-communist parties within the EEN. As discussed in the literature review section of the present thesis, most of the parties from the former Soviet republics lacked some previous political experience that would help them to consolidate and emerge as successful political players after the collapse of the USSR. Yet, the majority of the newly establishing political actors did not appear from scratch because they were either emerging from the ruling Communist parties during the Soviet times or as successors of the opposition umbrella organizations during the national independence movements. As a result, this helped them to consolidate their party

organization, particularly in the case of parties that incorporated the former *nomenklatura* and with it the political experience, on the one hand, and the managerial and organizational skills gained during the Soviet period. (Enyedi 2006a) So, although the successors of the ruling Communist parties were legally forbidden in the first years of transition, the newly established Communist political forces in Ukraine and Moldova managed to gain a considerable percentage of electoral votes and to represent one of the major actors within the post-communist period. (see Tables 4-6) The positive effect of the managerial and organizational skills acquired during the Soviet times on party electoral success is particularly well exemplified by PCRM. It was able to represent one of the major opposition forces during the last decade of the 1990s and to be one of the few non-reformed successors of the ruling Communist parties within the former Socialist camp that managed to obtain a parliamentary majority within two consecutive mandates during 2001-2009. Moreover, it still has the highest chances on securing the largest number of legislative mandates in the upcoming parliamentary elections.

TABLE 4-6 NEAR HERE

Also Kuchma's and Shevardnadze's parties of power represent another example of how the maintenance in power of former *nomenklatura* can benefit party organization and help the preservation of a political organization despite the absence of a well defined ideological profile. (Way 2005; Wheatley 2003)

As it was presented in the theoretical part of the chapter 5, party identity was shaped by the existence of several major lines of political conflict that represented party attitudes regarding the course of post-communist developments. So, despite the fact that some well-established ideological profiles are missing in the region, in the form that they are identified in Western European democracies, EEN parties have a better defined identity when looking at the separate economic and non-economic, or cultural dimensions of political competition. So, the nationalist counter-elites from the first years of transition adopted a pro-market economy and liberal-democratic stance, together with a clear anti-Communist position, combined with anti-Russian/anti-CIS attitudes that were joined later

by a pro-Western/European stance.⁸² By contrast, the successors of the Communist ruling parties and most of the Left wing parties hesitated in favoring pro-market and liberal-democratic reforms or even promoted an alternative to the democratic system – the restoration of the Communist system and of the USSR. These group of parties adopted a moderate or a clear pro-Russian/CIS stance and were either the supporters of multi-vectoralism or simultaneous promotion of pro-Western/European and pro-Russian/CIS foreign policy orientation (e.g. Kuchma's slogan “In Europe with Russia”), or were directly opposing the course of European integration and arguing for closer relations with Russia and the CIS. Table 7 illustrates the relationship between the main political dimensions of competition based on Timuş 2006 expert survey.

TABLE 7 NEAR HERE

However, despite the mentioned above positive aspects of party organizational developments, the consolidation of post-Soviet political parties has been much weaker than of their counterparts from Central and Eastern Europe. If within the CEE scholars have pointed out the “crystallization of political forces”(Ágh 1998, 204) and the achievement of a significant degree of party level institutionalization (Lewis 2006b), the EEN party organizations have continued to be weakly institutionalized. One of the major reason for this is the predominance of individual political entrepreneurs over political parties and of strategic calculations over a programmatic behavior of political actors within the post-Soviet space. (Aprasidze 2007; Birch 2003; Potichnyj 1994)

With regard to the second major ingredient of party level institutionalization, party fragmentation, the few large cross-national studies that include the three EEN countries present different results. Bielasiak, for example, finds that the average effective number of electoral and parliamentary parties in the former Soviet Union⁸³ is 6.2 and consequently 3.9, with Ukraine (7.8 and 4.3) and Georgia (7.4 and 4.5) scoring above the regional average, while Moldova is below the DSU average (4.4 and 2.6). (2005, 336) Dawisha and Deets include Ukraine and Georgia in the category of countries with the

⁸² With the exception of radical nationalist organizations from Western Ukraine or Gamsakhurdia's party from Georgia.

⁸³ Including Mongolia.

ENPP higher than 5, while Moldova scores lower than 5 in the number of effective parliamentary parties. (2006, 711) However, the major limitation of these studies is the presentation of average scores or of a bivariate categorization, which fail to present the fluctuations between the different election periods. Also, the high turnover of parties and the frequent change of electoral coalitions, as well as the incongruence of parliamentary factions present a serious limitation in applying the traditional indicator of party fragmentation to the case of East European neighbors. This explains the great fluctuation between subsequent elections in the number of effective parties. Finally, as in the case of electoral volatility, the frequent allegations with regard to the falsification of election results questions the reliability of the official electoral data for the coding of the effective number of parties.

Lewis' Index of Party Stabilization (IPS) used for the calculation of party consolidation in CEE countries adopts "the least demanding approach" to party stability by including in the analysis the parties that got into the parliament on at least two occasions. (Lewis 2006b, 571) The scholar argues that the index takes into account voter stability in electoral preferences and party age, measuring both party rootedness at societal level and organizational systemness - two major elements of party institutionalization.⁸⁴ With regard to the number of parties and their electoral strength table 8a shows that less than a half of analyzed EEN parties managed to achieve more than once parliamentary representation by their own, without being part of larger blocs or alliances. the most successful appear to be parties from the Left of ideological center (SMK in Georgia, PCRM in Moldova, KPU, SPU, SDPU(u) and PR in Ukraine), this phenomenon being part of a general trend of stronger and more stable Left wing independent parties and smaller Right wing independent parties, with a higher degree of joining electoral and parliamentary blocs. Overall, table 8a displays preponderance over the time of electoral blocs that in most of the cases do not manage to transform into stable parliamentary alliances or even new cohesive parties and disappear after one round of elections (see notes of table 8a).

The analysis of Lewis' index of party stabilization from table 8b and 8c reflects

⁸⁴ IPS involves a progressive enhancement of the proportion of the total vote for political parties in a given election over time -- by 20% for a party's second appearance in parliament, 40% for the third, 60% for the fourth, 80% for the fifth, and so forth. (Lewis 2006b, 574-575)

the course of development of post-Soviet EEN parties and party systems. At the beginning there was a high degree of party fragmentation and fluidity of party systems, which is illustrated by the few parties that managed to sustain their parliamentary representation after the first elections. Then, however, a clear pattern of party stabilization can be traced, with a significant increase in the proportion of votes taken by post-communist parties represented more than on one occasion in the parliament (table 8b). The IPS shows that by contrast to the theoretical expectation about the weakly institutionalized parties in post-Soviet space (Kopstein 2003; Mair 1997c) there is a significant level of progress towards party stabilization, proven by the latest IPS scores in Moldova and Ukraine (almost 70%). As compared to CEE countries, parties appear to be more stabilized in Ukraine and Moldova than in Latvia, Poland (52% each), Lithuania (53%) and Slovakia (57%) during their last four parliamentary elections. (Lewis 2006b, 575)

Lewis' IPS has its own limitations, however. It claims to capture the two major dimensions of party institutionalization: the societal rootedness and organizational systemness. Yet, party persistence over time (old parties) can be the result of institutional factors, such as the constraints of the electoral thresholds or of the electoral formulas (Moser 1999), which cannot be captured by the present index.

Summing up, the analysis of post-communist EEN party development shows that despite the achievement of a certain level of consolidation in party identity and party age the EEN parties are still weakly institutionalized. The predominance of individual political entrepreneurs makes party fissions and fusions to be primarily an elite-driven phenomenon and results in a high level of party system fluidity of political environment. In these circumstances political parties are not as constrained as their CEE counterparts in defining and altering their positions on the major axes of political competition, including the European issue.

The influence of European integration on party institutionalization. After the explanation of the post-communist development of EEN parties the thesis turns now to the analysis of the European level influence on party consolidation in Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia based on the empirical findings presented in the chapter 4 and 5. I start with the analysis of the EU impact on party identity and organizational structure and turn later to the

investigation of EU influence on party fragmentation.

Party identity and organizational structure. The interpretation of the empirical findings from the chapter 4 on the direct influence of European integration process on party developments can be interpreted as having the following implications for party level institutionalization. The compliance to accession criteria of EPP, the largest and most influential EPF both inside and outside EU, points to a limited European level influence on party identity and organizational changes. The compliance to EPP's Christian-democratic principles is considered to induce the strongest party identity changes in the case of aspiring members. As it was argued in the dissertation section that presented the transnational party linkages with EU-based party federations, EPFs were expected to adopt a more principal-oriented rather than a strategic behavior in granting their membership status because of the absence of EU membership and of EPFs' high political and material stakes resulting from the inclusion of non-EU member or candidate parties. However, the empirical evidence shows that the ideological compliance requirement did not determine fundamental, long-term party identity changes. One of the reasons is the primary membership of EEN parties in Party Internationals, which also have ideological compliance as one of their major accession criteria. The case study of PPCD illustrates that the party undergo significant ideological and organizational changes in line with Christian-democratic principles before joining the Christian Democrat International in 1999. Yet, once it started the EEP accession process it did not endure any significant EPP induced transformations regarding party ideology and organization.

The second reason for the restricted European level direct impact on party organization is the limited financial resources of EU-based party federations available for cooperation outside the EU borders. While EPP had a special budget for cooperation with sister-parties from CEE candidates, (Delsoldato 2002, 274) this type of budget is missing in the case of East European Neighborhood. As a consequence, EPFs have been less involved in training EEN political elites of their like-minded parties and in developing professionalism, managerial, and organizational skills, relying mostly on the financial instruments of political foundations of different EU members, particularly the German ones. (Dakowska 2002, 287-289)

Finally, an important reason of a limited direct EU impact on party organization

transformation in line with the European norms and values is the strategic calculations of EPFs in selecting the potential candidates from the European neighborhood. The analysis of EPP recruiting strategy, as presented in the chapter 4, shows that it was conducted by contrast to the theoretical expectation of this dissertation. European People's Party did not apply a more principled-oriented selection of EEN parties because of the lack of high material and political stakes, as compared to CEE candidates. On the contrary, it continued relaxing its affiliation requirements, particularly the ideological compliance, in the case of large and successful post-communist parties (e.g. Saakashvili's ENM , Batkivshchyna and NU from Ukraine) in order to increase its prestige in the region.

The analysis of the indirect EU influence on party identity and organization shows more empirical evidence that supports the second theoretical scenario of the present dissertation. The two instances of a significant change from moderate (SPU) or even hard Euroskepticism (PCRM) to a pro-European position show that party opposition/government statute represents a central factor in determining the opportunities and constraints for the change of party attitudes towards Europe. Once SPU and PCRM went from opposition to government they were constrained in defining their European stance and undergo a considerable change from anti- to pro-European position, which also determined some substantial changes in other party identities, particularly their attitude towards capitalism, market economy reforms and democratic principles. As PCRM is currently still a governing party, it is not possible to examine whether its European stance and party identity might alter again in case if it goes into opposition. But the case of SPU shows that this party did not change its European position after it went into extra-parliamentary opposition and party manifesto is still referring to the implementation of European standards and to European integration as its priorities.

Yet, the indirect EU power of influencing party identity changes is dependent on the degree of political elite's freedom in transforming according to the European requirements and to their commitment to reform in line with their devotion to European norms and to the European integration objective. The EU proved to have a weaker leverage on party consolidation as compared to post-communist CEE candidates because the long-term EU membership incentive is missing and EEN parties are more flexible in transforming their party identity in line with their European aspirations. So, for example,

despite the fact that the Communist Party from Moldova committed itself to reform and became a party of ‘European type’ before the 2005 parliamentary elections, it did not materialize its promises once it obtained the majority of mandates and managed to get opposition’s backing of its presidential candidate after the signing of Political Partnership Agreement that declared European integration the primary objective of parliamentary parties. Only before the 2009 elections PCRM came back to the idea of pro-European reformation. Yet, the so-called ‘reformation congress’ from 2008 showed that party strategic calculations regarding the maintenance of its electoral support determined nothing more than the continuation of its old Communist political doctrine combined with the pro-European discourse. By contrast to the case of CEE governing parties, on which Brussels could exert more pressure during the accession process, the EU appeared weak in its capability of constraining PCRM to reform and undergo fundamental identity changes in line with its promises to become a ‘European type’ Left wing party.

Wrapping up, the empirical findings show the existence of both direct and indirect European level influence on party identity and organizational changes. Although none of the advanced theoretical scenarios is fully confirmed, there is more evidence supporting the second situation, particularly the existence of a limited European level influence on party identity and organizational structure. While there are some instances of change in party identity resulting from the altering of its European stance, the research shows that they do not represent fundamental, irreversible changes, but merely short-term changes resulting from the strategic calculations of the domestic parties, constrained by party-government relation.

Party age and stable societal roots. As it was stated earlier, the analysis of EU influence on the second key dimension of party level institutionalization – the persistence of party as an organization over time (party age) and stable electorate is conducted in this research with the focus on party fragmentation.

As compared to the case of EU induced changes in party identity and organizational structure, Europe proves to be much weaker in influencing party age and its stable electoral support. Although AP provisions make a direct reference to the promotion of political pluralism, the vaguely defined EU requirement, together with the lack of clear guidelines on the implementation of party-related legislation that would

encourage political pluralism did not result in the promotion of party-related legislation that would ensure a large political representation. By contrast, as the evidence from the first section of chapter 4 shows, the EEN governing parties could maintain or even engage in promoting legislation that was detrimental for a viable political pluralism, being constrained however by the veto power of the opposition forces.

Although Saakashvili emerged after the Rose revolution as a true defender and promoter of liberal-democratic principles and a pro-European leader, he hesitated to change the electoral legislation and to change the 7% threshold, which was the legacy of Shevardnadze's period. Only at the very end of his party's governing mandate, under a strong internal pressure and the recommendations of European level institutions, he lowered the electoral barrier to five percent.

Furthermore, the weaker bargaining power of opposition forces in Moldovan case allowed the governing 'pro-European' PCRM to manipulate the party-related legislation in the eve of 2009 and to introduce legislative changes that were opposing European democratic standards and were detrimental to political pluralism. The result was the increase of party electoral threshold from 4% to 6% and the interdiction of electoral blocs, as well as public party funding only after the 2009 elections.

The examination of EU support of liberal-democratic forces shows that EEN parties have been capable of obtaining Brussels' backing of their course of governing policies and using it for achieving internal political legitimacy and electoral support. For example, the Center-Right governing parties from Ukraine, NU and BYuT, as well as Saakashvili's ENM, have been using actively EPP congresses and other European level meetings for achieving the verbal support of European political elite for their European aspirations, which has been later used as a proof in front of the domestic electorate of EU's backing of their party's European aspirations. (Lobjakas 2007; Ukrainian Government's Portal 2008a, 2008b) Also, PPCD has been extensively using EPP's support during its protest rallies against the ruling Communist party in 2002 and its leader even argued that PPCD continued its legal existence under the Communist rule only thanks to the backing from the European officials. (PPCD 2007)

The emergence of successful pro- or anti-European parties is another indicator of EU level impact on the degree of party fragmentation. Yet, the empirical evidence

provided in the chapter 5 of the present dissertation point to only two instances of the establishment of pro-European parties in Moldova, PSL and PE, which did represent single-issue parties and did not manage to become successful political forces based on their Europeaness.

Summing up, EU appears to have a weaker influence on the second key dimension of party level institutionalization. The empirical evidence points to instances of regression of party-related legislation with regard to the guaranteeing of a political pluralism, which contradicts the European level requirements, but benefits the ruling parties that follow a benefit-maximizing behavior and manipulate the legislation in their favor. A more positive influence from the European level is EU's backing of European aspirations of liberal-democratic forces from the three examined countries, which helps the political actors to obtain internal political legitimacy and electoral support. Finally, the analysis shows the absence of successful parties that emerge on the basis of their pro- or anti-European stances.

Party system institutionalization

Theoretical framework. With the reference to the conceptual part of the present thesis, most of the scholars agree that the stability and continuity in the patterns of party interaction represents the core dimension of party system institutionalization. (Bielasiak 2001; Mainwaring and Scully 1995; Mair 1997b; Randall and Svåsand 2002) This allows for a certain degree of predictability of political competition and of patterns of coalition formation, which, in turn, define the ‘systemness’ of a party system. Following the scholarly theoretical arguments, the present part aims at examining the influence of European integration process on patterns of party interaction.

Based on the investigation of EU level impact on post-communist party and party systems, scholars have been debating the broader influence of European integration process on party system institutionalization, particularly in CEEC. Because post-communist party systems have been part of the process of European integration from the first days of their lives, as democratic consolidation and Europeanization have been interactive processes (Kubicek 2003; Pridham 2005; Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier 2005b), some scholars argue about the positive EU effect on party and party system

consolidation in CEE candidate countries. So, for example, Kostelecký argued that because the EU demanded post-communist CEE political systems to come closer to European standards, the European integration would represent a “centrifugal and unifying power” on CEE political actors, contributing to party system stabilization. (2002, 177) Yet, a larger number of scholars shared a less enthusiastic view on the influence of European integration process on the consolidation of CEE party systems, pointing to the difficulty of tracing a direct link between EU factors and the institutionalization of post-communist party systems. (see Batory 2007; Enyedi 2006b, 2007; Hloušek and Pšeja 2007; Szczerbiak and Bil 2008) Others have even stressed the negative, often destabilizing effects of European integration on the structuring of domestic political systems during the first years of EU candidacy, (Lewis 2006a, 2) or the expected opposite, dividing effect of European issue on party competition as the result of the decreased salience of the European dimension and the growing variance of party European stances. (Bielasiak 2006; Enyedi 2007)

Two contrasting hypothesis are examined with regard to the broader impact of European integration on the degree of EEN party system institutionalization. The first is that European integration process has a consolidating power on EEN party systems. Due to the valence nature of the European issue party rivalry is likely to become less confrontational and adversarial, contributing to the consolidation and stability of East European party systems. Thus, the process of European integration would represent a “centrifugal and unifying power” for EEN party systems by getting them closer to ‘European standards’, similar to the scholarly argument in the case of CEEC. (Kostelecký 2002, 177) In these circumstances, I expect to find that the higher the degree of political consensus on European issue, the more parties will coalesce on the basis of their European stances and the lower the degree of fragmentation of a party system will be. Yet, the power of European influence is conditional upon the EU level opportunities offered to parties, the support (financial or political legitimacy) that EU can offer to like-minded pro-European parties in their domestic political competition.

The second hypothesis stipulates that Europe matters for party competition and political actors adopt different European stances and there is a polarization of party interaction based on the European issue. In this case I expect party strategic behavior to

determine the degree of polarization and the importance of the European issue for political confrontation. European issue represents in this scenario another issue of competition within EEN party systems on which parties can differentiate themselves in order to gain maximum (short- or long-term) benefits. The strategic calculations of political parties determine also the relationship between the European issue and other lines of political competition within EEN party systems.

Background post-communist party system development. If the level of party system institutionalization is to be perceived as a continuum, then the empirical findings from Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia show some stability and continuity in the patterns of inter-party competition since their declaration of independence. The highest level of stability is found among the former regime parties, KPU and PCRM, which dominate the Left and represent the anchors of political competition in Ukraine and, respectively, Moldova.⁸⁵ Both parties used largely the same strategy: they played the ‘Soviet card’ and adopted a pro-Russian stance⁸⁶ during elections and preferred to run alone during elections instead of joining an alliance. In the case of these parties the stability in party strategies and interaction with other political players is definitely linked to party level institutionalization, with both parties showing a high degree of stability in organizational patterns and their societal rootedness. In Georgian case, the unpopularity of the Communist idea both at the public and political levels determined the weakness of the ideological Left, but it was still the former *nomenklatura* party – Center-Left SMK – that represented the anchor of political competition until the ‘Rose revolution.’ Its formula of success was, first of all, its leader-based character, with Shevardnadze managing to ‘balance’ the political representation of different influential networks both on party lists and within parliamentary and executive branches. (Wheatley 2003, 162-170)

The strong presidential powers in Ukraine and Georgia encouraged the emergence of center parties as some of the major political contestants. However, the different presidential strategies led to diverging outcomes in the two countries. So, Kuchma’s strategy of encouraging the multiple pro-presidential parties determined the existence of a

⁸⁵ KPU, in this respect, lost its role of anchor of political competition after 2002, as the result of the emergence of the strong Center-Left PR which stole most of KPU’s electorate.

⁸⁶ PCRM abstained from making references to the restoration of the Socialist system and the joining of Russia-Belarus Union during its 2005 electoral campaign.

fragmented center, not able to form a strong ‘party of power.’ Moreover, many political leaders, previously close to Kuchma (e.g. Tymoshenko and Yushchenko), obtained the organizational and financial resources for future opposition activity by allowing themselves to be co-opted into the government and then turn against the president (“opposition through co-optation”). (Way 2005, 198) In Georgian case, Shevardnadze managed to get together within SMK different political and economic networks and to play successfully the role of mediator by distributing them offices and political power. Yet, when some factions became more influential, particularly the ‘reformers,’ both within the party and within legislative and executive branches, even Shevardnadze did not manage to keep the party together any more, resulting in the dissolution of SMK and the destabilization of party competition. (Wheatley 2003, 202-205)

The strong executive powers of heads of state in Ukraine and Georgia determined both the electoral and the parliamentary competition to be largely based on pro- and anti-presidential divide, instead of the domination of the ideological axis of competition. In Moldova, however, even before the change towards a parliamentary republic in 2000 political competition appeared to be more ideologically polarized than in the mentioned above countries, represented by the antagonism of the two anchors of party system: PCRM and PPCD. Since PCRM became the ruling party in 2001, there can be distinguished an even increased degree of polarization between the representatives of the communist camp (PCRM) and the anti-communist opposition camp.

Finally, the Right appears to be the most fragmented in EEN since the declaration of independence. The biggest effort to unite was made during the ‘electoral revolutions’ in Georgia and Ukraine against the former *nomenklatura* regimes and following the common cause of the promotion of pro-Western internal reforms and integration in Euro-Atlantic institutions.

In conclusion, by contrast to Central and Eastern Europe, where scholars have found a significant progress towards achievement of stability in party and bloc interaction (Bakke and Sitter 2005), EEN party systems are still characterized by a low degree of consolidation. The so-called ‘electoral revolutions’ in Ukraine and Georgia brought radical changes in the format and the mechanics of these post-communist systems and the events that followed the revolutions still point to the significant degree of uncertainty in

the patterns of party interaction.

The influence of European integration on party system institutionalization. So what can we tell about the influence of European integration process on the consolidation of party systems in East European Neighborhood? While addressing this question, we are confronted again with the causality problem that is present throughout the Europeanization research. While it is relatively easy to examine party European stances or transnational party linkages and trace the influence of European integration at party level, it is more complicated to link the European question with the patterns of continuity and stability of party interaction. It is so because the European Union merely an indirect influence on party interaction.

The findings from the three case studies present mixed results with regard to the two examined hypothesis on the influence of European integration process on party system consolidation. On the one hand, if one searches deeply the links between the European question and the patterns of party interaction, one can definitely find some indirect EU level influence that confirms the first expected scenario of the present work. So, the empirical research has shown that the European issue has proved to have a dividing and unifying capacity within EEN party systems. The case studies of Ukraine and Moldova (before 2005 elections) show that the politicization of the European integration perspective had determined a significant degree of polarization of political forces in two broad rival camps: pro-European and anti-European. At the same time, the European issue had an important unifying role in coalition formation, contributing to the change of the prevailing modes of party competition and bringing new coalition formulas during the ‘electoral revolutions’ in Georgia and Ukraine, and during 2005 legislative and presidential elections in Moldova. By bringing together ideologically diverse parties and former rivals that have not regarded themselves as potential coalition partners, the European issue would appear to influence the decrease of the level of fragmentation of the examined political spaces, conduced to the institutionalization of EEN party systems.

Furthermore, the adoption by Moldovan legislature of the Declaration of Political Partnership aimed at achieving cooperation of rival forces for the sake of European integration objective can be examined as an evidence that the European question would represent a “centrifugal and unifying power” for EEN party systems, similar to the

scholarly argument in the case of CEEC. (Kostelecký 2002, 177) It also suggests that the salience of the European question makes it a valence issue and pushes it outside party competition, leading to the decrease of political rivalry, which becomes less confrontational and adversarial and contributes to the consolidation and stability of East European party systems.

On the other hand, a major question that arises while analyzing the mentioned-above empirical findings is how accurate one can trace the influence, particularly the indirect one, of European integration process on party system institutionalization. How can we judge whether there is a significant indirect EU impact on its neighboring states or whether it is ‘non-existent’ when it is hardly possible to trace what causes what between the domestic and European levels? (Bathory 2007, 3) In these circumstances, I agree with the scholars that argue about the necessity of adopting a bottom-up-down approach in studying the influence of European integration process on domestic transformations. (Bathory 2007; Haverland 2005; Lehmkuhl 2006, 341; Szczerbiak and Bil 2008) Political parties and party systems represent one of the subjects that have to be firstly investigated through domestic lenses and only in case if something remains unexplained one has to look at the European level.

If one approaches EU influence on party system consolidation from this perspective the following conclusions can be drawn. First of all, the European issue does not demonstrate a significant indirect power on party interaction in EEN. It was not the sole power the European issue that determined the division and unification among EEN political forces in the mentioned above cases. The European issue did not prove to be a maverick issue that would cross-cut the existing lines of domestic competition. Rather, the European question has been mostly assimilated into the domestic debate, becoming ‘an additional tool’ in EEN political actors’ ‘toolbox’ of inter-party competition. (Haughton and Rybar 2007) So, for example, it was a combination of party European stance with party position on the major lines of competition, together with the evaluation of government’s competence, that was responsible for the existing differences between the ‘electoral revolution’ coalitions in Ukraine and Georgia from the governing forces.

Second of all, the analysis of domestic level variables proves that party strategic behavior is responsible for most of the (re-)alignment of political forces according to

their European stances. Partly constrained by their position in a political space and party/government relation, EEN political forces have shown a flexible behavior towards the European question, being able to change quickly their European stances for the sake of gaining maximum benefits (short- or long-term). As a result, we could witness the creation of large electoral blocs, governing coalitions, or ‘political partners’ in the three countries that were bringing together ideologically diverse parties or former ‘deadly foes’ (e.g. PCRM and PPCD in Moldova) under the umbrella of their pro-European aspirations. The political crisis in Ukraine since the Orange revolution and the often ‘divorces’ and ‘re-marriages’ of Orange coalition partners clearly illustrates the superiority of explanatory power of party strategic calculations over the influence of European issue on continuity and stability of party interaction.

So, the mentioned-above reasoning confirms the second theoretical scenario of the present research regarding party system institutionalization. It shows that the European integration question fails to exercise a significant indirect influence on the consolidation of EEN party systems. The examined post-soviet party systems continue to be weakly institutionalized, allowing parties to pursue a more flexible and strategic behavior towards the contestation of political issues. Despite the contribution of the European issue towards the seeming advancement on the continuum of party system institutionalization in Ukraine and Georgia during the ‘electoral revolution,’ nowadays behavior of political forces disproves any significant progress towards the consolidation of EEN party systems.

Conclusion

Despite the existence of empirical evidence that points to both direct and indirect influence of European integration process on party and party system institutionalization, this influence is rather limited and is different from the case of post-communist CEE candidates. Several factors are responsible for the type and the extent of EU involvement in EEN party and party system consolidation.

The major factors from the European level that affect party institutionalization are the limited financial resources of EPFs in promoting closer ties with EEN sister-parties and transferring ideological, managerial, as well as organizational assistance. Also, the

case study of EPP shows that by contrast to the theoretical expectation of this thesis EU-based party federations tend to loosen the key accession requirement, ideological compliance, which can induce fundamental party identity changes. The reason behind this is the predominance of strategic calculations of EPFs in selecting the EEN candidates and the preference given to successful and governing parties from the region over the ‘natural’ sister-parties, similar to the case of CEE. (Dakowska 2002)

The analysis of domestic level variables shows that EEN parties are more flexible in transforming their party identity in line with their European aspirations and can engage in short-term identity changes with the aim of maximizing their electoral or parliamentary representation, yet being constrained by their party-government position. Concomitantly, the liberal-democratic forces use Brussels’ backing of their governing party policies and European aspirations in order to obtain domestic political legitimacy and increase their electoral support.

With regard to party system consolidation, the research reveals a weak European level influence on party interaction. It can be said that the EU achieved a momentum in its engagement in promoting domestic political changes during the ‘electoral revolutions’ in Georgia and Ukraine by helping to establish large pro-European opposition blocs that could overcome the old regimes and initiate the implementation of liberal-democratic reforms. However, the analysis of the political competition that followed the revolutions shows a significant degree of political instability and a high degree of unpredictability in the patterns of party interaction. Concomitantly, in Moldovan case the empirical evidence seems to point to a stronger positive influence on party interaction, represented by the signing of the Political Partnership between the major forces regarding the European integration objective and the valence of European issue within the domestic competition. However, a closer investigation of the way in which Europe matters for party interaction shows that these developments do not induce stable patterns of party interaction and party strategic behaviour dominates the European integration objective and the implementation of EU requirements.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

Introduction

This final chapter aims at reviewing the major findings of the dissertation. It starts with a presentation of the major empirical findings, following the thesis structure. Then it turns to the elucidation of the theoretical implications of this research and the contribution to the existing literature. Finally, it concludes with the explanation of the limitations and potential development of the research.

Empirical results

Based on the theoretical model advanced in the chapter 3 of the present dissertation, the following section presents the main empirical evidence of how and to what extent European integration process influences party and party system developments in East European Neighborhood. I discuss the key findings derived from the four modes of EU impact on party politics.

First, the analysis of the **adjustment of party-related legislation to European level requirements** shows that the vague political stipulations of EU-country Action Plans, together with the lack of EU membership perspective determine a weaker direct EU involvement in domestic political transformations than in the case of CEE candidates. The fact that APs do not contain clear EU requirements and guidelines for the implementation of European standards of party legislation offers the domestic political elites a certain degree of freedom of compliance to EU demands. The analysis shows that Brussels makes reference to European democratic norms and standards promoted by other European level institutions, such as the Council of Europe, or OSCE. Yet, because of the multiple recommendations coming from the European experts EEN political elites can choose to implement those that benefit their policies, increase their electoral success and harm them least. This is illustrated by the recent legislative changes introduced by PCRM in Moldova before the 2009 parliamentary elections. The Communist party introduced some changes of medium or low resonance for party activity in line with the European experts' recommendation, stressing that these actions confirm in practice PCRM's aspiration to promote "advanced" European standards. At the same time,

however, the Communist parliamentary majority adopted a series of legislation that was detrimental to political pluralism and opposed the European standards, such as the increase of the electoral threshold of the prohibition of electoral blocs.

Yet, as the research shows, the benefit-maximizing behavior of the governing elites and the final outcome of the legislative adjustment to EU requirements are constrained by the strength of internal veto players, particularly of the opposition forces promoting liberal-democratic reforms. For example, although both in Moldova and in Georgia there has been one governing party, PCRM and respectively ENM, during the implementation of EU Action Plans, the different bargaining power and interaction between government and opposition affected differently the strategic behavior of the ruling elites regarding the legislative adjustment. So, in Moldovan case, the weak bargaining power of the divided opposition forces, together with the parliamentary majority of PCRM allowed the governing parties to ignore the opposition's objections over party-related legislative changes that contravened to European democratic standards, such as the increasing of the electoral threshold and the forbidding of electoral blocs before the 2009 elections. In Georgian case, the more democratic-oriented profile of the ruling ENM and its readiness to listen better to European recommendations, together with the more unified and more active opposition limited the strategic behavior of the governing ENM and resulted in legislative changes that were in line with European level recommendations.

Finally, although as compared to CEE candidates the examined post-Soviet neighbors lack the strongest EU incentive – membership perspective, the research shows that the Union influences directly party politics by providing domestic political actors rhetorical and financial incentives within the framework of European Neighborhood Policy existing ENP framework. Brussels can use intermediary rewards, such as visa facilitation or preferential trade agreements, for encouraging the promotion of domestic reforms in line with European standards.

Second, the examination of **the compliance to EPFs' accession criteria** presents new empirical insights regarding the direct EU involvement in party-related transformations. It points to a more limited EU direct impact than in the case of CEE candidates, argued to be the result of the weaker conditionality policy because of the

limited material support and membership offer within the biggest Euro-parties, EPP and PES. By contrast to the theoretical expectation of this dissertation, the case study of EPP reveals that it decreased the major affiliation requirements – ideological compliance to Christian-democracy – in order to include the successful and governing parties from the region. By doing so EPP follows the aim of increasing its pan-European influence, even if this comes at the cost of an ideological dilution of the largest Europarty. Also, the case of Georgian New Rights Party's accession to EPP shows that the Euro-party can use its 'stick' of postponing indefinitely the affiliation of undesired political parties, even if the major accession requirements are met.

Although the decision of joining a European Party Federation is a voluntary one and the membership offer is usually limited to the observer status in the case of the largest Euro-parties, EEN political actors are still motivated to join EPFs. Similar to the case of CEE states, joining an EPF, exemplified by the case study of EPP, offers domestic political actors internal political legitimacy and international credibility, as well as membership in a prestigious European political club. This explains the desire of governing Center-Right parties from the region to join the largest European Party Federation, even if from ideological point of view some of them are closer to other EPFs (e.g. ENM and Batkivshchyna).

Third, the study of the indirect European influence on party and party system transformations examines the **change in the patterns of party interaction and coalition formation resulting from the change of opportunities available for political actors**, as well as **the emergence of pro/anti European parties/ political blocs**.

At party level, following the scholarly debate of whether ideology or strategy is the major predictor of party European stance, the study proves the importance of the latter factor in the case of post-Soviet neighbor states. The analysis of the role played by party ideological profile in shaping the European attitudes shows that the ideological dimension of competition does not subsume the European issue within EEN political spaces. Yet, parties that approach the Left extreme of the ideological axis (e.g. PCRM, Patria-Rodina, KPU, Vitrenko Bloc) are the most Euroskeptic ones. By contrast to the case of Central and Eastern Europe, Euroskepticism is a unipolar phenomenon in East European Neighborhood.

The disentanglement of the ideological dimension into the economic Left-Right axis and the non-economic, or cultural divides shows that party stances on systemic transformation dimension, represented by democratic and market economy reforms, is a good predictor of party European position. The pro-reform parties are Europhiles, while those promoting a Communist/Socialist type of political and economic system or even the restoration of the USSR are opposing the Europe. The analysis of the relationship between the European issue divulges a considerable degree of correlation between party European profile and its position on the non-economic dimensions, such as anticommunist-communist and Russia/CIS issues. Yet, the relationship varies across the three countries, depending on the contextual factors such as the nature and the degree of politicization of nation/state issues.

An interesting finding of the research is the relationship between nationalism and the European issue. By contrast to the case of Western democracies and CEE, the case studies of Ukraine and Moldova reveal that a cosmopolitan– pro-EU combination is absent, because at the other end of the country nationalist dimension nationalist Russian/pan-Slavic parties. So, the presence of a Russian minority in the examined two cases, similar to Latvia, determines Right wing nationalist parties to be Euro-enthusiasts while Russian/pan-Slavic nationalist parties represent the Euroskeptic political forces, promoting closer ties with Russia and the CIS.

The investigation of the role played by party-government relation in defining the European stance the thesis confirms the scholarly argument from Western and Central Europe that it represents an important factor in shaping the opportunities and constraints for the change of party European profile and of other aspects of party identity. Even if the weakly institutionalized EEN parties and party systems provide more flexibility in party reaction to the major lines of political conflict, their rent-seeking behavior is constrained once they shift from opposition to government. While the opposition status allows parties to engage in a stronger criticism of Europe, once they achieve the ruling power they are determined to shift to a moderate or a strong pro-European position, which renders also some further party identity changes.

The empirical evidence reveals several ways in which Europe matters for EEN party systems. The dissertation shows that the process of European integration does not

influence the format of the party systems within the region as there are no successful political organizations that would emerge with the purpose of gaining electoral support based on their European stance. While the Moldovan case reveals two newly established parties that define their identity within their Europeaness (PSL and PE) these political organizations failed to become successful political contestants, argued to be the result of the increased valence of the European issue within Moldovan political arena.

Concerning the other mode of EU indirect influence, the change in the patterns of party interaction and coalition formation, the thesis reveals that Brussels' support of liberal-democratic opposition forces during the 'electoral revolutions' in Georgia and Ukraine represented an important source in determining their success over the old regime forces. The EU could influence indirectly the pro-reform parties, ENM in Georgia and NU and BYuT in Ukraine, by providing them moral support and internal political legitimacy, as well as international credibility regarding their commitment to European norms and values of liberal democracy. Also, the study of the Moldovan political competition shows that the Union could exercise an important leverage in persuading the pro-reform opposition forces, such as PSL and PPCD, in supporting the Communist Party which promised to reform itself in line with European Left ideology and declared itself devoted to European integration objective.

Yet, the extent of EU level influence depends primarily on the domestic degree of freedom of political elites, conditioned on the strength of opposition as a veto player, and the commitment of domestic actors to comply with European requirements. Although the European Union can exercise a significant influence on domestic transformations during some decisive moments, such as the 'electoral revolutions' or the avoidance of a political deadlock, its powers decrease significantly afterwards, party strategic behavior being the major determinant of the way in which Europe matters for party interaction.

The examination of the **broader influence of European integration process on party and party system institutionalization** reveals several important empirical findings. The research demonstrates a restricted EU level involvement in the consolidation of party identity and organizational structure, which is considered to be one of the major dimensions of party institutionalization. Although theoretically the EU could exercise a strong direct influence on party identity and organization via AP stipulations

and EPF's accession criteria, its involvement in party consolidation proved to be weak because of the limited financial instruments and vaguely defined requirements. So, the poorly defined EU requirements regarding party-related legislative adjustment, together with the lack of strong material and political incentives resulted in a weak EU leverage within the AP framework. Concomitantly, the strongest mechanism through which the EPFs could directly induce party level changes in line with European norms is ideological compliance. Yet, the empirical evidence from the case study of EPP shows that the previous ideological compliance to Party Internationals, as well as EPP's strategy of including politically successful parties over the 'natural' sister-parties, lead to the failure of exercising a significant European influence on consolidation of EEN party organizations.

Concerning the second dimension of party institutionalization, party age and stable societal roots, the dissertation shows that domestic level variables, particularly party instrumentalist behavior, determine the final outcome of EU involvement in party consolidation. A positive EU influence on this party dimension is the use of Brussels' verbal support by liberal-democratic forces in order to obtain domestic political legitimacy and to increase their electoral support. Yet, EU's persuasive power is more limited in the case of Left wing parties, proven by the example of SPU and PCRM, which can use their European stance with the aim of maximizing their electoral or parliamentary representation while avoiding fundamental party identity changes in line with their European aspirations.

Turning to party system level, the empirical evidence points again to a limited EU influence on the stability and continuity of party interaction, agreed to be the main ingredient of party system institutionalization. Both theoretical scenarios of the present thesis are confirmed by the practical findings. Similar to CEE candidates, the EU acted as a consolidating and a unifying power in Moldovan case, where parliamentary parties signed the Political Partnership that declared European integration the major objective of the current legislature. The valence of the European issue led to the absence of political confrontation based on pro- and anti-European attitudes. At the same time, the European issue has been highly contested in Ukraine during the Orange revolution, with pro-reform opposition forces being pro-European and the former regime supporters, including the

current Party of Regions, preferring closer ties to Russia and the CIS.

Yet, the European Union could not have a significant impact on political competition by stimulating stability and continuity in party interaction and coalition formation. Once the decisive moments of revolutionary change has passed and the political deadlock was avoided in Moldova regarding the parliamentary voting of the Communist president, the strategic behavior of post-communist political parties prevented the continuity in the patterns of interaction that were backed by Brussels.

Theoretical implications and contribution to the existing literature

As it was states in the literature review section, the dissertation addressed three major theoretical debates: theoretical approaches to EU impact on domestic political transformations, Europeanization debate and the special case of the Europeanization of party politics and party systems. The present section aims at summarizing the theoretical contribution of the dissertation with regard to each of the three strands of literature.

The analysis of the two major IR theories: the logic of conditionality (instrumentalist) versus the logic of appropriateness (constructivist) shows that both logics are present in the empirical analysis of EU influence on EEN party politics. The research confirms the instrumentalist approach regarding the weakness of EU bargaining power in promoting domestic political changes outside its borders. The vaguely defined party-related EU requirements, together with the lack of strong incentives, primarily EU membership perspective, represent the major European level variables that determine the nature (direct versus indirect) and the extent of EU involvement in party and party system transformation in accordance to European norms and standards. Also, the number of domestic veto players, particularly the strength of liberal-democratic opposition forces, constrains the instrumentalist behavior of the ruling political elites and their degree of freedom in complying with European requirements.

However, the research also reveals that by contrast to the general scholarly belief that the absence of EU membership perspective implies the failure of European leverage outside its members and candidates, the EU still can influence domestic political transformations within its neighbor states by providing political actors with intermediary

rewards, such as visa facilitation, preferential trade agreements, etc., which were aimed at bringing the EEN countries closer to European integration.

At the same time, the dissertation shows that the constructivist approach explains partially the extent of European involvement in EEN party politics. The sociological explanations, particularly the resonance of norms and values that define the domestic culture with the European ones, is confirmed to have a considerable role in determining EEN political actors' reaction to European integration process, exemplified by the study of Communist or Russian/pan-Slavic parties. Also, despite the weak material incentives that Brussels can offer to its Eastern neighbors, the rhetorical support of domestic actors' European aspirations represents an important EU instrument in inducing party and party system changes in accordance to European norms and standards. The Union is most successful in supporting liberal-democratic forces, which can use the rhetorical promises of European officials in order to obtain internal political legitimacy and international credibility.

The dissertation also contributes to the literature on post-communist party politics through the analysis of the influence of European integration process on party and party system institutionalization. By contrast to the case of Central and Eastern Europe, where the EU managed to contribute to the process of party and party system consolidation during the accession process, things are proven to be different in the case of EU outsiders from Eastern Europe. The exclusion of EEN countries from the EU accession limited considerably the powers of the Union in promoting party and party system changes in line with European standards. The research proves that the process of European integration failed to exercise a significant influence on the consolidation of EEN parties and party systems which by contrast to the case of CEE counterparts are still characterized by a low degree of institutionalization. However, the thesis also points to the existence of a considerable EU leverage in changing the patterns of party interaction during some decisive historical points, such as the 'electoral revolutions' in Georgia and Ukraine or the avoidance of the political deadlock in Moldova during the presidential elections in 2005.

Finally, the major theoretical contribution of the research refers to the literature on the Europeanization of political parties and party systems. The theoretical model of the present dissertation addresses the major limitations of the study of Europeanization of party politics. First, it advances a theoretical framework that allows the expanding of the Europeanization research outside the EU official borders, one of the ‘blind spots’ of the existing literature. The combination of the IR and CP approaches proves to be valuable in investigating the nature and the extent of European level influence on domestic transformations within the EU outsiders. Although it does not solve the causality problem of the Europeanization research, it represents a considerable theoretical contribution that allows for a more careful investigation between the European and the domestic level factors and processes. So, based on the major variables from domestic and European levels that were advanced in the Europeanization literature: degree of political elite’s freedom (more or less constrained) and the type of EU involvement (direct versus indirect), the dissertation advances four major modes of EU influence on party and party system transformations.

By contrast to existing scholarly arguments that Brussels can exercise only an indirect influence in non-EU members or candidates in the absence of EU conditionality and of its strongest ‘stick’ – full membership perspective, the research reveals that the Union can exert direct leverage within the EEN. This can be done via two mechanisms: legislative adjustment of party-related laws and the compliance to the accession criteria of European Party Federations. So far, the empirical findings show that the outcome of European level influence on domestic political transformations is constrained by the vaguely defined EU stipulations regarding the promotion of party reforms in accordance to European norms and values, as well as by the limited financial assistance available for EEN political parties for their implementation. Yet, I argue that one might expect that the EU can increase its direct influence by adopting some more specific requirements within the new legal framework that defines the future EU relations with the EEN states – Eastern Partnership, and the inclusion of special funds that would stimulate the adjustment of party-related legislation and transnational party linkages.

As the chapter 5 reveals, the indirect EU involvement in party and party system changes is stronger within its outsiders, which confirms the existing scholarly arguments.

But again, in contrast to CEE candidates, where the accession process provides a better environment for European indirect influence on party interaction and constrains the coalition potential of parties with governing ambitions, the situation is different in the case of EEN countries. Because Brussels cannot keep responsible the EEN political elites for acting in accordance to European democratic standards in the same way as it did in the case of CEE, the EU proves to be able to influence party interaction and coalition formation only during some decisive historical moments (e.g. ‘electoral revolutions’ or political deadlock). Once the periods of political crisis pass, EU powers are significantly limited and party strategic behavior is responsible for the degree of domestic political elite’s commitment in complying with European level requirements.

Finally, the academic contribution of the dissertation is represented by the fact that the advanced theoretical framework can be applied to the analysis of EU influence on other outsiders, particularly within the post-Soviet space, Russia being an interesting case for research.

Limitations and potential development of research

The dissertation has its own limitations as well. The first one deals with the limited focus of analysis of party politics. The impact of European integration at party level is examined narrowly, without looking at party organizational changes and other aspects of party life, such as intra-party disputes on the European issue and the shifts in the intra-party power.

The second one deals with the time period. The country Action Plans represent the major legislative framework of EU relations with its neighbors and are believed to include a greater degree of EU direct influence on domestic transformations in line to EU requirements. However, these documents have had a relatively short period of implementation (3 years) and the starting date varied from 2004 in Moldova to 2005 and 2006 in Ukraine and, respectively, Georgia. As a result, the present research has a limited time period for examining EU policies within the framework of Action Plans. One of the ways to overcome this shortcoming is the broadening of the time span so that to include also the analysis of the new legal framework aimed at enhancing EU relations with its Eastern neighbors – the Eastern Partnership Agreement, presented in May 2008.

The third limitation of the present research refers to the range of cases analyzed. The lack of an existing systematic data on post-communist party development and the significant differences in the transition paths of former Soviet republics makes it hard to engage in a large cross-country analysis of EU influence within the former URSS. As a result, this dissertation addresses only three countries, providing both case studies and cross-national comparison of EU influence in the region. However, as it was already mentioned, the theoretical framework advanced in this thesis can be applied in further studies to other former Soviet republics, and maybe to the case of other EU outsiders.

Last, but not least, the access and the availability of empirical data represents another constrain of this dissertation. Most of the empirical data has been collected by the author during the time of the PhD research (3 years). Although the work provides a comprehensive analysis of different empirical sources and applies various methodological analyses in order to provide a complex picture of the empirical background, the language constraints and the short period of field trips represent another shortcoming of the present research. During party leaders' interviews, for example, some parties could not be 'reached' in order to answer the questionnaire, either refusing directly to take part in such a research by expressing their disinterest in such a topic (e.g. Communist Party and Vitrenko Bloc in Ukraine, and Communist Party in Moldova), or arguing the business of their officials that are able to provide such an information (e.g. Tymoshenko's Bloc in Ukraine and Liberal Party in Moldova).

APPENDICES

TABLES

Table 1. EU influence on party and party system developments in EEN

		<i>Type of EU involvement</i>	
		Direct	Indirect
Degree of freedom of domestic political elite	More constrained	Legislation adjustment to EU standards (according to country AP stipulations) (1)	Change in the patterns of party interaction and coalition formation resulting from the change of opportunities available for political actors (3)
	Less constrained	Party compliance to requirements for joining European Party Federations (EPFs) (2)	Emergence of pro/anti European parties/ political blocs Lesson-drawing (4)

Table 2. Transnational Party Links

	Broad Ideology ^a	Party International	Parliamentary Representation	European Federation	Party
Georgia:					
United National Movement ENM	5,80	International Democratic Union IDU (full member)	Governing: - 2004 – 2008 - 2008 – present	EPP	(observer member since 2008)
New Rights Party AMA	6,80	International Democratic Union IDU (associate member)	Opposition: - 2001- present ^a	EPP	(applicant for observer member)
Republican Party RP	7,30	Liberal International LI (observer member)	Governing: - March – June 2004 ^b Opposition: - June 2004 – 2008	ELDR	(full member since 2007)
Moldova:					
Christian Democrat People's Party PPCD	7,70	Centrist Democratic Union CDI (full member)	Opposition: - 1994 – present	EPP	(observer member since 2005)
Our Moldova Alliance AMN	5,20 ^c	Liberal International LI (observer member)	Opposition: - 1998 – present	ELDR	(full member since 2007)
Communist Party of Moldova PCRM	2,35	-	Opposition: - 1998 – 2001 Governing: - 2001 – 2005 - 2005 – 2009	EL	(full member since 2005)
Ukraine					
Our Ukraine-People's Self-Defense NU-NS	6,80 ^d	-	Opposition: - 2002 – 2004 - December 2006 – December 2007 Government: - 2005 – 2006 - December 2007 – October 2008	EPP	(observer member since 2005)
Batkivshchyna (major BYuT party)	4,15 ^e	-	Opposition: - 1999 – 2004 - September 2005 – December 2007 Governing: - January – September 2005 - December 2007- present	EPP	(observer since 2008)

Notes:

^a Source: 2006 Timuș expert survey

^b AMA refused their parliamentary mandates as a protest to 2008 elections, which they consider were falsified, and to Saakashvili's authoritarian policy

^c Member of National Movement-Democrats

^d Score for BDM

^e Score for NU

^f Score for BYuT

Table 3a-3c. The importance of the European issue for party programmatic content

3a. Georgia 1992-2004 parliamentary elections

	LEFT	RIGHT
EC +	<u>1992:</u> Greens	<u>1992:</u> EDP National Democratic Party KTK Union of Traditionalists SEDP National Independence Party
	<u>1995:</u> --	<u>1995:</u> KTK Union of Traditionalists EDP National Democratic Party
	<u>1999:</u> SMK Citizens' Union	<u>1999:</u> SAK All-Georgian Revival Union (<i>far right</i>)
	<u>2004:</u> DAP Democratic Union of Revival SLP Labour Party	<u>2004:</u> BD Burjadnaze Democrats BAS Bloc 'For a New Georgia'
	--	--
EC -	--	--

Source: MRG dataset

3b. Ukraine 1994-2002 parliamentary elections

	LEFT	RIGHT	CENTER (Power party)
EC +	<u>1994:</u> --	<u>1994:</u> Rukh Popular Movement URP Republican Party	<u>1994</u> Kuchma Bloc for Reforms
	<u>1998:</u> PZU Green Party	<u>1998:</u> DPU Democratic Party Hromada Community	<u>1998:</u> NDPU People's Democratic Party
	<u>2002:</u> --	<u>2002:</u> Rukh Popular Movement --	<u>2002:</u> --
	--	--	--
	--	--	--
EC -	--	--	--

Source: MRG dataset

3c. Moldova 1994-2005 parliamentary elections

	LEFT	RIGHT
EC +	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>1994:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - BTI Peasants and Intellectual Bloc <p style="text-align: center;"><u>1998:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MPMDP Social-Political Movement 'For a Prosperous and Democratic Moldova' <p style="text-align: center;"><u>2001:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - PDAM Democratic Agrarian Party - PSM Socialists Party - PDM Democratic Party - BEAB Bloc 'Braghis Alliance' <p style="text-align: center;"><u>2005:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - PSDM Social-Democratic - PCRM Communists Party 	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>1994:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <p style="text-align: center;"><u>1998:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CDM Democratic Convention - PFD Party of Democratic Forces <p style="text-align: center;"><u>2001:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - PRCM Party of Rebirth and Reconciliation - PPCD Christian-Democratic People's Party - PFD Party of Democratic Forces <p style="text-align: center;"><u>2005:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - DM Democratic Moldova Bloc - PPCD Christian-Democratic People's Party
EC -	--	--

Source: MRG dataset

Table 4a – 4d. Georgian Parliamentary Elections Results (1992 - 2004)

4a. Parliamentary elections from 11 October 1992

PARTY/BLOC	% List Votes	List Seats	SMD Seats	Total Seats	% Seats
Peace Bloc	20.38	29	6	38	16
October 11 Bloc	10.71	18	1	19	9
National Democratic Party	8.18	12	2	14	6
Unity Bloc	7.36	14	1	15	7
Democratic Party	6.25	10	0	10	4
Union of Georgian Traditionalists	4.94	7	1	8	4
Greens Party	4.36	11	1	12	5
Charter '91	4.29	9	1	10	4
Ilya Chavchavadze Society	2.67	7	0	7	3
Merab Kostava Society	2.52	5	2	7	3
National Independence Party	2.40	4	0	4	2
Socialist Worker's Party	2.10	4	0	4	2
Union of National Agreement	1.91	4	1	5	2
Social Democratic Party	0.92	2	0	2	1
Independent Candidates			60	60	26

Source: Final Record of results of Georgian Parliamentary Elections, internet, available at <http://www.parliament.ge/ABOUT/parties.html>, last accessed on March 30, 2005.

4b. Parliamentary elections from 5 November 1995

PARTY/BLOC	% List Votes	List Seats	SMD Seats	Total Seats	% Seats
SMK – Citizens' Union of Georgia	23.71	90	17	107	46
EDP – National-Democratic Party	7.97	31	3	34	14
All Georgian Revival Union	6.84	25	6	31	13
Block - “United Communist Party of Georgia and Social Democrats”	4.49	0	0	0	0
Union of Georgian Traditionalists	4.22	0	3	3	1
Block - “21st Century-Konstantine Gamsakhurdia Society- United Georgia”	4.15	0	0	0	0
Socialist Party of Georgia	3.79	0	3	3	1
Bloc “Union of Georgian Reformers – National Agreement”	2.89	0	3	3	1
Stalin Communist Party	2.17	0	0	0	0
Communist Party of Georgia	2.07	0	0	0	0
Independent Candidates	-	-	29	29	12

Source: Final Record of Results of Georgian Parliamentary Elections, available at <http://www.parliament.ge/ABOUT/parties.html>, accessed on 30 March 2005.

4c. Parliamentary elections from 31 October 1999

PARTY/BLOC	% List Votes	List Seats	SMD Seats	Total Seats	% Seats
SMK – Citizens' Union of Georgia	41.75	85	47	132	56
AK – Bloc “Revival of Georgia”	25.18	51	8	59	25
MGS – Bloc “Industry Will Save Georgia”	7.08	14	1	15	6
SLP – Georgian Labour Party	6.59	0	2	2	1
Bloc “National Democratic Alliance-Third Way”	4.45	0	0	0	0

Bloc “People’s Party - Didgori”	4.11	0	0	0	0
Bloc “Georgian United Communist Party (Stalin’s followers) and Workers’ Unions”	1.35	0	0	0	0
Independent Candidates	-	-	13	13	6

Source: *Georgian Parliamentary Directory November 1999*, available at <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/election/georgia/greps1129.html>, accessed on 30 March 2005.

4d. Parliamentary elections from 28 March 2004

PARTY/BLOC	% List Votes	List Seats	SMD Seats	Total seats	% Seats
NM-D* – National Movement – Democrats	66.24	135	19	153	66
Bloc “Rightist Opposition – Industrialists, Novas”*	7.56	15	8	23	10
Georgian Labour Party	6.01	0	3	3	1
Political Movement “Freedom”	4.39	0	0	0	0
Union of Democratic Revival	3.86	0	6	6	3
Bloc “National- Democratic Party – Traditionalists”	2.55	0	0	0	0
For New Georgia	N/A	0	19	19	8
Independent Candidates	-	-	21	21	9

Source: *Georgian Parliamentary Elections 2004*, available at www.parliament.ge, accessed on 21 May 2004.

* The composition of electoral coalitions

National Movement – Democrats

- United National Movement
- Burjanadze Democrats
- Republican Party
- Union of National Forces

Bloc “Rightist Opposition – Industrialists, Novas”

- New Rights Party
- Industry Will Save Georgia

Table 5a-5d. Moldovan Parliamentary Elections Results (1994-2005)

5a. Parliamentary elections from 27 February 1994

PARTY/BLOC	% Votes	Seats	% Seats
PDAM - Democratic Agrarian Party of Moldova	43.18	56	53.85
PSMUE - Socialist Party and “Unitate-Edinstvo” Movement Bloc	22	28	26.92
BTI - Peasants and Intellectuals Bloc	9.21	11	10.58
AFPCD - Alliance of the Popular Christian Democratic Front	7.53	9	8.65
BSD - Social Democratic Bloc	3.66	0	0

5b. Parliamentary elections from 22 March 1998

PARTY/BLOC	% Votes	Seats	% Seats
PCRM - Party of Communists of the Republic of Moldova	30.01	40	39.6
CDM* - Electoral Bloc Democratic Convention of Moldova	19.42	26	25.74
PMDP* - Electoral Bloc For a Democratic and Prosperous Moldova	18.16	24	23.76
PFD - Party of the Democratic Forces	8.84	11	10.89
PDAM - Democratic Agrarian Party	3.63	0	0
ACF* - Electoral Bloc of the Civic Alliance Furnica (The Ant)	3.29	0	0

AFD - Alliance of Democratic Forces Electoral Bloc	2.24	0	0
PDSEM - Moldovan Party of Economic and Social Justice	1.95	0	0
PSDM - Social Democratic Party of Moldova	1.86	0	0

5c. Parliamentary elections (pre-term) from 25 February 2001

PARTY/BLOC	% Votes	Seats	% Seats
PCRM - Party of Communists of the Republic of Moldova	50.07	71	70.3
BEAB* - Electoral Bloc Braghis Alliance	13.36	19	18.81
PPCD - Christian Democratic Popular Party	8.24	11	10.89
PRC - Party of Rebirth and Conciliation	5.79	0	0
PDM - Democratic Party of Moldova	5.02	0	0
PNL - National Liberal Party	2.81	0	0
PSDM - Social Democratic Party of Moldova	2.47	0	0
BEPN - Electoral Bloc Plai Natal (Native Land)	1.58	0	0
PFD - Party of the Democratic Forces	1.22	0	0
BEE - Electoral Bloc Edinstvo	0.46	0	0
MSPRR - Republican Socio-Political Movement Ravnopravie	0.44	0	0

Source: *Political Transformation and the Electoral Process in Post-Communist Europe Project*, University of Essex, Moldova, internet, available at <http://www2.essex.ac.uk/elect/database/indexCountry.asp?country=moldova>, accessed on 30 March 2005.

5d. Parliamentary elections from 6 March 2005

PARTY/BLOC	% Votes	Seats	% Seats
PCRM - Party of Communists of the Republic of Moldova	45.98	56	0.55
PPCD - Christian Democratic Peoples Party	9.07	11	0.11
BMD* – Electoral Bloc Democratic Moldova	28.53	34	0.34
EBPR - Electoral Bloc Patria-Rodina	4.97	0	0
PSDM – Social-Democratic Party of Moldova	2.92	0	0
RSPMR - Republican Socio-political Movement Ravnopravie	2.83	0	0

Source: <http://www.elections2005.md/results/total/>, accessed on 21 April 2005.

* The composition of electoral blocs:

BMD – Electoral Bloc Democratic Moldova

- Democratic Party of Moldova
- Our Moldova Alliance (Social-Democratic Alliance of Moldova, Liberal Party, Independents' Alliance of Moldova, and Peoples' Democratic Party)
- Social Liberal Party

EBPR - Electoral Bloc Patria-Rodina

- Socialist Party of Moldova
- Party of Socialists of the Republic of Moldova

BEAB - Electoral Bloc Braghis Alliance

- New Force Socio-political Movement
- Speranta-Nadejda Professionals' Movement
- Socialist Party of Moldova
- Labor Union
- Centrist Union of Moldova
- Furnica (Ant) Party of Social Democracy

- CDM - Electoral Bloc Democratic Convention of Moldova (Blocul Electoral Conventia Democrată din Moldova)
- Party of Rebirth and Reconciliation of Moldova
- Christian-Democratic Peoples' Party
- Green Alliance Environmental Party of Moldova
- Women's Christian-Democratic League of Moldova
- Christian-Democratic Peasants' Party
- PMDP - Electoral Bloc For a Democratic and Prosperous Moldova (Blocul Electoral Pentru o Moldova Democratica si Prospera):
- Movement For a Democratic and Prosperous Moldova
- Civic Party of Moldova
- New Force Socio-political Movement
- Peoples' Democratic Party of Moldova

ACF - Electoral Bloc of the Civic Alliance Furnica (The Ant) (Blocul Electoral Alianta Civica Furnica)

- Socio-political Movement Civic Alliance for Reforms
- Party of Progressive Forces of Moldova
- Civic Unity Movement
- Youth Union of Moldova
- Centrist Democratic Party of Rebirth of the Republic of Moldova

Table 6a-6e. Ukrainian Parliamentary Elections Results (1994-2002)

6a. Parliamentary elections from 27 March, 2 -10 April 1994

PARTY/BLOC	Votes	% Votes	Seats	% Seats
KPU - Communist Party of Ukraine	3,683,332	12.72	86	25
NRU - Popular Movement of Ukraine (Rukh)	1,491,164	5.15	20	6
SPU - Socialist Party of Ukraine	895,830	3.09	14	4
SelPU - Peasant Party of Ukraine	794,614	2.74	18	6
URP - Republican Party of Ukraine	728,614	2.52	8	2
KUN - Congress of Ukrainian Nationalists	361,352	1.25	5	1
PDVU - Party of Democratic Rebirth of Ukraine	239,763	0.83	4	1
PPU - Labour Party	114,409	0.4	4	1
SDPU - Social Democratic Party of Ukraine	104,204	0.36	2	1
Independent candidates			163	48

Source: 1994 Election Results in Ukraine- By Alliances/Parties, available at <http://www.brama.com/ua-gov/el-94vrg.html>, accessed on 28 March 2008.

6b. Parliamentary elections from 29 March 1998

PARTY/BLOC	% List Votes	List Seats	% SMD Votes	SMD Seats	Total Seats	% Seats
KPU - Communist Party of Ukraine	24.65	84	14.69	37	121	27
NRU - Popular Movement of Ukraine (Rukh)	9.4	32	6.34	14	46	10
Socialist – Peasant Bloc	8.56	29	4.49	5	34	8
PZU - Party of Greens of Ukraine	5.44	19	0.83	0	19	4
NDP - Popular Democratic Party	5.01	17	4.17	11	28	6
Hromada	4.68	16	3.72	8	24	5
PSPU - Progressive Socialist Party of Ukraine	4.05	14	0.98	2	16	4
SDPU(o) - Social Democratic Party of Ukraine - united	4.01	14	1.9	3	17	4

Independent candidates	-	-	46.9	111	111	25
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Source: *Political Transformation and the Electoral Process in Post-Communist Europe Project*, University of Essex, available at <http://www2.essex.ac.uk/elect/database/indexCountry.asp?country=UKRAINE&opt=elc>, accessed on 30 March 2005.

6c. Parliamentary elections from 30 March 2002

PARTY/BLOC	% List Votes	List Seats	SMD Seats	Total Seats	% Seats
NU – Viktor Yushchenko Bloc Our Ukraine *	23.6	70	42	112	25
KPU – Communist Party of Ukraine	20.0	59	7	66	15
ZYU – Bloc For a United Ukraine! *	11.8	35	66	102	23
BYuT – Bloc Juliya Tymoshenko *	7.2	22	0	22	5
SPU – Socialist Party of Ukraine	6.9	20	3	24	5
SDPU(o) – Social-Democratic Party of Ukraine (united)	6.3	19	5	24	5
NV-NO – People's Opposition Bloc of Natalia Vitrenko	3.2	0	0	0	0
Independent candidates				93	93
					21

Source: Central Electoral Commission, available at <http://www.cvk.gov.ua/vnd2002/w6p001e.html>, accessed on 12 March 2007.

6d. Parliamentary elections from 26 March 2006

PARTY/BLOC	% Votes	Seats	% Seats
PR – Party of Regions	32.14	186	41
BYuT – Bloc Juliya Tymoshenko **	22.29	129	29
NU – Bloc Our Ukraine **	13.95	81	18
SPU – Socialist Party of Ukraine	5.69	33	7
KPU – Communist Party of Ukraine	3.66	21	5
NV-NO – People's Opposition Bloc of Natalia Vitrenko**	2.93	0	0
NBL – Lytvyn's People's Bloc**	2.44	0	0

Source: Central Electoral Commission, available at <http://www.cvk.gov.ua/vnd2006/w6p001e.html>, accessed on 20 February 2008.

6e. Parliamentary elections from 30 September 2007

PARTY/BLOC	% Votes	Seats	% Seats
PR – Party of Regions	34.37	175	39
BYuT – Bloc Juliya Tymoshenko ***	30.71	156	35
NU-NS – Bloc Our Ukraine – People's Self-Defense ***	14.15	72	16
KPU – Communist Party of Ukraine	5.39	27	6
NBL – Lytvyn's Bloc ***	3.96	20	4
SPU – Socialist Party of Ukraine	2.86	0	0
PSPU – Progressive Socialist Party of Ukraine	1.32	0	0

Source: Central Electoral Commission, <http://www.cvk.gov.ua/vnd2007/w6p001.html>, accessed on 20 February 2008.

* The composition of electoral blocs 2002 Elections:

Victor Yushchenko Bloc Our Ukraine

- Christian People's Union
- Liberal Party of Ukraine
- Forward, Ukraine!
- Rukh
- People's Movement of Ukraine (Rukh-Kostenko)

- Reforms and Order Party
- Republican Christian Party
- Solidarity Party
- Congress of Ukrainian Nationalists
- Ukrainian National Party
- Youth Party of Ukraine

Bloc For a United Ukraine!

- Agrarian Party of Ukraine
- Labor Ukraine – Working Ukraine
- Party of Regions
- Popular Democratic Party
- Party of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs of Ukraine

Bloc Yuliya Tymoshenko

- Christian Democratic Party of Ukraine
- Conservative Republican Party
- The Fatherland / Motherland Party
- Patriotic Party of Ukraine
- Sobor Party
- Ukrainian Social Democratic Party

People's Opposition Bloc of Natalia Vitrenko

- Progressive Socialist Party of Ukraine
- Party Rus'-Ukrainian Union

**** The Composition of Electoral Blocs 2006 Elections****Bloc Yuliya Tymoshenko**

- All-Ukrainian United Fatherland
- Ukrainian Social Democratic Party

Bloc Our Ukraine

- People's Union Our Ukraine
- Party of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs of Ukraine
- People's Movement of Ukraine
- Christian Democratic Union
- Ukrainian Republican Party Assembly
- Congress of Ukrainian Nationalists

People's Opposition Bloc of Natalia Vitrenko

- Progressive Socialist Party of Ukraine
- Party Rus'-Ukrainian Union

Lytvyn's People's Bloc

- People's Party
- Party of All-Ukrainian Union of the Left Justice
- Ukrainian Peasant Democratic Party

***** The Composition of Electoral Blocs 2007 Elections****Bloc Yuliya Tymoshenko**

- All-Ukrainian United Fatherland
- Ukrainian Social Democratic Party

- Party of Reforms and Order

Bloc Our Ukraine

- People's Union "Our Ukraine"
- Forward, Ukraine!
- People's Movement of Ukraine
- Ukrainian People's Party
- Ukrainian Republican Party Assembly
- Christian Democratic Union
- European Party of Ukraine
- Citizen's Party "PORA"
- Congress of Ukrainian Nationalists
- Motherland Defenders Party

Lytvyn's Bloc

- People's Party
- Labour Party of Ukraine

Table 7. Proximity Matrix between the major dimension of political competition in Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia

	Correlation between Vectors of Values						
	Broad ideology	Freedoms and rights	Country nationalism	EU and European integration	Market economy reforms	Communism / USSR	Russia /CIS issue
Broad ideology	1.000	.545	.383	.651	.766	-.610	-.632
Freedoms and rights	.545	1.000	.100	.597	.667	-.454	-.543
Country nationalism	.383	.100	1.000	.469	.325	-.428	-.455
EU and European integration	.651	.597	.469	1.000	.782	-.695	-.808
Market economy reforms	.766	.667	.325	.782	1.000	-.613	-.701
Communism /USSR	-.610	-.454	-.428	-.695	-.613	1.000	.695
Russia/CIS issue	-.632	-.543	-.455	-.808	-.701	.695	1.000

Note: This is a similarity matrix

Source: Timuş expert survey 2006

Table 8a-8c. Lewis' Index of Party Stabilization

8a. Parliamentary Parties Represented on More than One Occasion (%)

Post-communist election	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Georgia (PR system)</i>					
EDP - National Democratic Party	8.18	7.97	(4.45) ^a		(2.55) ^b
DAK – Democratic Revival Union	20.38 ^c	6.84 ^d	25.18 ^e		(3.86)

STK - Union of Georgian Traditionalists	4.94	(4.22)	With DAK	(2.55) ^f
SMK - Citizens' Union of Georgia	-	23.71	41.75	-
MGS - Industry Will Save Georgia	-	-	7.08 ^g	7.56 ^h
SMP – Greens Party of Georgia	4.36	With SMK	(0.55)	-
<i>Moldova</i>				
PSM - Socialist Party of Moldova	22 ^a	(1.83) ^b	13.36 ^c	(4.97) ^d
PPCD Christian-Democratic Peoples' Party	7.53 ^e	19.42 ^f	8.24	9.07
PCRM - Party of Communists of the Republic of Moldova	-	30.01	50.07	45.98
PDM – Democratic Party of Moldova ^g	-	18.16	(5.02)	34 ^h
ASDM - Social-Democratic Alliance of Moldova	-	(3.29) ⁱ	13.36 ^j	34 ^k
<i>Ukraine (PR system)^a</i>				
KPU - Communist Party of Ukraine	12.72	24.65	20.0	3.66
NRU - Popular Movement of Ukraine "Rukh"	5.15	9.4	Merged with Our Ukraine	-
SPU - Socialist Party of Ukraine	3.09	8.56 ^b	6.9	5.69
SelPU - Peasant Party of Ukraine	2.74	With SPU	(0.38)	-
NDP - Popular Democratic Party	-	5.01	11.8 ^c	(1.2) ^d
PSPU - Progressive Socialist Party of Ukraine	-	4.05	3.2 ^f	(2.93) ^f
SDPU (o) - Social Democratic Party of Ukraine - united	-	4.01	6.3	(1.01) ^g
NU Bloc Our Ukraine	-	-	23.6	13.95
BYuT Bloc "Juliya Tymoshenko"	-	-	7.2	22.29
PR Party of Regions	-	-	11.8 ⁱ	32.14
				34.37

Source: Tables 4-6.

Notes:

Georgia: ^a within Bloc "National Democratic Alliance-Third Way," ^b within National Democratic Alliance, ^c within Peace Bloc, ^d as All-Georgian Revival Union, ^e within the Bloc "Revival of Georgia," ^f within National Democratic Alliance, ^g within Bloc "Industry Will Save Georgia," ^h within Bloc "Rightist Opposition – Industrialists, Novas"

Moldova: ^a with "Unitate-Edinstvo" Movement, ^b within "Socialist Union" Bloc, ^c within Electoral Bloc "Braghis Alliance," ^d within Bloc Patria-Rodina, ^e as Alliance of the Popular Christian Democratic Front, ^f within Bloc Democratic Convention of Moldova, ^g as Bloc "For a Democratic and Prosperous Moldova," ^h within Bloc "Democratic Moldova," ⁱ as Civic Alliance for Reforms within Civic Alliance "Furnica" (Ant), ^j as Party of Social Democracy "Furnica" (Ant), ^k as "Our Moldova Alliance" within Bloc "Democratic Moldova"

Ukraine: ^a first elections – majoritarian system, ^b within Socialist/Peasant Bloc, ^c within Bloc "For a United Ukraine!" ^d with Democratic Union, ^e within Ukrainian Regional Asset, ^f within People's Opposition Bloc of Natalia Vitrenko, ^g within Opposition Bloc "Ne Tak," ^h with People's Self-Defense Party, ⁱ within Bloc "For a United Ukraine!"

8b. Proportion of Vote of Parties Represented on More than One Occasion (%)

Post-communist election	1	2	3	4	5
Georgia	37.86	38.52	74.01	7.56	

Moldova	29.53	67.59	71.67	89.05	
Ukraine	23.7	55.68	79	77.73	84.62

Source: Tables 4-6.

8c. Index of Party Stabilization Based on Party Representation Enhanced over Time*

Post-communist election	1	2	3	4	5	IPS**
Georgia	37.86	46.22	103.61	12.10	-	38.42
Moldova	29.53	81.11	100.34	142.48	-	67.97
Ukraine	23.7	66.82	110.60	124.37	152.32	68.26

Source: Tables 4-6.

Notes:

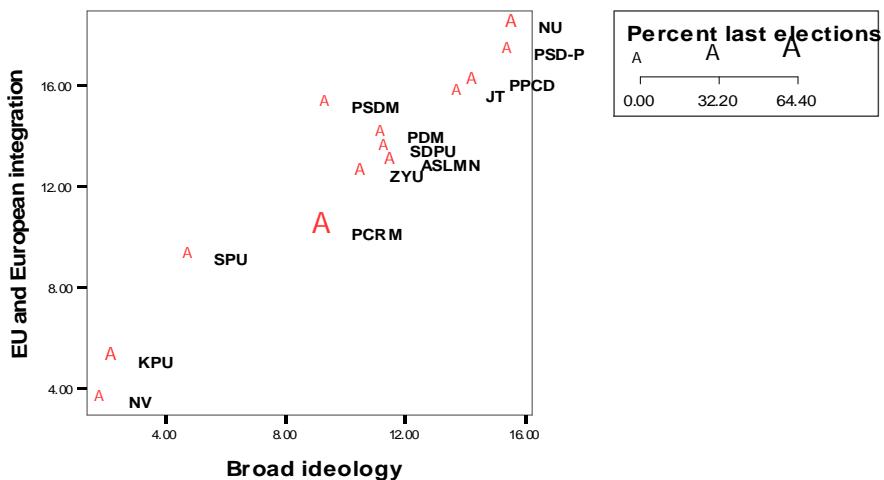
*Votes taken by parties represented on more than one occasion with proportion enhanced for successive elections – 100% (original measure) for first election, 120% for second, 140% for third, 160% for fourth.

**Index of Party Stabilization – sum of enhanced representation scores divided by notional total score of 520 and multiplied by 100.

FIGURES

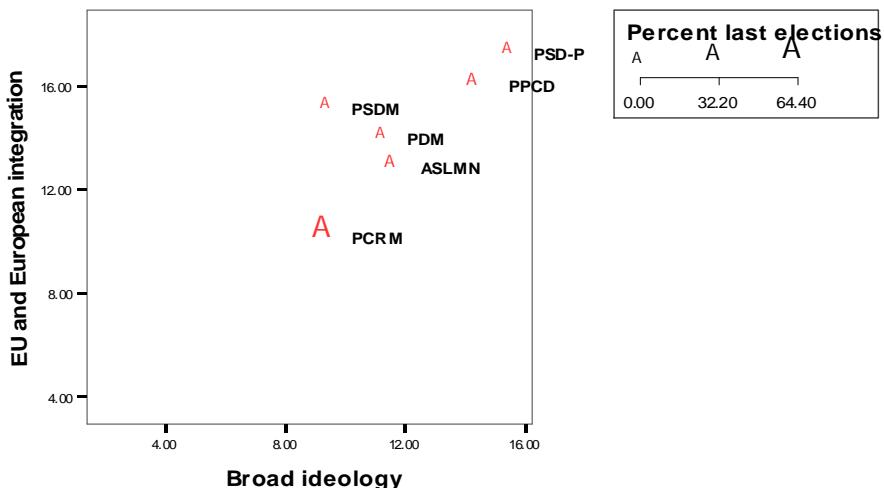
Figure 1a-1c. The relationship between ideology and EU joining 2003-2004

1a. Cross-national analysis (Moldova and Ukraine)



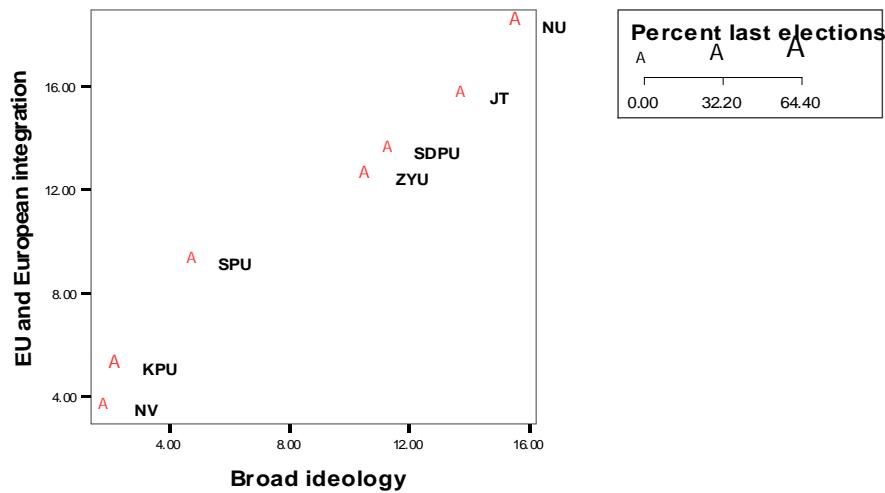
Source: 2003-2004 Benoit/Laver expert survey

1b. Moldova



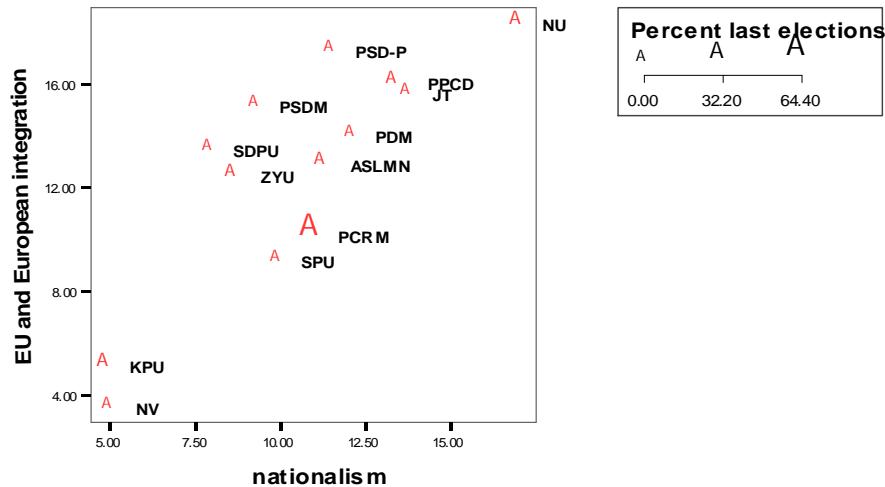
Source: 2003-2004 Benoit/Laver expert survey

1c. Ukraine



Source: 2003-2004 Benoit/Laver expert survey

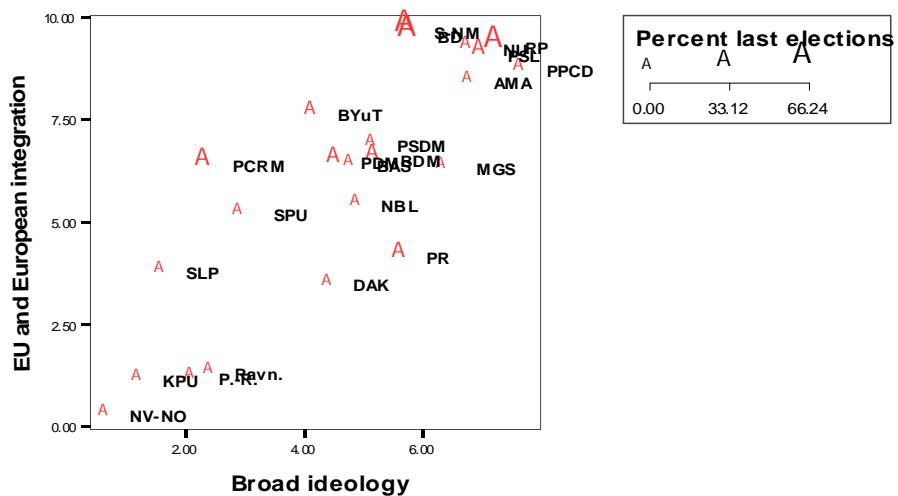
Figure 2. The relationship between nationalism and EU joining 2003-2004 (Ukraine and Moldova)



Source: 2003-2004 Benoit/Laver expert survey

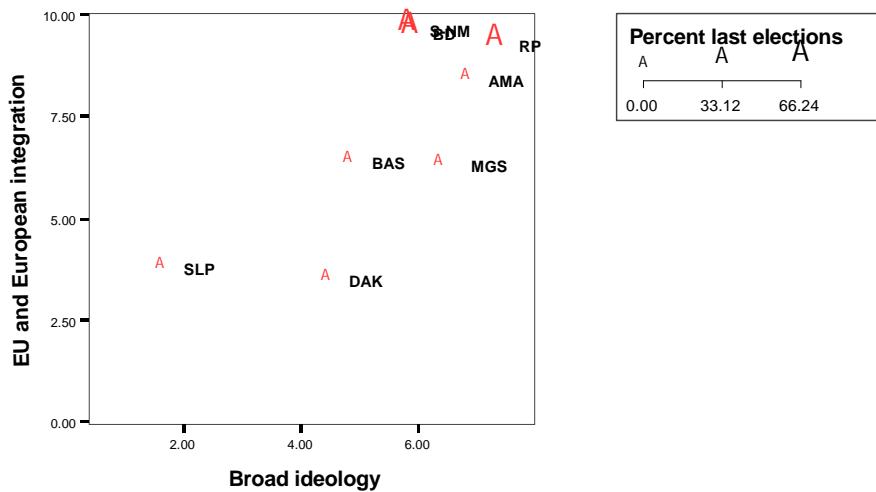
Figure 3a-3d. The relationship between broad ideology and European issue 2006

3a. Cross-national analysis (Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine)



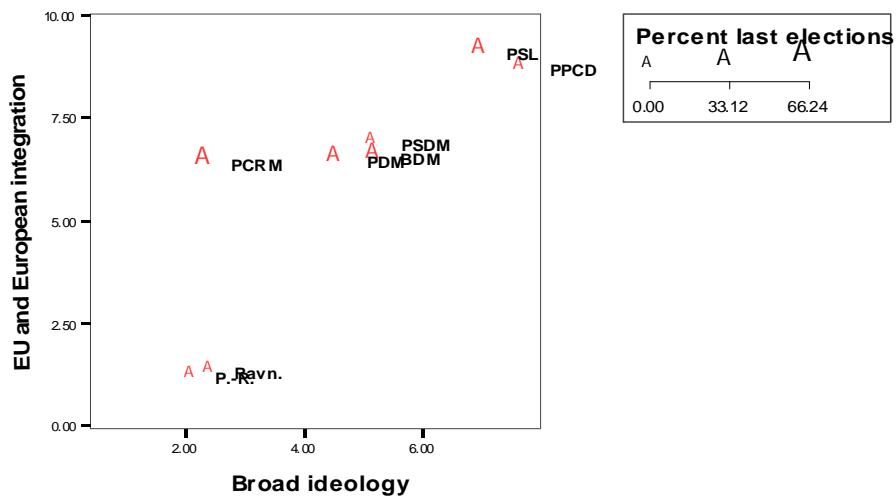
Source: Timuș expert survey 2006

3b. Georgia



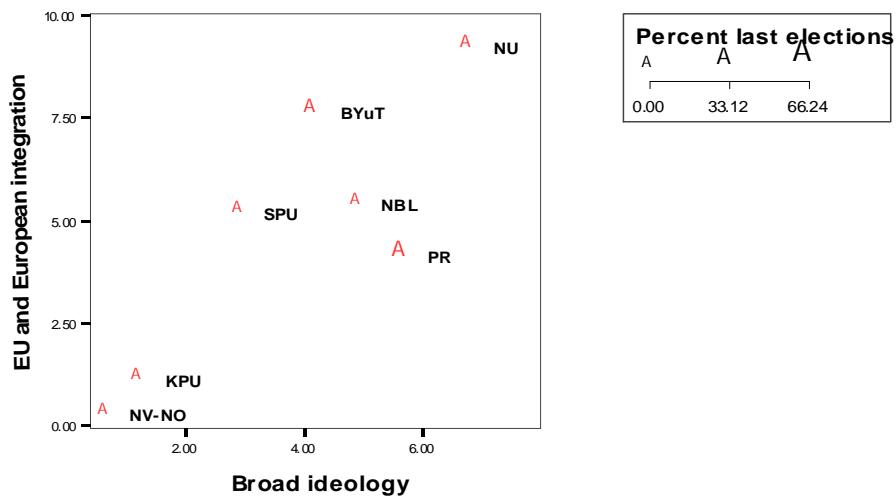
Source: Timuș expert survey 2006

3c. Moldova



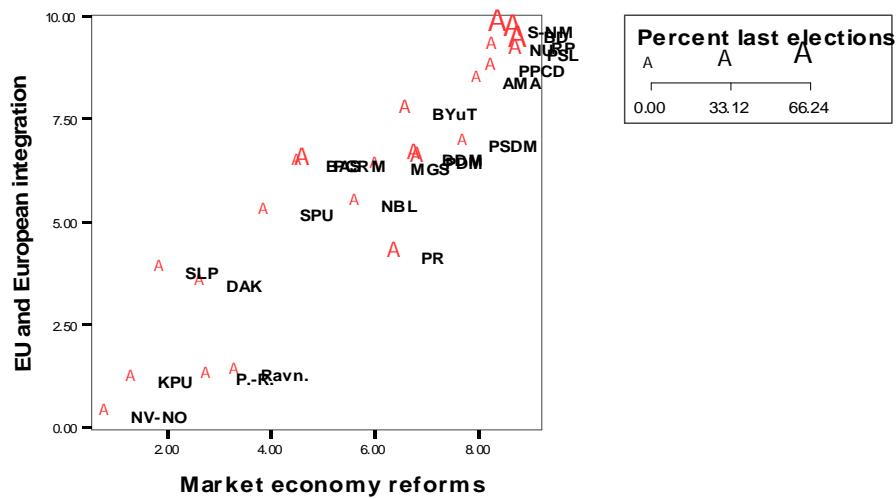
Source: Timuș expert survey 2006

3d. Ukraine



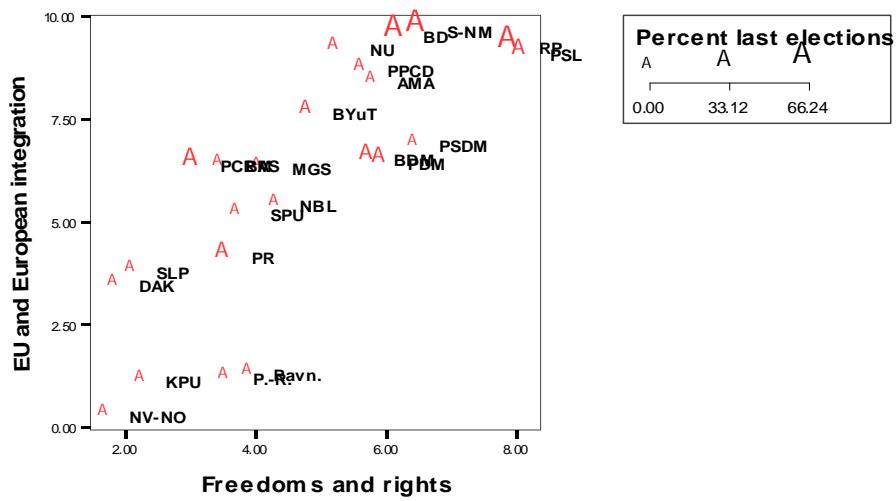
Source: Timuș expert survey 2006

Figure 4. The relationship between market economy and European issue 2006 (Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine)



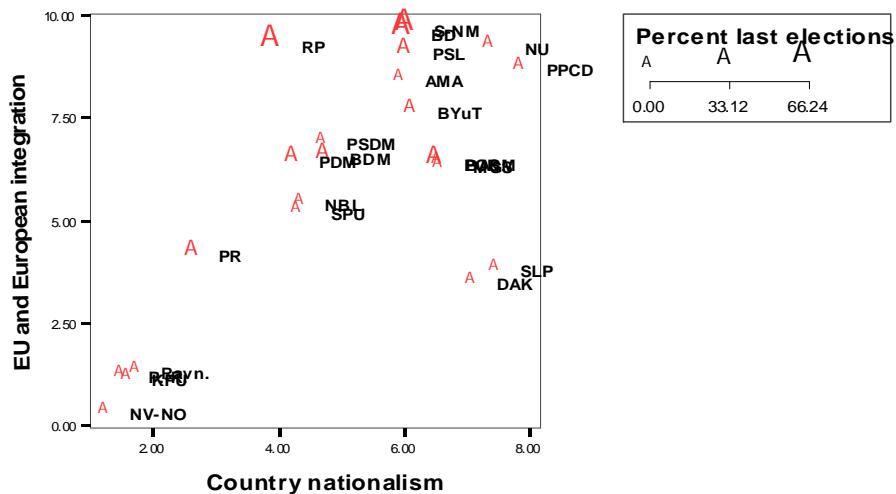
Source: Timuș expert survey 2006

Figure 5. The relationship between individual freedoms and rights and European issue 2006 (Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine)



Source: Timuș expert survey 2006

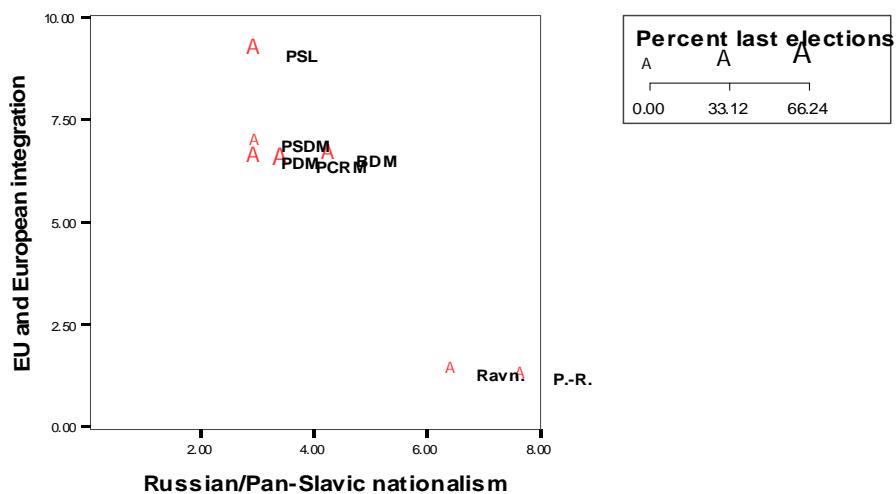
Figure 6. The relationship between country nationalism and European issue 2006 (Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine)



Source: Timuș expert survey 2006

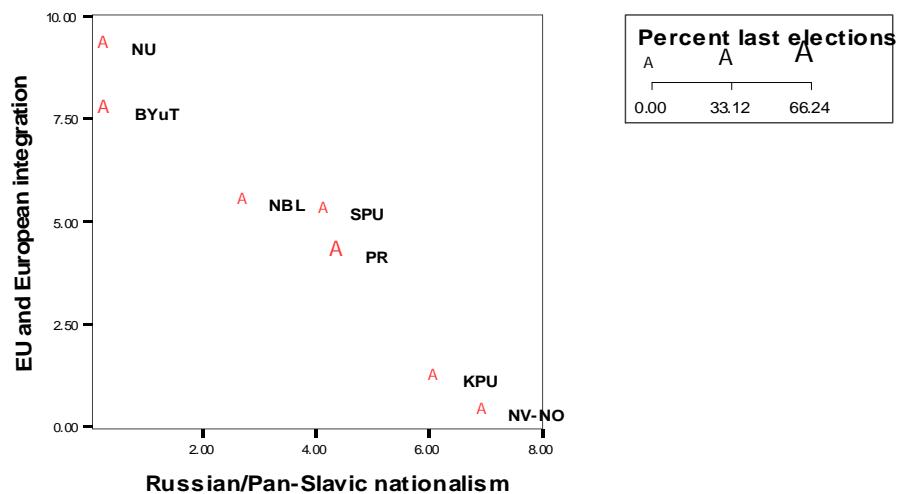
Figure 7a-7b. The relationship between Russian/pan-Slavic nationalism and European issue 2006 (Moldova and Ukraine)

7a. Moldova



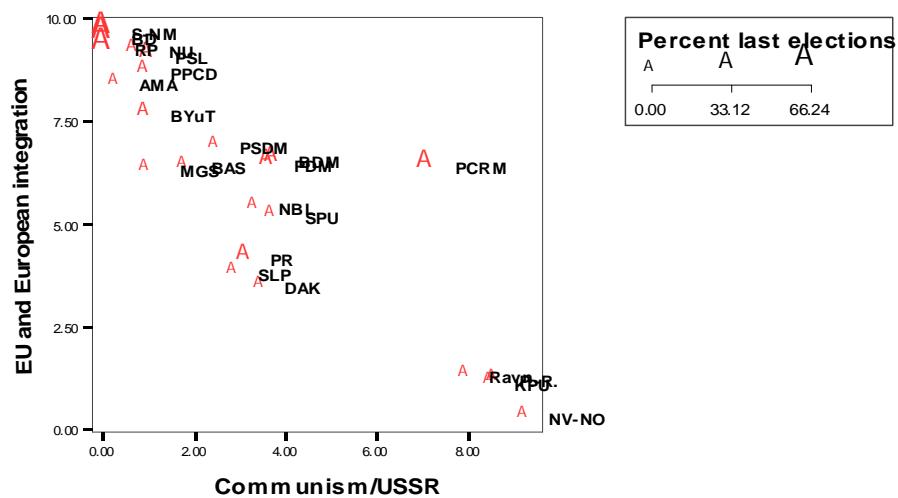
Source: Timuș expert survey 2006

7b. Ukraine



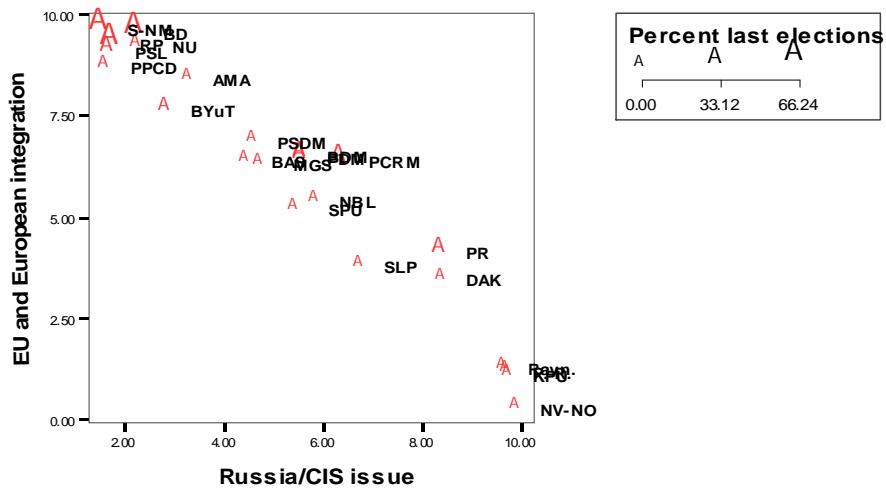
Source: Timuș expert survey 2006

Figure 8. The relationship between anti-communist - communist divide and European issue 2006



Source: Timuș expert survey 2006

**Figure 9. The relationship between Russia/CIS issue and European issue 2006
(Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine)**



Source: Timuş expert survey 2006

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- Interview with Viorel Ghimpu, leader of European Party PE, Chisinau, May 2007.
- Interview with Giorgos Karatsioubanis, Neolaia Synaspismou (Greece), European Left, 10 March 2008.
- Interview with Igor Klipii, general secretary of PSL, Chisinau, May 2007.
- Interview with Malkhaz Matsaberidze, TSU, Tbilisi, August 2006.
- Interview with George Mosidze, International Secretary, AMA, Tbilisi, August 2007.
- Interview with Ghia Nodia, CIPDD, Tbilisi, August 2006.
- Interview with Ivan Popescu, MP, Party of Regions, Kiev, July 2007.