

THE PARLIAMENTARY ACTIVITY OF ROMANIAN OPPOSITION PARTIES: THE COOPERATIVE OPPOSITION: A POST-COMMUNIST PHENOMENON?

IRINA IONESCU

MA Candidate European Studies and European Union Law, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Bucharest.

MA Comparative Politics, Faculty of Political Science, University of Bucharest.

ionescu_irina2003@yahoo.com

Abstract

This paper is based on research on the parliamentary activity of Romanian opposition parties between 1990 and 2004. It analyzes the vote for organic laws, the vote for the investiture and reshuffle of cabinets, votes of confidence, the vote for simple and censure motions, and the participation at their initiation – using the minutes of the parliamentary debates in plenary sessions as a main source. Its objective is to identify a series of possible similarities and dissimilarities between the parliamentary activity of post-communist and western opposition parties, looking especially at the “cooperative opposition” phenomenon.

Starting from a Romanian case study and using a series of research on both post-communist and western systems, the analysis investigates the way the theoretical framework changes progressively from “transition & consolidation” studies to Western-based paradigms, even if the phenomenon analyzed remains almost unchanged. It is the interplay between two approaches that can simultaneously explain the same phenomenon - studied during fourteen years, which raises so many questions about the thick line named “end of transition” - on a topic that is so rarely investigated: the parliamentary activity of political parties.

Introduction

The starting point of this paper is research on the parliamentary activity of Romanian opposition parties between 1990 and 2004 - a good starting point for an analysis of the similarities and differences between parliamentary activity of opposition parties in both post-communist and western political systems. It is a comparison between the parliamentary activity of post-communist and western opposition parties, looking especially at the “cooperative opposition” phenomenon and an attempt to provide some arguments in order to demonstrate the following statement: similarities are far more frequent than differences and it is difficult to sustain the existence of a special model for the post-communist systems.

The purpose of this analysis is to investigate the way in which the phenomenon may be analyzed in the post-communist context, but with the tools provided by the research on western political systems and with a close look at western political developments (after the Second World War).

The hypothesis is that the major part of cooperative behavior of post-communist parties (in legislative assemblies) can be explained using the theories designed for consolidated (democratic) political systems. The usefulness of a special theoretical framework based on post-communist realities is rather small. During the first years after 1989, the lack of discipline of political actors made the “cooperative opposition” phenomenon rather predictable. After a certain number of years, parties consolidate their positions and acquire better abilities to participate in the governmental process. But as they approach the western paradigm, their actions should be judged accordingly. This also includes taking into consideration the “cooperative opposition” phenomenon, which remains present, although it might be based on different reasons and explanations.

There is a widely acknowledged scarcity of studies on the parliamentary activity of opposition parties, in both post-communist and western systems. For that reason, there are also very few explanations available to analyze the issue of the “cooperative opposition”. The existing approaches and explanations seem to emphasize a certain convergence between the post-communist and western experiences, but it is not easy to rule out from the start the possibility of a post-communist based model of behavior.

It must be emphasized that the analysis is not intended to prove or verify to what extent the “cooperative opposition” phenomenon is present in East-Central Europe because of the lack of relevant data.

The paper is divided into three parts: after a brief presentation of the research on the Romanian case, the second part enumerates a series of possible approaches to this phenomenon starting from the western experience and investigates whether the “cooperative opposition” is a characteristic applicable only to the parliamentary activity in post-communist systems, while the third part closes the paper with a few concluding remarks.

1. Parliamentary Activity of Romanian Opposition Parties: 1990-2004

The research on the Romanian case addresses the following *question*: to what extent parliamentary activity of the political parties reflects the dividing line between “parliamentary majority” and “opposition”, as it is defined by the alliances that shape the

composition of the cabinet and its parliamentary support. The research has two main *objectives*: the identification of the parties that actually belonged to the “opposition” camp during the whole post-communist period, and the analysis of this partisan structure of the “opposition” camp as compared to that of the whole party system. The term “opposition” is understood here as follows: parties that do not belong to the cabinet or to the parliamentary majority that was created in order to (explicitly) sustain the cabinet.

The *object* of analysis is the parliamentary activity of political parties that belonged to the “opposition” camp elected in all Romanian post-communist legislatures (1990-1992, 1992-1996, 1996-2000, 2000-2004). The types of parliamentary activity that were taken into consideration in order to answer the research question were the vote for organic laws¹, the vote for the investiture and reshuffling of cabinets, the vote of confidence, the vote for the simple and censure motions, and the participation at their initiation. The main *sources* used were the minutes of the parliamentary debates in plenary sessions, published in the *Official Journal of Romania*. From a *methodological* point of view, the main strategy was to identify the positions adopted by the political groups during debates in plenary sessions - be it by vote or through the speeches given - by studying the text of the minutes. This served the first objective of the research. In order to analyze the partisan structure of the “opposition” camp as compared to that of the whole party system, the positions adopted during parliamentary sessions were compared to the public positions expressed by parties concerning their alliance policy and their attitude towards the government or towards the rest of the parties.

A very brief version of the research results can be presented as follows. The vote for *organic laws* offers the strongest proof of the support given by the opposition parties to the cabinet and to the governmental policies. Only 35.5% of all the important laws did not receive the support of the opposition. During the first years, the support given by the opposition was rather weak, but it strengthened progressively over the years in spite of an increasingly aggressive rhetoric used by those parties against the government. Since the second legislature, only two years break the rule: in 1997 and 2004 the majority of important organic laws were not supported by the opposition camp. It should be mentioned that the support given by the opposition was not necessary for the adoption of these laws, except for very few cases.

¹ A selection was made, according to the policy domain of each law, in order to identify the most relevant organic laws – which could have represented a crucial point in government-opposition relations.

On the other hand, the analysis of the *motions* (initiation and support) shows the highest degree of coherence in the opposition parties’ behavior in relation to their position (outside the government) and public statements. Nevertheless, there are three types of strange behavior: parties that belong to the cabinet initiate motions against it; parties that belong to the cabinet or to the parliamentary majority sustain motions initiated against the government, and; the same party votes differently for the same motion from one chamber to another. The frequency of such cases is higher during the first two legislatures, but these exceptions disappear slowly towards the fourth one. It should also be mentioned that the unity of the opposition camp is remarkably strong over the years. Since 1992, with only very few exceptions, all the opposition parties sustained all the motions that were initiated, irrespective of the topic under debate or the political identity of the authors.

Five out of seven cases of *cabinet investiture* show significant support given by the opposition parties to the government through voting or public statements. However, it is rather surprising to see that immediately after an aggressive electoral campaign, some parties offer their support to the new government. The opposition parties have been equally willing to give a *vote of confidence* to many cabinets, since they initiated only four censure motions in response to nine such requests.

As a result, the most straightforward answer that can be given to the research question is: the parliamentary activity of the political parties only moderately reflects the dividing line between “parliamentary majority” and “opposition”, as it is defined by the alliances that shape the composition of the cabinet and its parliamentary support. There is clear and frequent support given by parties that do not belong to the parliamentary majority to the cabinet and to its policies. The dividing line between the parliamentary majority and the rest of the parties was crossed from both sides, but in most of the cases, the opposition parties were those who crossed it. This kind of behavior frequently contradicts the public discourse of the opposition parties and sometimes even the position adopted during the debates before voting. Nevertheless, the data gathered do not offer enough arguments to completely change the image of the “parliamentary majority” and “opposition” camps as they were publicly perceived during the whole period (1990-2004), or to explicitly nominate a series of parties that have constantly failed to follow the dividing line between the two camps.

Starting from the conclusions of the research on the Romanian case, a series of questions may be raised. Is this a situation that characterizes only the Romanian case? Or, is it applicable to the whole post-

communist area? Is it a trait of under-developed democracies (transition democracies, poorly consolidated democracies, etc) or is it common to all political systems based on the “power versus opposition” game?

An equally straightforward answer would be that many of the conclusions of research on parliamentary activity in both post-communist and western systems were confirmed by the results of the research on the Romanian case.

However, this answer does not really simplify the problem, since there are very few studies on this topic and, most of the time, the explanations rely on researches that only briefly examines the parliamentary activity of the opposition. Furthermore, the explanations are based on hypotheses that ignore or include (sometimes simultaneously) the variable of political immaturity due to the post-communist transition. In the absence of a solid theory, the validity of any assessment is questionable to a certain extent. However, there is a series of explanations that are worthy of attention.

2. The “Cooperative Opposition”: Several Explanations

a. The Logic of The Multiparty System: Consolidated Democracies vs. Post-Communist Systems

Almost all the explanations that were offered over the years as a result of different approaches can be synthesized as follows: *the cooperative behavior of the opposition is a simple consequence of internal logic and the dynamics of a multiparty system – taking into account, simultaneously, its strong points and weak points, as well as the opportunities and the threats present.* Several paradigms that have contributed to such a conclusion can be mentioned.

One of the possible approaches of the “cooperative opposition” phenomenon may start from the analysis made by Maurizio Cotta and Jean Blondel² who have dedicated an entire book to the relation between governments and supporting parties. Their conceptual and methodological framework helps clarifying the relation between power and opposition on the parliamentary scene. They emphasize the fact that it is almost impossible to draw a clear dividing line between supporting and non-supporting parties. It is possible only in the British type of party system, a very rare situation. Therefore, in order to avoid any misunderstandings, they propose to divide

parliamentary parties into three categories: supporting parties that have representatives in the cabinet, supporting parties that do not have representatives in the cabinet, and non-supporting parties. These categories are useful for studying the parliamentary activity of political parties and especially the behavior of the opposition. They offer a starting point for defining the “opposition” camp, although a definition that contains serious deficiencies because it offers no criteria for taking into account the actual behavior of parties. Furthermore, the authors emphasize that the higher the numbers of parties, the weaker the support for the government, which was highly confirmed by the Romanian case (and not only).

When correlating the two main statements made by Cotta and Blondel with the results from the Romanian case-study, we can identify one of the most important and useful definitions of the opposition in multiparty systems: the sum of all the (op)positions assumed by parliamentary parties during a certain period of time, irrespective of their status (parliamentary majority vs. opposition). In fact, this western system-based statement is the most appropriate way to describe and to synthesize the conclusions of research on the post-communist/Romanian cases.

Another study written by Kaare Strom³ addresses the same issue from another perspective, namely divided and minority governments. One of the most important observations from this book also helps to explain parliamentary behavior of both western and post-communist parties. It also prevents us from considering the “cooperative opposition” like some kind of bizarre behavior or relegating it directly into the unconsolidated democracy paradigm. Strom considers that the study of coalitions of political parties operates with two false assumptions. First, “the legislative coalitions that assure the viability and the effectiveness of the government are identical” and “the parliamentary majority [created by those coalitions] has the same political composition as the cabinet”. This approach is also very useful for understanding the apparently “deviant” behavior of the “cooperative opposition”.

As in the previous case, it is also confirmed by the Romanian case. The best period for illustrating the validity of Storm’s statements is the second legislature, where the parliamentary majority experienced nine types of configurations during thirteen successive stages. In spite of this volatility and seven government reshuffles, the minority government (made out of one to five parties) resisted throughout its

² Maurizio Cotta, Jean Blondel, eds., *Party and Government: An Inquiry into the Relationship between Governments and Supporting Parties in Liberal Democracies*, (London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1996).

³ Kaare Strom, *Minority Government and Majority Rule*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

whole term. In order to eliminate any doubt, the behavior of the opposition parties was rather coherent during the whole period. In spite of a high volatility in the structure of the opposition camp (due to the different formulas of the parliamentary majority), the level of cooperative behavior was not significantly different from other legislatures.

As can be seen, the type of party system is one of the most important factors that influences the strategies of the opposition. The most challenging situation is considered to be the multiparty system. The complex features of a heterogeneous political setting facilitate an apparently “deviant” behavior, lack of discipline within coalitions, and bizarre alliances at the parliamentary level. Of course, when all the post-communist problems of parties, party systems and institutions are added to the multiparty setting, instability is almost inevitable and it may become almost impossible to define the composition and explain the behavior of the “opposition” camp.

In the sixties, special attention was already given to studying the influence of the type of party system on the opposition’s features and on its strategies. Gordon Smith⁴ and Peter Pulzer⁵ stress that there is a serious bias in many studies of this kind because the British bipartisan model strongly influences the analysis and it has a negative impact on the study of multiparty systems.

Maurice Duverger⁶ also emphasizes the problems that the study of opposition encounters in multiparty settings. The very definition of the opposition is challenging because the dividing lines between the parliamentary majority and the rest of the parties are difficult to trace. Actually, Duverger reiterates that parliamentary support given by opposition parties to the government in order to pass legislation tends to erase all distinction between parliamentary majority and opposition. Taking into account the identity problems and volatility of inter-partisan relations, Duverger’s statement is more than accurate in the post-communist systems. Moreover, for Maurice Duverger, the multiparty system generates a violent but confused and inefficient opposition, which describes very well the Romanian case during the whole fourteen years and many other post-communist cases, at least during the first years of transition.

Duverger also draws attention to the fact that in multiparty systems the fall of the cabinet does not offer a clear opportunity to be a part of the new government to the rest of the parties. It should also be taken into account that the greater the number of possible alliances, the greater the number of possible strategies and styles of the opposition and the more complex its political behavior. Moreover, it is perfectly possible that the interests of a party are better accomplished by staying in opposition than by choosing to be part of the cabinet. This is why it is not at all necessary nor obvious that the same parties support the government from one vote to another,⁷ a thesis that is largely confirmed by the Romanian case and by other post-communist systems. Such statements illustrate very well the complexity of relationships between parties in the governmental process.

In order to assess the behavior of the opposition parties, it should also be remembered that the composition of the “opposition camp” is not the result of political agreements, as is the case of the parliamentary majority⁸. Moreover, there may be deep cleavages between the opposition parties and the government may use those cleavages in order to ensure its viability by proposing policies that maintain the divided nature of the “opposition” camp. This situation may have at least two consequences. First, it is possible that the existing coalition government represents the best political structure, preferred by all the actors in the system. Because of the dividing lines and the conflicting relationship between them, no other alternative may be viable. Second, the government may itself generate the premise of a “cooperative opposition” and take advantage of the selective support of parts of the opposition, depending on the policies it proposes.

It should be emphasized that these kinds of assumptions can also be found in most of the research based on game theory and rational choice, a very valuable resource for understanding parliamentary behavior of political parties⁹. In this case, their usefulness lies mostly in the clear assumptions that are used by all the research with respect to the different goals of the parties and the way they pursue them. This way, the parliamentary behavior of the opposition parties can be analyzed more easily.

⁴ Gordon Smith, “Party and Protest: the Two Forces of Opposition in Western Europe”, in *Opposition in Western Europe*, ed. Eva Kolinski (London: Policy Studies Institute, 1987), 49-71.

⁵ Peter Pulzer, “Is There Life After Dahl?”, in *Opposition in Western Europe*, ed. Eva Kolinski (London: Policy Studies Institute, 1987), 11-29.

⁶ Maurice Duverger, “Les partis et la fonction d’opposition”, in *Les partis politiques*, Maurice Duverger, (Paris : Armand Colin, 1976), 538-549.

⁷ Michael J. Laver, Norman Schofield, *Multiparty Government. The Politics of Coalition in Europe*, (New York : Oxford University Press, 1992), 67.

⁸ M. Duverger, “Les partis et la fonction d’opposition”.

⁹ Michael J. Laver, Ian Budge, *Party Policy and Government Coalitions*, (London : Macmillan Press Ltd., 1992).; Michael J. Laver, Norman Schofield, *Multiparty Government.*; Ian Budge, Hans Keman, *Parties and Democracy: Coalition Formation and Government Functioning in Twenty States*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990).

After this brief review of the literature on party behavior and government-opposition relations, the most important aspect to constantly remember is that the post-communist party systems are multiparty systems (in the beginning, in an extremely polarized form). Therefore, all the observations and assumptions made for the western systems become far more complicated in the post-communist context because of the extreme volatility of inter-partisan relations. Nevertheless, the accuracy of the above-mentioned observations is verified and reinforced within the post-communist context.

However this review of the literature shows very clearly that there is no special need for a theoretical framework on the post-communist parties and the problems they experienced during the period of post-communist transition/consolidation in order to understand or explain the situation in the Romanian parliament. The theoretical framework provided by research on western political systems is adequate and satisfactory. At the same time, it would be incorrect to completely ignore the “post-communist” variable. The fact that literature on consolidated democracies demonstrates that this variable has only a limited usefulness does not make it irrelevant for the analysis.

b. The “Cooperative Opposition” in Consolidated Democracies: a Well-known Phenomenon

There is a second useful argument for proving that the cooperative opposition is not *only* a post-communist phenomenon and that it can be analyzed and explained very well and very easily starting from the literature on consolidated democracies. *The cooperative behavior of the opposition was first analyzed almost fifty years ago in western political systems and it became considered, for many decades now, a rather ordinary phenomenon.*

At first sight, it seems that it should have solved the problem from the beginning, without any more explanations. The problem with this argument is that it has only an illustrative power/usefulness; it is based only on empirical observation and does not really explain the behavior of political parties in parliament. Meanwhile, the first approach, the one that has just been presented above, has a strong explanatory power.

The observations made by Ghita Ionescu and Isabel de Madariaga¹⁰ in the sixties concerning the behavior of the opposition and opposition parties have been largely confirmed by the results of the research on the Romanian case. The authors strongly emphasize

the increasing preference that the opposition had for consensus and the continuous strengthening of executive powers at the expense of the legislative branch. Furthermore, the authors noticed an increasing degree of technical elements that appeared during parliamentary workings and debates – due to the complex nature of issues governments had to deal with – that limited the ideological depth of parliamentary confrontations. This is also visible in the Romanian case, as well as the fact that the vote in plenary session is more and more frequently a “simple formality”¹¹. According to the two authors, the explanation of such changes lies in the highly complex mechanisms of parliamentary decision-making, which progressively replace simple political debates. Consequently, parliamentary work acquires a technical, utilitarian, pragmatic, and consensual character, which influences the behavior of political parties and generates cooperative behavior in the opposition camp.

Thirty years after this study was published, Klaus von Beyme¹² also reconfirmed that “cooperative opposition” was a rather widespread phenomenon in western political systems. His observations are linked to an explanation relying on another type of argument: the party-in-parliament is more moderate than the rest of the parties. This is also the argument used by many researchers to justify their refusal to study the policy positions of political parties based only on their parliamentary activity. Such an approach might explain another widely spread practice – the difference between the aggressive rhetoric used by politicians outside the parliamentary scene and their actions during committee and plenary workings (of a cooperative nature). The discrepancy between behavior and rhetoric is easily noticeable in the Romanian case throughout the whole period and is extremely puzzling at first sight.

The post-communist period and the studies dedicated to political parties and parliaments strongly revive the “cooperative opposition” topic, within a totally different paradigm: the discipline issue. For example, the study of parliamentary party groups in Europe coordinated by Knut Heidar and Ruud Koole¹³ often emphasizes the existence of alliances between the parliamentary groups of the government and the opposition in the post-communist area. Actually, during the first years of transition, it happened rather frequently that the opposition parties voted with the government coalitions in order to compensate and remedy the lack of discipline of the parties in power. Some laws were adopted due to the alliances between

¹¹ Ionescu and Madariaga, 101.

¹² Klaus von Beyme, “Parliamentary Oppositions in Europe”, in *Opposition in Western Europe*, ed. Eva Kolinski (London: Policy Studies Institute, 1987), 30-48.

¹³ Knut Heidar, Ruud Koole, eds., *Parliamentary Party Groups in European Democracies*, (London: Routledge, 2000).

¹⁰ Ghita Ionescu, Isabel de Madariaga, *Opozitia*, (București: Humanitas, 1992).

parts of the opposition and parts of the coalition in power in spite of the overt disagreement expressed by the representatives of the executive. Furthermore, it was observed that the party groups of the opposition were less disciplined than those in power (because they did not bear the constraints of the exercise of power), which significantly contributed to such cooperative behavior. However, the two authors stress that those cases cannot be considered a real “pattern” across the post-communist area. Furthermore, they emphasize that even if the frequency of such cases could have been seen as problematic during the first years, it decreased over time.

Nevertheless, the “discipline issue” is a common approach in all post-communist studies dedicated to the parliamentary activities of political parties. The explanation lies first in the lack of maturity of political actors in East-Central Europe during the first years after the fall of communism and in a well-known theory regarding institutional effectiveness stating that the lack of discipline of parliamentary groups is an important obstacle against an efficient governmental process.

Naturally, such observations should be correlated with the entire literature on the post-communist political parties - identity problems, lack of programmatic appeals and competition, lack of experience in governmental issues and practices, extreme volatility in policy positions, etc¹⁴. Since the beginning, all researchers have expressed serious concerns about the political and governmental skills of the new political actors; a severe and pervasive lack of discipline and strange alliances have been expected. Within this paradigm, the parliamentary behavior of the opposition parties, namely the “cooperative opposition” phenomenon, is rather predictable and understandable. However, after a certain number of years, parties become more and more accustomed to institutional and democratic constraints. They become able to follow the discipline rules within the party organization, the party group, the parliamentary institution, etc. Apparently, the assessment of cooperative behavior should be changed, but it is not entirely possible. It is true that parties evolve towards more consolidated positions and acquire better abilities to participate in the governmental process, but as they approach the western paradigm their actions should be judged accordingly. This also includes taking into consideration the “cooperative opposition”

¹⁴ See for example, Paul G. Lewis, ed., *Party Development and Democratic Change in Post-communist Europe. The first decade*, (London: Frank Cass, 2001); Stephen White, Judy Batt, Paul G. Lewis, eds., *Developments in Central and East European Politics 3*, (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2003) ; Jean Michel de Waele, ed., *Partis politiques et démocratie en Europe Centrale et Orientale*, (Bruxelles : Editions de l'Université de Bruxelles, 2002), etc.

phenomenon, which remains present although it might be based on different reasons and explanations.

Conclusion

When a “cooperative opposition” phenomenon appears in a political system characterized by fragile and immature parties, a weak parliament, and a difficult process of democratic learning, two questions may be raised: what is the real strength and relevance of the opposition within that system? And does this cooperative behavior reveal a structural weakness instead of a simple parliamentary strategy?

It is difficult to answer such questions because any action of the opposition may be judged either using the “(ongoing) transition” approach or the “convergence (with the western model)” approach. For example, concerning the strength and the relevance of the opposition on the parliamentary scene, Klaus von Beyme¹⁵ emphasized that the “zeal” of the opposition is shaped by its ability to influence the government’s policy positions and by the opportunities to do it. Looking at the Romanian case and the most important weapon of the opposition - the motion - it can be seen that the number of motions increased with every legislature even if the amount of those that were approved decreased sharply¹⁶. In the same time, the quality of the opposition’s activity and its proposals is problematic and far from being substantial. Nevertheless, it must be emphasized that the overall strength of the opposition has increased continuously, in spite of all the problems it had faced – an observation equally true for all post-communist countries. David Olson and Philip Norton¹⁷ stress that during the first years of transition, the opposition was almost ignored during an aggressive race to adopt and implement all the policies necessary for reform. Nowadays, its status within the system has consolidated considerably and its visibility has increased. In spite of deep crosscutting cleavages within the opposition camp, the coherence of its actions seems to be improving constantly and its relevance increases.

In the same time, any assessment of the strength and relevance of the opposition on the parliamentary scene and within the general governmental process should pay attention to the way the whole parliamentary functions and its status in the system. During the first years, the activity of all the parties was closely linked to the parliamentary institution, increasing its visibility and its importance within the

¹⁵ Klaus von Beyme, “Parliamentary Oppositions in Europe”

¹⁶ In Romania, since 1996 no motion has won enough votes to be accepted.

¹⁷ David M. Olson, P. Norton, *The New Parliaments of Central and Eastern Europe*, (London: Frank Cass, 1996).

system¹⁸. The “centrality”¹⁹ thesis is widely applied. However, the status of East-Central European parliaments has changed considerably over the years and many of them have turned into rather weak actors, blamed for inefficiency or obedient attitude towards governments²⁰. Their weakness combines with certain weaknesses of the party systems and leads to a highly problematic status for the opposition, which receives the same criticisms: inefficiency, inconsistency, lack of coherence, obedience, etc. The Romanian parliament is a very good example of this kind, having been repeatedly accused of “subordination”²¹ towards the government. In this situation, the strength of the “opposition” camp is seriously challenged by far more serious problems than its internal weak points.

All in all, there is no “post-communist version” of parliamentary activity of the opposition. This camp and its actors illustrate the features of the post-communist transition and the post-communist systems, but there are enough proofs to identify convergence points and to plead for the “convergence” approach. Even cooperative behavior can be explained using well-known theories about political parties in general without a constant need to bring up “post-communist” weaknesses. This does not rule out the usefulness of a “post-communist” or “transition-based” paradigm, but changes its weight. The analytical framework is structured around western-based theories and receives only “post-communist” nuances.

Bibliography

- Bocancea, Cristian, *La Roumanie du communisme au post-communisme*, Paris : L’Harmattan, 1998.
- Close, David, ed., *Legislatures and The New Democracies in Latin America*, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1995.
- Cotta, Maurizio, Ulrike Liebert eds., *Parliament and Democratic Consolidation in Southern Europe: Greece, Italy, Portugal, Spain and Turkey*, London: Pinter Publishers, 1990.
- Cotta, Maurizio, “Building Party Systems After The Dictatorship” in *Democratization In Eastern Europe: Domestic And International Perspective*, ed. Geoffrey

Pridham and Tatu Vanharen, (London: Routledge, 1994). 99-127.

- Dahl, Robert A., *Poliarhiile : participare si opozitie*, Iași: Institutul european, 2000.
- Elgie, Robert, ed., *Divided Government in Comparative Perspective*, Dublin: Dublin City University, 2001.
- Flinterman, Cees, Aalt Willem Heringa, Lisa Waddington, *The Evolving Roles of Parliaments in Europe*, Maklu Uitgevers Antwerpen, 1994.
- Kitschelt, Herbert, “Formation Of Party Cleavages In Post-Communist Democracies. Theoretical Propositions”, *Party politics*, 1 (1995) : 447-472.
- Kostecky, Tomas, *Political Parties after Communism. Developments in East Central Europe*. W. Wilson International Center for Scholars, 2002.
- Kopecky, Petr, *Parliaments in the Czech and Slovak Republics: Party Competition and Parliamentary Institutionalization*. Hampshire :Ashgate, 2001.
- Kopecky, Petr, “Party Structure And Organizational Development In Post-Communist Poland”, *Journal Of Communist Studies And Transition Politics*, 17, (Jun. 2001): 94-130.
- Mair, Peter, *Party system change. Approaches and interpretations*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997.
- Mair, Peter, ed., *The West European Party System*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990.
- Mainwaring, Scott, Timothy R. Scully, “Introduction” in *Building Democratic Institutions. Party Systems In Latin America*, ed. Scott Mainwaring and Timothy R. Scully, Stanford University Press, 1995.
- Norton, Philip, ed., *Parliaments and Governments in Western Europe*. London: Frank Cass, 1998.
- Olson, David M., “Party Formation and Consolidation in the New Democracies of Central Europe”, *Political Studies*, XLVI (1998): 432-464.
- Soare, Sorina, “La construction du système partisan roumain entre sorties et entrées imprévues”, *Studia Politica. Romanian Political Science Review*, IV(2004): 77-104.

¹⁸ Jean Michel de Waele, *L’émergence des partis politiques en Europe Centrale*, (Bruxelles: Editions de l’Université de Bruxelles, 1999) ; David M. Olson ,“Party Formation And Consolidation In The New Democracies Of Central Europe”, *Political Studies*, vol. XLVI, 1998, 432-464; Klaus von Beyme, *Transition to Democracy in Eastern Europe*, (New York: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1996), 122-147.

¹⁹ Attila Agh, “The Parliamentarisation Of The East Central European Parties”, in Susan Bowler, David M. Farrell, Richard S. Katz, *Party Discipline And Parliamentary Government*, (Ohio: Ohio State University Press, 1999), 180.

²⁰ Jean Michel de Waele, Sorina Soare, Petia Gueorguieva, “Parliaments of East Central Europe: Bulgaria, Poland , Romania”, *Studia Politica. Romanian Political Science Review*, vol. III, no.1, 2003, 141-161.

²¹ Jean Michel de Waele, Sorina Soare, Petia Gueorguieva, “Parliaments of East Central Europe”, 158.