

democratic institutions and authoritarian rule in southeast europe

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chapter | explaining democratisation

Democratisation studies are a vast field of scholarship that need viewing through analytical lenses in order to get a grasp of them. One way of sorting through the various existing theoretical approaches to democratisation is through the concepts of structure and agency. Here the debate revolves around whether the proper foci of analysis are actors' strategic interactions, or whether explanations lie hidden in the structural and historical factors. In fact, the best work in comparative politics does not lose sight of either side of the coin, constructing dynamic approaches instead. One such dynamic approach is path dependence analysis, which rests on complex causal processes that involve both structure and agency (Hall 2003). This study advances precisely such a path dependent argument, which rests on the assumption that a crucial choice or event alters the impact of subsequent events, challenging the assumption that factors x and z will have the same impact across cases (ibid.). This means that interaction effects occur over time and can multiply, and it rejects the assumption that an x occurring today has the same effect, y, across all settings in time and space. The world is not inhabited by timeless causal relations, but is rather understood as a branching tree whose tips represent events that unfold over time (Sewell 1996). Also, path dependent analysis is process oriented, whereby both timing and sequence of events matter for the outcome (Thelen 1999, Pierson 2000, Ekiert and Hanson 2003).

In existing democratisation studies, however, the bulk of research takes sides in the structure and agency debate. In his analysis of theories of democratisation at the end of the 1960s, Rustow (1970) saw an emphasis on structural, socioeconomic factors as the main contribution of his generation. The greatest contribution these authors made was to move away from prescriptive and descriptive legalism that characterised earlier work, which focused on the nuts and bolts of constitutions and formal institutions. Together they elaborated what is today known as the modernisation theory of democracy, with Lipset (1959) holding an especially prominent role in establishing the link between socioeconomic modernisation and democratisation. However, at the time of writing, Rustow had become concerned that this focus on structure somehow implied that the actual political process was superfluous, irrelevant for explaining democratic outcomes (ibid.).

Ignoring Rustow's concerns, modernisation studies that developed throughout the 1970s and '80s overemphasised structure and have as a result been criticised as functionalist and overly simplistic regarding the influence of capitalism on democracy (Grugel 2002). Looking back at the twenty years of transformation in post-communist Europe, the view according to which the relationship between democratisation and the introduction of capitalism is uncontroversial seems untenable. Though at the beginning of 1990s capitalism and democracy were embraced in post-communist countries as complementary mechanisms for

the attainment of freedom, it has since become clear that rising socioeconomic inequalities and various forms of exploitation coexist uneasily with democratisation. Capitalism is complementary to democracy in that rights of citizenship are not determined by a person's socioeconomic position, but at the same time this civic equality leaves the deeper rooted questions of political and economic equality intact (Wood 1995), seriously limiting the exercise of citizenship.

The so-called mode of transition literature (see O'Donnell, Schmitter and Whitehead 1986, di Palma 1990, Przeworski 1991, Karl and Schmitter 1991) played an important role in the theories of democratisation, since after its rise to prominence it has become 'impossible to formulate a theory of democratic transitions that does not explicitly address the strategic interactions between and within the government and opposition' (Haggard and Kaufman 1997: 265). The mode of transition literature distinguished itself from earlier work on democratisation precisely by shifting focus towards human agency, the analysis of strategic behaviour of actors and elite-based compromise pacts. This was warranted, in part at least, by the fact that these scholars were attempting to account for numerous cases of democratisation in the Third Wave, characterised by high uncertainty of outcomes and the extraordinary weight carried by elite choices. They rejected functionalist determinism inherent to modernisation theories, and embraced emphasis on contingency (Grugel 2002). On the other hand, this literature was criticised for being excessively empirical, a-contextual, elitist, and focused only on the short term (ibid.).

After the collapse of the Eastern bloc, many insights from this literature on Latin American and Southern European transitions were applied in trying to account for post-communist transitions to democracy (e.g. Ishiyama 1997, Bruszt and Stark 1998, Greskovits 1998, Grzymala Busse 2002, McFaul 2002, 2005). While many authors built on the same premise of elite compromise as the most successful recipe for transition to democracy, some reframed the argument in terms of noncooperative games (McFaul 2005) and competition among elites (e.g. Vachudova and Snyder 1996, Vachudova 2005, Grzymala Busse 2002, 2007). Today, looking back at the twenty years of post-communist democratisation processes, the mode of transition literature looks overly optimistic in placing the weight of their explanations on the interaction of elites and downplaying the influence of historical legacies and structural prerequisites of democratisation. Having said that, I do take on board that historic political and social change comes about through conscious human action (Przeworski 1991, Przeworski and Limongi 1997), and that any attempt at a comprehensive account of change must be dynamic. This realisation is however not new. When Kirchheimer (1965: 965) studied regime change in Russia and Germany in the late 1920s, he theorised that the answers lie in the intersection between socioeconomic conditions and the 'discretionary element left to the decisions of the regime'. In other words, the social and economic frame of a particular society 'lays down a conditioning parameter within which the original choice has to be made and solutions have to be sought' (Kirchheimer 1965: 966). This theoretical insight is of central importance to this study, because it draws attention to the fact that the supply of political parties, as well as elites' and citizens' value orientations are a function of their socioeconomic environment, and that hence the moment of regime change is not as highly contingent as the mode of transition literature assumes.

Kirchheimer's interactive approach was revived by Diamandouros and Larrabee (2000) who argued that structural conditions should be viewed as environments within which choice occurs. The particular trajectory that democratisation will take in a given country depends on how environmental factors combine with political choice (ibid.). In post-communist literature a similar epistemological position regarding the relationship between structural and contingent factors influencing democratisation was taken up, for instance in the edited volume of Ekiert and Hanson (2003), where valuable contributions were made in attempting to explain how historical legacies from pre-communist and communist regimes conditioned political and institutional choice after the fall of communism. Ekiert (2003) in particular argued that without accounting for institutional, social and political legacies of the communist period it was not possible to explain post-communist transformations.

The presented debate can also be applied to the scholarship on post-communist democratisation, which can be analogously organised by grouping explanations into those that emphasise how historical constraints influence long term democratic development, versus those that argue that immediate circumstances surrounding regime change in the turbulent period of the early 1990s were crucial for subsequent developments. Historical legacies explored in the literature on postcommunism include geopolitical and spatial, regime types during communism, and, more broadly, modernisation arguments regarding economic development and other development indicators from communist and pre-communist times. These historical legacies have been operationalised as the distance from Western capitals (Kopstein and Reilly 2000), state society relations before the onset of communism (Kitschelt et al 1999), the length of democratic statehood before communism and pre-communist literacy (Darden and Grzymala Busse 2006), or simply as the level of economic development. When stressing that legacies can take facilitating or inhibiting forms, Ekiert (2003) was building on Roeder (1999) and others who claim that communist legacies should not be conceptualised exclusively as burdening democratisation, but instead should be understood as also carrying the potential for democratisation. Communist regimes pursued modernisation policies of industrialisation, urbanisation and education, as well as exhibiting relatively low levels of inequality. All these represent important ingredients for the subsequent introduction of democracy (Fish 2001, Ekiert 2003). In addition to that, during the 1980s important economic and political reforms were undertaken in a number of European post-communist countries (not least in Yugoslavia) that facilitated democratic breakthroughs. Taking this on board, Ekiert's distinction between inhibiting and facilitating legacies is adopted in subsequent discussions of structural conditions.

At the same time, numerous scholars of post-communism have focused on the circumstances surrounding regime change, analysing the mode of transition (Stark and Bruszt 1998, McFaul 2002), the availability of opposition and character of

political competition (e.g. Grzymala Busse 2002, Vachudova 2005, Fish 1998, O'Dwyer 2004, 2006) as well as the constitutional features of the new regime (McGregor 1996, Fish 2001). In addition to that, important features of the political economy have been identified as influencing democratisation prospects, such as the politics of partial reform (Hellman 1998) as well as the character of the privatisation process (Gould 2003). In the case of European post-communist countries, economic and political dimensions of regime change were frequently compounded by the dimension of state-building. In contexts of state-building it was argued that democratisation would be more protracted and tenuous because the imperative of state-building would take precedence over necessary political and economic reform (Offe 1991). Finally, when analysing circumstances surrounding regime change in the early 1990s, apart from domestic conditions, a number of scholars have looked at the influence of the international environment and the role of the European Union in particular. The influence of the EU in post-communist democratisation has been operationalised in terms of political conditionality (Smith 1997, Vachudova 2005, Schimmelfennig 2005, Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier 2005) and the different types of leverage that this conditionality entails (Vachudova 2005).

Let me now introduce the main features of the proposed theoretical framework. First of all, modernisation theory is placed centre stage, which has rarely been the case in post-communist studies. As was argued, post-communist studies appeared at a time when modernisation scholars were eclipsed by the mode of transition literature that developed through the study of Southern European and Latin American countries in the 1980s. While post-communist scholars introduced various historical legacies into accounts of democratisation, they rarely referred to modernisation explicitly as a driver of democratisation. In contrast, this study proposes that socioeconomic development together with key features of the communist regime represent the conditioning parameters for political choice at the moment of regime change. In addition, it is argued that the combination of modernisation preconditions with communist regime types as developed by Kitschelt et al (1999) effectively absorbs many other historical legacies that have featured as candidates for explanations of democratisation.

The second part of the framework focuses on features of the political process during the early 1990s, where I analyse political party system dynamics and the role that the European Union has played in democracy promotion. Here again a number of potentially important features of emergent political institutions are considered, only to show that party system dynamics have been crucial in engendering vicious and virtuous circles of democratisation after regime change. I engage with excellent scholarship on the role of political party systems in postcommunist democratisation, but I extend it to argue for the unique importance that authoritarian party dominance during the initial period of regime change has had on subsequent democratisation. Furthermore, while in looking for explanations of political phenomena, standard comparative politics studies start and finish in the domestic political arena, the theoretical framework presented here includes the role of the EU in post-communist Europe in an attempt to relate the influence of external democracy promotion with domestic factors that drive democratisation. The main argument put forward is that in the case of Southeast Europe the EU's standard toolkit for democracy promotion was less of a good fit than was the case in Central Eastern Europe.

Finally, since this analysis includes former Yugoslav countries, one cannot avoid engaging with the literature that argues for the primacy of state-building, the imperative of a unified nation state and the obstacles to democratisation in multiethnic contexts. These literatures are engaged in another attempt to figure out which features of various existing hypotheses overlap or complement each other in order to enable a comparative analysis across cases. The concept of disputed statehood is put forward, which enables clear differentiation between cases where acquiring statehood did not have lasting consequences on successful democratisation, versus cases where statehood was disputed either by internal minorities or the kin state. The goal is to formulate a theoretical framework that enables cross-case analysis without simplifying the tremendously complex process of post-communist democratisation beyond what is reasonable. The framework, which includes historical preconditions, party system dynamics, EU influence and the problems of disputed statehood, is complex enough to allow for the possibility that countries may have democratised more or less successfully through various combinations of factors. At the same time, the theoretical framework attempts to keep the argument simple enough to endure rigorous formal analysis using fsQCA techniques. In the tradition of comparative politics scholarship, rival explanatory factors are tested against each other in the search for configurations that best explain divergent democratisation trajectories in post-communist Europe.

In the subsequent sections structural factors influencing democratisation are reviewed first, focusing on modernisation theory, the role of historical regime legacies and finally state-building and war which already move the analysis from history towards contingency. This is followed by the exposition of contingent conditions surrounding regime change, focusing on political party dynamics and the role of the EU as external democracy promoter.

Modernisation theory

The initial theory proposed by Lipset (1959) and developed by Moore (1966) and others remains an anchor for discussing modernisation theory. Apart from Duverger's law, the link between economic development and democracy is the strongest empirical generalisation comparative politics has produced to date (Boix 2003). Lipset's key proposition is that the more economically developed the country, the better the chances of democracy. Regarding causal mechanisms, Lipset leaned on Lerner (1958), according to whom the causal chain proceeds as follows: industrialisation brings urbanisation, and in the 'urban matrix' literacy and media grow simultaneously. Literacy in turn is deemed crucial in the development of political participation (i.e. voting). To this analysis Lipset added the role of the middle class as crucial in democratisation, with its demand for moderate politics, and the fact that the growth of civil society seems to be a function of the level

of income and opportunities for leisure. Moore (1966) and Lindblom (1977) were among prominent social scientists who reasserted this essentially Marxist connection between a strong bourgeoisie and democracy (Arat 1988). This thesis on the role of the middle class, together with Lerner's causal chain, was later taken up by Huntington (1991). Lipset subsequently also revisited his framework, reemphasising the importance of the middle class which 'can stand up against the state and provide resources to independent groups' (1994: 2).

In modernisation theory, the specification of causal mechanisms linking economic development to democratisation emphasises the role of political culture, a concept that has its origin in citizenship theory and which historically evolved from political liberalism and Lockean ideas of preserving liberties from the state (Somers 1995: 115). It is the middle class that is charged with the historical task of engendering an independent social sphere, i.e. civil society, and the public arena. Parsons and Habermas are most responsible for the theoretical elaboration of the concept and its link to democracy. While for Parsons political culture is defined as internalised values, for Habermas it has an institutional dimension, referring to 'public meeting places, newspapers, and material expressions of public opinion' (Somers 1995: 124). However, in both conceptions relationships among free individuals are the motor for the creation of the public sphere, a civil society which stands for autonomy and plurality of social relations that can stand against the coercions of both state and market (Wood 1995). From this it follows that a certain level of socioeconomic development which releases a person from the everyday toil of work is a necessary precondition for the development of democratic values and principles (ibid., also Howard 2003).

Inglehart and Welzel (2005) explain how the causal mechanism between economic development and the demand for democracy operates on an individual level. What they conceptualise as a process of transformation towards post-material value systems starts with socioeconomic development, by raising incomes, educational levels and diversifying human interaction, reducing 'constraints on autonomous human choice' in the economic, cognitive and social domains (ibid.: 151). This in turn nurtures a sense of existential security and autonomy, leading people to give priority to humanistic self-expression values that emphasise emancipation, liberty, diversity and autonomy. In the final step, increased subjective aspirations lead people to demand institutions that allow them to act according to their own choices, or in other words to seek civil and political rights that define substantive aims of democracy as it is here understood, together with political equality. According to the authors, Lerner (1958), Lipset (1959), Dahl (1971) and Huntington (1991) relied on the same causal mechanism in their explanations of why economic development is conducive to democracy, only earlier empirical testing of this proposition was not possible due to lack of survey data on a wide range of societies. In their longitudinal analysis of Third Wave countries the authors show an almost perfect correlation between self-expression values and the quality of democracy that is practiced in a given society (2005).

The link between democracy and economic development uncovered by Lipset was replicated by numerous studies in the following decades, generating the largest body of research on any topic in comparative politics (Przeworski and Limongi 1997). Przeworski and Limongi's (1997) study in turn provided the most referenced contemporary work revising the original framework. Their analysis supported the exogenous version of the theory, according to which economic development plays a role after democracy is established, while disputing the role of economic development in leading to democracy. However, their distinction between endogenous and exogenous versions of the hypothesis was subsequently challenged. According to Boix and Stokes (2003) socioeconomic development helps existing democracies survive and new democracies emerge. Inglehart and Welzel (2005) also refuted Przeworski and Limongi's finding, using their own data. As a result, the current state of play with respect to empirical verifications of this relationship provides support for both the argument according to which socioeconomic development contributes to the emergence of democracy, and the version according to which it increases the chances of democracy's survival once it has been established.

While the relationship between socioeconomic development and democracy stands firm against repeated empirical scrutiny, the positive link between capitalism and democracy has been empirically disputed. Williamson and Rodrik have argued that more economic openness leads to increased inequality (in Landa and Kapstein 2001), which in effect means that economic inequality that is inherent to capitalism hinders rather than aids democratisation. Boix (2003) has argued that democracy prevails under conditions of economic equality, while a recent study by Acemoglu and Robinson (2006) established that democracy is more likely to consolidate in more equal societies. Similarly, Ziblatt's recent work on First Wave democracies stresses how socioeconomic inequality 'can be a major and underappreciated barrier to the long term process of democratisation' (2009: 1). Other empirical works stress that economic inequality produces divisive social differences, weakens community life, reduces trust and increases violence (Wilkinson and Pickett 2010), all of which are detrimental to democratisation. These findings provide important qualifications to the initial enthusiasm over capitalism's effect on democratisation and emphasise the importance of economic equality for democracy. Therefore, while this study does not deal with the relationship between capitalism and democracy directly, it is important to stress that the modernisation hypothesis as it is used here does not assume that it is the introduction of capitalism that furthers democratisation. Socioeconomic development is a wider phenomenon, and the modernisation hypothesis simply states that a person needs to relieved of the daily toil of securing her material existence in order to participate in the life of the political community. This allows for economic development to stand apart from the concept of capitalism, since economic development may be (and historically has been) achieved through various modes of production. Such a formulation unfortunately leaves aside the fact that economic and political freedoms are closely related, but such is the fate of analytical endeavours. The analysis of the complex implications that the simultaneous introduction of democracy and capitalism has had on post-communist societies over the last twenty years is something I hope to tackle in future research

As has been shown, claiming that economic development advances democratisation is a hollow proposition without an attempt to specify the causal mechanism, and specifying the causal mechanism has led to the application of macro concepts of civil society and the middle class, or self-expression values as the equivalent micro-foundational concept. What lies at the heart of the causal mechanism that links economic development with democracy is a large enough independent social sphere, which is necessary to limit political power and create bottom-up societal pressure for democratisation. In the context of communist Eastern Europe civil society stood for opposition forces against state oppression (Wood 1995). While the concept of the middle class does not travel to the post-communist setting unharmed, its crucial features stand. In the post-communist setting the middle class stands for social groups which have sufficient education and material means to generate an independent public sphere and pressure the state to establish an impartial rule of law system that upholds human rights. Additionally, the presence of an urban middle class plays a key role in breaking down clientelism and patronage as a model of party-citizen linkage (Kitschelt et al 1999), which is of direct relevance for establishing a functioning system of rule of law. In Kitschelt's definition (1999) the middle class combines features of advanced education with higher income expectations, and creates pressure for the establishment of the rule of law. Henceforth, the empirical analysis of modernisation preconditions in the subsequent chapters relies on indicators of levels of economic development, urbanisation and literacy in the fourteen post-communist countries.

In the following sections the structural precondition of economic development is related to features of communist regimes as historical legacies that influence democratisation

Historical legacies

Already by mid-1995 it was possible to distinguish the more from the less successful democratisers in previously communist Europe (Kopstein and Reilly 2000, Vachudova 2005). Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovenia, Slovakia and the Baltic states had made significant progress, unlike the rest of Eastern Europe. Kopstein and Reilly (2000) wondered at the apparently complete overlap between being successful at democratisation and being close to the core of Western Europe. They undertook an empirical investigation of the effect that the distance from the European core had on the prospects of successful democratisation only to find that this relationship was actually more complex. As Darden and Grzymala Busse (2006) noticed, judging on proximity to Vienna and Berlin, Belarus should have been doing better than the Baltic states. It seems reasonable to assume that spatial distance is closely related to historical and cultural ties among states, as well as strength of norm diffusion among neighbours. Surely Slovenia's democratisation was aided by the fact that it is surrounded by Austria and Italy on its western borders, but this type of explanation loses power as one moves away from the elusive Western border.

The proximity factor probably overlaps with other structural cultural and political legacies of these states, which are investigated next. In the investigation of historical legacies, the main question is how far in the past is one willing to travel. Putnam (1993) famously traced the causal chain of divergent governance performance among Italian regions all the way back into the Middle Ages. I follow Kitschelt's advice (2003) of not incorporating causal factors which are either too close to the phenomenon of interest to effectively carry any explanatory weight, or go so far back into history that the unravelling of the supposed causal mechanisms poses an insurmountable obstacle. Hence the argument advanced here does not travel far back into previous centuries, but instead focuses on illuminating those historical legacies that can be tied to the type of causal mechanism proposed by modernisation theory. In that respect Kitschelt *et al*'s (1999) typology of communist regimes seems relevant.

Even though Kitschelt *et al* (1999) do not explain democratisation *per se*, but rather the features of post-communist party systems, their regime typology can be used to help explain subsequent democratisation trajectories. Their typology partly relies on establishing the extent to which the rule of law was present as a pre-communist tradition in each of the examined states, which links their work directly to this analysis. In addition to that, their regime typology aggregates several dimensions of historical political legacies that have been argued in the literature to play a role in the success of subsequent democratisation. Hence the application of this typology enables a simplification of the theoretical framework by reducing the number of analysed factors. Their regime typology is based on two pillars: the extent to which a formal bureaucracy existed within the communist regime, which was usually a vestige of the pre-communist democratic statehood experience, and the balance of power between communists and political society, to employ Ekiert's (1991) concept that refers to independent social and political movements and organisations.

The first regime type in their classification is patrimonial communism, in which rational bureaucratic institutionalisation in the state and party is low and instead political power is concentrated around a small clique or an individual ruler. Any opposition is repressed or co-opted, and there is effectively no separation between party and state. Such communist regimes evolved in rural societies, with weak cities and effectively no proletarian base. Having presided over heavy industrialisation, these regimes had no rivals in alternative visions of modernity. In other words, in these societies communism was the force that brought social progress, and it had widespread social legitimacy (Elster, Offe and Preuss 1998). On the eve of the moment that would bring regime change, patrimonial communist states faced 'no significant opposition movements except dispersed isolated dissident intellectuals, unable to produce a sustained discourse or organise a professional cadre advancing a new vision of political-economic modernity' (Kitschelt *et al* 1999: 24).

The second regime type Kitschelt *et al* (1999) identify is national-accommodative communism, crafted to capture regimes that had a modestly professional bureaucracy but for which the central defining feature was an accommodative relationship between the communist party and the political

society (ibid.). This was especially relevant in attempting to accommodate appeals to national autonomy with the official communist ideology, as was the case in the more developed republics of Yugoslavia: Croatia and Slovenia. Similar features were present in countries under Soviet domination that emerged from semi-authoritarian interwar polities with established interest groups and political mobilisation, such as the Baltic states. Instead of relying on a strong working class base, in national-accommodative regimes communist parties had to balance urban-rural conflicts. The cognitive legacy, as the authors call it, of nationalaccommodative regimes is the experience of conflicting visions of modernity, with communism never acquiring hegemonic ideological power.

Finally, bureaucratic-authoritarian communism is characterised by a powerful rule-guided bureaucratic machine on the one hand, and a harsher oppressive relationship of the communist party towards opposition forces on the other. These regimes relied on a technocratic class of professionals in the bureaucracy and a hierarchically stratified communist party. However, with respect to accommodating potential outside challengers, these regimes were rigid and oppressive, tolerating no political diversity. This type of regime occurred in countries with considerable democratic experience in the interwar period and an early, more advanced industrialisation, such as the Czech Republic and, to some extent, Poland. Hence, while in patrimonial communist regimes opposition was feeble and easily quenched, in bureaucratic-authoritarian regimes the opposition was potentially much more powerful, but the state was comparatively much stronger and able to repress political pluralism. With respect to cognitive legacy, these regimes carried within them the most pluralistic array of competing models of development.

How does Kitschelt's communist regime typology relate to other historical conditions that have been advanced in the literature? Kitschelt et al (1999) acknowledge that their regime typology relies on modernisation theory in that their regime types imply a movement from an agrarian to an industrial society. However they also argue that by the 1970s and 1980s the relationship between regime type and level of economic development was no longer close (ibid.: 28). Initially economically more backward regimes managed to catch up and it was the political institutions of communist rule rather than levels of economic development that were key determinants of subsequent political transformation strategies. Since the proposed theoretical framework in this study incorporates both modernisation preconditions and Kitschelt's regime typology, the relative strength of these two factors will be assessed empirically in subsequent chapters.

Another factor that has been identified as important for long term democratisation is pre-communist experience with democracy. While all 14 countries studied have had at least some type of experiment with multi-party elections in the interwar period of the 1920s and 1930s, in Albania it lasted less than a year, while in 1918 Czechoslovakia had established a parliamentary democracy and welfare state that was put to an end only by Nazi occupation in 1938 (Berend 2001). However, how does one elaborate a causal chain that is over 100 years long? Kitschelt's regime typology starts from pre-communist experiences with democracy but develops into an argument on how communist regimes evolved and influenced politics and society until the eve of regime change. Hence previous experience with democracy is not introduced as a separate explanatory condition in the theoretical framework. Instead, Kitschelt's typology of communist regimes is assumed to capture what is left of the pre-communist democratic experience. Another argument about the importance of historical legacies for democratisation focuses on state capacity and the strength of civil society at the time of regime change as key for subsequent democratisation prospects (Ekiert 1991). Again, both of these dimensions are incorporated in Kitschelt's typology. As was described above, the two pillars of Kitschelt's typology are state capacity and the strength of opposition groups in society. In summary, Kitschelt's typology of regimes enables the aggregation of several important historical and political legacies that characterised the fourteen country cases at the moment of regime change.

To summarise this section – numerous historical legacies were identified and reviewed for their ability to illuminate democratic development in Southeast and Central Eastern Europe over the last twenty years. The analysis has shown that many of the identified dimensions overlap and can be aggregated into more complex concepts. While it has been argued that the distance from Western capitals or previous democratic experience hardly have much explanatory power on their own, the concept of modernisation which rests on economic and social development indicators on the one hand, and Kitschelt's regime typology which rests on state capacity and civil society on the other, are taken forward as two crucial structural preconditions in explaining democratisation in European post-communist countries.

State-building and war

The emergence of new nation states in post-communist Europe initially appeared 'extraordinary and undesirable to Western democracies' even though the nation state is the form within which all modern societies evolved (Lukic 2010). Territorial integrity and a clear delineation of borders have been repeatedly advocated as prerequisites for a democratic transition, which has been taken to mean that newly emerged states face increased obstacles to democratisation (Offe 1994, Linz and Stepan 1996, Rupnik 1999; quoted in Kasapović 2000).

Apart from arguing that state-building complicates democratisation, some scholars go further and say that ethnically diverse societies face permanent problems. Ethnically diverse societies are said to be worse candidates for sustained democratisation than more homogenous societies (Rabushka and Shepsle 1972, Horowitz 1985, 1993, Dahl 1998). Roeder (1999: 868) also exhibits scepticism about the sustainability of multiethnic states, arguing that crisis and instability are inherent in power sharing arrangements and that they 'contain the seed of their own destruction'. Therefore, the argument is that multiethnicity and democracy are incompatible in the long run. However, this still leaves open the question of how multiethnicity complicates democratisation. Vachudova and Snyder (1996) paint a more nuanced picture of how ethnic diversity played into democratisation in post-communist Europe. In a nutshell, their argument is that in multiethnic states,

in times of poor economic performance, ethnic nationalism becomes a convenient political platform for portraying negative outcomes in zero sum logic, especially in countries with a sizeable minority where ethnic difference can be framed as a threat. According to the authors, this scenario played out in Bulgaria, Romania and Slovakia in the 1990s. Post-Yugoslav cases support this reasoning: the rise of Milošević and his ethno-nationalist rhetoric at the end of 1980s also coincided with unsuccessful economic reform and dire times for the Yugoslav economy. In the complex multinational federation where no ethnic group constituted an outright majority, playing the card of ethnic nationalism proved explosive. Once it became clear that the federation was not going to survive and the political game assumed zero sum logic, the ethnic nationalist platform was ready made and convenient for the subsequent process of state building. As a result, the secessionist states became 'entangled in a mortal embrace with their own ethnic nationalisms' (Diamandouros and Larrabee 2000: 34).

Adopting a cross country perspective, what can be made of the two arguments according to which both state-building and ethnic diversity thwart successful democratisation? Let us first examine the argument according to which the context of newly acquired statehood complicates democratisation. Of the fourteen countries studied, nine are new states, as can be seen in Table 2.1 below.

Table 2.1: New and old states in post-communist Europe

New states	Croatia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia FYR, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia
Old states	Albania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, Romania

The label of a new state as it is used here refers to those states that in the period 1989–1991 established independence within new state borders, irrespective of whether they had flirted with independence in the interwar period of the 1920s and 1930s or not. Analogously, the label of old state refers to those countries that in the period 1989-1991 did not acquire independence and change state borders. If the two groups of states in Table 2.1 are related to democratisation data presented in Chapter 1, it is clear that both new and old states have exhibited either types of democratic trajectory. The Baltic states acquired independence at the beginning of the 1990s but they were among the fastest democratisers of the whole group of European post-communist countries. Conversely, among the so-called old states we find the successful Hungary and Poland, as well as the laggard Bulgaria, Romania and Albania. Simply establishing whether a post-communist country is a new state tells us practically nothing about whether it has successfully democratised. The fate of new states in post-communist Europe has been quite divergent and it is necessary to look for alternative ways in which state-building has affected democratisation prospects.

Similarly, while some ethnically diverse societies have experienced grave difficulties in democratisation, such as the case of former Yugoslavia, this

Table 2.2: Ethnic composition of European post-communist states

Country	Last communist census	Post-communist census (in %)	Year of census/ Estimate*
Hungary	98.5	/	1990c
Poland	98.2	/	1985e
Albania	97.9	/	1989c
Czech Republic	94.4	94.4	1983e/1991c
Romania	88.6	89.5	1985e/1992c
Slovenia	87.8	83	1991c/2002c
Slovakia	86.6	85.7	1992c
Bulgaria	[no data]	85.7	1992c
Lithuania	79.6	81.4	1989c/1996e
Croatia	78.1	89.63	1991c/2001c
Macedonia	64.6	66.6	1991c/1994c
Serbia and Montenegro	62.6	/	1991c
Estonia	61.5	64.6	1989c/1996e
Latvia	52.0	55.1	1989c/1996e
Yugoslavia	36.3	/	1985e

Sources: Roeder (1999: 859) CSB Croatia Census 2001, SB Slovenia Census 2002

Note: c stands for census, e for estimate

relationship is anything but straightforward. As Table 2.2 shows, most of the fifteen European post-communist countries have had sizeable ethnic minorities, but in spite of that they have exhibited widely divergent democratisation trajectories.

Only Hungary, Poland and Albania among the group of fourteen can claim substantially homogenous populations. In spite of that Albania did not avoid institutional breakdown and widespread violence in the late 1990s. At the other end of the continuum is former Yugoslavia, an extreme example of a federation with effectively no majority population, which experienced violent dissolution. Nevertheless, the wide majority of European post-communist countries have substantial minorities but have in spite of that managed to establish rule of law guarantees of civil rights to their citizens. This includes even the Baltic states which face large Russian minorities, coupled with troublesome inter-ethnic history and a strong kin state. At the same time, it cannot be overlooked that ethnic politics played a very prominent role across post-communist Europe, from Macedonia and Romania to Slovakia and the Baltic. Ethnicity is one of many potential sources of the fear rhetoric that can be used in political competition, and the presence of a substantial ethnic minority facilitates such divisive political strategies. However, in the absence of internal minorities, these threats can be framed as coming from economic migrants, or outside threats from other nations or organisations, as current trends in rightwing movements across Western Europe aptly demonstrate.

Overall it stands that multiethnic new states may have a harder time democratising, but whether the ethnic divide becomes an obstacle to democratisation is conditional on whether there is a dispute between the minority and the majority in a given state. In Rustow's (1970: 350) account, the only condition for democracy is a unified nation state, where national unity means that the vast majority of citizens in a polity have no reservations as to which political community they belong to. The main obstacles to achieving consolidation in plural societies arise therefore due to disputes over the boundaries of the state, its character, and the question regarding who has a right to citizenship (Linz and Stepan 1996). Linz and Stepan call this the stateness problem (ibid.). Conflicts are 'reduced when empirically almost all the residents of a state identify with one subjective idea of the nation, and that nation is virtually contiguous with the state' (ibid.: 25). The congruence between the polity and the demos is therefore one of the conditions for successful consolidation of democracy. If a significant group of people 'does not accept claims on its obedience as legitimate (...), this presents a serious problem for democratic transition and even more serious problems for democratic consolidation' (ibid.: 27). Among the nine new states in this study, some were cases of disputed statehood by internal minorities (Croatia, Macedonia and Serbia) and others by politics of territorial expansion on the part of the kin state (Serbia). In these cases minority issues spilled out of the framework of institutional conflict into violence, and in such circumstances the democratisation process was effectively derailed for a longer period of time. Croatia had gone through war with Serbia (initially Yugoslavia), which ended in 1995. The country re-established full territorial sovereignty in 1998 and after that moment two countries in post-communist Europe remained with an open stateness problem: Serbia and Macedonia.

In Serbia the national question remains open due to continuous challenges to its state borders (Zakošek 2008). Throughout the 1990s Serbia (at that time Yugoslavia) unsuccessfully led wars in Croatia, Bosnia and Kosovo - morphing into a 'defeated aggressor', which had a strong negative impact on its state identity. In addition to that, it had been dealing with resistance in its Kosovo province, with Kosovar claims over time growing into demands for secession. After the 1999 NATO intervention, Serbia no longer engaged in violent conflicts but it still experienced the loss of further parts of its territory. Montenegro left the union with Serbia in 2006, while in 2008 Kosovo declared independence. Though

^{1.} Author's interview with Srda Popović. Interview No. 10, November 2010

Serbia accepted the secession of Montenegro, it still disputes the sovereignty of Kosovo. The two decades of undefined state borders have resulted in the national identity question dominating the political agenda in that country.

In Macedonia during the 1990s the Albanian minority disputed their constitutional status in the newly formed state, keeping the stateness problem open for a whole decade. After the inter-ethnic conflict was resolved through the Ohrid Agreement in 2001, the name dispute with Greece took over as the main obstacle to Macedonia's full statehood. As a result, as in Serbia, in Macedonia questions of national identity still dominate the domestic political agenda. Due to long term disputes to their statehood, in Serbia and Macedonia the ethnic question exerts strong effects on the character of political party competition and the perseverance of authoritarian parties that ground their platforms in ethno-nationalist appeals. Similarly, disputed statehood has helped strengthen authoritarian features of political culture in these countries, stifling liberal and pluralist values, respect for human rights and principles of legality. A similar dynamic had occurred in Croatia during the 1990s, but during the last decade societal dynamics and those of the party system have experienced the strengthening of pluralist democratic values.

In summary, this analysis shows that state-building on its own has not exerted a negative effect on the prospect of democracy, while multiethnicity was shown to carry potential for destabilisation. The point is that democratisation faced serious obstacles only in cases where multiethnic populations led to disputes over statehood and created violent conflicts. The fact that in post-communist Europe disputed statehood has led to war introduces the need for the next set of arguments which relate the state of war to democratisation prospects. In attempting to review literature that theorises the relationship between war and democratisation, I join Bermeo (2003) in her surprise over the fact that the democratisation literature leaves the connection to war either wholly neglected or seriously under-theorised:

This is perplexing because so many new and renewed democracies emerge in the context of war. Of the 73 democracies founded after 1945 that still exist today, over half emerged either in the immediate aftermath of a war or as a means of bringing an ongoing war to an end. (Bermeo 2003: 159)

The few existing theoretical propositions regarding the influence of war on democratisation focus on its authoritarian nature as antithetical to democratic development. Horowitz (2003) proposes three main negative effects of war on democratisation: it distracts governments from reform agendas and provides cover for political repression and cronyism; it facilitates greater accumulation of arbitrary executive power; and it can lead to long term economic isolation and disruption. Zakošek (2008) puts forward a similar argument that focuses on the political effects of war. According to him, violent conflicts lead to authoritarian centralisation, fostering hierarchy and discipline, while thwarting deliberation, political competition and full realisation of civil and political rights. Similarly, Pridham (2000: 1) argued that 'experience until 1995 tended rather to reinforce authoritarian practices if not institutions, while flouting human rights and highlighting the breakdown of pluralist tolerance'. According to Fish (2001:

59), war may also spark democratic reversal 'since the human and material costs of war may reduce popular support for a new democratic government and the requirements of prosecuting war may lessen state officials' tolerance for dissent'. Wars may also enhance the popular appeal of antidemocratic forces, including chauvinists and nationalist extremists.

In writing more specifically about Yugoslavia, Ramet argued (1996: 215) that war 'has allowed the respective ruling parties [in Serbia and Croatia] to engage in seductive oversimplifications of complex issues, to marginalise representatives of minority interests (whether ethnic or otherwise), and to harness nationalism as a false principle of legitimation'. In addition to that, war often meant a postponement of programmes that might have enjoyed higher priority in times of peace. Like Pridham, Fish, Horowitz and Zakošek, Ramet argues that 'war has reinforced a tendency towards authoritarianism (...) and has muted political opposition (ibid.: 319). Using the example of Croatia, she argues that as a result of the war nepotism appeared, the parliament was marginalised, key media outlets were taken over, and human rights abuses of the Serbian minority were taking place. Similarly, Dvornik (2009) argues that wars across Yugoslavia stunted pluralist tendencies that emerged during the 1980s, and reinforced ethno-nationalist identification. Finally, Batt (2007) concentrates on the effect that war may have on state exploitation. She argues that war set the stage for crony capitalism which went much further than in Central Eastern Europe. While in CEE corrupt privatisations faced constraints by more robust legal and institutional checks, as well as international scrutiny, in SEE the process unfolded in the absence of almost any scrutiny (ibid.).

While these propositions that elaborate the influence of war on democratisation seem plausible and supported by anecdotal case evidence, any cross country empirical analyses that assess the effect of war against other factors influencing democratisation are very difficult to find. Since violent conflict occurred in several of the fourteen cases in this study, the condition of violently disputed statehood is included in the theoretical framework and analysed empirically in subsequent chapters.

Moving from regime type and modernisation arguments towards disputed state-building processes and the eruption of violent conflicts in Southeast Europe has already shifted the analysis of explanatory factors towards the contingency that surrounded the period of the early 1990s. In the remaining part of this chapter two other key factors are reviewed whose specific morphology during the 1990s have exerted a longlasting effect on democratisation trajectories of European post-communist countries. The first one refers to the nature of political party dynamics in the initial period after regime change, and the other introduces an international perspective to events in post-communist Europe by focusing on the influence that the European Union has exerted on democratisation prospects of the fourteen analysed cases.

Political party dynamics

The emergence of many new polities and the comprehensive reform of political, economic and social institutions that started in the early 1990s in post-communist Europe represented a vast laboratory for institutional scholars in political science. Many arguments from earlier studies of Latin America and Southern Europe regarding the effects of political institutions on democratisation gained new testing grounds. While scholars who studied regime change focused on institutional choice. those who were interested in democratisation more often observed institutions as environmental constraints on actors' choices. Such work falls within historical institutionalism, where primary emphasis is placed on institutions as sources of constraints. In this strand of the literature political institutions are conceptualised as explanatory factors, rather than outcomes to be explained (Hall and Taylor 1996). The bulk of the work in this field has been devoted to three key institutions: constitutional frameworks (presidentialism versus parliamentarianism), electoral systems and political party systems.

The presidentialism versus parliamentary debate is long and undecided. Looking for a way out of this deadlock, in his analysis of post-communist states Fish (2001) claims that the key common institutional feature among democratic laggards is power concentrated in the office of the president. He refers to such a system as a superpresidency (2001: 69). In developing this argument Fish builds on Migdal (1988), who argued that rulers possess an anti-institutional urge, disabling even the institutions that they themselves build. Strong rulers create arbitrary concentrations of power, which is detrimental to political competition and the dispersion of power which are necessary for democratic institution building. According to Fish, 'a Madisonian approach to institutions, rather than simple avoidance of presidentialism, provides the firmest basis for avoiding democratic erosion' (2001: 88). This focus on concentration of power is directly relevant for the types of power morphology outlined in Chapter 1 as happening in post-communist context. Parliamentarism, with its inbuilt division of power, contains the prerequisites for strengthening new democratic states and enabling pluralisation and democratisation, while concentration of power in the presidency has a disabling effect on emergent institutions of monitoring and mutual control.

Empirical research confirms the relationship between strong presidencies and weak democracies and the evidence from post-communist countries seems to strongly support it. Henceforth, in this analysis countries are selected by excluding political systems characterised by super-presidentialism. Political systems with this characteristic, which would include Russia and the large part of the former Soviet world, are understood as overdetermined for a slow and laggardly democratisation. European post-communist states on the other hand adopted either fully parliamentary or semi-presidential constitutional frameworks, instituting formal mechanisms for political competition and division of power as crucial components of democratic regimes. Therefore, they are considered as containing formal preconditions for the development of democracy, which then sharpens the question of why we observe such diversity with respect to democratisation advances within constitutionally similar systems. At the same time, as was argued in Chapter 1, the type of constitutional framework is treated as a scope condition, or in other words, excluding countries that exhibit the features of superpresidentialism allows for reducing the number of explanatory factors in the theoretical framework.

Studies of electoral systems have largely focused on the ways in which electoral systems affect party systems (e.g. Katz 1980, Taagepera and Shugart 1989). Lijphart focused scholars' attention on the crucial relationship between types of government, which results from electoral formulas, and the functioning of democracy (1986). Taking part in a wide debate on preferred constitutional solutions for the institutional laboratory of post-communist Europe, Liphart (1991: 163) argued that the combination of parliamentarism with a proportional representation electoral system should be 'especially attractive to newly democratic and democratising countries'. According to him, features of the electoral system affect the makeup of the party system, the type of executive and the nature of executivelegislative relations. More specifically, PR electoral systems lead to multi-partyism, coalition governments and more equal executive-legislative relations, which are features conducive to power sharing. Similarly to Fish's (2001) argument about how avoiding a strong presidency helps establish checks and balances among branches of government, Lijphart argues that a PR electoral system divides power and that this is good for new democracies. And indeed, almost all European postcommunist countries instituted proportional representation electoral systems. Of the countries included in this study, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Macedonia, Poland, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia and Romania have fully PR systems, while Albania, Hungary and Lithuania have mixed systems (Birch 2005). Of the latter group, the Lithuanian electoral system is 50 per cent PR, the Hungarian 54 per cent PR, while only the Albanian system is dominantly majoritarian (ibid.). Therefore, the presented overview of constitutional frameworks and electoral systems shows that the case selection has been done in order to treat the two potential factors as scope conditions. By excluding majoritarian electoral systems and superpresidencies, the analysis focuses on fourteen country cases that had the institutional prerequisites for the development of multipartyism and of robust parliamentary opposition. Whether this indeed happened depended on the overall structural context. The following sections explore the role of political party dynamics in post-communist democratisation.

Holding free and fair elections which result in peaceful alternation of political parties in power represents a baseline for classifying a country as democratic. Bellamy (2007: 5) argues that party competition 'institutionalises a balance of power that encourages the various sides to hear and harken to each other, promoting mutual recognition through the construction of compromises'. Indeed, political parties can be thought of as central institutions of democracy (Blondel 1999) and they have an exceptional role to play in representative systems since they organise the critical citizen-elite bonds through the electoral process (Kitschelt et al 1999). The structure and interaction of political parties are 'the most significant variables which contribute to the consolidation or failure of the political systems of democratic polities' (Elster, Offe and Preuss 1998: 110). In addition to that, the role of political party systems is of particular significance in post-communist Europe, where democratisation occurred after a lengthy and extensive one-party mobilisation (Lewis 2001, Sitter 2002).

Perhaps the most recurrent argument in post-communist democratisation scholarship is the one about the importance of political party competition for democracy (Vachudova and Hooghe 2009). Some of the best scholarship in comparative politics has been written precisely on the relationship between party systems, EU accession and democracy in post-communist Europe (Grzymala Busse 2002, 2007, Vachudova 2005, Schimmelfennig 2005). There are several points that scholars agree on as relevant for developing political party competition in post-communist countries: the exit of the communist party from power at the first multiparty election, the existence of a strong enough democratic opposition to take its place, the prompt reform of the former communist party into a modern Social Democratic party after losing office, and the subsequent regular alternation of political parties in power (e.g. Bunce 1999, Fish 1998, Vachudova 2005, Grzymala Busse 2002, 2007). Hellman (1998) famously encapsulated the essence of the competitiveness argument: where politicians were most vulnerable to electoral pressures, countries adopted and sustained the highest level of reform. Conversely, in countries where governments were insulated from electoral pressures, there was only partial reform. The dynamic of reform was thwarted by initial winners, who drew rents from the partially reformed system. Instead of supporting reforms, 'the short-term winners have often sought to stall the economy in a partial reform equilibrium that generates concentrated rents for themselves, while imposing high costs on the rest of society' (1998: 204, also Aslund 2007). Counterintuitively, the argument goes, it was in the most competitive political systems that necessary reforms were initiated and sustained. A competitive political party system therefore seems to hold the key to strengthening the system of checks and balances, and sustaining reform efforts – which makes it a major factor in the democratisation of post-communist polities.

Two recent studies, Grzymala Busse's *Rebuilding Leviathan* (2007) and O'Dwyer's *Runaway State Building* (2006), put forward the argument according to which party system competitiveness helped curb state politicisation. Both scholars were concerned with explaining why Central Eastern European countries experienced various degrees of state exploitation, and they proposed that the more competitive the party system was, the less state abuse happened. While the two authors aim primarily to explain the influence of party system competition on state capture, their theoretical argument seems pertinent for establishing the relationship between party system dynamics and advances in democratisation as it is here conceptualised. As was argued in Chapter 1, problems of corruption and state capture may be understood as the inverse measurement of the extent to which democratic polities have succeeded in establishing functioning rule of law systems to protect their citizens' civil liberties.

The concept of political party competition refers to a party system where the incumbents are faced with a political opposition that 'offers a clear, plausible and critical governing alternative that threatens the governing coalition with

replacement' (Grzymala Busse 2007: 1). A strong opposition can monitor and influence the incumbent's behaviour, and it poses a threat of replacement, which should have the effect of inducing more accountable behaviour by shifting the preference of incumbents towards strengthening formal institutions (ibid.). In other words, if a party in power can plausibly imagine being voted out of office in the forthcoming election, it will have the incentive to strengthen formal institutions so that it does not get a raw deal once out of power. Vachudova (2005) applies the logic of political competition to argue that political competition at the moment of regime change determined whether European post-communist countries embarked on a democratic trajectory. This is an extension of her earlier argument (1996, with Snyder). The quality of political competition is determined, she argues, by the presence or absence of an opposition to communism strong enough to take power at the moment of regime change, and secondly the presence or absence of a reformed communist party. This is basically the same argument that Grzymala Busse makes, but Vachudova explicates the essential link between political party competition and democratisation.

The arguments that were just reviewed emphasise the importance of the critical juncture at the moment of regime change for subsequent democratisation trajectories. Whether a new democracy sets off on a virtuous path of reform depends to an extent on whether at least two strong political alternatives start competing for power right from the first multi-party election. Their alternation in government as a source of mutual restraint is considered to have a strong positive effect on the development of democracy. Conversely, in the absence of competition at that critical juncture of the first few rounds of elections, new regimes spiralled into vicious circles of corruption, state capture and partial reform. These arguments seem to capture well the diverse fates of, for instance, Poland on the one hand or Romania on the other. However, what this argument leaves out is propositions about what should happen in cases where political competition evolved gradually, after key features of the new regime were already in place. Also, it leaves open the question about what should happen if competition was present, but it took place among nondemocratic political parties which only declaratively supported formal democratic institutions while their governance practices ran counter to the establishment of rule of law. In order to extend the explanation regarding the influence that political party systems had on democratisation in Southeast Europe, it is important to introduce the concept of political party constellation.

Schimmelfennig (2005) and Schimmelfennig, Engert and Knobel (2005, 2006) use the concept of political party constellation to capture the extent to which major parties operate within democratic principles and they explore the relationship of party system constellation with democratisation and European integration. While most political party systems, including those in Western Europe, have the experience of extremist parties with various types of undemocratic platforms (fascist, communist, ethno-nationalist etc.), historical experience shows that a democratic regime is incompatible with such parties becoming major parties; when this happened, authoritarian regimes emerged such as in interwar Germany and Italy. Now, while Schimmelfennig (2005) and Schimmelfennig, Engert and Knobel (2005, 2006) refer to these types of parties as illiberal. I prefer to call them undemocratic or authoritarian since this better reflects the empirical operationalisations of the term as it is used here. Referring to parties as undemocratic stresses two important characteristics. First of all, it points to the fact that such parties advocate a platform and rhetoric that is exclusionary and polarising, whether towards ethnic or religious minorities, or based on some other type of ideological exclusionary principle such as xenophobia (Rose and Mishler 1998). Hence such parties in principle oppose the full attainment of civil liberties for all citizens, which are here defined as a fundamental substantive aim of democracy. Secondly, and more importantly, referring to parties as undemocratic stresses the fact that their practices undermine the intended effects of formal democratic institutions. Such practices would be a disregard for the law and arbitrary exercise of power, cronvism and the abuse of state resources, electoral fraud, influencing the media or harassing the opposition. They have been referred to in Chapter 1 under the three types of post-communist power morphology: concentration of power, the conversion of political into economic power and the weakening of state capacity through a politicisation of state administration and the public sector. This typology of undemocratic or authoritarian practices enables the tracing of ways in which political parties created obstacles to the establishment of rule of law systems, hence slowing down democratisation processes. Even though they operate in a democratic institutional setting and they declaratively endorse it, when they come into power such parties undermine the foundations of a democratic regime.

The typology of party constellations considers only the major parties in a given system, in other words, the two or three political parties that are large enough to lead a government. Schimmelfennig (2005) and Schimmelfennig, Engert and Knobel (2006) propose that countries with mixed party constellations, characterised by a combination of democratic and undemocratic major political parties, experienced prolonged periods of authoritarian rule in the 1990s, which delayed their democratisation. According to, Schimmelfennig (2005) where major parties were not undemocratic, democratic regimes should quickly consolidate, countries where undemocratic parties dominated should remain far off-mark, while countries with mixed constellations should experience stalled democratisation. It is only when all major parties adopt democratic rhetoric and practices that the trajectory can become progressive. Until then there is a back and forth movement depending on which party is in power or how international pressures oscillate.

Going back to the argument regarding party competition, when authoritarian parties operated in environments that provided them with free rein to rule over regime change, they subverted the establishment of the rule of law despite at the same time introducing formal democratic institutions. Here the focus on timing becomes of crucial importance. While the general argument postulates that party competition advances democratisation, the focus on party constellation emphasises the importance of the kind of political party that dominates the regime change period. If party competition develops after an authoritarian party has established its dominance over the political system, it will not be as effective in engendering positive democratisation effects. In other words, party constellation conditions the

relevance that party competitiveness has for democratisation. Party constellations without authoritarian parties as a rule engendered competitive party systems, and in such cases democratisation was fast and successful. This combination characterised Hungary, Poland and the Baltic states. Even when there was no frequent alternation in power, like in the Czech Republic and Slovenia, in the absence of authoritarian parties successful democratisation was not jeopardised. In contrast, in cases where regime change was dominated by authoritarian parties, competition among parties did not entail the mechanisms of mutual monitoring that would strengthen mutual checks and balances. Instead, in most cases they managed to secure power over several terms in office, firmly establishing their dominance over all aspects of the political system. This configuration of party dynamics characterised Bulgaria, Croatia, Macedonia, Romania, Slovakia and Serbia. Even in cases when parties competed and alternated in power, they perpetuated state capture and continued to subvert the rule of law. Such a competitive party system of authoritarian parties characterised Albania.

The length of time an authoritarian party stayed in office uninterrupted is argued to exacerbate negative effects on democratisation, but the key features here are governing practices that subvert the rule of law. If alternation in power does not bring a change to authoritarian disregard for the principle of legality, then the party competition mechanism does not carry the democratisation potential that previous scholarship argued for. Authoritarian party dominance over regime change has perpetuated detrimental practices from the period of state socialism as well as added new forms of abuse of power. It made possible the accumulation of arbitrary power in governing political parties, created a parallel web of informal networks of power and led to state capture. Secondly, it was based in a clientelist relationship between party and electorate, trading votes for various kinds of material benefits. Finally, it led to instrumentalisation of the law and subverted the division of power between branches of government.

In contexts where the emergent party system was embedded in a stronger framework of independent institutions and civil society that created pressure for democratisation, frequent alternation in power was of less consequence. Given the chance, political elites will abuse power, so this is not an argument about Slovenian elites being somehow inherently more moral than, for instance, Bulgarian ones. Instead, the key distinction is whether the societal and institutional framework is strong enough to guarantee mechanisms of control and scrutiny, which brings us back to the initial argument according to which structural preconditions of socioeconomic development draw the parameter within which political choice is exercised. The fact that in some post-communist countries the supply of parties was overwhelmingly devoted to democratic practices, while in others major political forces had strong authoritarian tendencies is the product of the level of economic and social development, as well as of previous regime legacies. More developed countries with stronger and more independent societies created better preconditions for a stand-off among two or more parties with essentially democratic agendas. Democratisation from below was stronger in such cases, where citizens demanded the upholding of their political and civil rights and created pressure for respect of rule of law. Such a context is characteristic of both the Czech Republic and Slovenia, and it might explain why the absence of alternation in power was of little consequence for their successful democratisation.

As the proposed theoretical framework unfolds, it reveals its configurational nature, in that explanatory factors offer meaningful accounts of divergent democratisation trajectories only when related to each other. Structural preconditions such as level of development and previous regime type contribute directly to contingent factors such as the supply of political parties and the character of their competition at the moment of regime change. The next sections introduce the final indispensable component of this complex picture: the influence that the EU has had on divergent democratisation trajectories of post-communist Europe.

EU as external democracy promoter

Among the international organisations that have been involved in post-communist Europe, the EU has been argued to have the most powerful set of resources for promoting democracy (Pravda 2001, Vachudova 2009), exercising 'tremendous influence on domestic politics' (Sedelmeier 2010: 519). With its potential for accepting countries as members, as the argument goes, the EU holds the stick as well as the carrot for coercing compliance with criteria it chooses to uphold. There is wide consensus in the literature that the promise of membership structures the relationship between aspiring members and the EU, and that this has acted as an important driver of democratisation in post-communist Europe (Vachudova 2005, Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier 2005, Grabbe 2006, Schimmelfennig, Engert and Knobel 2006, Schimmelfennig 2007, 2008, Rupnik 2002, 2007, De Ridder and Kochenov 2011). While not abandoning the argument according to which the EU has exerted a positive democratisation influence in post-communist Europe, I aim to show that the relationship between countries aspiring to become EU members and the EU as external democracy promoter is multifaceted and complex, for several reasons.

First of all, with the benefit of time passed it seems fair to say that existing literature has exhibited too much optimism with respect to the effects of EU democracy promotion. Writing around the time of the first Eastern Enlargement in mid-2000s, scholars saw convergence towards successful democratisation in initially authoritarian post-communist states such as Slovakia, Bulgaria and Romania, and attributed this change of trajectory to the positive influence of EU conditionality (Vachudova 2005, Schimmelfennig, Engert and Knobel 2006, Noutcheva and Bechev 2008). Looking back, it seems that the convergence trend needs to be reconsidered. Bulgaria and Romania, though EU members, have still not reached a satisfactory level of civil rights protection and functioning rule of law. According to the European Commission's most recent CVM report (2012), neither country has produced convincing results in areas of judicial reform, fight against corruption and organised crime. Political events since the coming of Victor Ponta's government to power in 2012 have prompted President of the European Commission, José Manuel Barroso to express major concern

regarding the government's respect for the rule of law.² The control verification mechanism (CVM) that was put in place after the two countries acceded to the EU in 2007 remains in place both for Romania and Bulgaria. In addition to that, Bulgaria's scores on the Nations in Transit dimension of judiciary framework and independence show backsliding (Figure 1.3), despite recent scholarly arguments against it (see Levitz and Pop-Eleches 2010). Similarly, while Serbia and Croatia have made important adjustments to their trajectories since 2000, opening up their membership perspective and signing up to the project of European integration, ten years later they are still struggling to establish functional rule of law systems. EU's involvement in Macedonia with respect to democratisation is anything but simple and the opinion of the European Commission issued on Albania in 2010 postponed accession negotiations for the undetermined future.

Many scholars agree that Central Eastern European states would have become consolidated democracies regardless of EU conditionality (Vachudova 2005, Schimmelfennig, Engert and Knobel 2006, Sedelmeier 2010). It is important to know that it was the CEE countries that initially raised the issue of membership and pushed the EU to commit to this goal (Schimmelfennig 2001, 2005a; Vachudova 2005). Schimmelfennig (2001, 2005b) argued that the EU's decision to enlarge could not be explained as the result of cost-benefit calculations. Instead, because the EU's legitimation rested on the ideology of a 'pan-European community of liberal democratic states' (Schimmelfennig 2001: 46), when this rhetoric was taken up by CEE states to stake their claim in the Union, the EU was rhetorically entrapped. After the CEE states adopted the EU's founding myth of pan-European liberal states to justify their interests on the grounds of a shared legitimacy, the EU conformed to its own norm and allowed for Eastern Enlargement (ibid.).

If CEE countries would have democratised anyway, then the strength of EU democratisation influence should be assessed against countries of Southeast Europe. If the test of this relationship is the extent to which these countries have managed to secure basic civil and political rights for their citizens, it seems that the EU has had only qualified success. This divergence in outcomes can be accounted for either by claiming that the EU has behaved differently towards some countries than to others; or by arguing that overall the EU has exercised the same approach, but that circumstances in recipient countries varied sufficiently to explain the resulting divergence. I contend that there is merit to both of these arguments, as I try to explain in the following paragraphs.

One way of getting at this is by applying a counterfactual analysis. Had Southeast Europe not gone through conflicts and the resulting ethnification of politics, would they have been able to join the EU together with the rest of Central Eastern Europe? Had democratisation reforms been domestically driven, as was

^{2.} Statement by President Barroso following the adoption of the Cooperation and Verification Mechanism Reports for Romania and Bulgaria, July 18, 2012; available at http://europa.eu/rapid/ pressReleasesAction.do?reference=SPEECH/12/565&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN& guiLanguage=en. Last accessed August 23, 2012.

the case in CEE countries, would for instance Croatia or Macedonia have joined the EU in 2004? If we accept the argument that the EU has been reluctant to receive new members and it was due to efforts by aspiring states that they joined, it should hold that, had the determination to join the EU been as unequivocal in SEE as it had been in CEE, these countries would have equally successfully claimed their part in the project of Europe. The case of Slovenia supports this reasoning. Though a former Yugoslav republic, Slovenia managed to escape the escalation of violent conflict and ethnification of politics, pursuing unfaltering democratic reforms and European integration. As a result, it was joined with the CEE states in the first round of Eastern Enlargement. Further evidence in support of this counterfactual exercise is the fact that at the last meeting of the Yugoslav Communist Party Congress in January 1990, delegations of Croatia and Slovenia endorsed the idea of joining the European Community in a joint declaration (Caratan 2009) and that the European Community offered Yugoslavia an association agreement in May 1991 (Cviić and Sanfey 2008). However, since the signing of the Association Agreement was predicated on Yugoslavia remaining united at a moment when the dissolution of the federation was unavoidable, the deal fell through.

Nevertheless, these facts support the argument that the EU may have been fairly consistent (or reluctant) about its Eastern Enlargement across the board, but that Southeast European countries posed a different type of challenge whereby its mechanisms of political conditionality were less effective since it tried to pursue a 'one-size-fits-all' model of accession (Börzel and Risse 2004, Bicchi 2006) in a very different context. The positive sides to this uniform approach are that it supposedly treats every potential applicant the same³ (cf. Vachudova 2005). At the same time, this model can be seen as insensitive to socioeconomic differences and cultural diversity (Börzel and Risse 2004). It reflects the prevailing orthodoxy according to which you need to put the incentives right, and the desired behaviour will follow – irrespective of context.

According to the second argument, the role of the EU as democracy promoter has not been the same over time and across the fourteen cases analysed in this study. After the decision of the Copenhagen European Council in 1993, membership criteria for joining the EU required that the candidate country must achieve 'stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities; the existence of a functioning market economy as well as the capacity to cope with competitive pressure and market forces within the Union; the ability to take on the obligations of membership including adherence to the aims of political, economic & monetary union'. The very broad formulation of political and economic criteria by the

^{3.} The Luxembourg European Council (12–13 December 1997) states that all candidate countries are 'destined to join the European Union on the basis of the same criteria and [...] on an equal footing (para 10).

^{4.} The Copenhagen Criteria as formulated by the European Council as part of the enlargement

Copenhagen Council has meant that in practice there has hardly been a 'single aspect of the functioning of the candidate countries [that] was to be regarded as immune from EU's scrutiny' (De Ridder and Kochenov 2011: 5). Such a broad and vague mandate has made it easier for the EU to develop political conditionality over time and more complicated to properly assess its reach when it comes to democratisation. To this day the underlying concept of democracy that the EU is supposed to be promoting has not been specified either by the EU or the academic literature that analyses it (Wetzel and Orbie 2011).

According to Kurki (2012) the concept of democracy that the EU promotes is dominantly liberal but deliberately fuzzy. Unlike the US, the EU has been reluctant to be ideologically openly committed to pursuing a liberal democratic agenda, so its documents and actions sometimes refer to social democratic and participatory democracy as well, echoing the European social model (ibid.). According to some views, this fuzziness reduces its effectiveness in democracy promotion – particularly since in the economic domain it has consistently promoted a liberal market model. Liberal economic reforms that have been pursued as part of European integration processes in post-communist countries clearly influence the political system and the reach of democracy in these states. Furthermore, the financial crisis that has engulfed the EU since 2008 has reinstated the debate regarding democratic controls over the market and made a serious dent in the EU's credibility as a democracy promoter (Kurki 2012).

The fuzziness of EU's democracy promotion is further complicated by a very legitimate question of whether the development of democracy can be conditioned from outside of a given society (De Ridder and Kochenov 2011). While some scholars advocate the EU as having transformative power (Grabbe 2006), others emphasise that its reach goes only as far as the domestic political context allows. If the EU's democracy promotion is defined less ambitiously, as pursuing interventions in institutional, legal and governance reforms that further political and civil liberties, the EU can be considered as a relatively successful democracy supporter (Kurki 2012). The literature on the power of EU conditionality has developed insights into the tools and types of leverage the EU has at its disposal for changing the incentives of domestic actors towards adopting the Copenhagen political and economic criteria. The relationship between the EU and a potential candidate for membership is clearly asymmetric, with the EU setting all the rules of the game, while aspirant member countries should comply (Vachudova 2005, Grabbe 2006). This relationship of asymmetric power enables the use of political conditionality, which has been defined as 'a strategy of reinforcement used by international organisations and other international actors to bring about and stabilise political change at the state level' (Schimmelfennig 2007: 127). It involves the linking of perceived benefits such as aid, trade concessions, cooperation agreements, political contacts or international organisation membership to the fulfilment of conditions

process, available at http://ec.europa.eu/bulgaria/documents/abc/72921_en.pdf. Last accessed August 23, 2012.

relating to the protection of human rights and the advancement of democratic principles (Smith 1997). If the benefits are perceived by recipient countries as large enough, conditionality can change the incentive structure for elites to trigger domestic reforms (Sedelmeier 2010). However, if domestic political adaptation costs threaten the security of the state or the survival of the regime, even the presence of credible membership incentives may fail to entice governments to comply (Schimmelfennig, Engert and Knobel 2006, Schimmelfennig 2008).

The process of European integration certainly creates enormous traction in the legislative arena and it furthers formal prerequisites of democracy, for the process to work the country in question must be willing to introduce political reforms (Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier 2005). If this willingness is missing, the EU has limited influence. More realistically, as we have often seen in practice in Southeast Europe, governments exhort willingness, but hope to talk the talk without walking the walk (Jacoby 2002). As was already elaborated in Chapter 1, pro-democratic, at least declaratively pro-EU governments had to win domestic elections in Serbia or Croatia before the process of European integration could get underway.

To summarise, the influence of the EU on democratisation of European postcommunist countries was multifaceted. On the one hand, Southeast European states posed a greater challenge for political reform, not least due to violent conflicts that emerged in former Yugoslavia and to the emergence of new states, but also due to weaker socioeconomic preconditions of countries in the region. On the other hand, the EU was also muddling through as a reluctant democratiser while balancing political interests of its member states and avoiding committing to a clear concept of its democratic agenda. As a result, the match between the EU's liberal democratic agenda and the SEE governments' mode of rule was less than perfect, to say the least. Even though these countries adopted constitutions that established them as parliamentary democracies, governance practices that emerged from authoritarian party constellations were subverting these same democratic principles. Though the EU became involved in the region early on in the 1990s and evolved into a more important actor of democratisation over time, governments in Southeast European countries faced huge hurdles in trying to square the circle over maintaining their grip on power and at the same time securing the preconditions for European integration. Having said that, further analysis rests on the premise that the EU promotes a circumscribed form of democracy which rests on an orthodox neoliberal model that focuses on elections, separation of powers, constitutionalism, rule of law and the protection of human rights (Ayers 2008), and that external democracy promotion can have only a limited reach. This is juxtaposed with authors who claim the EU should have a transformative effect in democratising states. Based on such an understanding, the EU's influence on democratisation in post-communist Europe is argued to be positive, especially in areas of human rights and rule of law, which are pertinent to this analysis.

Let me now tie together the preceding elaboration of different factors impacting on European post-communist democratisation, focusing on modernisation preconditions, communist regime types, disputed statehood, political party dynamics and the influence of the EU. These factors appeared in different configurations at the moment of regime change in the early 1990s and coalesced into recipes more or less favourable for democratisation in post-communist countries in Central Eastern and Southeast Europe. Structural preconditions in terms of socioeconomic development and previous regime legacy influenced the characteristics of political party competition at the time, while the circumstances of disputed statehood in some multinational states further complicated the transformation towards democratic regimes. How these circumstances combined in turn influenced the role that the European Union would play in each of the new democratic states. In a second step, following the logic of path dependency, the circumstances that characterised the moment of regime change are understood to have coalesced into a new legacy that helps explain the persistent stagnation of Southeast European post-communist countries.

Though this framework creates an interface between structural and contingent factors, it clearly predicates structure as conditioning contingency. The supply of political parties and their strategies is understood as the function of structural preconditions that characterise a given country. In other words, the socioeconomic context and regime legacy influence whether democratic contenders will compete for power, or whether an authoritarian party will preside over regime change – introducing formally democratic institutions but at the same time trampling over them with authoritarian politics. The democratisation outcome that emerges from this crucial nexus is further conditioned by the international environment at the moment of regime change. Those new democracies that experienced smooth transformations after the first multi-party election were also the first to initiate European integration processes. Those same new democracies under close international scrutiny from the onset of democratic reform were less likely to give in to the temptation that wholesale economic and political reform offered to elites in terms of abuse of power. In cases where violent conflicts occurred in the early 1990s, processes of international political opening and European integration were postponed. As a result, once European integration was initiated in cases such as Macedonia or Serbia, its democracy promotion toolkit faced an already petrified authoritarian rule that needed dismantling in order to further democratisation. A simplified rendering of the argument is shown in Figure 2.1.

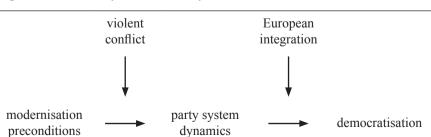


Figure 2.1: Scheme of the theoretical framework

Looking at Figure 2.1, it is important to emphasise that, had there not been violent conflicts, or external democracy promotion on the part of the EU, structural preconditions would have conditioned the supply of political party alternatives, and together they would form the strongest predictors of success in democratisation. Good socioeconomic development coupled with facilitating regime legacy, leads to democratic elites and competitive party systems, influencing decisive and fast democratisation. Conversely, poor modernisation preconditions cannot engender democratic elites and hence authoritarian parties preside over regime change, making democratisation more precarious. Violent conflict occurred in only a minority of the analysed fourteen cases. In those that it did occur, conflict exacerbated an already unfavourable combination of inhibiting legacies and authoritarian elites in some cases, while in others it side-tracked an originally positive trajectory into a negative spiral. These two different scenarios will be explored in case studies of Serbia and Croatia in Chapters 5 and 6. Finally, the start of European integration is linked with the occurrence or absence of conflict. Among cases of peaceful regime change, EU integration accentuated already favourable combinations of facilitating legacies and democratic elites, while in others it helped reorient an originally wavering trajectory onto a positive spiral of democratisation

The research question that animates this study is why democratisation in Southeast Europe has not reached levels comparable to Central Eastern Europe - and more specifically why in Southeast Europe the protection of civil liberties remains problematic well after democratic regimes were established. The conditioning effect of socioeconomic development and the resulting dominance of authoritarian parties in some European post-communist countries at the beginning of the 1990s play a crucial part in the explanation. The central argument is that the dominance of authoritarian parties over regime change has produced a mode of rule inimical to functioning rule of law as the procedural objective of democracy. Authoritarian rule is operationalised through three processes of power mutation: concentration, conversion and dispersion, as elaborated in Chapter 1. This mode of rule is the causal mechanism that connects initial authoritarian party dominance with persistent obstacles to fully functional rule of law systems, which persist even after the initial dominance of an authoritarian party over the political system has been broken. It coalesces into a fundamental feature of these democratic regimes that becomes difficult to undo.

The following chapters analyse empirically the presented arguments. Chapters 3 and 4 analyse the relationships among each of the explanatory factors and the outcome while Chapter 5 looks at ways in which these explanatory factors configured to influence democratisation trajectories by applying fuzzy set QCA. The application of fsQCA enables a search for parsimonious answers by providing causal recipes both for democratic advancement and its failure. Fourteen countries are analysed to establish which explanatory factors carry most weight, and to assess how they combined to produce diverging outcomes. Finally, the sequential logic of the proposed relationships presented here is explored in Chapters 6 and 7 through case studies of Serbia and Croatia. Case studies are used to test

the findings of fsQCA in a careful tracing of causal mechanisms that converted initial configurations into lasting legacies that burden democratisation processes. Systematic process analysis is well placed to establish whether the hypothesised relationships among the explanatory factors and the outcome actually hold. At the same time, the search for causal mechanisms that integrate the framework serves the purpose of theory building. The Conclusion draws out the main implications of the implemented analyses.

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