

WORK IN PROGRESS SECTION

DETERMINANTS OF PARTY UNITY IN CENTRAL EASTERN EUROPE

GABRIELA BORZ

PhD candidate, Central European University,

Budapest

MA in Political Science, Central European University,

Budapest

pphbog02@phd.ceu.hu

Abstract

This paper concentrates on party behavioral unity in Central Eastern Europe and seeks to establish its major determinants. An indirect model of party unity is proposed, which contends that there is a trade off between attitudinal (ideological unity) factors and party centralization in order to achieve party behavioral unity. The analysis is conducted at three levels – the individual, party, and country level (in Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Poland) after 1993. The results show that the level of behavioral unity varies according to the salience of the issues at stake. The electoral mechanisms did not seem to have the expected impact on party behavioral unity and this questions the relevance of existing theories linking party unity and electoral systems. Among the internal party factors like attitudinal homogeneity, party centralization, incumbency status, and party ideology, the only one with a clear influence on the result of votes on the floor is party centralization. Therefore, decreasing the level of internal party democracy helps to increase the level of external democracy of the system.

1. Introduction

Do parties behave like united entities because they have a high level of party programmatic cohesion or because of the systemic or internal constraints that they encounter? Is attitudinal homogeneity a prerequisite for behavioral unity or is it the case that some of the systemic factors directly affect party unity on the floor? Following these questions, the paper proposes an indirect model of party behavioral unity, with attitudinal homogeneity and party centralization playing a role as intervening factors.

The paper differentiates between behavioral and attitudinal unity and focuses mainly on the behavioral aspect of party unity. The aim is to find the major factors that lead to party unity or those that explain its different levels, where that is the case. The analysis focuses on parliamentary political parties after 1993 in Central Eastern Europe, seeking to identify patterns of achieving party behavioral unity across this region.

The aim is to see if behavioral unity goes hand in hand with attitudinal unity and how systemic factors like the electoral system and party system affect behavioral unity and attitudinal homogeneity. The paper takes into account other party level factors like the perceptions of the members of parliament (MPs) about representation and the level of party centralization.

The study is conducted at three levels. At the first level, the unit of analysis is the individual MPs and at the second level, the unit of analysis is the parliamentary parties from four countries: Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia. The direct and indirect determinants of behavioral unity will be identified from these variables together with the implications that arise from this on the political representation process in the region.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1 The concept of party unity

The literature related to party unity refers to political parties and party systems, party decline issues, party organization, electoral systems, and coalition governments either by stating the importance of party unity or the implications of all the specified factors on it. No extensive comparative study has been conducted on the topic, with the exception of one tentative study¹, which remained at the stage of a working paper. More recent studies² concentrated on Central Eastern Europe or Latin America, but are only related to party programmatic cohesion (unity in terms of party policy positions).

There is a conceptual overlap and confusion between terms like *party unity*, *party cohesion* and *party discipline*. In the US literature it is usually the case that the concept of party unity is used interchangeably with that of party discipline and party cohesion, with all three terms taken to mean exactly the same thing: “the average percent of partisans who voted with the party line, on party votes during a given

¹ Ergun Ozbudun, *Party Cohesion in Western Democracies: A Causal Analysis*. (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1970).

² For an overview see Herbert Kitschelt et al., *Postcommunist Party Systems. Competition, Representation and Inter-Party Cooperation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Herbert Kitschelt, “Party Competition in Latin America and Post-Communist Eastern Europe. Divergence of Patterns, Similarity of Explanatory Variables”. Paper prepared for delivery at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Philadelphia, August 27-31, 2003; Herbert Kitschelt and Regina Smyth, “Programmatic Party Cohesion in Emerging Post-Communist Democracies. Russia in Comparative Context?” *Comparative Political Studies* 35 (10): 2002: 1228-1256.

session”³ or as a party unity vote “in which a majority of the voting Democrats oppose a majority of voting Republicans”⁴.

However, some literature draws a distinction between party cohesion and party discipline. For example, Bowler, Farrell and Katz⁵ speak about party cohesion and party discipline as being different things. The identifiable trend among definitions is that cohesion has been used lately in relation to the preferences of party members/representatives, while discipline has been used to denote uniformity of voting inside the legislature. Discipline is also referred to as the sticks and carrots used in order to maintain the unified vote inside the parliament⁶ but besides this distinction, both concepts are still often used interchangeably with party unity.

In a similar vein with other researchers, Heller and Mershon⁷ define a party as *cohesive* when it is “made up of like-minded people who vote together because they share preferences”, and imply that uniformity in voting behavior and in preferences should coexist. On the same line, Janda,⁸ who used the concept of party coherence as equivalent with party cohesion in the ICPP project (International Comparative Political Parties), defines it as “the degree of congruence in the attitudes and behavior of party members.” The problem with these studies is that they use roll-call votes as measurements for the concept, which are mainly a behavioral expression and do not necessarily imply an attitudinal similarity. Furthermore, no evidence has been advanced to show that behavior and attitudes are always correlated, or that attitudes are a prerequisite for behavior. Kitschelt and Smith⁹ offer another approach to cohesion that refers more to preferences and attitudes when they

define *party programmatic cohesion* as the “general agreement within a party organization on specific issue positions”.

Recent studies briefly mention that both party discipline and party cohesion are observations of party unity¹⁰ or that both discipline and cohesion are “overlapping routes to party unity”¹¹ without too much clarification about the relationship that exists between the concepts or in-depth research to bring more theoretical and empirical justification to their statements.

In order to avoid any confusion, conceptual overlap, or measurement overlap, the present paper clearly differentiates between *unity in terms of attitudes*, which materializes into party cohesion as far as the policy preferences of the party representatives are concerned, and *unity in terms of behavior*, which includes party behavior inside the legislature and party factionalism.

2.2 Representation and party unity

Party unity, either in terms of attitude or in terms of behavior, is essential for *political representation*. Voters’ choice between the parties and the election of their representatives is very much related to party unity. The parties should be united [...] because otherwise they may prove incapable of translating their mandates into effective action and indeed because without cohesion [unity] the very concept of an electoral mandate is ambiguous. Only if the party acts together as a team, can the voters reward or punish it at the polls as a team. Only if each candidate advocates the same policies and can be trusted to act with his copartisans to carry them out ... unless this condition is met, an election cannot truly be said to have given anyone a mandate at all¹².

There is agreement between scholars that modern democracy is representative democracy, but when it comes to representation, what one may ask is: who is to be represented, who is going to represent, and what is the representative going to do in order to represent the represented?¹³ For every question there can be several answers: the represented can be all the citizens

³ Shannon Jenkins, “Party Voting in US State Legislature”. Paper presented at the 2001 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, (San Francisco, CA, August 30-September 2, 2001) 9.

⁴ David C.W. Parker, “*The Price of Party Unity: The Financial Power of America’s Political Parties*”. Paper presented at the 2001 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association. (San Francisco, CA August 30-September 2).

⁵ Shaun Bowler, David M. Farrell and Richard Katz, eds., *Party Discipline and Parliamentary Government* (Columbus Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1999).

⁶ Lukáš Linek and Petra Rakušanová. “Parties in the Parliament. Why, When and How do Parties Act in Unity? Parliamentary Party Groups in the Chamber of Deputies in the years 1998-2002.” *Sociological Papers*. Prague: Institute of Sociology, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic. 2 (9): 2002).

⁷ William B. Heller and Carol Mershon “Fluidity in Parliamentary Parties: Exits and Entries in Parliamentary Groups in the Italian Chamber of Deputies, 1996-2000.” Paper delivered at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, (Washington, DC, August 30-September 3, 2000) 3.

⁸ Kenneth Janda, *Political parties. A Cross-National Survey* (New York: Free Press, 1980), 118.

⁹ Kitschelt and Smith, “Programmatic Party Cohesion”, 1229.

¹⁰ Heller and Mershon, “Fluidity in Parliamentary Parties”, 3.

¹¹ Jonathan Malloy, “High Discipline, Low Cohesion? The Uncertain Patterns of Canadian Parliamentary Party Groups”. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, (Philadelphia, August 2003), 1.

¹² Richard S. Katz, *A Theory of Parties and Electoral Systems* (Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1980), 3.

¹³ Richard S. Katz, “Party in Democratic Theory,” in *Handbook of Party Politics*, ed. Richard S. Katz and William J. Crotty (London: Sage Publications, 2005), 42.

of a country, particular groups of citizens, voters for the party, individual citizens, or the party membership organization. The representative can be the parliament as a whole, the national party, the constituency party, or the individual MP. As for the actions of the representative, they can mirror the demographic characteristic, the distribution of opinions, they can do what the represented told them to do (delegate), or they can use their own judgment in order to advance their interests (trustee), or they can act as an ombudsman.

Representation at the individual level is more linked to the party or the MP for whom the citizens have been voting. The ballot structure plays an important role in this situation. In the case of closed lists, the link between the elected MP and the electorate in the constituency or the electorate overall is not as close as in the case of single member districts or open lists. Therefore, we can speak of different levels of representation. At the individual level, the MP is the trustee or the delegate to his voters, while at the national level political parties put representation in practice. In the latter case, it is the party rather than the individual MP that sets the link between the citizens and the state¹⁴.

While there is a long known debate about whether a representative acts as a delegate or a trustee, representative democracy theorists speak more about delegation¹⁵ and the role of the delegate to represent the citizens rather than a trusteeship role. Following from this, party unity appears as a necessity inside the political party in order to ensure the attainment of representation and in order to avoid the accountability punishment of not being re-elected. The present research will pursue only one chain of delegation, which is from the voters to their elected representatives, although the chains of delegation can continue up to the level of civil servants.

In the present paper I introduce an explanatory variable for party behavioral unity, which deals with the MPs' perceptions about political representation. Their behavior inside the party and in parliament may depend on their perception of whom they exactly represent - their direct voters, all the voters, the constituency party, specific social or interest groups, the national party, or the nation as a whole. This explanatory variable may be relevant to explaining the behavior of Central-East European legislators during the early 1990s, since the democratic game was still in

its early phase and the MPs were not familiarized with the rules of the game.

2.3 Systemic determinants of party unity

The literature related to party unity refers to macro and micro level explanations, depending on their specific arguments and level of analysis. The macro level (systemic) explanations mainly emphasize the role of state level factors in determining/influencing party unity. These theories highlight the role of the political system (either presidential or parliamentary), the type (structure) of state (federal or unitary), the type of electoral system (from single member district plurality to list proportional representation), and the nature of the party system (two-party, two and a half or multi-party systems).

Federalism is one of the factors that has usually been blamed for low cohesion in the American parties¹⁶ because of the decentralizing effect on the party system. On the same line, Epstein¹⁷ argued that "party organization tends to parallel governmental organization, particularly the governmental organization prevailing when parties originally developed". It seems that in a federal system, state parties count more than the local and regional parties in a unitary state. The federal form of state is usually perceived as the result of regional diversity and may further encourage diversity "by channeling the claims of local socio-economic interest groups. Thus, a local interest, provided that is strong enough to dominate the state government, may efficiently oppose adverse national policies"¹⁸. Maybe the presence of federalism has generated the lack of unity in US parties but it may not be the only and sufficient cause for disunity and certainly the US case is not enough to make generalizations, especially since recent cross-national studies¹⁹ have found a reverse relationship between federalism and party centralization.

A constitutional factor that has importance on party unity in the legislature is the relation between legislative and executive authorities. This structure might be either a parliamentary, presidential or a semi-presidential form of government. In the case of parliamentary systems, the parliamentary majority has the power to form and to change the cabinet. But in presidential systems, neither the parliament nor the

¹⁴ Petr Kopecký, "The Czech Republic: Entrenching Proportional Representation," in *Handbook of Electoral System Choice*, ed. Joseph M. Colomer (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 353.

¹⁵ Kaare Strøm, Wolfgang C. Müller and Tobjörn Bergman, *Delegation and Accountability in Parliamentary Democracies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 20-21.

¹⁶ Valdimer O. Key, *Politics, Parties and Pressure Groups* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1964), 334.

¹⁷ Leon D. Epstein, *Political Parties in Western Democracies* (New York: Praeger, 1967), 32.

¹⁸ Ozbudun, *Party Cohesion*, 355.

¹⁹ Alexander C. Tan, *Members, Organizations and Performance. An Empirical Analysis of the Impact of Party Membership Size* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), 44.

executive can put an end to the legal existence of the other, hence the executive remain in office even if it does not enjoy majority support in the legislature.

Parliamentary systems lead to party unity²⁰ “by making a great many roll-call questions of confidence in the government”. If certain members of the parliament (MPs) vote against their party in parliament, this means not only that they oppose their leaders on particular issues, but can also mean that they are “willing to see their party turned out of power and the other side put in to defeat the particular bill”²¹, especially when the government’s majority is small. This is one explanation for the fact that few parliamentarians choose to vote against their party in parliament under the conditions of a parliamentary state. In presidential systems, the legislators can vote against their party legislative program without any immediate negative consequences for the party.

The power of dissolution associated with the parliamentary system is seen as an effective instrument to strengthen party behavioral unity. This power may give the parliamentary leaders and the party executive a great control over the parliamentary party. Sartori²² argues that “[...] parliamentary democracy cannot perform – in any of its many varieties – unless it is served by *parliamentary fit* [emphasis in original] parties, that is to say, parties that have been socialized (by failure, duration, and appropriate incentives) into being relatively cohesive and/or disciplined bodies... [And] disciplined parties are a *necessary condition* for the ‘working of parliamentary systems’.

Sartori is not very specific in what party cohesion means and does not give any specific definition of party discipline either; he only specifies that party discipline is connected to parliamentary voting.

The type of party system that functions in a country has also been related to party unity. When considering the number of parties within the political system, the claims are contradictory. Loewenberg and Patterson²³ argue that multi-party systems produce smaller and more homogeneous parties with greater intra-party cohesion. But when dimensions other than the numerical criterion are considered, the arguments relating party unity to party system fragmentation are

reversed. In two-party parliamentary systems, party unity is expected to be high because the majority party has to maintain the government²⁴, but it is still not clear which of the two variables (two-party system or parliamentary system) has a bigger impact on party unity, or whether there is a joint effect of the two factors.

In extreme multiparty systems, bearing in mind Sartori’s typology of party systems²⁵, the incentives for behavioral party unity inside the legislature are weaker than in two-party or moderate multiparty systems. Because the parties situated in the center of the ideological spectrum may always be in the government, parliamentary representatives can afford to vote against the majority of their party. Even if this act signifies a reshuffle of the cabinet, it does not mean a loss of power or prestige for the center parties. In this way, the parliamentarians of the center parties can manifest their dissent on a particular issue. As in a two-party parliamentary system, a moderate multiparty system that has two blocs of parties or one major party and an opposing bloc of parties also creates incentive for party unity. It is the bipolar nature of the party system and the possibility of alternation in government that should generate high behavioral party unity, as in the case of the two-party system²⁶. The difference between the predictions is thus evident if in defining a party system, dimensions other than the numerical criterion are considered (such as polarization), or environmental factors are added (parliamentary/presidential system).

According to the theorists of electoral systems²⁷, the electoral formula, the district magnitude, and the ballot structure are related to party unity. Party list proportional representation (PR) is expected to generate more united parties than single member district systems (SMD) using plurality or majority, because in the latter case, the relationship with the constituency makes the MPs less attached to the party at the central level.

With proportional representation, a separate preference vote cast by electors choosing that party might determine the order in which candidates are

²⁴ See L.D. Epstein, *Political Parties in Western Democracies* (New York: Praeger, 1967) and Giovanni Sartori, *Comparative Constitutional Engineering*.

²⁵ Giovanni Sartori, “A Typology of Party Systems,” in *The West European Party System*, ed. Peter Mair (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990). 316-349.

²⁶ Ozbudun, *Party Cohesion*, 360.

²⁷ For an overview see Richard S. Katz, *Party Systems and Electoral Systems*; Rein Taagepera and Matthew S. Shugart, *Seats and Votes. The Effects and Determinants of Electoral Systems* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1989) and John M. Carey and Matthew Soberg Shugart, “Incentives to Cultivate a Personal Vote: a Rank Ordering of Electoral Formulas,” *Electoral Studies*. 14 (4: 1995): 417-439.

²⁰ Ozbudun, *Party Cohesion*, 355.

²¹ Austin Ranney, “Candidate selection and party cohesion in Britain and United States”. Paper presented at the 1965 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association. (Washington. D.C., 1965), 11.

²² Giovanni Sartori, *Comparative Constitutional Engineering. An Inquiry into Structures, Incentives, and Outcomes* (London: Macmillan, 1997), 94.

²³ G. Loewenberg and S. Patterson, *Comparing Legislature* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1979).

declared elected. Katz developed an extensive study regarding the influence of preferential voting on party unity and argued that “the pattern of cohesion or disunity exhibited by a party in parliament can be predicted from district magnitude, the possibility of intraparty choice and the distribution of resources in the country”²⁸. His predictions relate intraparty choice with intraparty competition, which in turn, will determine a candidate’s electoral fortunes and consequently candidates’ behavior in maintaining separate campaign organizations.

Katz’s expectations concerning party unity were that whenever the preferential vote is allowed, parliamentary parties will tend to be disunited. “In the case of small districts, this will be manifested in personalistic factionalization. In the case of large districts, the pattern of party factionalism or fractionalism will reflect the distribution of electorally mobilizable resources²⁹”. The empirical verification of these propositions in the case of U.S., British, Irish, and French parties led to the result that indeed, preferential voting and party disunity are positively associated. But Katz’s did not consider all the important parliamentary parties and his analysis took into account only the US Democrats, British Conservatives, Irish Fine Gael, and the French Communists.

On the same line with Katz, based on electoral rules, Carey and Shugart³⁰ developed a theoretical model in order to assess the relative value that each legislator assigns to personal or party reputation. In order to maintain party reputation, politicians should refrain from taking positions and actions that would contradict the party platform. If the electoral results depend on votes cast for individual candidates, then politicians need to evaluate between the value of personal and party reputation.

Among the factors that they considered to influence personal vote seeking is the lack of ballot control (the control that party leaders exercise over ballot rank in electoral lists), vote pooling (whether votes are pooled across entire parties or candidates), and types of votes (whether voters cast a single intraparty vote instead of multiple votes or a party-level vote). District magnitude, as Carey and Shugart³¹ contend, “affects the value of personal reputation in opposite manners, depending on the value of the ballot. In all systems, where there is intraparty competition, as M [district magnitude] grows, so does the value of personal reputation. Conversely, in systems where there is no intraparty competition, as M

grows, the value of personal reputation shrinks.” However their model, besides the fact that it has not been empirically tested, keeps constant the other systemic factors that may influence party unity, such as the state structure, the legislative-executive power relations, or the type of party system.

Another variable that is often not considered and which could affect the end result of voting on the floor are the parliamentary specific rules on the functioning of party parliamentary groups (PPGs). The rules can be expressed in the parliamentary rules or sometimes can even be stipulated in the party statutes. The more clear and strict these rules are, the more united the behavior of the MPs is expected to be.

2.4 Party level explanations for party unity

Micro (party) level explanations for party unity³² put emphasis on political party characteristics: party size, party age, party origin, and party centralization. These studies relate party traits to party unity but do not have a particular theory about party unity.

Concerning the size of the party, it has been argued that differences in party membership may explain differences in party behavior. A small organization has been perceived to favor internal cohesion. As Kirchheimer³³ maintains, it is in the party leaders’ interest to prevent internal conflicts by maintaining a small number of party members. But as Panebianco³⁴ shows, there are many examples such as the Italian Communist Party or the British Conservative Party that have both large membership and high unity. Therefore the question of the impact of party size on party unity remains open, especially given the actual trend of decreasing party membership³⁵. Apart from the party size in terms of membership, what is relevant for the purpose of the present research is the party size in the legislature or whether the party is in government or not.

³²For an overview see Janda, *Political Parties*, Kenneth Janda and S. King “Formalizing and Testing Duverger’s Theories on Political Parties,” *Comparative Political Studies*, 18 (2: 1985): 139-69. Pippa Norris, “Legislative Recruitment,” in *Comparing Democracies. Elections and Voting in Global Perspective*, ed. Lawrence LeDuc, Richard G. Niemi, Pippa Norris (London: Sage Publications, 1996). Hazan Reuven. “Candidate Selection” in *Comparing Democracies 2. New Challenges in the Study of Elections and Voting*, ed. Lawrence LeDuc, Richard G. Niemi, Pippa Norris (London: Sage Publications 2002).

³³Otto Kirchheimer, *Politics, Law and Social Change* (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1969), 250.

³⁴Angelo Panebianco, *Political Parties: Organization and Power* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 187.

³⁵Peter Mair and Ingrid van Biezen, “Party Membership in Twenty European Democracies, 1980-2000,” *Party Politics*. 7 (1: 2001): 5-21.

²⁸ Katz, *Party Systems and Electoral Systems*, 34.

²⁹ Katz, *Party Systems and Electoral Systems*, 34.

³⁰ Carey and Shugart, “Incentives to Cultivate a Personal Vote.”

³¹ Carey and Shugart, “Incentives to Cultivate a Personal Vote, 418.

Party age was also associated with an increase in the political experience of the party elite and the older the party, the more cohesive it is expected to be³⁶. As the party is getting 'more mature', it acquires value and stability (party institutionalization process) and becomes reified in the public mind while engaging in valued patterns of behavior³⁷.

Related to party discipline, Duverger³⁸ pointed out that organization is very important for the political party in controlling its parliamentary representatives. Based on his theory, Maor formulated the following three hypotheses: "the more centralized [emphasis added] the party is, the higher its cohesion, the greater its leftist tendency, the higher its cohesion; and the more ideologically extreme, the higher its cohesion."³⁹ The hypotheses were tested only in the British case (Conservative and Labour parties), in the period 1945-1995, without any possibility for a further generalization.

Party centralization has been discussed when relating party unity to responsible party government, which is the way to achieve political representation. The responsible party government presumes that the parties should act as a unitary body inside parliament and their unity of action is often linked to a centralized and hierarchical party organization. Comparing elite-voters opinions from nine countries, Dalton's findings show that centrally organized parties are more representatives of their supporters, in terms of the voter-party agreement on policy issues. Still, the research was not carried further and no proof has been brought for the link between party centralization and unity in terms of elite opinion or behavior, although Dalton suggests that a centralized party "is more likely to project clear party cues and ...helps elites agree on a party's general political orientation"⁴⁰.

Little attention has been paid to party ideology in explaining party unity. As mentioned earlier, Maor⁴¹, studied the British party system and checked if more ideologically extreme parties or those with greater leftist tendencies had higher levels of cohesion. A

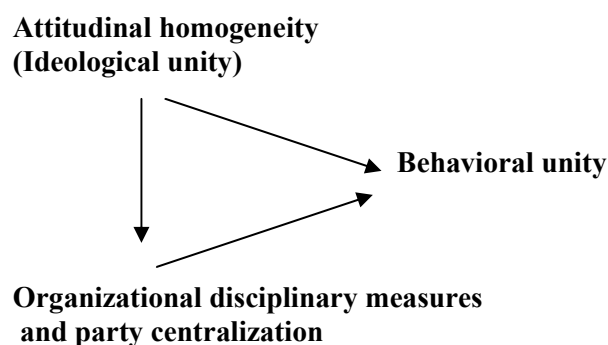
comparative study will help to see the influence of ideology on the party's behavioral unity, not only for the Western European democracies, but for the Central Eastern Europe democracies as well. Duverger's hypothesis has been tested using data from the ICPP project⁴² and one of the findings was that left parties are associated with centralization and with a high likelihood of administering discipline. However, the ICPP project contains data about political parties from all over the world in the period 1950-1962. While at that time most of the parties were mass parties, nowadays, given the transformation of parties (towards catch-all and cartel parties), it is questionable if Duverger's hypothesis still holds.

Party financing can be another explanatory variable for party behavioral unity. The financial resources, their magnitude, and the way in which the funds are used can play an important role in explaining party behavioral unity. Subsidies can be restricted to election campaigns, or given to parties irrespective of the electoral campaign. Also campaign financing can be directed to the parties as organizations or directly to the candidates⁴³ and this may influence the way in which the party representatives behave.

2.5 Model of party unity. Hypotheses

In the context of post-communist democracies and at the early stages of party development, there are many instances in which attitudinal homogeneity is not a prerequisite for behavioral unity. Those parties that have low attitudinal homogeneity will try to construct an organizational apparatus with strict disciplinary measures and high centralization in order to reach a high level of behavioral unity and implement the policies announced and these in turn will bring in time a high level of attitudinal homogeneity.

Figure 1. Party level mechanism of achieving behavioral unity



³⁶ Knut Heidar and Ruud Koole, "Approaches to the study of parliamentary party groups," in *Parliamentary Party Groups in European Democracies. Political Parties behind Closed Doors*, ed. Knut Heidar and Ruud Koole (London and NY: Routledge, 2000).19.

³⁷ Janda, *Political Parties*, 19

³⁸ Maurice Duverger, *Political Parties. Their Organization and Activity in the Modern State*. (London: Methuen and Co. Ltd, 1967).

³⁹ Moshe Maor, *Political Parties and Party Systems. Comparative Approaches and the British Experience*. (London and NY: Routledge, 1997): 137.

⁴⁰ Russell J. Dalton, "Political Parties and Political Representation. Party Supporters and Party Elites in Nine Nations," *Comparative Political Studies* 18 (3: 1985): 294.

⁴¹ Moshe Maor, *Political Parties and Party Systems*

⁴² Kenneth Janda and S. King "Formalizing and Testing Duverger's Theories on Political Parties"

⁴³ Richard S. Katz, "Party Organization and Finance," in *Comparing Democracies. Election and Voting in Global Perspective*, ed. Lawrence LeDuc, Richard G. Niemi, Pippa Norris (London: Sage Publication, 1996). 107-134.

My model of party behavioral unity asserts that there is a trade-off between attitudinal unity and organizational disciplinary measures and party centralization in order to achieve behavioral unity, especially for the Central and Eastern European parties. Behavioral unity can be the result of attitudinal similarity of the party members, of the disciplinary organizational rules, or the result of both. At the same time, in a dynamic context, the lack of unity inside the parliament or an unfortunate event like a government defeat can oblige the party to increase the centralization and disciplinary rules in order to ensure uniform behavior for the future. In other words, the democratic representation process can be fulfilled at the expense of intra-party democracy. High levels of internal and external democracy cannot always coexist and as Janda⁴⁴ stipulates, this goes at odds with the theory of parliamentary government.

There has been too much emphasis put on the institutional determinants of party unity and their direct impact on it in the party literature. However, the systemic variables are too 'far' from party behavioral unity and intra-party dynamics may play an important role in facilitating or impeding their expected effect on party behavioral unity. The literature mainly addresses the question of a direct link between system-level factors and party unity without giving much importance to party organization factors, which may constitute an important intervening factor in achieving behavioral unity. It may be the case that some institutional factors directly affect party unity independent of party organization features or that there is an indirect effect of the systemic factors on behavioral unity through party organization features.

Systemic variables like executive-legislative relations, the state structure and the nature of the party system in terms of fragmentation and party competition are kept constant in this paper, since all four countries analyzed have a parliamentary system of government, a multi-party system, and a unitary state structure. Party system fragmentation with an average of five to eight parliamentary parties and internal party conflicts were common features of the party systems in all four countries around 1993. Because the electoral system is a systemic variable, the ballot structure is tested for its impact on party behavioral unity. At the individual level the explanatory variable considered is the perceptions of representation and at the party level, and the variables expected to have an effect on behavioral unity, are party centralization and attitudinal homogeneity.

Considering the independent variables discussed above, the following general expectations and hypotheses are going to be tested:

1. The broader the understanding of representation, the higher the level of party behavioral unity.
2. MPs who are elected in single member districts are expected to see representation just in terms of their constituency voters and consequently to show a low level of party behavioral unity.
3. MPs elected under open lists where preferential voting is allowed are expected to have a broader understanding of representation but to show a low level of behavioral unity.
4. Parties with a high score on programmatic cohesion and who have at the same time a high degree of centralization are expected to score high on all measurements of behavioral unity.
5. Parties with a low level of attitudinal homogeneity are expected to apply strong centralization measures in order to keep their representatives acting as a unitary body.
6. The behavioral unity on the floor is expected to vary according to the party's power status. Parties that are in government are expected to be very united in parliament, proportionally to the party size in the legislature.
7. Parties that are in government are expected to differ in terms of behavioral unity accordingly to their seat share. The bigger the party size in the legislature, the higher probability for a disunited behavior.
8. Left parties are expected to be more centralized and more united than the rest in terms of behavior.
9. The more strict and restrictive and rewarding the PPG's rules are, the more united the MPs behavior in the legislature.

3. Variables. Operationalization Party Behavioral unity

The dependent variable is party behavioral unity defined as uniformity in the actions/conduct of party representatives. By party representatives I refer to party elite and middle level elite, which will be the focus of the inquiry.

There is much criticism about using roll-call votes a measure of unity precisely because of instances like abstention, the difficulty of cross-national comparison, different rates of legislative activity, and different importance attributed to different issues, not to mention the fact that only the legislators' visible

⁴⁴ Kenneth Janda, *Goldilocks and Party Law: How Much Law is Just Right?* Paper presented at the 2005 American Political Science Association short course on Political Parties in Emerging Democracies: Tools for Political development, 50.

preferences are registered, while they may be able to express dissent by other means⁴⁵.

Therefore I operationalize behavioral unity differently, by looking at the behavioral attitudes of the MPs in Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland and Hungary after 1993. The attitudes towards behavior are expected to give a good prediction about the MPs future behavior in the parliament. Each MP was asked, under the condition of strict confidence, ‘if he/she has to vote, but holds an opinion, which is different from the one, held by his parliamentary party, should he/she then vote in accordance with the opinion of the parliamentary party or should he follow his own opinion?’ The answers stipulating that they would follow their own opinion have been coded as low, or non-existent level behavioral unity and the rest were coded as medium and high levels of behavioral unity.

The other measure for party behavioral unity is the existence of factionalism, which is addressed by the direct question ‘Are there any subgroups or currents inside your parliamentary party?’ The objective is to see if the low levels of party behavioral unity, as exemplified by the future roll-call votes, go hand in hand with the existence of parliamentary factionalism. Both measures seem appropriate to show the lack of party behavioral unity. Still, a plausible scenario is that a factionalized party will behave like a united entity when voting on the floor because of reasons like material restrictions, disciplinary sanctions, or incumbency pressure.

Individual factors. Perceptions of representation

When they are elected and given the mandate, MPs are expected to represent the voters. But depending on the type of electoral system under which they were elected and depending on their political experience, the representatives may have different views as to what representation is about and who is actually being represented. MPs opinions can differ and the direct question addressed to them was if it is more important to represent their voters in the constituency, all voters in the MP’s constituency, and all the MP’s voters at the national level, the nation as a whole or the members and activists of the party.

Party factors. Attitudinal homogeneity

Attitudinal homogeneity is measured by programmatic cohesion, which refers to the ideological congruence of the party members, “the general agreement within a party organization on

specific issue positions⁴⁶”. The measurement for this variable is the standard deviation of issue positions politicians assign to their own party, and systematic asymmetries in its reputation, resulting from different policy positions attributed to it by insiders and outsiders⁴⁷.

High levels of cohesion indicate that the party is building programmatic linkages, meaning that the politicians pursue policy programs that distribute benefits and costs to all citizens, regardless of whether they voted for the present government or not. Conversely, as Kitschelt and Smith⁴⁸ contend, “low levels of cohesiveness are indicators of alternative linkages: either clientelist linkage formation or the highly volatile personal charisma of individual politicians”.

One qualification that needs to be addressed when using this measure is that it may be difficult to interpret in the case of parties whose mean issue position is close to the center of a salient issue space. If the respondents assign a party in the middle position, this may also be a result of not knowing where the party stands on that particular issue. Another fault of the measure is that it is sensitive to outliers (few extreme values) and may not bring a real image of the party’s attitudinal homogeneity.

Party Centralization

Party centralization means that the concentration of effective decision-making belongs to the national party organs. Centralization refers to many aspects, such as the *nationalization of the structure*, the *selection of the national leader* by a small number of top leaders, the *selection of parliamentary candidates* by the national organization, and the *allocation of funds* to the local organizations in which the national organization must have a primary role. In a centralized party the *policy* is also formulated and promulgated at the national level, the national party controls the communication, and *disciplinary measures* are settled and implemented by the national organs. The most obvious characteristic of a centralized party is that the leadership is concentrated in the hands of a few persons or of a single powerful figure (Janda 1970: 108-109). In the analysis, I consider the decision-making aspect of party centralization with the aim of verifying if the predicted connections with party unity work for the parties studied. The MPs are asked who has the final/most say in party policy, the parliamentary party or the party executive, and in case they differ in their opinions, which should have the final say.

⁴⁵ See Keith Krehbiel, “Party Discipline and Measures of Partisanship,” *American Journal of Political Science* 44 (2: 2000): 212-227 and John E. Owens. “Explaining Party Cohesion and Party Discipline in Democratic Legislatures: Purposiveness and Context.” Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, (Philadelphia, PA, 2003), 11.

⁴⁶ Kitschelt and Smith, “Party Programmatic Cohesion”, 1229.

⁴⁷ Kitschelt et al., *Postcommunist Party Systems*, 197.

⁴⁸ Kitschelt and Smith, *Postcommunist Party Systems*, 1229.

Systemic factors. Electoral System

The electoral system variable is operationalized in terms of the ballot type, which can be an open list, a closed national or regional list, or a single member list, and the district magnitude. Among the four countries taken into analysis, the Hungarian electoral system is the most complex one with three distinct sets of districts, a mixed-member system, a two-round system, two separate legal thresholds and two different sets of rules for proportional representation. Together with Bulgaria, Hungary is the only East-European country which has implemented a mixed electoral system without any external influences⁴⁹.

In Hungary, out of the 386 seats, 176 are elected from single member districts (SMD), 152 are elected using proportional representation (PR) in twenty districts with a district magnitude ranging from four to twenty eight. The remaining 58 seats are elected using PR from national lists. Following this structure the interesting thing to observe is that voters cast two ballots each. One ballot is for the candidate in their constituency and one for the party list in their PR district. Automatically the vote is given to two persons who are going to represent them.

Since 1989, Poland has had four different electoral systems. At the time when the elite survey was conducted, the electoral law in force was paced before the elections as it happened with the rest of the electoral system changes. The electoral law stipulated the usage of PR with the D'Hondt formula from 52 districts and 69 seats allocated from the national list. The electoral threshold is 5% nationwide for districts, 8% for coalitions and 7% for the national list⁵⁰. An open list was another characteristic held in common with the Czech and Slovak electoral systems, with Polish voters being allowed to express two preferences from the list until the 2001 elections.

Shortly after the split of the Czechoslovak federation and the emergence of the independent Czech Republic in early 1993, the PR system used had undergone tiny changes before each election. The Senate uses majority run-off and the rule has remained unchanged since 1995. The electoral threshold was set at 5 per cent of the votes. An interesting feature of the system is the ballot structure, which since 1990 has given voters the possibility of casting preferences over the candidates and to alter the initial list. Preferential voting has been seen as a way to counteract the

centralization inside the parties, especially with regard to the communist selection procedure of candidates for office⁵¹.

As compared to Czech Republic, Slovakia does not have many differences in its electoral system. The same proportional representation system with a 5 percent electoral threshold is employed. What Poland, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia have in common is preferential voting, which allows voters to alter the initial list⁵². Consequently what one would expect from the MPs elected under preferential voting and under majority run-off rule is for them to show a low level of party behavioral unity.

4. Data Analysis

The analysis is based on a data set that incorporates elite surveys conducted in 1993 in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia. The sample contains 633 MPs elected for the unicameral legislature (Hungary) or for the lower chamber in the rest of the countries. As mentioned earlier, systemic factors like the nature of the party system (in terms of fragmentation and party competition) and the executive-legislative design are all kept constant and the analysis controls for these factors.

Regarding the level of behavioral party unity, when asked how an MP has to vote when his opinion differs from that of the parliamentary club, the most undisciplined MPs are those from Czech Republic followed by those from Slovakia, Hungary, and Poland (figure 1). The difference between the ones with the most disunited behavior and the ones showing unity is quite large, since 50 percent of the Czech MPs declared that they would follow their own opinion and only 12.7 percent of the Polish MPs declared that they would defect from the party line. What it is worth noting is that from the total of 450 MPs who clearly answered the question, only 13 percent clearly declared that they would follow the opinion of the parliamentary party, 38 percent declared that they would follow their own opinion, and an even higher percentage (48) declared that they were undecided and it would depend on the circumstances. Following these results the level of unity when voting on the floor is low overall and the legislative experience shows that indeed there were many instances in which the bills proposed did not pass the floor.

In terms of measurement for party behavioral unity, the attitudes toward actual voting in parliament

⁴⁹ Kenneth Benoit, "Hungary: Holding back the tiers," in *The Politics of Electoral Systems*, ed. Michael Gallagher and Paul Mitchell (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

⁵⁰ Kenneth Benoit and Jacqueline Hayden, "Institutional Chance and Persistence: the Evolution of Poland's Electoral System, 1989-2001," *The Journal of Politics* 66 (2: 2004): 396-427.

⁵¹ Petr Kopecký, "The Czech Republic: Entrenching Proportional Representation," in *Handbook of Electoral System Choice*, ed. Joseph M. Colomer (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 350.

⁵² Joseph M. Colomer, ed., *Handbook of Electoral System Choice*. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 330.

are clearly associated with the existence of factionalism inside the parliamentary party. When asked if there are subgroups or currents within their parliamentary party, almost 70 percent of the parliamentarians who previously said that they would follow their own opinion in voting when their view differed from that of the parliamentary party (table 1) identified party factionalism. This shows that voting on the floor and the existence of issue factionalism inside the parliamentary party go together, which justifies the usage of both as measures of party behavioral unity.

Unity and disunity can be manifested in different ways depending on the issue discussed. Generally, MPs are expected to defect from the party line when the budget is discussed, sexual

increases significantly. Only up to 10 percent of the total parliamentarians interviewed declared that they would disobey the party line and follow their own opinion in case of disagreement (table 3). The most undisciplined MPs are the Czechs and the most disciplined in this case are the Slovakian MPs. The percentage of officials following the parliamentary party is over 50 or 60 percent as in the case of Slovakia.

All legislators take economic issues more seriously than legislation on constitutional or moral issues. When it is about voting on important legislation on the constitution, the level of disunity increased by almost 15 percent in all four cases (table 4). On this matter, the Czech and the Slovakian MPs are shown to be the most disobedient ones. The explanation has to do with the harsh economic reforms that had to be introduced at that time and the impact of those issues on the political arena. Privatization of state businesses, foreign investment, and health service reform were the salient issues at that time⁵³.

The most controversial subject leading to disunity is voting on moral issues (table 5). Although there is an open debate in every parliament about what a moral issue is, the situation of voting shows a clear disobedience, with over 80 percent of parliamentarians reporting defection from the party line. Subjects like war, sexuality, or fox hunting (i.e. Great Britain) are considered to be of moral value and require a free vote from the MPs. For instance, in a free vote British MPs are allowed to vote as they wish and are not bound to follow instructions from their parties' whips. Free votes are most often granted on issues of conscience, such as Sunday Trading or Capital Punishment. Then the question that arises in the context of post-communist democracy is what exactly the moral issues are and how they are defined in the legislatures.

As for the possible determinants of behavioral party unity, the MPs perceptions of representation seem to matter as regards their final behavior on the floor, although not in a decisive way. All the defectors, the loyal MPs, and the undecided ones seem to accord the same importance to representing their party. This is understandable since the party has put them forward on the list and assured them a mandate. The same percentages of MPs show loyalty and commitment to the whole nation. Around 45 percent within the disciplined, undisciplined, and undecided MPs see the representation of the whole nation as very important. As expected, there is no association between the importance attributed to the representation of all the

There is a very low negative correlation at the limit of statistical significance (Pearson coefficient - 0.07) between those who declare they would defect from the party line and the importance they attribute to the representation of specific social or professional groups. Almost 40 percent of the defectors thought that the representation of these groups was very important. This relation shows the clientelistic linkages between the voters and their representatives and the shifting loyalties of the parliamentarians at the early stages of post-communist transition. Still, even if they consider the representation of these groups important, only 10% of the disloyal MPs declared that the specific social and professional groups nominated them to the Parliament.

The expected effect of the electoral system on behavioral unity was in relation to the ballot structure and district magnitude. The expectation was that the level of behavioral unity would be low for the MPs elected in single member districts and in multimember districts where preferential vote was allowed. But contrary to these expectations, among the disloyal MPs, most of them (68.4 percent) were elected in the multimember districts with open lists and only 9.9 percent of the disloyal MPs were elected in single member districts, which is only the case for the Hungarian MPs. The figures in percentage points are similar for the MPs who express behavioral unity (table 6). Therefore one can conclude that the effect of the electoral system on behavioral unity is not as predicted and therefore the importance of this systemic variable is questionable.

Systemic constraints can come from the parliamentary rules regarding the PPGs as predicted. Before 1996, the rules approved by the Slovakian parliament were such that any group of five MPs could form a PG, and at the same time the constitutional framework did not provide a mechanism to ensure that the MPs would remain loyal. Article 29.2 of the Constitution stipulates that the MPs "shall be the

⁵³ Jan Čulík, "A Repeat of November 1989?" *Central Europe Review* 1: (24: 1999).

representatives of the citizens, and shall be elected to exercise their mandates individually and according to their best conscience and conviction. They are bound by no directives⁵⁴. This clearly leaves space to maneuver for MPs, which in this case are becoming trustees and not necessarily delegates.

Czech parliamentary rules were stricter. Even if at least 10 members of parliament were needed in order to form a parliamentary group⁵⁵, there are specific restrictions as to what happens if such a group forms a fraction with different views as compared to the rest of the parliamentary party. Most of these restrictions have to do with material and financial benefits, which will be much lower than of the rest of the parliamentary groups. Articles 26 and 27.1 of the Czech 1993 Constitution stipulate that ‘Deputies and Senators shall exercise their office in person and in conformity with the oath they have taken and in doing so they shall not be bound by any instructions...No Deputy or Senator may be disciplined for his or her voting in the Chamber of Deputies or in the Senate, or in their bodies.’ In this way, MPs have freedom of action and it may be very hard to keep them loyal.

Specific Hungarian parliamentary rules regarding parliamentary groups encourage defection and the formation of parliamentary fractions. Hungarian parliamentary rules stipulate a number of at least 15 seats in the parliament in order to be entitled to form an official group. This is why former party MPs who defected from the party and joined another one could all form another party fraction together⁵⁶. Article 20.2 of the Hungarian constitution specifies that ‘Members of Parliament act in the public interest’, with no other details as compared to the Polish, Czech, or Slovak cases.

Polish MPs are the most united in their behavior and Parliamentary rules concerning PPGs are about the same as in the rest of the countries, with 15 MPs required to form a group. Article 104 of the Polish Constitution stipulates that ‘Deputies shall be representatives of the Nation. They shall not be bound by any instructions of the electorate’.

Parliamentary rules for PPGs are different in their provisions and do not have the expected impact on the behavior of MPs. The minimum number of MPs required to form a PPG is more or less similar. The differences appear though in the specific restrictions about groups formed out of defecting MPs, but even

more differences appear in constitutional provisions, which encourage defection as in the Slovak case.

As predicted, the more centralized the party is, the more unity will show on the floor (table 7). As the results show, there is a positive correlation between the reported levels of party unity and the level of party centralization. The unity of voting increases as more of the decisions on party policy are taken by the party executive (Pearson correlation coefficient 0.16). 51 percent of those who are disloyal declare that there is a low level of centralization in their party and 30 percent of them declare that the demands of party discipline inside the parliamentary party should be stronger than those existent at that time.

Pertaining to programmatic party cohesion, a relatively high level of it is shown in economic areas by most of the parties. For example, MPs almost unanimously agree to the importance of social security, inflation, and unemployment issues with no significant differences of cohesion between parties. Still other economic subjects like foreign investment and income taxation do not illustrate the same similarity of opinions between the parties’ MPs. Abortion, the European issue, decentralization, immigration, and autonomy are subjects on which the parties apparently did not have a clear stance at that time because the rates of parties’ deviation from the mean position is quite high. What can be concluded from this is that indeed, in some areas attitudinal unity goes hand in hand with behavioral unity, and this happens for the stringent economic issues at that time in Central East Europe. Some issues were pressured by social protest, like the miners strike in Poland at the end of 1992. On other subjects, which are still important, but without such economic pressure, attitudinal unity varies from medium to low, and so do the scores for behavioral unity on topics like moral issues and important legislation concerning the constitution.

If we move the unit of analysis to political parties, in the Czech Republic the most disloyal MPs belong to the Left Bloc (LB), followed by the governing Civic Democratic Party, while the most loyal are part of the Society for Moravia and Silesia. The disunity inside the Left Bloc in 1993 is understandable, since at that time the party suffered from many conflicts finalized when, during the National Congress of the party, part of the members formed another party called the Party of the Democratic Left, and later on during that year another splinter, Party Left Bloc emerged from the rest of the party MPs. As the elite survey shows, the decentralization of the party is obvious, with more than 60 percentage points of the parliamentarians declaring the parliamentary party as the final authority.

After the June 1992 elections, a right wing grouping, headed by Václav Klaus, ex finance minister

⁵⁴ Darina Malová and Kevin D. Krause, “Parliamentary Party groups in Slovakia,” in *Parliamentary Party Groups in European Democracies*, ed. Knut Heidar and Ruud Koole (London: Routledge, 2000), 195-214.

⁵⁵ Kopecký, “The Czech Republic”.

⁵⁶ Benoit, “Hungary: Holding back the tigers”, 246.

in the previous government, formed the CDP-CHDP government. More than half of the party representatives declared that there were subgroups or currents inside the party, as they identified that the party had a traditional conservative group, and a more rational and non-fundamental group, but none of them had any formal status inside the party and the members of the party executive once even declared that it would be good if these members would just leave the party⁵⁷. In terms of centralization, there are no signs of such thing, and the rivalry between the national executive and the parliamentary party is obvious since about the same percentage (20-25) of MPs declared the supremacy of each of them in terms of the party's final decisions.

In Slovakia, the 1992 elections were won by the post-communist party HZD (The Movement for Democratic Slovakia) with Vladimír Mečiar as leader. In terms of parliamentary behavior, again the left party SDL (Democratic Left Party) proved to be the most disunited one, while the most disciplined party was the government party HZDS. What seems striking is that none of the representatives of the Democratic Left Party would follow the opinion of the parliamentary party in case they had divergence of opinions. This extreme situation may have two explanations: either the party was very centralized, which gives the whole power to the national executive or they do not listen to any of the two authoritative organs and follow their opinion. Amongst the 20 SDL MPs interviewed, 50 percent of them declare that in a case of divergence of opinion between the national executive and the parliamentary party, the opinion of the parliamentary club should prevail. This clearly shows the party decentralization, which is reinforced by the fact that it almost never happened that the national executive would give instructions to the parliamentary party.

In Hungary, incumbency did not directly affect the level of behavioral unity on the floor. MDF (Hungarian Democratic Forum) was one of the most disunited parties in 1992. 32 percent of the disloyal Hungarian MPs were from MDF, the ruling coalition party. The level of dissent within the party was visible and openly manifested when in 1993 Prime Minister Antall forced the extreme right activists out of the party. Furthermore, during 1992, one of the dissidents, István Csurka, had attacked the party and its leader for not being tough enough with the opposition and in introducing tougher reforms. From the beginning, different tendencies existed inside the MDF, but they were not institutionalized or formally recognized by the party as in the case of the Polish Democratic Union. The dissent was manifested by the right-wing

Circle of Nationalists led by István Csurka, a second faction of the Christian Democratic Circle, and a third faction of the National Liberals. The factions did not establish an independent platform within the party, neither were they recognized, and most of their activity was informal and outside the party, like in the Magyar Forum publication edited by István Csurka⁵⁸. As the results of the elite survey show, the party was clearly decentralized with a weak national executive. Among the MDF MPs, almost 40 percent declared that they would follow the opinion of the parliamentary party and not the opinion of the national executive as compared to only 20 percent of them who would follow the national executive opinion in case of disagreement.

Amongst the rest of the Hungarian parties, again an increased level of disunity was found inside the MSZP (Hungarian Socialist Party) and the FKGP (Independent Small Holders Party). The MSZP had originated from a reformist group against the communist state, within the former ruling party. The Socialist Party showed no signs of party centralization since its MPs were evenly distributed on the categories when it came to the final authority inside the party, with around 33.3 percent of them declaring they would follow national executive directions, the same proportion declared they would listen to the parliamentary party, and about the same number were not decided and declared that it depends on the situation.

The FKGP has its roots dating from the period prior to communism and was also part of the coalition government, and it was completely decentralized with almost 40 percent of its MPs being loyal to the opinion of the parliamentary party. The party's main policy to pursue was re-privatization, and since the government proposal was at odds with the opinions of the party leader, he declared that the party should withdraw from the coalition but only 11 from the total of 44 MPs followed him. The 33 remaining MPs were expelled and formed their own party, the 'group 33', which experienced factionalism and many splits of its own. Three separate parties – the Historical, Conservative and Radical Smallholders' Parties were functioning until they were reunited before the 1994 elections⁵⁹.

What is striking and says a lot about the internal organization and chain of authority for all Hungarian parties is that, although the parliamentary party is seen as the ultimate authority in terms of a dispute with the

⁵⁷ Petr Kopecký, "Factionalism in Parliamentary Parties and Democratization in the Czech Republic: A Concept and Some Empirical Findings," *Democratization*, 2 (1: 1995): 143.

⁵⁸ Bill Lomax, "Factions and Factionalism in Hungary's New Party System" *Democratization*, 2: (1:1995): 128.

⁵⁹ Lomax, "Factions and Factionalism in Hungary's New Party System," 132.

national executive, more than 65 percent of the MPs within each party declare that is the national executive which has the most say in party policy.

For the Polish parties, the situation appears to be similar to the Hungarian parties in terms of behavioral unity. The coalition partners PSL (Polish Peasant Party) and SLD (Alliance of the Democratic Left) experienced internal dissent up to the point that 60 percent of the MPs who would follow their own opinion when voting were affiliated with these two parties. The third Polish party experiencing internal dissent was the Democratic Union, with its MPs constituting almost 20 percent of disloyal parliamentarians from our sample. In the case of this particular party, the explanation is the specificity of internal party rules, which clearly recognize the existence of factions within the party as part of the party statute. According to the UD statute, a faction is 'a group of members expressing elements of their own program which does not enter into contradiction with that of the union', could formulate its specific rules, elect their own national and local leaders, and establish internal and external contacts. The Social-Liberal Ecological faction and the Conservative-Liberal Faction were permitted to express their views in the Informative Bulletin of the UD, and some of them even had their own press bureau⁶⁰.

1993 was an unstable year in Polish political life. In March 1993, the Parliament voted against the government's plan to privatize a large number of the state enterprises. During the next month strikes of teachers and health workers of the Solidarity unions took place and the pressure led to a vote of non-confidence against the government. Prime Minister Pawlak was also implicated in a number of scandals and accused on many occasions by President Walesa for promoting party and personal interests at the expense of matters of state importance. This political situation together with the internal organization of the parties therefore explains the low level of behavioral party unity inside the government parties and inside those from the opposition.

5. Discussion and conclusions

As measured by the attitudes toward behavior, this analysis shows that the MPs from the Hungarian, Czech, Slovak, and Polish Lower Chambers show their loyalty to the party, but this loyalty is very unstable and quite low. Among the 631 MPs interviewed, 30 percent declared that they would follow their own opinion when voting on the floor, if

their opinion was different from that of the parliamentary party. The level of behavioral unity varied according to the salience of the issues at stake. The highest behavioral unity was expressed when economic issues were on the legislative agenda, the next were the laws on constitutional issues, and, as expected, the lowest level of behavioral unity was shown on matters with moral implications. The results are in conformity with the situation in each country around 1993, when economic issues were the most pressing ones.

The analysis follows many questions like the measurement of behavioral unity and its possible determinants at the individual, party, and systemic level. In terms of measurement, the results show that voting on the floor and the existence of issue factionalism inside the parliamentary party go hand in hand, which justifies the usage of both measures to determine party behavioral unity. Whether formally expressed in the party statutes or manifested as a reaction to the personalized politics and lack of party development, factions appeared and clearly show the diminished level of behavioral party unity. In all four countries, factional activity and behavioral party disunity increased as the parties had to take hard policy decisions.

Given the post-communist context, the existence of factionalism can be seen as a regulating mechanism for a healthy democratic political life, leading to a clear definition of the party programs and policies. What remains important is the final behavior on the floor, when the representatives of the same party are expected to be on the same front and promote the party policy. It cannot be argued that the low level of party unity had a completely negative effect on the party system or the democratization process. Rather, what can be said is that it slightly hastened the process of democratization by forcing parties to adopt clear stands on their identity. In a long run one can expect the level of factionalism to decrease and it would be interesting to compare this situation with the one in Western European parties.

As for the systemic, party, and individual determinants of party unity, the analysis shows that concerning the perceptions of representation, all the defectors, the loyal MPs, and the undecided ones seemed to place the same importance on representing their party. This is understandable since the party had put them forward on the list and assured them a mandate. The same percentages of MPs showed loyalty and commitment to the whole nation. The only impact that this variable shows is in relation to interest groups. There is a small association between those who declare they would defect from the party line and the importance they attribute to the representation of specific social or professional groups, something that

⁶⁰ Paul Lewis, "Poland and Eastern Europe. Perspectives on Factions and Factionalism," *Democratization*. 2: (1: 1995): 103,108.

shows the clientelistic and shifting nature of MPs' loyalties. What this shows is a gap in the representation process, which is somehow expected at the beginning of the democratic process.

Electoral mechanisms did not seem to have the expected impact on party behavioral unity and this raises questions regarding the relevance of existing theories linking party unity and electoral systems. Being elected in a single member district did not lead to a lower level of unity, but preferential voting in multimember districts also had a small negative impact on the behavior on the floor, since the same percentage of MPs elected under all the different ballots show degrees of unity and disunity at the same time.

More attention has been attributed in this analysis to internal party factors like attitudinal homogeneity, party centralization, incumbency status, and party ideology, and their impact on behavioral unity. Among all these variables, the only one having a clear influence on the result of votes on the floor is party centralization. Decreasing the level of internal party democracy helps to increase the level of external democracy of the system. Since both of them cannot be achieved at the same time and in the case of all parties, in the post-communist context party centralization appears as an antidote for defection and as an instrument to keep the party together in all the actions pursued. Attitudinal homogeneity doesn't always go hand in hand with the level of behavioral unity and in most cases, when homogeneity in attitudes is low, centralization is high in order to achieve unity in parliament.

Incumbency in the post-communist context did not positively affect the declared unity on the floor. Most of the incumbent parties were among the most disunited ones with an increased level of factionalism. Moreover, even if one would have expected the post-communist successor parties and other emerging left parties to be very centralized and consequently very united, the results show completely the contrary. In each country, the most disunited parties were left-wing oriented. One explanation is the lack of policy agreement and program clarity at the outset of the democratic process and moreover the concentration of political disputes around personalities.

What the present paper offers is a snapshot analysis of party behavioral unity, which needs to be compensated with recent data about MPs' behavior and the hypotheses should be retested against a new data set. This static analysis offers a clear picture of behavioral unity in which party factors make a difference in achieving party unity on the floor and completing the chain of delegation in order to achieve political representation.

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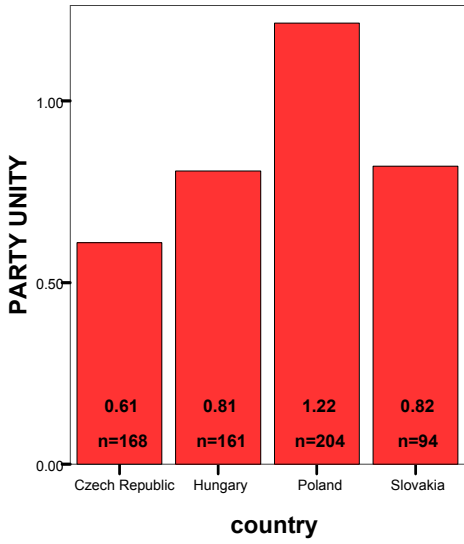
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APPENDIX

FIG. 1 BEHAVIORAL UNITY BY COUNTRY



Bars show Means

Figure 2.

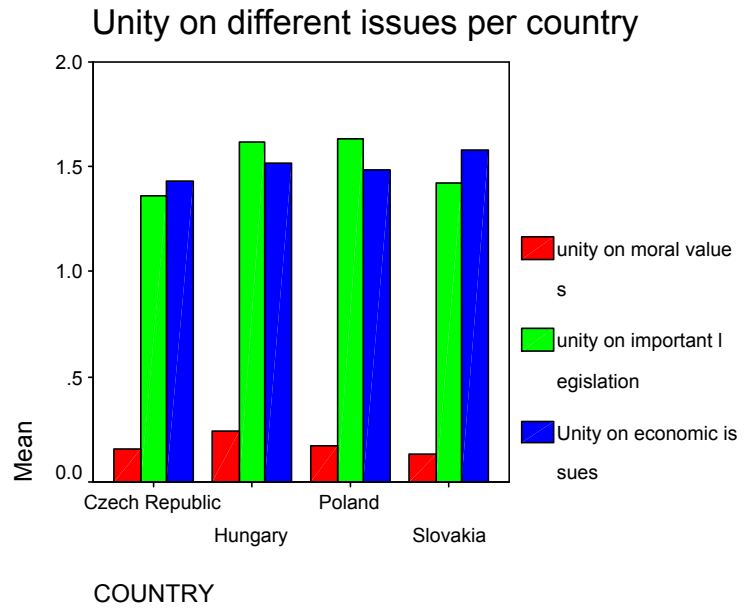


Table 1

FACTIONALISM * PARTY UNITY Crosstabulation

		PARTY UNITY			Total
		PARL.CLU B.OPINION	OWN OPINION	IT DEPENDS	
FACTIONALISM YES	Count	74	134	197	405
	% within PARTY UNITY	62.2%	70.2%	64.4%	65.7%
	% of Total	12.0%	21.8%	32.0%	65.7%
NO	Count	45	57	109	211
	% within PARTY UNITY	37.8%	29.8%	35.6%	34.3%
	% of Total	7.3%	9.3%	17.7%	34.3%
Total	Count	119	191	306	616
	% within PARTY UNITY	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	% of Total	19.3%	31.0%	49.7%	100.0%

Table 2. Electoral systems after 1990

Country	Districts			Ballot	Rule/Formula	Threshold
	Seats	No.	Magnitude			
Czech Republic 1992(1992, 1996, 1998) 2002	200 200	8 14	15-41 5-25	Open list Open list	Proportional –Droop Proportional-D'Hondt	5% national 5% national
Hungary 1990(1990,1994,1998,2000)	386 210 176	21 176	4-58 1	Double Closed list and Single	Proportional (2 tiers)- Droop/d'Hondt Majority/2 nd round plurality	4-5% national
Poland 1989 (1989) 1991 (1991) 1993 (1993, 1997) 2001 (2001)	460 460 460 460	460 37 52 41	1 7-69 3-69 7-19	Single Open list Open list Closed list	Majority/second round run-off PR (2 tiers)-Hare and St.- Laguë PR (2 tiers)-d'Hondt PR-m.St-Laguë	5% national 5% national
Slovakia 1992 (1992, 1994, 1998, 2002)	51-150	1-4	5 - 150	Open list	Proportional Representation- Droop	5% national

Source: Colomer, M. Josep. 2004. *Handbook of Electoral System Choice*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Table 3.**VOTING ABOUT ECONOMIC ISSUES * COUNTRY Crosstabulation**

			COUNTRY				Total
			Czech Republic	Hungary	Poland	Slovakia	
VOTING ABOUT ECONOMIC ISSUES	PARL. CLUB OPIN.	Count	35	52	60	28	175
		% within COUNTRY	53.0%	56.5%	55.6%	62.2%	56.3%
		% of Total	11.3%	16.7%	19.3%	9.0%	56.3%
	OWN OPINION	Count	6	5	8	2	21
		% within COUNTRY	9.1%	5.4%	7.4%	4.4%	6.8%
		% of Total	1.9%	1.6%	2.6%	.6%	6.8%
	IT DEPENDS	Count	24	34	39	15	112
		% within COUNTRY	36.4%	37.0%	36.1%	33.3%	36.0%
		% of Total	7.7%	10.9%	12.5%	4.8%	36.0%
	DK/NO OPINION	Count		1			1
		% within COUNTRY		1.1%			.3%
		% of Total		.3%			.3%
	NO ANSWER	Count	1		1		2
		% within COUNTRY	1.5%		.9%		.6%
		% of Total	.3%		.3%		.6%
Total	Count	66	92	108	45	311	
	% within COUNTRY	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
	% of Total	21.2%	29.6%	34.7%	14.5%	100.0%	

Table 4.**VOTING ABOUT IMPORT.LEGISL.+CONSTIT.ISSUES * COUNTRY Crosstabulation**

			COUNTRY				Total
			Czech Republic	Hungary	Poland	Slovakia	
VOTING ABOUT IMPORT.LEGISL.+ CONSTIT.ISSUES	PARL.CLUB OPIN.	Count	36	65	80	28	209
		% within COUNTRY	54.5%	70.7%	74.1%	62.2%	67.2%
		% of Total	11.6%	20.9%	25.7%	9.0%	67.2%
OWN OPINION		Count	11	9	12	9	41
		% within COUNTRY	16.7%	9.8%	11.1%	20.0%	13.2%
		% of Total	3.5%	2.9%	3.9%	2.9%	13.2%
IT DEPENDS		Count	18	17	15	8	58
		% within COUNTRY	27.3%	18.5%	13.9%	17.8%	18.6%
		% of Total	5.8%	5.5%	4.8%	2.6%	18.6%
DK/NO OPINION		Count	1	1			2
		% within COUNTRY	1.5%	1.1%			.6%
		% of Total	.3%	.3%			.6%
NO ANSWER		Count			1		1
		% within COUNTRY			.9%		.3%
		% of Total			.3%		.3%
Total		Count	66	92	108	45	311
		% within COUNTRY	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	21.2%	29.6%	34.7%	14.5%	100.0%

Table 5.**VOTING ABOUT MORAL ISSUES * COUNTRY Crosstabulation**

			COUNTRY				Total
			Czech Republic	Hungary	Poland	Slovakia	
VOTING ABOUT MORAL ISSUES	PARL.CLUB OPIN.	Count		7	4	2	13
		% within COUNTRY		7.6%	3.7%	4.4%	4.2%
		% of Total		2.3%	1.3%	.6%	4.2%
OWN OPINION		Count	54	77	93	41	265
		% within COUNTRY	81.8%	83.7%	86.1%	91.1%	85.2%
		% of Total	17.4%	24.8%	29.9%	13.2%	85.2%
IT DEPENDS		Count	11	8	10	2	31
		% within COUNTRY	16.7%	8.7%	9.3%	4.4%	10.0%
		% of Total	3.5%	2.6%	3.2%	.6%	10.0%
NO ANSWER		Count	1		1		2
		% within COUNTRY	1.5%		.9%		.6%
		% of Total	.3%		.3%		.6%
Total		Count	66	92	108	45	311
		% within COUNTRY	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	21.2%	29.6%	34.7%	14.5%	100.0%

Table 6.

electoral system-ballot structure * party unity recoded ordinal Crosstabulation

			party unity recoded ordinal			Total
			low beh. unity	medium level of b. unity	high level of b. party unity	
electoral system-ballot structure	single member district	Count	17	41	8	66
		% within party unity recoded ordinal	9.9%	18.6%	13.6%	14.7%
		% of Total	3.8%	9.1%	1.8%	14.7%
	regional list	Count	20	26	8	54
		% within party unity recoded ordinal	11.7%	11.8%	13.6%	12.0%
		% of Total	4.4%	5.8%	1.8%	12.0%
	national list	Count	17	42	9	68
		% within party unity recoded ordinal	9.9%	19.1%	15.3%	15.1%
		% of Total	3.8%	9.3%	2.0%	15.1%
	multimember district open list	Count	117	111	34	262
		% within party unity recoded ordinal	68.4%	50.5%	57.6%	58.2%
		% of Total	26.0%	24.7%	7.6%	58.2%
Total	Count	171	220	59	450	
	% within party unity recoded ordinal	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
	% of Total	38.0%	48.9%	13.1%	100.0%	

Table 7.

party centralization-final say(party policy) * party unity recoded ordinal Crosstabulation

			party unity recoded ordinal			Total
			low beh. unity	medium level of b. unity	high level of b. party unity	
party centralization-final say(party policy)	low centralization	Count	87	106	36	229
		% within party unity recoded ordinal	51.5%	37.7%	35.0%	41.4%
		% of Total	15.7%	19.2%	6.5%	41.4%
	medium centralization	Count	51	94	27	172
		% within party unity recoded ordinal	30.2%	33.5%	26.2%	31.1%
		% of Total	9.2%	17.0%	4.9%	31.1%
	high centralization	Count	31	81	40	152
		% within party unity recoded ordinal	18.3%	28.8%	38.8%	27.5%
		% of Total	5.6%	14.6%	7.2%	27.5%
Total	Count	169	281	103	553	
	% within party unity recoded ordinal	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
	% of Total	30.6%	50.8%	18.6%	100.0%	