

THE IMPORTANCE OF INTER-PARTY RELATIONSHIPS FOR DEMOCRATIC QUALITY

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ABSTRACT

Previous research employs electoral volatility as the key instrument in measuring party system stability. Although volatility scores are useful for macro-comparative purposes they do not measure the strength of inter-party relationships. I argue that inter-party relationships are the most important factor for our understanding of party system quality. The measure of inter-party relationship is based on: the stability over time of the effective number of political parties; the stability of left-right parties' positions; and, relatedly, the stability of ideological distances between the major parties. These measures -- based on the number of parties, ideological consistency, and ideological distances between parties -- are crucial for our understanding of democratization.

Keywords: *Party institutionalization, Party system institutionalization, democratization, Southeast Europe*

ÖZET

DEMOKRATİKLEŞME İÇİN PARTİLER ARASI İLİŞKİLERİN ÖNEMİ

Siyaset bilimi literatüründe parti sistemi kurumsallaşmasını ölçmek için “oynaklık katsayısı” oranları yoğunlukla kullanılmaktadır. Oynaklık katsayısı oranları çok sayıda ülkeyi karşılaştırmak için kullanışlı olmasına rağmen parti sistemlerinin temel belirleyicisi olan partiler arası ilişkiyi ölçmekte yetersiz kalmaktadır. Bu makalenin amacı hem parti sistemi kurumsallaşmasını ölçmek için partiler arası ilişkiyi dikkate alan yeni bir model önermek hem de bu model doğrultusunda parti sistemi kurumsallaşması ve demokrasi arasındaki ilişkiyi açıklamaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Parti kurumsallaşması, parti sistemi kurumsallaşması, demokratikleşme, Güneydoğu Avrupa*

Introduction

Some scholars have called the twentieth century “the century of democracy” (Merkel, 2004). However, given the troubled experience of many new democracies, the issue naturally arises of how to sustain and stabilize (i.e., consolidate) these

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regimes (see Alves, 1998; Diamond, 1994; O'Donnell, 1994; O'Donnell, 1996).

The literature on democratization suggests that political parties and their party systems are key players for consolidation to take place (see Birch, 2003; Clapham, 1993; Diamond, 1989; Diamond, 1997; Dix, 1992; Mainwaring and Scully, 1995; Mainwaring, 1999). The “indispensability of parties” thesis has been widely employed in understanding the democratization processes in latecomer European democracies and in the Third World, including Africa, Asia, and Latin America (Lipset, 2000). For instance, analyzing the Third World context, Clapham (1993) argues that the lack of stable party representation undermines the functioning of democratic polity. In a similar vein, looking at Asian cases, Diamond also highlights the significance of parties and party systems (Diamond, 1989). Furthermore, studying Latin American cases, Dix (1992) reasserts that the prospects for democratic consolidation increase as parties become more institutionalized (see also Dix, 1989).

The role played by parties and party systems in the process of democratic consolidation has also been analyzed in relation to Southern Europe (see Diamandouros and Gunther, 2001; Pridham, 1990a; Pridham, 1990b). These studies emphasize several factors that are associated with party- and party system-institutionalization, including membership, party identification, organization, roots in society, and the stability of inter-party competition.

Yet three problems persist in the literature. First, only few studies distinguish between party institutionalization, on the one hand, and *party system* institutionalization on the other (for exception see Bértoa, 2011; Randall and Svasand, 2002; Robbins, 2010). And, secondly, even when party system institutionalization is explicitly considered, the inter-party relationships are overlooked. Finally, very few studies estimate the relationship between either party- or party system-institutionalization, and their effects on democratic consolidation.¹

This paper addresses these shortcomings in the literature by estimating the effects of party and party system institutionalization on democratic quality in 13 transitional democracies. Aside from filling holes in the literature, the study makes

¹ For only exception see Fernando Casal, Bertoa ‘Party System Institutionalization and the Quality of Democracy in Eastern Europe’, *DISC Working Paper Series*, DISC WP/2009/7 (2009). Bertoa’s work seeks correlation between party/party system institutionalization and democratic quality. However, his results are not significant and his conceptualization of party system is different than the one developed here.

its primary contribution by introducing the concept of party system institutionalization that is based on how parties interact with one another, i.e., based on the strength of inter-party relationships and observing whether party system institutionalization matters for consolidation.

Relocating Party Institutionalization and Party System Institutionalization Theory in Transitional Contexts

Political parties are still considered to be the most relevant and vital organizations for the proper functioning of democratic political systems (Aldrich, 1995; Dalton and Wattenberg, 2000; Duverger, 1954; Downs, 1957; Key, 1964). Although at some point the decline of parties' theses affected discussions around party politics (see Dalton, 2000; Fisher, 1980; Lawson, 1988; Sell and Svasand 1991), thanks to several critical and unique roles parties play in the operation of democracy, such as the aggregation and articulation of public opinion, the recruitment of political leadership and organizing the government, for the foreseeable future modern democracy will continue to be "unthinkable, save in terms of political parties" (Schattschneider, 1942: 1).

Although several studies have emphasized the importance of party and party system institutionalization for the proper functioning of democracy (see Clapham, 1993; Dix, 1992; Mainwaring, 1999; Randall, 2006), confusion remains as to the meaning of these concepts. The term 'political institutionalization' was first introduced by Huntington in his work 'Political Development and Political Decay' (Huntington, 1965), which influenced a number of scholars. Since then, many studies have employed the concept of institutionalization in different contexts, including political parties and party systems (see Farr, 1973; Janda, 1980; Keohane, 1969; Perlmutter, 1970; Polsby, 1968; Robins, 1976; Welfling, 1973). While some scholars have used his approach without any change and have tried to apply it empirically (Robins, 1976; Dix, 1992), others have either modified his approach or created their own framework for institutionalization (Polsby, 1968). Notwithstanding a great deal of studies on party and party system institutionalization, two problems have persisted: the 'unit jump fallacy' (Sartori, 2005 [1976]: 39) and the failure to address the relational features of party systems.

The first problem is related to the lack of differentiation between individual party institutionalization and that of the party system. Whilst some studies use these concepts interchangeably (Morlino 1998; Rose and Munro 2003; Toka 1997), others examine individual features of political parties in measuring system level

institutionalization (Kuenzi and Lambright, 2001; Mainwaring, 1998; Mainwaring, 1999; Mainwaring and Torcal, 2006; Mainwaring and Scully, 1995). However, the relationship between the party institutionalization and party system institutionalization is much more intricate than has been argued, particularly in relatively newer democracies. As Randall and Svasand (2002, p.8) assert, although they are closely related, they are neither the same thing nor mutually competitive, and in some cases these two types of institutionalizations “may even be at odds”. Therefore, it is critical to approach party and party system institutionalization as two different phenomena which require separate treatment.

As follows, borrowing from Randall and Svasand, although with a small adaptation, this paper defines individual party institutionalization as “the process by which the party becomes established in terms of both integrated patterns of behavior and attitudes” (2002: 12) within and outside of the party. From this definition, the dimensions of party institutionalization are identified as organizational development and strong roots in society, both of which have appeared many times in the literature as the indicators of institutionalization (Basedau and Stroh, 2008; Kuenzi and Lambright, 2001). The central argument is that, internally, the more institutionalized a party, the higher degree of organizational development it exhibits, while externally the more institutionalized a party, the stronger it is rooted in society.

The second problem relates to the conceptualization of party system institutionalization. The seminal work of Mainwaring and Scully was the first that introduced the party system institutionalization concept to the party politics literature (1995). They asserted that in order for a party system to be institutionalized, four conditions must be present: stability in the patterns of interaction, strong party roots in society, the legitimacy of parties and strong party organization (Mainwaring and Scully, 1995). Furthermore, they argued that variance in institutionalization needs to be incorporated into the comparative analysis of party systems, since weakly institutionalized party systems operate in a different way in comparison to well-established ones, with significant implications for democracy (Mainwaring, 1999). Since this concept was posited, the concept of party system institutionalization has gained wide recognition and been given fundamental importance, particularly in democratization studies. Whilst some scholars have simply followed Mainwaring and Scully by merely applying their conceptualization to different cases (see, e.g., Crossiant and Völkel, 2012; Hicken and Kuhonta, 2011; Kuenzi and Lambright, 2001; Mainwaring and Torcal, 2006), others have developed their own approaches by identifying different dimensions of the phenomenon (Bertoa, 2011; Bielasiak, 2002; Horowitz and Browne, 2005; Lindberg, 2007; Meleshevich, 2007).

However, although introducing the notion of party system institutionalization for comparative purposes has contributed to the party systems literature, except for the stability of party competition, other dimensions identified by Mainwaring and his colleagues are related more to the individual features of political parties rather than relational ones. Moreover, even when analyzing the stability of interparty relations, Mainwaring and his colleagues used electoral volatility scores to compare several countries. Though volatility scores are useful for macro-comparative purposes, as Wolinetz argues they fail to explain the relational features of party systems, such as the patterns of sympathy or antipathy that are at the core of party system discussion (Wolinetz, 2006: 6; see also Luna and Altman, 2011). Needless to say, the same criticism leveled against Mainwaring and Scully applies to all studies that have employed their conceptualization.

Other studies that used the concept of party system institutionalization but with different attributes have also suffered from the same problem. For instance, Lindberg identifies eight indicators of institutionalization: the number of parties in the legislature, the number of new parties in the legislature, the share of new parties in the legislature, the number of parties voted out, the share of parties voted out, the share of seats in the legislature occupied by the largest party, the share of seats in the legislature held by the runner-up and legislative seat volatility (Lindberg, 2007). Although the way in which Lindberg approaches party system institutionalization might have the explanatory power to understand the highly inchoate party systems of Africa, all of these numbers barely clarify either party regime interaction or interparty relations, which are major determinants of party system consolidation.

Bertoa also offers a different conceptualization of party system institutionalization (Bertoa, 2011; Bertoa, 2014). Referring to Bakke and Sitter, (2005), he defines institutionalization as “the process by which the patterns of interaction among political parties become routine, predictable and stable over time” (Bertoa, 2011). In order to operationalize the concept, he draws on Mair’s framework of party system analysis (Mair, 1997; Mair, 2001) and considers party systems as institutionalized, if alternations of government are total or non-existent, if governing alternatives are stable over a long period of time and if some parties are permanently excluded from participation in national government (see Bertoa, 2011; Mair, 2007). So as to measure these criteria, he develops three indicators, namely an index of government alternation, an index of familiar alternation and an index of closure (see Bertoa and Enyedi, 2010). Although Bertoa’s conceptualization and operationalization of party system institutionalization might be useful for understanding the dynamics of power distribution, he also fails to address whether

the patterns of sympathy and antipathy between parties, that are the major factors that characterize inter-party relationships, have been stabilized. If, as Bertoa acknowledges, the most important attribute of party system institutionalization is the stability of rules and the nature of interparty competition (Lindberg, 2007), the concept of institutionalization has to attend to and analyze the nature of the relationship between parties. Accordingly, the main criteria employed by Bertoa – government alternation, governing formulae and access to government – certainly measure stability with regard to the major actors among which power is distributed, but they overlook whether the extent to which parties are able to form working interactions.

As follows from this discussion, similar to Bakke and Sitter (2005), this paper also defines party system institutionalization as the process by which the patterns of inter-party competition have been stabilized and regularized. The central concern of this conceptualization is to take the relational features of party systems into account and to observe whether the way parties relate to one another is institutionalized.

The Relationship between Party and Party System Institutionalization and the Democratic Quality

Before discussing why stabilized parties and party systems are crucial for the democratization processes, it is beneficial to briefly define what is meant by the democratic quality. Needless to say, the question of what determines the quality of a democracy has long been discussed in the literature, and this is why it is possible to find numerous studies assessing this subject (see Svetlozar, 2005). However, Lijphart was the first to define the concept as “the degree to which a system meets such democratic norms as representativeness, accountability, equality and participation” (Lijphart, 1993: 149). From this perspective, it is clear that there are significant differences between polities’ democratic quality, depending on their capability to meet certain requirements. This is also in line with Karl and Schmitter (1991), who argued that democracy cannot be considered as a single, unique set of institutions, but there are certainly several types of democracies with diverse practices producing diverse effects. Henceforth, there is not only one type of democracy but several types especially in between consolidated democracies and electoral democracies.

In the literature, although several scholars have identified certain characteristics of democracies (see Inglehart and Welzel, 2005; Lijphart, 1999;

Putnam, 1993), Diamond and Morlino's (2004) work has been one of the few exceptions which tackle with the question of what the requirements of a functioning democracy are (see also Morlino, 2004; Puhle, 2005). According to them, democratic quality needs to be evaluated with regard to its procedures, content and results, and five dimensions should be central in analyzing the quality of democracy, namely rule of law, accountability, the responsiveness of elected officials, the realization of equal political rights and civil liberties and the progressive reduction of social and economic inequality (Diamond and Morlino, 2004; see also Merkel and Crossiant, 2004). In a similar vein, Merkel defines 'embedded' democracy as consisting of five partial regimes: "... a democratic electoral regime, political rights of participation, civil rights, horizontal accountability, and the guarantee that the effective power to govern lies in the hands of democratically elected representatives." (Merkel, 2004: 41)

However, the majority of new democracies fall short of meeting the requirements of an 'embedded democracy' especially because competitive and free elections are not sufficient for "guaranteeing the rule of law, civil rights and horizontal accountability" (Merkel and Crossiant, 2004: 199). Some performs better than the others in consolidating the ground rules of democracy, while others suffer from the lack of political and civil rights. This is why the concept of 'defective democracy' which refers to diminished subtype of a consolidated democracy is also very important to understand the transformation processes in newer democracies. Since these new democracies in transformation differ from one another in terms of their ability to meet the requirements of a qualified democracy, it is important to understand what explains the differences among them and which factors positively affect their democratic performances.

Within this context, drawing on the Lijphart's definition and Morlino and Merkel's conceptualizations, in this study, democratic quality refers to the degree to which countries manage to meet the certain requirements of a democratic system, which are above all accountability, responsiveness, rule of law and socio-political integration (Merkel, 2004: 36). The logic is that the more the countries are able to meet these requirements, the more qualified democracy they have and the less they do so, the more defective their democracy is.

Coming back to the relationship between parties, party systems and democracy, this paper follows the common conclusion in the literature that political parties that form stable relations with the public and have a strong organizational existence, in other words institutionalized parties are very important for the

democratic quality (see Clapham, 1993; Dix, 1992; Mainwaring, 1999; Randall, 2006). The idea is that if there are stabilized, regularized and strong parties – and therefore stable alternatives –citizens find it easier to identify with what each party stands for and which ones are accountable for their ineffective public policies (Birch, 2003). As such, especially in terms of the notion of accountability, party institutionalization plays a central role by making it possible for citizens to choose from among stable alternatives that are responsible for previous achievements and/or failures. Low levels of party institutionalization are also problematized for responsiveness, since weakly institutionalized parties lack well-defined programmatic goals and turn into vehicles for personal interests, thus curbing the long-term search for the common good of society (Levitsky 1998). Similarly, lacking organizational development, weak parties tend to become platforms for populist/charismatic leaders and thus jeopardize the proper functioning of a democracy (McGuire, 1997).

Conversely, the institutionalization of party systems, understood as stability and regularization in the patterns of interaction among political parties, is especially critical for democratic enhancement. Since increasing a polity's capability in meeting democratic norms such as freedom, equality, and rule of law requires an ongoing process of structuration led by the interaction of parties in the system, the stability of interparty relations has special relevance for democratization (Pridham, 2000: 160). In weakly institutionalized party systems, the interparty relationship is defined by uncertainty and irregularity, which decrease their ability to accommodate and increase centrifugal dynamics, therefore creating negative consequences for the processes of compromise and reconciliation needed for improving democratic quality (Morlino, 1998). Moreover, with regards to accountability and responsiveness, since stable patterns of interaction generate regularity in coalition strategies, the institutionalization of party systems also enhances the quality and predictability of the policymaking process and hence contributes to the quality of democracy (O'Dwyer and Kovalcik, 2007). Therefore, the institutionalization of a party system is particularly critical for moving beyond electoral democracy, since stabilized relations among parties increase the possibility of expanding political rights, civil liberties and constitutional constraints on state power, which constitute the basis of democratic quality.

In general terms, as Diamond asserts, political institutionalization strengthens “the formal representative and governmental structures of democracy so they become more coherent, complex, autonomous, and adaptable and thus more capable, effective, valued, and binding” (Diamond 1999, p.19). Moreover, the

coherence, complexity and autonomy of a polity raise its propensity to meet democratic credentials. Following from this discussion, I expect to see positive relationships between the degree of party and party system institutionalization of a polity and its level of democratic quality.

How to Operationalize Variables: Party Institutionalization, Party System Institutionalization and Democratic Quality

In the literature, scholars have employed different ways of measuring party institutionalization with multiple indicators: the capacity of parties to sponsor parties cross-nationally (Rose and Mackie, 1988), personalism (Dix 1990), party discipline (Kreuzer and Pettai, 2003), party identification (Dalton and Weldon 2007) and the percentage of independent candidates (Birch, 1998; Moser, 1999). As Bertoa (2009) argues, although the validity of these studies cannot be questioned, most of these tools either fail to measure rootedness and organizational development simultaneously or require extensive data; consequently, they do not allow for application to newer democracies. Therefore, in this study, as Bertoa (2009), Lewis's Index of Party Stabilization (IPS) is employed, which measures both the degree of political space occupied by parties (the proportion of the total vote they receive) and the progressive enhancement of this proportion over time – by 20 % for the party's second appearance in Parliament, 40% for the third time and so on (Lewis 2006).

Although the IPS fails to measure organizational development thoroughly, which requires extensive data on membership levels, territorial comprehensiveness and funding, two crucial aspects of this index make it appropriate for measuring party institutionalization across cases. First, it thoroughly captures the degree of rootedness by not only taking account of the percentage of votes taken by parties but also their ability to sustain these votes over time. Secondly, since the IPS attends to the age of party organization, which has been considered as one of the central indicators of institutionalization over and over again in the literature, the IPS scores also give hints as to organizational development.

With regard to the party system institutionalization, as discussed previously not many studies to date have managed to account for the complexities of the concept, particularly relational features of party systems. Aiming at addressing this gap, this study attempts to account for the aspects of interparty relationships so relational features of party systems in operationalizing party system institutionalization. Here it is critical to revisit the literature on the concept of party system.

According to Ware (1996) two out of four major criteria on which party systems differ from one another are parties' ideologies and the number of parties in the system. Several studies on party systems also approach the number of parties in the system as an important factor that characterizes inter-party competition (see Blondel, 1968; Dahl, 1990; Duverger, 1990; Rokkan, 2009 [1970]). Besides all these, Sartori (2005) adds the ideological distance among parties as a crucial dimension in explicating for how party systems function.

I argue that in measuring party system stability, these dimensions that characterize the party systems should stay at the core of operationalization (see also Gross and Sigeman, 1984): the number of parties, ideological distance among parties and party ideologies. In other words, if these are the major characteristics of a party system while analyzing whether a party system is institutionalized or not, it is crucial to account for whether the number of parties in the system have been stabilized and regularized, whether the ideological distance among parties fluctuates or remains stable, and whether individual parties change their position in the ideological spectrum so often or the parties' positions are stabilized. The argument here is that a system of parties is said to be institutionalized when (1) the number of effective parties in the system have been stabilized over time, (2) the ideological distance among parties do not experience profound and extreme fluctuations, and (3) individual parties' place in the ideological spectrum is rather regularized for a period of time.

The stabilization over time in the number of effective parties in the system, in other words the concentration of party vote share over time, has already been considered as an important indicator of party system consolidation (Horowitz and Browne, 2005). The idea is that the number of parties in a system has far-reaching implications for the patterns of party competition. This is why, for instance, a shift from a two-party system to a multiparty system is considered a party system change. As in the words of Sartori (2005):

“... the number of parties immediately indicates albeit roughly, an important feature of the political system: the extent to which political power is fragmented or non-fragmented, dispersed or concentrated. Likewise, simply by knowing how many parties there are, we are alerted to the number of possible ‘interaction streams’ that are involved” (Sartori 2005: 106).

Accordingly, if the effective number of parties in a system is stabilized over time, the ‘interaction streams’ are also stabilized in that sense this stabilization

indicates a degree of institutionalization.

Secondly, the change or stabilization as to the ideological distance among parties, in other words change in the polarization scores, also constitutes another important indicator of party system stabilization. Dalton argues that the polarization of political parties within a party system, defined as the distribution of parties along an ideological dimension, demonstrates the quality of party competition (Dalton, 2008). Relying on Dalton's (2008) model of party system analysis, together with the quantity of party systems, it is also crucial to examine the 'quality' of a party system because the distribution of parties along the continuum has also influence over both the patterns of voter behavior and the broad characteristics of the political system. The logic is that manifesting the degree of ideological space among political parties (Dalton, 2008), party polarization attends to the interactions among parties and indicates the patterns of cooperation and opposition which should lie at the core of party system analysis. Changes in the levels of party polarization, on the other hand, show to what extent the distance between parties has been stabilized and regularized over time. From this perspective, I argue that the change in polarization levels can ably be used as another indicator of party system institutionalization.

Finally, since polarization scores are aggregate and do not tell us the extent to which individual parties change their positions in an ideological spectrum, in measuring party system institutionalization it is also important to include the fluctuations in individual party policy positions. Needless to say, the very idea of representation requires policy changes by political parties over time in order to respond voters' demands. For instance, in the UK party system party positions² change quite frequently (see Quinn, 2013) and this characteristic of the British politics is one of the factors that enhance 'the credibility of representation' in the country (Klingemann *et.al.*, 2006: 26). However, when the changes in party ideologies are so extreme and profound, the patterns of party competition also suffer from irregularity. For instance, let us think of a party system in which party A is a center-right party and party B is a center-left party. Under these circumstances party competition is expected to be centripetal but if party A moves to the center-left then the patterns of competition also changes since party B also has to respond to this change. If party A moves to the extreme-right, again, the possibility of cooperation between the two parties diminishes and competition tends to become centrifugal.

² Albeit frequent party position moves, when we apply the operationalisation adapted in this research to the UK party system, the PSI score of the country is still 4.07 which indicates high degree of party system institutionalization.

Here it has to be underlined that these kinds of extreme fluctuations are particularly detrimental for the processes of transition and consolidation which requires interparty cooperation for the ongoing structuration. While an already established system might be tolerant for party policy changes, for the nascent party systems of new democracies these fluctuations tend to have adverse effects on the functioning of political system as a whole. Within this perspective, the extent of individual party position fluctuations is also another indicator of party system stability or instability.

In order to measure effective number of parliamentary parties (ENPP) I use Laakso and Taagepera's method (1979) in which the proportion of seats for each party is squared and then summed, and the inverse of this provides the effective number of parties. For each case I measure ENPP for each election and then calculated the standard deviation of these scores in order to find the change in ENPP over time.

Measuring party system polarization, on the other hand, is a difficult task, mainly because it is difficult to find data on the ideological placement of parties for several cases. This is why scholars have "estimated polarization from indirect indicators such as the number of parties in an electoral system, the size of extremist parties or the vote share for governing parties" (Dalton, 2008: 903; see Pennings, 1998; Powell, 1982). However, in order to measure polarization levels, the Manifesto Project Dataset provides significant data on party placements along the left-right scale for a high number of countries, which allows for calculating the levels of system polarization directly (Volkens *et.al.* 2012). Although it is not viable to suggest that the distances between parties are only determined by the left-right scale, as argued by Inglehart (1990), in most nations citizens define themselves along a left-right continuum, and this continuum also represents major cleavages existent in a political system, whether to be social or cultural (See also Dalton, 2006; Huber and Inglehart, 1995; Knutsen, 1998). Therefore, this study, following Dalton (2008), basically assumes that party politics is mainly structured by the left-right dimension, while the distance between parties regarding their positions on the left-right scale demonstrates the level of system polarization.

However, rather than using Dalton's method,³ here the index of party polarization is measured by calculating weighted standard deviation in the

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distribution of parties:

$$\text{Polarization (xp)} = \text{SQRT}\left(\frac{\sum_{i=1}^N w_i(x_i - \bar{x}_w)^2}{(N' - 1) \frac{\sum_{i=1}^N w_i}{N'}}\right)$$

Where w_i is the vote percentage of Party i , N' the number of parties which are represented in the parliament and \bar{x}_w the weighted mean of party votes. Since the weighted standard deviation scores are calculated, this way also allows for taking parties' strength into account. In order to measure the change in polarization scores over time, the standard deviation of the polarization scores over elections is used. As such, this indicator of party system institutionalization is measured as follows:

$$\text{Change in Polarization} = \text{SQRT}\left(\frac{\sum_{i=1}^N (x_p - \bar{x})^2}{N - 1}\right)$$

Where x_p is the polarization score for each election, \bar{x} the average of the polarization scores and N the number of elections. This index is comparable to Dalton's method and similar to statistics employed by other researchers (see Caul and Gray 20; Pennings 1998; Sigelman and Yough 1978).

In order to measure individual party position fluctuations, using Manifesto Project Dataset I calculate the standard deviation of individual party positions in each country among different elections and find a score for each individual party. Then, taking the average of these individual party scores in a given system, the fluctuations in the individual party positions for each case are calculated. Table 1 provides the scores for each indicator and the index of party system institutionalization.

Table 1. Party System Institutionalization in Southeast Europe**

	1/Average of Individual Party Fluctuations	1/ Std. of the ENPP	1/Std. of Weighted Polarization	PSI
Russia	0.038	0.396	0.095	-3.636
Armenia	0.061	0.732	0.140	-2.472
Serbia	0.053	0.650	0.227	-2.083
Bosnia	0.095	0.476	0.177	-1.677
Albania	0.072	1.531	0.195	-1.064
Turkey	0.151	0.613	0.142	-0.566
Montenegro	0.081	1.867	0.216	-0.385
Romania	0.107	2.024	0.158	-0.101
Bulgaria	0.141	1.138	0.278	0.714
Moldova	0.158	1.500	0.315	1.719
Macedonia	0.174	1.594	0.290	1.973
Hungary	0.154	1.536	0.419	2.455
Croatia	0.096	4.425	0.584	5.123

** In order to have positive correlation, I inverted all three variables. Moreover, as can be seen from the Table 1 so as to avoid measuring incompatible scores, I employ the standardized (z) scores of the three variables and take the sum of all three z-scores which in turn gives the final level of systematic institutionalization (PSI). Discussion on case selection is provided in the following section.

Finally, we need to clarify how the democratic quality can be assessed. In the literature on democratization, there are numerous ways of measuring democracy (see Munck, 2009). Although the Freedom House Index on democratic quality in newer democracies is the most widely used, the differentiation made by the Freedom House Index between free, party free, not free democracies is not refined enough for a small sample, the analysis of which requires “a more meaningful concept of democracy, with more demanding normative and analytical criteria” (Merkel, 2004: 35). Accordingly, in line with the definition of democratic quality adapted herein, the Bertelsmann Transformation Index (BTI) provides an almost perfect measurement of democratic quality in the sense that it goes beyond the minimalist definition of electoral democracy and includes rule of law as well as the separation of legislative,

executive and judicial powers with checks and balances.⁴ Especially for new democracies, most of which tend to be ‘defective’ and differ from one another with respect to their defects, the BTI appears to be the most suitable and detailed index, as it allows for understanding both common ground and the patterns of defective democracies in play today (Merkel and Crossiant, 2004). The BTI involves countries which are yet to achieve a fully consolidated democracy (transitional countries) and examines independently five dimensions of political transformation: stateness, political participation, rule of law, institutional stability and socio-political integration.⁵ The BTI’s rating scale ranges from 10 (best) to 1 (worst).

With regard to the countries to be analyzed, two major factors influence our case selection. First, only transitional countries included in both the Manifesto Project and the BTI at the same time are examined. Secondly, countries whose democracy scores are below 8.5 are chosen. In this way, eastern and central European democracies are kept out of the analysis. This decision is justified by the fact that eastern and central European democracies score above 9 and 9.5, so these countries can be considered as consolidated democracies, which makes them more appropriate for comparison with more developed democracies. In other words, comparing countries which are in the early period of their democratization journey with those which are about to complete might lead to false inferences. Henceforth, the countries analyzed in this study are southeast European countries⁶ (Russia, Montenegro, Macedonia, Albania, Serbia, Romania, Bosnia, Bulgaria, Moldova, Croatia, Turkey and Hungary) and Armenia, which is involved in the study because it is the only nation to score below 5.5, which consequently increases variation in the degree of democratic quality. The analysis of parties and party systems in the Southeast Europe significantly contributes to our understanding of the workings of political parties and party systems in general not only because there is almost no study on parties and party systems of this region which is the new component of the Europe but also because it gives important clues about the ways in which parties and party systems influence the process of transition and consolidation.

⁴ Bertelsmann Stiftung (2012) *Bertelsmann Transformation Index- Codebook for Country Assessments*, Available at: http://www.bti-project.de/uploads/tx_jdownloads/BTI2012_Codebook.pdf, accessed on November 21st, 2012: 5.

⁵ The average BTI democracy scores have been recalculated by leaving out the party system score (that looks at the extent of stable and socially rooted party system) which was part of ‘Political and Social Integration’ Criterion.

⁶ Here it has to be acknowledged that except for Turkey all these countries are post-Communist which is not typical of what we might have in other parts of the world but still their experiences with democracy give hints about the possible problems to arise in newly democratizing settings.

Impact of Party and Party System Institutionalization on the Democratic Quality in Southeast Europe

Party Institutionalization and Democratic Quality

Based on the above conceptualization and operationalization, Table 2 summarizes the level of party institutionalization as well as the democratic quality scores of the southeast European democracies. The results suggest that the relationship between the quality of democracy and the institutionalization of parties is much more complicated than previously analyzed.

Table 2. Party Institutionalization and the Quality of Democracy in the Southeast Europe

Countries	Elections	PI (%)	The Quality of Democracy Score***	Type of Democracy
Moldova	2001-2005-2010	90	7,02	Defective
Hungary	2002-2006-2010	89	8,28	Democracy in Consolidation
Macedonia	2006-2008-2011	86	7,6	Defective
Russia	2003-2007-2011	85	5,38	Highly Defective
Turkey	2002-2007-2011	85	7,74	Defective
Montenegro	2006-2009-2012	84	7,58	Defective
Bulgaria	2001-2005-2009	80	8,72	Democracy in Consolidation
Croatia	2003-2007-2011	77	8,4	Democracy in Consolidation
Armenia	2001-2005-2009	76	5,26	Moderate Autocracy
Albania	2003-2007-2012	72	7,28	Defective
Romania	2000-2004-2008	70	8,52	Democracy in Consolidation
Serbia	2007-2008-2012	69	8,02	Democracy in Consolidation
Bosnia	2002-2006-2010	60	6,44	Defective

***These democracy scores are taken from BTI 2012 Index but are recalculated by taking party system score out.

As can be observed from Table 2, contrary to what scholars usually argue there seems to be no association between the democracy scores of countries and their party institutionalization levels. For instance, Russia, defined as a highly defective democracy in the BTI, with a democracy score below 5.5, has highly institutionalized parties. This might be related to the fact that under certain circumstances electoral rules and regulations that support party institutionalization might actually jeopardize democratic quality. Moldova is also another interesting case, whereby a high level of party institutionalization does not correlate with democratic quality. More interestingly, countries like Croatia, Romania and Serbia seem to manage to move towards consolidation without the need for institutionalized parties. These findings clearly challenge the general assumption that party institutionalization is necessary but not sufficient for the quality of democracy (Diamond and Linz, 1989; Huntington, 1968; Mainwaring, 1999; Mainwaring and Scully, 1995). However, this is not to say that there is no relationship between party institutionalization and democratic quality at all, but the analysis of this relationship does require careful examination, considering what factors brought about institutionalization in the first place.

Party System Institutionalization and Democratic Quality

Since an increasing score on PSI scores indicates higher levels of institutionalization, it is expected that the higher the PSI scores, the higher the quality of democracy. Table 3 displays party system institutionalization and the quality of democracy scores for southeast European democracies.

Table 3. Party System Institutionalization and the Quality of Democracy in the Southeast Europe

Countries	Time Span****	PSI Score	The Quality of Democracy Score*****	Type of Democracy
Russia	1993-2007	-3.64	5.28	Highly Defective
Armenia	1995-2003	-2.47	6.07	Highly Defective
Serbia	1997-2012	-2.08	8.02	Democracy in Consolidation
Bosnia	1990-2000	-1.68	6.73	Defective
Albania	1991-2001	-1.06	7.27	Defective
Turkey	1999-2007	-0.57	7.03	Defective
Montenegro	1992-1998	-0.38	7.40	Defective
Romania	1996-2008	-0.10	8.50	Democracy in Consolidation
Bulgaria	1997-2009	0.71	8.85	Democracy in Consolidation
Moldova	1994-2005	1.72	5.43	Highly Defective
Macedonia	1990-1998	1.97	7.53	Defective
Hungary	1998-2010	2.46	9.17	Democracy in Consolidation
Croatia	2000-2011	5.12	8.38	Democracy in Consolidation

**** Polarization scores for the consecutive elections that take place less than 3 years of time are not taken into account. The same election years have been taken into account to measure the change in fluctuations in individual party positions.

***** Since time span is different for each case, in order to avoid time inconsistency I used different BTI scores. For the countries whose final election year is before 2006, I used the BTI 2006 scores. For Russia, Turkey, and Romania, I used BTI 2008 scores. For Bulgaria and Hungary I used BTI 2010 scores. Finally, for Croatia and Serbia I use BTI 2012 scores.

When looking at the table, it can be observed clearly that although their defections vary, with the exception of Serbia all the countries that have lower degree of party system institutionalization are defective democracies. In other words, according to the findings, low levels of party system institutionalization can be

associated with low levels of democracy. Since party mergers and splits is a common occurrence in Serbia, it is expected to see lower levels of party system stability.

Moreover, most of the countries with higher PSI scores are democracies in consolidation, with the exception of Moldova and Macedonia, in both of which ethno-nationalist parties tend to dominate the political system, which in turn might stabilize party placements along an ideological spectrum.⁷ Leaving aside these two exceptions, all transitional countries that have higher PSI scores are democracies in consolidation. In other words, while low levels of party system institutionalization are certainly associated with less qualified democracies (e.g. Russia, Armenia, Albania, Bosnia, Turkey and Montenegro), higher levels of institutionalization indicate more qualified democracies (e.g. Romania, Bulgaria, Croatia and Hungary). These findings suggest that party system institutionalization plays a much more critical role in advancing democracies, and there is almost a linear relationship between institutionalization of party systems and the degree of democratic quality – as the former increases, the latter improves.

Party and Party System Institutionalization

The relationship between party and party system institutionalization⁸ also requires further clarification in order to answer the following questions: What is the essence of this relationship, how do these two processes interact, relate to and affect one another and how would this relationship be different under different circumstances? In the literature, there is considerable agreement on the necessity of party institutionalization for party system institutionalization. The logic is that the components of a system – the parties themselves – need to be capable of enduring over time (Rose and Munro, 2003; Toole, 2000), which in return increases the regularity of patterns of interaction among these political factions. Therefore, a positive relationship between party institutionalization and party system institutionalization is expected. In contrast to these expectations, the correlation

⁷ It has to be underlined here that ethnic cleavages might have adverse effects on the process of democratic consolidation. However, they also have stabilizing effects on the functioning of party systems since strong ethnic cleavages mostly anchor party positions in the ideological spectrum and comes with higher levels of partisanship both of which have positive impact on party system institutionalization.

⁸ While the scores for PI are calculated using most recent election results, time span for PSI scores vary depending on the availability of Manifesto Project dataset. However, measuring the relationship between two notions is still relevant since system level institutionalization is a much longer process and therefore does not experience extreme fluctuations over time.

coefficient is not significant, even though the direction is positive (table 4).

Table 4. Party Institutionalization and Party System Institutionalization (Correlation)

		Party Institutionalization
Party System Institutionalization	Pearson Correlation	0,347
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,25
	N	13

These findings suggest that the relationship between two processes is much more complicated than has been portrayed before, to the extent that the institutionalization of political parties could be even at odds with that of the party system. The contention here is that in order to understand the effects of party institutionalization on party system institutionalization, it is crucial to analyze the sources of party institutionalization which indicate the essence of this relationship. Within this perspective, for instance, the case of Turkey is indicative wherein the very existence of strong ethnic and religious cleavages increased polarization levels, which in turn is one of the central causes of party institutionalization (Yardimci-Geyikci, 2015). A high level of polarization, in turn, impaired party system institutionalization by curbing interparty trust. All these observations demonstrate that party and party system institutionalization are related to one another, but the effect of institutionalized parties on party systems needs careful examination regarding the sources of party institutionalization itself, which might have different implications under different circumstances.

Party/Party System Institutionalization and Democratic Quality

These findings also require empirical assessment. In line with what has been argued previously, a fairly strong and significant positive correlation (0,518) between party system institutionalization and the democratic quality is found, while there is no correlation between party institutionalization and democratic quality (Table 5). This confirms our initial hypothesis that higher party system institutionalization correlates with higher degrees of democratic quality.

Table 5. Party/ Party System Institutionalization and the Quality of Democracy (Correlation)

		Party System Institutionalization	Party Institutionalization
Quality of Democracy	Pearson Correlation	0,518	-0,128
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.07*****	0,68
	N	13	13

***** = $p < 0.1$

It is also crucial to discuss the compound impact of party/party system institutionalization on democratic quality. Table 6 presents the results of the OLS regression used to model the quality of democracy.

Table 6. OLS Regression Results: Party and Party System Institutionalization and Quality of Democracy

Quality of democracy	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
PSI	0,334	0,139	2,40	0,037
PI	-0,048	0,037	-1,31	0,219
_cons	11,161	2,913	3,83	0,003

$R^2=0.38$

$n= 13$

As can be observed from the table, it is clear that the impact of party system institutionalization is significantly associated with the quality of democracy. The model shows that when controlling for party institutionalization, party system institutionalization contributes to the democratic quality in a 95% significance level.⁹

⁹ However, it has to be borne in mind that the number of cases is limited.

Conclusion

Although there are numerous studies on the relationship between party/party system institutionalization and democratic quality in the literature, almost no attempt has been made to seek causation or correlation between the two factors.¹⁰ Moreover, hardly any studies have analyzed the relationship between party institutionalization and party system institutionalization. This paper addressed these issues and looked at their relationship and the effects of both on the quality of democracy by examining 13 transitional democracies.

Developing a new quantitative tool and applying it to real cases, it has been found out that party system institutionalization plays a greater and more critical role in democratization processes. So, the more institutionalized a party system they have, the more likely it is for countries to develop a qualified democracy. Although more work needs to be done in order to produce more concrete results, it is reasonable to conclude that the nature of democracy differs according to whether the level of party system institutionalization is high or low.

This study contributes to the literature in a number of ways. First, it offers a new way of quantitatively measuring party system institutionalization which has not been employed before and which is in line with the conventional literature on party systems. Second, it not only differentiates between party and party system institutionalization but also empirically analyzes this relationship. Third, it demonstrates a fairly strong correlation between party system institutionalization and democratic consolidation. Finally, it increases the number of cases under scrutiny by examining 13 transitional democracies. Using BTI scores, it also shows how different degrees of party system institutionalization lead to different types of democracies.

¹⁰ For exception see Bertoa (2009), 'Party System Institutionalization and the Quality of Democracy'.

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